



# North Dallas Gazette

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## United Nations: Severe drought has brought on near-catastrophic hunger in the Horn of Africa

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

The United Nations World Food Program is appealing to the world for at least \$327 million to care for the urgent needs of 4.5 million people over the next six months and help communities become better equipped to deal with extreme climate shocks.

An estimated 13 million are facing severe hunger mostly because of droughts that have afflicted the Horn of Africa, and those in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia are experiencing droughts not seen in more than 40 years.

UN officials contend that malnutrition rates also have soared in the region.

People in South Sudan, Yemen, and the northern parts of Ethiopia and Nigeria, are especially at risk, according to the Hunger Hotspots report, published jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

The report calls for action to "prevent starvation, death and the total collapse of livelihoods" as more and more people slide towards catastrophic hunger.

"As humanitarian actors, we are



The troubling record notes that the primary drivers of hunger include conflict, climate, and economic challenges. (iStockphoto / NNPA)

faced with overwhelming challenges. We must scale up operations in challenging conditions, we must sustain critical assistance in complex crises, and we must be prepared to respond quickly to sudden disruptions and unexpected emergencies," Margot van der Velden, the U.N. World Food Programme's director of emergencies, said in the report.

The troubling record notes that the primary drivers of hunger include conflict, climate, and economic challenges.

According to the report, "many of the people that the U.N. World

Food Programme and FAO support are fleeing conflict and have been forced to abandon their land, homes and jobs in countries such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and the Central Sahel region."

Weather extremes such as heavy rains, tropical storms, hurricanes, flooding and drought continue to wreak havoc in most vulnerable countries, making life particularly hard in places such as Afghanistan,

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#### People In The News ...



Dr. Dorothea Shanks-Lott



Zoe Bethel

NDG Quote of the Week: "Hold on to your dreams of a better life and stay committed to striving to realize it."

—Earl G. Graves, Sr.



## Dr. Dorothea Shanks-Lott

Dr. Dorothea Shanks-Lott of Dallas, Texas, will be receiving the Living Legends Award at the 24th Annual Texas Gospel Music Excellence Awards in Houston, Texas on Thursday, February 24, 2022.

Dr. Dorothea A. Shanks-Lott was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, and a graduate of Courter Technical High School. She attended Ohio Industrial Center and Hondros College where she received her certificate in Real Estate.

Dorothea is the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate



of Music Degree, Founder of Deliverance, Peace, & Consolation Ensemble, "One Dallas Metropolitan Choral Union", Co-Founder of Montgomery Ensemble.

Dr. Shanks-Lott began her music ministry at the

age of 9 years old at the First Baptist Church of Cumminsville in Cincinnati where she served as choir director from her teens to age 26. While there, she was introduced to the Greater Cincinnati Choral Union, and one year later to the National Convention of Gospel Choirs & Choruses, Inc. (aka Thomas A. Dorsey Convention). When she moved to Dallas in 2011, she quickly established One Dallas Metropolitan Choral Union and the rest is history.

The Texas Gospel Music Excellence Awards began in 1999 by founder, Pastor Larry Davies and his wife Sharon Davies. Their goal

was to provide a platform to educate independent gospel artist and to recognize their excellence in the music industry. The Texas Gospel Music Excellence Awards is the longest running independent award show in the country. In the beginning, only artist in Texas were recognized but now it has expanded to national and international categories as well. The 2022 edition of TGMEA will feature 17 categories for Texas, 23 categories for the United States and 7 categories on the international scene.

The award show weekend will begin on Thursday, February 24 with an after-

noon opening ceremony and evening event to pay a tribute to quartet music and the legends of the industry. Other activities for the event include a Morning Glory program and Power2Praise Educational Sessions to focus on the Business of the Music Industry, Artist Health and Wellness, Praise and Worship, Praise Dance and Mime Ministry, Ministers of Music & Pastor Coordination, and Women of Excellence. There will also be a Media Luncheon to include a new artist showcase as well as the Founder's Luncheon.

Winners will be announced at the award show

on Friday night and Saturday evening, with Red Carpet from 4 to 5:30 pm and an after-party Gospel concert to follow, featuring power-packed performances by an organization out of Florida. The final event is ChoirMania, to hold at one of the churches in Houston to be determined, with choirs from across the country participating in this celebration.

For more information about the Texas Gospel Music Excellence Awards and to be a part of the initiative as a local or international sponsor as well as to provide media coverage, visit - [www.tgmea.org](http://www.tgmea.org).

## Zoe Bethel

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

Zoe Bethel, the former model crowned Miss Alabama for America Strong in 2021, has died.

Bethel, who worked as a reporter for Right Side Broadcasting, suffered fatal injuries from a car accident earlier this month, her family said in a social media post.

The 27-year-old succumbed eight days later to those unspecified injuries.

"Zoe had an accident Thursday night, February



10th, and sustained severe damage to her brain, brainstem and is in a coma," the family posted on Instagram after the injury.

"Unfortunately, the doctors are saying the damage cannot be repaired and that

she may not have much time left."

Grace Saldana, the editor-in-chief of Right Side Broadcasting then tweeted news of Bethel's death.

"Besides the fact that she was always incredibly stunning, I'll always remember how convicted Zoe was in her faith in God, how dedicated she was to her beliefs in protecting life, and how much she cared for others. May she rest in peace," Saldana wrote.

The Miss Alabama America organization posted a message about Bethel's death.

"On February 18th, 2022, the world lost a queen,"

pageant officials wrote on Instagram.

"It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our dear friend and reigning Miss Alabama for America Strong, Zoe Bethel. She was a light in this world, and we are heartbroken over the loss of such a bright and beautiful woman. Rest in grace and love, sweet one."

In one of her last social media posts, Bethel noted an optimistic outlook for the coming year.

"I was evaluating the earlier years of my life focusing on all the mistakes I've made, and the consequences of disobedience. I felt discouraged/disappointed with all I haven't achieved by my age. Feeling regretful.

"I am reminded to look at the bigger picture and admire all that God has done for me. Focusing on his promises and remaining steady in the faith to continue this journey of life guided by him.

"This year has passed like lightning.

"I am hopeful for what is to come, although I struggle with planning properly (free-spirited) I intend to tackle that flaw and get a better grip of 2022!"

The post ended with a reassuring verse from scripture.

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose".*

- Romans 8:28 KJV

## Michelle Green-Ford

By Bob Ray Sanders

The Board of Directors of the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce (FWMBCC) recently chose businesswoman Michelle Green-Ford to be the organization's new president and chief executive officer. She will replace the late Devoyd "Dee" Jennings, longtime Chamber executive who died last July.

In announcing Green-Ford's appointment, Board Chair Reginald Gates said, "She has executive leadership and business ownership experience that prepares her to produce superior results for the Black



Chamber."

He added, "Her selection is historic in that she is the first female president in the Chamber's more than 40-year history."

Green-Ford, who holds a bachelor's and master's degree in business administration, recently served as Vice President and Chief

Diversity Officer for JPS Health Network, which has more than 7,000 employees.

"As a result of Michelle's leadership, her department at JPS increased spending with small, minority, veteran and women-owned businesses," Gates said. "She improved access to vendor registration and provided vendor education seminars."

Glenda Thompson, who chaired the board's search committee, said Green-Ford did "an outstanding job" working with the community, and supporting the FWMBCC's PATHS Forward Mentorship Program.

"I feel honored to serve

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# Critical Race Theory and the bedeviled mind of Dale Nevis

By Allen R. Gray  
NDG Contributing Writer

Archeologists have identified three major races, Caucasoid (white), Mongoloid (Asian) and Negroid (Black), the physical characteristics of which vary in respect of skin color, hair texture, head form, face, eye, nose, lips, stature, blood group and dermatoglyphic features.

Negroids generally have brown to brown-black or yellow-brown skin color, a strong prognathism face, and hair that is brown to black with a coarse, woolly or frizzly texture. Their eyes are commonly brown to brown-black with a vertical eye-fold; the nasal bridge is usually medium broad to very broad; and their body shape is lateral and muscular.

Those physical characteristics are a perfect description of the Cookeville, Tennessee teacher who was recently fired by the Putnam County School Board on February 7th for stating the obvious to her students...that she is Black. She is one of several teachers who have (or will) fall victim to the state's newly inducted anti-Critical Race Theory (CRT) laws. She is not the only victim, though.

In another case of an unexpected firing a Blountville, Tennessee teacher who sought to help his students learn to critically evaluate contemporary debates by studying a Ta-Nehisi Coates essay that alludes to white privilege is also fighting for his job.

The rancorous debate around the CRT and what should be done about it is getting critical. White folk are not allowed to say the "N-Word" (in public) or

else they will have to face social shaming and maybe a temporary suspension of some kind. Now, Black teachers aren't allowed to say Black in public or else they will face legal penalties—and a whole lot of other things overzealous politicians can devise.

These unprecedented firings are part of a national movement to protect primarily white students from being indoctrinated with a new view on the American social system and its methods of exacting racial order. This exclusively conservative view is, perhaps, best explained by Putnam County School Board President Dale Nevis in his comments from a February 7, 2022 article in the Onion.

"Simply put, we cannot have a teacher in this school system poisoning our children's minds with her belief that she is a Black woman," said Nevis. He went on to say that the fired teacher had been warned on other occasions about telling her students she was Black, telling the teacher the "new laws are clear," and "...it's a simple case of student safety."

Nevis isn't the only Tennessean with concerns for the safety of white students. The most recent census showed Tennessee is 78% white with a Black population of 17%. But in Cookeville, the Black population is only 4%, with a white population of 91%. That's the population that voted Nevis and other likeminded individuals as leaders.

Many Americans are clueless to the demands of a newly instituted anti-CRT law that they are now legally obligated to observe and what proponents of the law

are saying.

Proponents of the law are saying:

- Don't say white folk nurture a racist society who then use that society for their own benefit.

- Don't say racism is systemic in America and is as inescapable as quicksand.

- Don't say that when two or more non-racists are gathered, racism is there.

- Don't say—even if your life depends on it—that the grave disparities in all aspects of American statistical outcomes are due to racist systems.

One might credit only the southern states with backing this censorship mentality spreads across America from Maine to Arizona. There are 22 US states that have introduced anti-CRT bills into legislation. In five states—Texas, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Iowa, and Idaho—the bill has been passed into law.

Albeit Dale Nevis won't be satisfied until all 50 states pass an anti-CRT bill into law.

"...We do not want our teachers doing critical race theory in schools, whether that's forcing students to hear evil theories like 'My parents are Black,' or whatever the other critical race theories are that are only meant to divide us," Nevis ranted. "Look, this divisive rhetoric, like 'I am a Black person,' is making our white students feel like they're inherently inferior. This is a clear-cut case of reverse racism, and our school board won't stand for it." He added that Black people in teaching positions is an irrational and far-fetched Communist notion to begin with.

Forensic psychiatrist Dr. Aruna Khilanani gave

a talk titled "The Psychopathic Problem of the White Mind," at Yale University's School of Medicine on April 6, 2021. During that talk, Dr. Khilanani expressed an opinion that is diametrically divergent to the Nevis view.

"White people are out of their minds and they have been for a long time," Dr. Khilanani stated. "...We are asking a demented, violent predator who thinks that they are a saint or a superhero, to accept responsibility. It ain't gonna happen. They have five holes in their brain."

This anti-CRT movement along with acts like removing books from school libraries are nothing new. This is the same tactic used by Europeans to erase the culture and history of African nations. This is the same scheme Nazis employed when they burned books and confiscated the valuables of the Jewish culture. This is the same scheme used by American oppressors who made it illegal for slaves to read to keep them enslaved. It is what the American education system is doing to us all by subjecting our history lessons to harsh censorship and selective omission, thereby, denying our young their true collective history.

Many of us may never realize what far-reaching implications or destruction the anti-CRT laws may have. We may also never realize the demands the subjective laws placed on educators who hope to illuminate their students with objective clarity and provide another perspective about what the American experience has been.

Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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# Shareef O'Neal issues Heart Month NFT to raise funds for the AHA

LOS ANGELES, CA — College basketball star Shareef O'Neal is joining the fight against heart disease and stroke by supporting the American Heart Association, devoted to a world of healthier lives for all. O'Neal, who plays for Louisiana State University men's basketball team, is raising funds for the Association's Life is Why campaign through proceeds from his collection of NFTs — or non-fungible tokens — including one celebrating American Heart Month in February.

O'Neal, son of NBA hall of famer Shaquille O'Neal, was preparing to start his basketball career with the University of California Los Angeles Bruins when



Annie Spratt / Unsplash

he was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect affecting the coronary artery. Following open-heart surgery in December 2018, the Los Angeles native, spent months in rehabilitation and had to relearn how to walk again.

"I'm truly excited about the chance support the

American Heart Association's lifesaving mission," said O'Neal. "My family and I went through a lot with my surgery. When I was in the hospital, I was continually inspired by child survivors. Those experiences drove me to get back on the court and to the game that I love. Now I

want to use my journey to give hope and impact the future of heart health. Together we have an opportunity to raise funds and make a huge difference."

O'Neal's three-year fundraising campaign aims to inspire giving to support the American Heart Association's mission of driving equitable health for all and improving and saving lives from heart disease and stroke, the leading causes of death globally.

"We believe every person deserves the opportunity for a full, healthy life, but this is not the reality for many people in our community due to socioeconomic factors beyond their control," said Nancy Brown, American Heart Association Chief

Executive Officer. "We are so appreciative of Shareef's commitment to help elevate our mission and raise critical funds to help remove barriers to health equity, advance innovative research and power the next generation of lifesavers through CPR education."

Donations through the Life is Why campaign support the Association's efforts to:

- Provide funding support

to local entrepreneurs and organizations working to improve health outcomes in under-resourced communities;

- Fund research that can improve the health outcomes of heart and stroke patients;

- Train more than 2.5 million high school students in CPR annually.

To learn more about the Life Is Why campaign, visit [www.heart.org/lifeiswhy](http://www.heart.org/lifeiswhy).

## Give blood in honor of Black History Month

During Black History Month this February, the American Red Cross encourages eligible donors to give blood to honor the legacy of blood-banking pioneer Dr. Charles Drew while supporting the health of all communities.

Blood transfusion would not be possible without the contributions of Drew, an African American surgeon who became the medical director of the first Red Cross blood bank in 1941. Drew's research about the storage and shipment of blood plasma proved that blood could be stored for transfusions. With blood transfusions remaining one

of the most critical treatments for patients with chronic illnesses such as sickle cell disease, donors can continue Drew's legacy by rolling up a sleeve to give.

Black History Month comes as the Red Cross is experiencing its worst blood shortage in more than a decade. This poses a risk to patient care, especially to those with chronic illnesses, like sickle cell disease, who may need transfusions on a regular basis. To help overcome the blood crisis, the Red Cross is encouraging eligible adults to make an appointment to donate blood at any one of its nu-

merous blood drive locations through the end of February.

As a thank-you, all who come to give in February will receive a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card via email, thanks to Amazon.\* How to donate blood Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), call 1- 800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients.

A blood donor card or

driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds, and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school stu-

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## DROUGHT, from Page 1

Angola, Haiti and Syria, the report continued.

"Three consecutive failed rainy seasons have decimated crops and caused abnormally high livestock deaths," the agency — which won the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize — said in a statement. "Shortages of water and pasture are

forcing families from their homes and leading to increased conflict between communities."

More forecasts of below-average rainfall raise the specter of worsened conditions in the coming months, the agency said.

Meanwhile, the economic challenges of the COV-

ID-19 pandemic persist and are projected to continue to increase food prices and drive hunger.

Officials noted that, despite a brief decrease in mid-2021, world food prices have continuously risen since May 2020.

South Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Yemen are identified as the four countries at risk of catastrophic hunger.

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# Supreme Court may end affirmative action at universities

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

The Supreme Court said it will reconsider race-based affirmative action in college admissions.

Last month's announcement could eliminate campus practices that have widely benefitted African

American and Hispanic students.

Policies at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina are at the heart of the issue that the court has agreed to consider.

A student's race counts among the criteria used to decide who enters class at those institutions.

The Department of Jus-

tice urged the justices to reject the case against Harvard.

"The filing from the office of US Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar emphasized that lower US courts had extensively reviewed Harvard's racial admissions practices and found them sufficiently limited to meet Supreme Court precedent as

they furthered the school's interest in campus diversity," CNN reported.

Admissions practices that take a student's race into account were first upheld in a 1978 Supreme Court decision and reaffirmed in 2003. Such practices have reportedly boosted the admission of Black and Latino students for decades.



The Department of Justice late had urged the justices to reject the case against Harvard. (Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA)

## Ride DART for free to vote in the March 1 Primary Election

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is providing free transportation to polling locations on the day of the Texas primary elections, Tuesday, March 1, 2022. Voters can ride at no charge on all DART buses, trains, the Dallas Streetcar, Go-Link, Paratransit Services and the TRE between EBJ Union Station and CentrePort/DFW Airport Station.

No proof of voter registration is required to ride for free on March 1. Go-Link riders can use promo code VOTE22 at checkout for a complimentary Adult Local Day Pass in the Go-Pass app on March 1. You can learn more at [dart.org/vote](http://dart.org/vote).



vote.

### How to Find a Voting Location

The State of Texas organizes election information and voting locations by county. Go to your county's website to find a convenient voting location, shown below:

For Dallas County loca-

tions, see <https://www.dallascountyvotes.org/early-voting-information/>

For Tarrant County, see <https://www.tarrantcounty.com/en/elections/Upcoming-Election-Information/Early-Voting-Reports.html>

For Collin County, see [https://www.collincountytx.gov/elections/election\\_information/Pages/early\\_voting.aspx](https://www.collincountytx.gov/elections/election_information/Pages/early_voting.aspx)

tion\_information/Pages/early\_voting.aspx

For Denton County, see <https://www.votedenton.gov/upcoming-election-information/>

Voting locations are open at various times during early voting and from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on the day of the Texas primary election, March 1. If you are in line by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day, you will be allowed to vote. Check your county elections website for specific times.

### Plan Your Trip on DART to a Voting Location

Riders who need customized trip planning can map out their ride with the

"Plan" tool in the free Go-Pass app or use the Trip Planner on [DART.org](http://DART.org). DART Customer Service can also assist at 214-979-1111.

If you plan your trip directly in Google Maps, enter the voting location as your destination and choose the Transit option (train icon) to get travel directions using DART.

### Tips for a Safe Voting Experience

• Wear a face mask while riding DART and while at the voting location. If you forget your mask, please take one from the dispensers located on DART trains and buses.

• Carry hand sanitizer with you and use it before and after your visit to the voting location, and especially after you use the voting machine. DART also provides hand sanitizer dispensers on board its buses and trains.

• Bring your own sanitized pen to sign any forms.

• Wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you can after leaving the voting location.

• Consider voting early so you can avoid crowds and practice social distancing.

• Stay home if you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19.

## The GOP takes aim at D.C. statehood and home rule as Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton fights back

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Longtime Democratic District of Columbia Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton has condemned attacks on her city by Republicans who now want to strip the nation's capital of Home Rule.

"Representative Clyde literally wants the federal government to resume running D.C. as a colony," Rep. Norton said.

Republican Georgia Rep. Andrew Clyde, a member of the House Oversight Committee, counts among those leading a GOP contingent seeking to repeal the District of Columbia's Home Rule Act.

Clyde and others have been critical of Mayor Mu-



Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton Fights Back. (Photo via NNPA)

riel Bowser's administration, claiming that crime, homelessness, and open drug use are out of control in the nation's capital.

The GOP lawmakers also cited Mayor Bowser's indoor vaccine mandate, which she's since rolled back.

"While I'm glad our intention of repealing D.C.'s Home Rule Act was heard loud and clear, the prob-

lems facing our nation's capital city extend far beyond medical tyranny," Rep. Clyde contended.

"Make no mistake, this was not an empty threat; legislation is coming to restore Congress' Article I Section 8 Constitutional duty 'to exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District' and to properly manage D.C.'s affairs.

"In the near future, we will free Washington D.C. from the failed experiment of so-called 'Home Rule,' and we will return our nation's capital to the American people after the Democrats' almost 50-year reign of terror and failed leadership," Rep. Clyde continued.

With the midterm elections in November, Republicans are positioned to retake the U.S. House and Senate while killing any hopes of D.C. statehood.

"Rep. Clyde wants to take away the limited self-government the nearly 700,000 D.C. residents, a majority of whom are minorities, have had for the last 50 years and give absolute power over D.C. to Congress and, presumably, to congressionally or

presidentially appointed administrators," Rep. Norton stated.

"At a time when we are having unprecedented success on our D.C. statehood bill, we will continue to move forward, not go back. We will defeat his anti-democratic efforts."

President Richard Nixon signed the Home Rule Act into law, and the measure gives D.C. an elected chief executive (mayor) and legislature (Council).

Rep. Norton pointed out that, in signing the statement on Home Rule, Nixon wrote, "One of the major goals of this Administration is to place responsibility for local functions under local control and to provide local governments with the authority and resources they need to serve their

communities effectively."

Nixon's statement continued:

"The measure I sign today represents a significant step in achieving this goal in the city of Washington. It will give the people of the District of Columbia the right to elect their own city officials and to govern themselves in local affairs."

"As the Nation approaches the 200th anniversary of its founding, it is particularly appropriate to assure those persons who live in our Capital City rights and privileges which have long been enjoyed by most of their countrymen. But the measure I sign today does more than create machinery for the election of local

See DC, Page 12



# New Analysis: Texas could see an \$8.56 billion return on investment if preschool proposal becomes law

A new Fight Crime: Invest in Kids research report makes a compelling case that recent Congressional preschool investment proposals could provide a strong, long-term, net return on investment (ROI). Texas, for example, could reap an ROI of \$8.56 billion if federal early childhood education measures become law.

The report, Preschool Key to Boosting School Success and Enhancing Public Safety, noted that the proposal would allow 571,000 more children to attend preschool in Texas alone. Each one of those children represents a lifetime return on investment of slightly over \$15,000, leading to the state's \$8.56



Segun Osunoyomi/Unsplash

billion ROI. Nationwide, six million additional children would be able to attend preschool as a result of this expansion, with a long-term return on investment of \$90 billion.

"Texas would see a lifetime of reduced costs to our society that include the costs of incarceration," said

Sally Hernandez, Travis County, TX Sheriff and a Fight Crime: Invest in Kids member. "Our children will thrive and live productive lives if we instill in them a joy of learning."

"We know when kids attend quality preschool, they're more likely to graduate high school on time,

enroll in a post-secondary program, and less likely to have disciplinary issues," said Harris County, TX Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, also a Fight Crime: Invest in Kids member. "If we want to keep Texas safe, we should ensure children are cared for and educated early."

The research brief highlights an independent cost-benefit analysis that found an average per-child societal "profit" of more than \$15,000—and applies it to the additional children served by the preschool provisions.

This ROI comes via several factors, including increased test scores, which are associated with higher earnings in adulthood, as well as decreases in costs

to society, such as expenses created by children being held back in school or needing special education.

Decades of research show that the experiences children have in their earliest years, during a period of critical brain growth, set the foundation for future development and success. Voluntary, quality preschool education can improve academic performance—including high school graduation—and reduce the risk that participants will become involved in crime later.

Children who attend high-quality preschool are more likely to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, with enhanced early math, language, and lit-

eracy skills. They're also less likely to be held back in school or to need special education, and more likely to be proficient in reading and math. Preschool participants have an increased probability of graduating from high school. Students who participate in high-quality preschool are also less likely to have behavioral infractions in elementary and middle school and to be suspended from high school.

Founded in 1996, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids is a membership organization of thousands of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and violence survivors who protect public safety by promoting solutions that steer kids away from crime.

## Howard University Receives \$2M to digitize Black newspaper archive

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Howard University has received a \$2 million donation to digitize its Black Press Archives, that contains more than 2,000 newspaper titles including publications like the New York Amsterdam News, Chicago Defender, Washington Informer, Baltimore AFRO, and other historically Black publications.

The University said it

hopes to make the archives more broadly available to researchers and the public.

"Once digitalized, Howard's Black Press Archive will be the largest, most diverse, and the world's most accessible Black newspaper database," Benjamin Talton, the director of Howard's Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, told the Associated Press.

The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center houses the archive, which dates to the 1970s and includes news-

papers from Africa and the Caribbean.

The \$2 million grant from the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation should also help increase diversity in the university, officials stated.

Howard University credited its Center for Journalism & Democracy for helping to secure the funding from the Logan Family Foundation, which supports social justice causes in journalism and the arts.

"We will be able to go

back and look at these archives and these newspapers and the way the Black press was covering the world and have a greater understanding of who we are as a society, who we were back then and who we are now," Nikole Hannah-Jones told the news service.

"Right now, we really are only getting a very narrow part of the story, and that is the part of the story told through power and through the ruling class."



The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center houses the archive, which dates to the 1970s and includes newspapers from Africa and the Caribbean. (Photo via NNPA)

## Joint Economic Committee and Congressional Black Caucus release new analysis highlighting economic progress and socioeconomic barriers facing Black Americans

Washington, D.C. — In recognition of Black History Month and in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) and the CBC released a new analysis of the impact of economic trends and barriers on Black Americans.

State and national data spanning the last 50 years highlight significant areas of economic progress among Black Americans.

However, the data also make clear the persistence

of structural and economic barriers facing Black workers and families that result in disparities across broad socioeconomic indicators and outcomes.

According to the analysis:

- Black child poverty rates have been cut by nearly half since the 1980s, and the share of Black Americans living below the poverty line reached the lowest level since federal data collection began in 1959.

- High school completion rates have risen sig-

nificantly, and notably, the Black-white racial gap in high school graduation has nearly disappeared: In 2019, less than 6 percent of Black high school students dropped out of high school.

- The share of Black adults with college degrees has more than doubled since 1990.

However, despite this progress:

- White households have eight times the wealth of Black households, a result of historical disparities in asset ownership, unemploy-

ment, wages and intergenerational wealth transfers.

- Black households earn just 62 cents for every dollar earned by white households.

- Black Americans have consistently experienced unemployment rates that are nearly twice that of white Americans.

Additionally, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic have disproportionately impacted Black workers and families, exacerbating existing gaps and threatening decades of progress.

Investments to improve job quality and raise wages, lower household costs and remove barriers to wealth-building are key to addressing racial inequality and advancing shared prosperity.

"We recognize the contributions of Black Americans and work to confront structural barriers throughout the year, and Black History Month presents a specific opportunity to shine a light on both the progress to address racial disparities and the systemic racism that remains entrenched in our so-

ciety and in our economy," said JEC Chairman Don Beyer.

"I am pleased to partner with Chairwoman Beatty and the Congressional Black Caucus on this important work, which makes clear the progress that has been made and the imperative that we in Congress do more to promote racial equality. In addition to directly harming Black workers and families, the effects of discrimination

See BARRIERS, Page 14



# Public invited to reCOLORcycle for Lewisville's ColorPalooza

The City of Lewisville is inviting everyone to share their creativity and reCOLORcycle at ColorPalooza: A Celebration of Spring, Saturday, April 23, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., in and around Wayne Ferguson Plaza in Old Town Lewisville.

ReCOLORcycle, one of the most engaging visual displays at ColorPalooza, returns for the fourth year and is open to everyone.

ReCOLORcycle turns those bland 55-gallon recycle bin everyone sees around their neighborhood into art. It's fun, it's easy, and it's creative.

The City of Lewisville will provide complimentary bins, but all expenses related to decoration are the responsibility of the designer. Decorated recycle bins must be family friendly and free of profanity and

political or religious affiliation. The City of Lewisville reserves the right to remove or not display any submitted art.

Clean recycle bins can be picked up at the Lewisville Visitor Information Center, 247 W. Main Street, beginning Tuesday, March 15, during regular business hours. Take the bins home and decorate them as you see fit. The more creative

and colorful, the better.

Decorated recycle bins must be returned no later than Monday, April 11, to be displayed at ColorPalooza. Bins can be returned during regular business hours Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

To participate, please go to the reCOLORcycle page on [LewisvilleColorPalooza.com](http://LewisvilleColorPalooza.com) and fill out the interest form.



Mike Petrucci / Unsplash

## Cheruvu receives Spirit of Frisco award

The Spirit of Frisco Award is awarded by the Frisco Chamber of Commerce to an individual that exemplifies love, dedication, commitment, and sincerity towards his or her city and fellow citizens...a person who truly embodies the spirit of our great city.

Sometimes, a recipient of the "Spirit of Frisco" is someone behind the scenes working in areas

that are not the most visible. Such is the case with Sunitha "Sunny" Cheruvu and the impact she has made working with the Frisco Police Department, the Frisco Education Foundation, the City of Frisco's Mayoral Inclusion Committee, and the Karya Siddhi Hanuman Temple, among many others. Those that know Sunny best describe her as a "silent" leader. Nev-

er seeking the limelight, Sunny is deliberate in her decisions - using the art of persuasion and the craft of influence to positively impact the community and those she serves. A resident of Frisco for over a decade, Sunitha, her husband and three children are a founding family of the KSH Temple, where she serves on many civic and community service efforts.

## Weather shuts Carrollton facilities

Due to icy road conditions, all public-facing City of Carrollton facilities were closed to in-person business at 6pm on Wednesday, and remained closed through Thursday, February 24.

Republic Services, the City's solid waste disposal and recycling partner, has suspended trash, recycling, and bulk and brush services for Thursday, February 24. The landfill will be closed Thursday and reopen on Friday, February 25. Resi-

dents regularly scheduled for Thursday, February 24 collection will be picked up on Friday, February 25, and routes regularly scheduled for Friday will be collected on Saturday, February 26. Conditions will be monitored and updates made if necessary.

Virtual services are strongly encouraged and remain available 24/7. Residents are also encouraged to use the City of Carrollton App to report City-related issues.

Public safety, including 911 response, remains fully operational. For non-emergency public safety situations, residents should call 972-466-3333 or dial \*247 from a cell phone at any time day or night, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The City will reassess conditions today and determine if extended closures are warranted. For the latest updates, check [cityof-carrollton.com/weather](http://cityof-carrollton.com/weather) and follow City social media channels.

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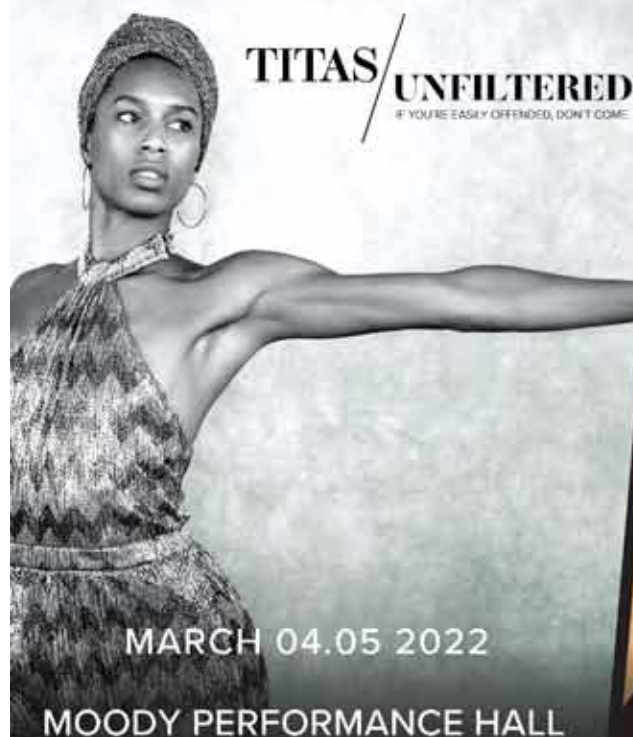
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by KYLE ABRAHAM

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# Concerned about extreme weather and the Power Grid, Texas voters show increasing support for future 'energy expansion'

*One year after a devastating winter storm, a new poll shows support for a wide-ranging approach to reliability and preparedness – and for using new federal funds to achieve it*

AUSTIN, TX -- A year after Winter Storm Uri knocked out electricity and water across Texas, a new poll shows most voters share deep concerns about extreme weather and support an expanded approach to the state's energy future and infrastructure challenges.

The fourth Texas Voter Poll, conducted by Texas 2036 shortly before the recent winter storm in which the state largely avoided blackouts and water outages, reflected significant concerns about the state's energy infrastructure and Texas' ability to adapt to changing future conditions.

The poll also showed widespread support for Texas' energy leadership and a strong desire to extend this legacy into the 21st century through new forms of advanced energy generation, in part by investing federal infrastructure and COVID relief funding.

Among registered Texas voters:

- 53% are extremely or very concerned — and an additional 24% described themselves as somewhat concerned — about the extreme weather trends Texas faces. Texas' state climatologist, based at Texas



Alex Simpson / Unsplash

A&M University, has projected that Texas will experience more 100-degree days, more extreme rainfall, more urban flooding, greater hurricane intensity, and increased drought severity by 2036. 65% of Republican voters, 73% of Independent voters, and 94% of Democratic voters expressed concern about these trends.

- 65% are very or extremely concerned — and another 23% are somewhat concerned — that given current trends, Texas will not be able to meet a significant amount of its future water needs, meaning some communities may lose access to water in an extreme drought. This concern was shared by 82% of Republican voters, 87% of Independent voters, and 95% of Democratic voters. In the aggregate, nearly nine out of every ten Texas voters are concerned about Tex-

ans' access to water in the future.

- Only 10% described themselves as "very confident" in Texas' electric grid, while 24% said they were "not that confident" and 25% said they were "not at all confident."

- And half of voters (51%) described themselves as extremely or very concerned that the state might not apply for federal infrastructure funds and, as a result, would fall behind other states in advanced energy technologies such as hydrogen, energy storage, and carbon capture. An-

other 24% are somewhat concerned about this possibility. Further, 72% — including 65% of Republicans, 71% of Independents, and 81% of Democrats — agreed that Texas must accept and maximize federal infrastructure and COVID relief funding while ensuring the funds are spent wisely.

"No one who endured last year's storm will ever forget it. It was much more than a major disruption, as lives were lost and others were put in jeopardy. It's a hard, painful reminder to Texans that extreme weather increasingly threatens us all," said A.J. Rodriguez, executive vice president of Texas 2036. "Texans want their leaders to prepare for the future — whatever it's likely to bring. Those preparations should be based on data, sound science, and strategies that keep all the options on the table. State leaders must use all

available funding, including federal dollars, to make them happen."

More than half (53%) of voters — including 50% of Republicans and 63% of Democrats — said they are willing to spend more to fortify the electric grid against extreme weather events. In reviewing the open-ended response, the median response of Texas voters was that they would spend about \$10 more per month to prepare the state's infrastructure for extreme weather events. The partisan median breakdown showed Republican voters willing to spend \$5 more per month and Democratic voters \$15 more.

"Our state experienced a dozen extreme weather events last year. They cost Texas about \$26.3 billion and wreaked havoc on the lives of millions of Texans," said Rob Orr, senior policy advisor at Texas 2036. "These are shared ex-

periences, and they clearly left Texans more concerned about the future. Texans want energy and water infrastructure that is more reliable and better prepared for extreme weather."

In addition, 72% of Texas voters believe the state should lead the nation in adopting new, cleaner forms of energy that grow the economy, create jobs and improve air quality — especially given the historic role that energy has played in our state's history.

"Texans want to be the world leader on energy — that hasn't changed, and it never will," said Jeremy Mazur, senior policy advisor for Texas 2036. "But Texans know that the definition of leadership has expanded in the 21st century. It now means continuing to lead on oil and gas and nuclear power, certainly, but also on newer strate-

See ENERGY, Page 10

## BLOOD, from Page 4

dents and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements. Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, 2022-APL-0057 from a computer or mobile device.

To complete a RapidPass, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App. About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or cruzrojaamericana.org, or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.

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# Film Review: 'Marry Me' falls short of best expectations

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*) Nothing is drastically wrong with this rom/com. Nothing is drastically right. That's the problem. This Valentine's Day offering feels like a present that's been regifted and passed along.

Jennifer Lopez took big chances in her last movie *Hustlers*. She played a streetwise stripper and that paid off, winning her accolades for that unlikely

role and very gritty performance. In this synthetic tale, she's an over-hyped singer/dancer who mugs for the cameras, never misses out on a press relations event and lives her love life in public. Sound familiar? With a script by John Rogers (*Transformers*), Tami Sagher (*Inside Amy Schumer*) and Harper Dill (*The Mindy Project*), based on a book by Bobby Crosby, the filmmakers have decided not to veer too far off her path. It's a

simple and safe decision. A feeble choice for audiences hooked on romance and looking for something fresh.

Superstar Latina singer Kat Valdez (Lopez) has arranged an unimaginable publicity stunt. She plans to wed her equally popular boyfriend, Colombian vocalist heartthrob Bastian (Maluma) onstage at a concert in front of her throngs of fans. Cameras will stream the event to millions. She's been primped with hair and

makeup. She's donning a white wedding dress that would shame Princess Di's. All is well until the internet blows up with these choice words: "Bastian caught cheating with [Kat's] assistant." Clips of her man planting a kiss on that underling's face are all over social media. It's out there.

In a fit of desperation and revenge, Kat spontaneously decides to put all those cameras to good use

See MARRY, Page 11



While not bad, Jennifer Lopez's latest romantic project could certainly have been better. (Photo via NNPA from Universal Press website)

## Great books for the kids to read during Black History Month

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The people you love are very special to you.

They keep you safe and warm, make sure you aren't hungry, they teach you fun things to know, and they share stories. So why not ask for these great stories from history....?

If you had a plate full of your favorite thing to eat, would you share it? In "Sweet Justice: Georgia Gilmore and the Montgom-



Terri Schlichenmeyer

ery Bus Boycott" by Mara Rockliff, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie (Random

House, \$18.99), you'll read about Gilmore, whose resourcefulness in the face

of racism helped finance a small part of the Civil Rights Movement.

When Rosa Parks was arrested for a quiet act that launched a movement, Gilmore was working as a cook at a restaurant. She participated in the bus boycott, but she also felt that she could do more – and so

she bravely began to collect money, quietly, right in front of the very people who could arrest her, too. For kids ages 5-7, this is a great introduction to this unsung heroine of the Civil Rights Movement.

For children who want to know more individual stories of slavery, "Seek-

ing Freedom: The Untold Story of Fortress Monroe and the Ending of Slavery in America" by Selene Catrovilla, illustrated by E.B. Lewis (Calkins Creek Books, \$18.99) is a book to find. It's the true story of a man, an escaped slave, who

See BOOKS, Page 11

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# Film Review: Moonfall might have been a bit too ambitious

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*) The title spills the beans. In this sci-fi yarn, the filmmakers weren't happy enough with a natural disaster: the moon hurtling towards earth. They had to add an outrageous AI storyline that makes what could have been a worthy, mildly plausible, catastrophic and action-filled movie a joke.

The idea for this lunar drama is the brainchild of director Roland Emmerich (Independence Day, The Day After Tomorrow), who can produce big-budget disaster films in his sleep. We take the moon/planets for granted and assume they'll stay put in our solar system forever. But what if that assumption goes askew? The moon on a collision course with earth has built-in apocalyptic implications—plot



Halle Berry and Patrick Wilson in Moonfall (Courtesy photo)

devices that are the foundations for countless act/adv films. And, in these days of COVID where nations mobilized in global ways, a universal call for action—or-else—could capture the imagination of genre-loving moviegoers.

NASA deputy director Jocinda 'Jo' Fowler (Halle Berry, Monster's Ball) and astronaut Brian Harper (Patrick Wilson, Aquaman, Midway) were once on an outer space mission in 2011. An inci-

dent, where some mysterious force enveloped them, caused a crew member to die. Harper was blamed for the death and booted from NASA. Fowler kept her job and was promoted.

Years later, in 2021, the moon seems to be off course and descending. The first to spot the danger is a pudgy, outcast space nerd, KC Houseman (John Bradley, Game of Thrones), who whines to his elderly mother: "No one will listen to me."

Mom: "Then make them!" An emergency, last-minute mission is slated to correct the lunar nightmare. Fowler, Harper and the unlikely KC go on a journey in a mothballed space shuttle to save humankind. Cue gravity waves, tsunamis and perilous escape attempts.

If the script, by Emmerich, Harald Kloser (The Day After Tomorrow) and Spenser Cohen, had left well enough alone it might not have drawn snickers and side-eyes from audiences. As is, the far-fetched storytelling becomes ridiculous and dumb. Adding a "mysterious intelligent enemy" to the equation, conspiracies about the 1969 Moon Landing and other junk doesn't elevate the scary premise—it devalues it.

Extensive special effects pour on sci-fi elements that help distract attention from

the tacky narrative and keep eyeballs glued to the screen. Some shots of outer space and inside the moon are stunning (cinematographers Robby Baumgartner, There Will Be Blood, The Hunger Games). The use of sounds (Phil Brewster, theatrical mix tec) and blaring music (Harald Kloser and Thomas Wanker) whips emotions into a frenzy.

Minus a few lapses in timing (editors Ryan Stevens Harris and Adam Wolfe), the 2h 20min run time doesn't feel long at all—even as the film rolls into ACT IV. Spaceship interiors and NASA observations rooms are dazzling (production design Kirk M. Petrucci, Blade, The Incredible Hulk). Tidal waves too. But too many of the earth scenes look incredibly fake (bogus snowy mountain locations).

Most gaps in the energy level can be blamed on an overabundance of secondary characters and a threadbare "broken families" gimmick that flounders: Brian's son (Charlie Plummer), ex-wife (Carolina Bartczak) and son's stepdad (Michael Peña). Jo's young son (Zayn Maloney), his nanny (Kelly Yu) and Jo's ex (Eme Ikwuakor). Despite clichéd dialogue, Berry is solid, Wilson is suitably rebellious and Bradley, as the "sky is falling" oddball, makes a surprising anti-hero that folks may like.

What could have been a respectable sci-fi/adv/fan/film may end up winning Razzie awards. It didn't have to be that way. Why reach for the stars when the moon is enough?

Visit NNPA News Wire Film Critic Dwight Brown at [DwightBrownInk.com](http://DwightBrownInk.com) and [BlackPressUSA.com](http://BlackPressUSA.com).

## ENERGY, from Page 8

gies such as renewable and clean energy, hydrogen and geothermal power, carbon capture and technologies that are still in the lab."

The Texas Voter Poll surveyed 1,001 registered voters between Jan. 19–26, 2022, about their attitudes

regarding the present and future of Texas and their concerns about issues facing the state. It has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ . The interviews were conducted via cell phones (44%), landline calls (21%), and online contacts (34%).

The survey covered a wide range of policy issues, including education and workforce, the state economy, crime, and health care. To learn more, see [texas2036.org/poll/](http://texas2036.org/poll/). For more on the extreme weather trends mentioned above, see [texas2036.org/weather/](http://texas2036.org/weather/).

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## Check us out on Youtube!

In case you've missed it, the *North Dallas Gazette* has begun producing videos. Our latest series, "Close Up" takes a deep dive into issues affecting the local DFW community. Episodes I and II are up now, with Jackie Hardy taking a look at criticisms surrounding the North Texas Tollway Authority's compliance with its stated goals of inclusion for Minority and Women in Business Enterprise firms. The first episode is a conversation with two accomplished professionals in the field, and the second features the NTTA's response to questions about its past performance. Check it out, subscribe to our Youtube channel and stay informed.



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# Portland Police Union, City settle on tentative contract

*Proponents of police reform see promise in agreement that includes police discipline guide*

By Sandra Sorenson  
The Scanner News

After a year of negotiation and eight months after deadline, the city of Portland and the union representing the city's police officers have tentatively agreed on a contract.

Amid ongoing community outcry for police transparency and accountability, the updated contract with the Portland Police Association (PPA) includes employee recruitment and retention bonuses, incentives for continued education, expansion of the Portland Street Response program, and the creation of a voter-approved independent oversight board—one that may have more clout due to the inclusion of the Portland Police Bureau's discipline guide within the contract itself.

"I made a promise to Portlanders we were going to do this contract different-

ly," Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty said in a statement. "Over the last three years, we took in significant community input, provided as much transparency as labor law allowed, hired outside legal counsel with expertise in police union contracts, and now we have real change. This includes the ability to continue our expansion of Portland Street Response citywide and creating a clear, fair discipline guide to provide accountability for police misconduct. While no single contract negotiation will bring about all the changes I personally would like to see, I'm proud that my office's deep engagement led to a better process and outcomes."

## Tense Negotiations

The contract must be renewed every four years. The previous contract term was a particularly eventful one that saw four police chiefs, more than 100

nights of historic protests against police brutality over the summer of 2020, the removal of school resource officers from Portland-area public campuses, a spate of police reform bills passed in the state legislature, and the surprise resignation of Portland Police Association president Brian Hunzeker after news of false accusations against City Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty were leaked to the press.

Amid calls from the community and Hardesty to defund the police by \$50 million, the city council cut \$15 million from the department's budget in 2020. Last November, the city experienced an unexpected budget surplus and voted to add \$5.2 million back to the department.

The most recent round of contract negotiations has been marked by concerns over falling recruitment numbers and the city's insistence on language inclu-

sive of Measure 26-217, which established a new, independent community oversight board empowered to discipline and potentially fire officers. The measure also stipulates that if PPB were to reject a policy suggested by the board, the board could then appeal to the city council to vote to implement the policy.

Although the council voted in favor of a program that would require police to wear body cameras on-duty, the city and PPA agreed it was too early to include the plan in a contract, opting to hammer out details at a later date.

In addition, the contract allows for an expansion of Portland Street Response, a program piloted last year that sends unarmed medical and mental health first responders on calls where mental health crises or substance abuse are involved. The program will go city-wide, and with an increased

budget, PSR is projected to divert about 5% of calls normally answered by PPB. Portland Street Response responders and police will also be able to work together on calls.

"This contract heralds a new era of partnership between the City and the Portland Police Association, one that is critical in addressing the public safety challenges before us today," Commissioner Mingus Mapps said in a statement. "The Letter of Agreement on Portland Street Response brings our operational experts to the table to determine how best to ensure that the city sends the correct emergency response to people in mental health crises. I'm pleased that the Bureau of Emergency Communications will continue to inform the city's strategy along with the police bureau and fire and rescue, and that we are reducing the role of politics in this process."

"Adopting a new discipline guide and defining and empowering Portland Street Response's role in our first responder system are tangible results that happened in bargaining," Commissioner Dan Ryan said. "This is an incredible milestone."

In the updated contract, new police recruits would be given a \$5,000 hiring bonus and current officers would receive the same amount during the first pay period after the contract takes effect, and an additional \$2,000 if they remain at the bureau through January 2024; other PPB employees would be eligible for a \$3,000 retention bonus.

"It is important to me that we are able to attract and keep quality police officers and that we have a discipline guide that ensures our officers are held accountable for their actions,"

**See CONTRACT, Page 12**

## MARRY, from Page 9

and show Bastian that she won't be humiliated on her wedding day. She asks a member of the audience to marry her. Who does she pick? Charlie (Owen Wilson, *The Royal Tenenbaums*), a nondescript math teacher. Everyone's shocked. It doesn't add up.

Lopez is in her comfort zone. She sings in English and Spanish, dances feverishly with a troop of hoofers, smiles for the lens and is about as deep emotionally as any megastar trying to hog the spotlight. Unfortunately, because she doesn't stretch as an artist,

that lack of innovation may make her fans yawn, while others who admired her *Hustlers*' work may now consider that just an anomaly. Lopez's talent as an entertainer is unquestionable. Her "Superbowl LIV Halftime Show" put her in a category all her own. But don't blame audiences if they want more than this.

The production crew's work isn't extraordinary. The cinematography (Florian Ballhaus, *The Devil Wears Prada*), production design (Jane Musky, *Hustlers*) and editing (Michael Berenbaum) are efficient,

the ornate costumes (Caroline Duncan) and dazzling choreography (Tabitha Dumo) a bit better. And the score's songs and performances are the film's most compelling attributes. The sweet pop song "Marry Me," written and sung by Maluma and Lopez, finds both singers in good voice and rare form. The very catchy and previously released reggaeton hit "Pa Ti," also written by the very sexy pair, was popular last year and sets down a nice Latinx vibe.

Speaking of sexy pairs. Why does the movie focus on Kat and Charlie and not on Kat and Bastian? The

latter coupling has real chemistry, an attraction that's lacking between Lopez and Wilson. Yes, that's the point of the story, two disparate souls coming together. But the singer and teacher are about as comfortable as distant cousins. What if the script had tipped the storyline in the opposite direction? What if Kat was getting ready to marry Charlie who was a wealthy record mogul (a la Mariah Carey and Tommy Mottola), when a young, poor up-an-coming singer named Bastian decided to pursue her? For Lopez and Maluma fans, that scenario would be far more ap-

pealing and romantic than what's on view.

Director Kat Coiro neither adds or subtracts from the tone, pacing or performances. Plot pieces fit together OK. The supporting cast does their jobs: John Bradley (*Moonfall*) as Kat's manager, Michelle Buteau as an assistant and Khalil Middleton as her photographer, Chloe Coleman (*My Spy*) as Charlie's daughter, and Sarah Silverman as Charlie's fellow teacher. And you can't deny Lopez and Maluma are fun to watch. That said, it still feels like something is lacking.

Hardcore rom/com fans who hold *Love Actually* or Julia Roberts' *My Best Friend's Wedding* in high esteem, may say to themselves: "They don't make romantic movies like the used to." Other lovers of love may ignore the film's paint-by-numbers formula and enjoy the Lopez/Maluma pairing for what it is: Two Latin music stars in their glory but not in a glorious film.

In theaters now and on Peacock. Visit NNPA News Wire Film Critic Dwight Brown at [DwightBrown-Ink.com](http://DwightBrown-Ink.com) and [BlackPressUSA.com](http://BlackPressUSA.com).

## BOOKS, from Page 9

played a silent but important part in the Civil War, the defeat of the Confederacy, and the end of slavery. Also for kids ages 5-7, this is an exciting tale and a great discussion-starter.

Slightly older children who have been following along with today's news

will enjoy "Evicted! The Struggle for the Right to Vote" by Alice Faye Duncan, art by Charly Palmer (Calkins Creek, \$18.99). It's a story of the early years of Jim Crow, when sharecroppers could kick a family off their farm merely because the adults wished

to register to vote. White shopkeepers wouldn't do business with them anymore, either, leaving them with few options. This book explains what those sharecroppers had to do to cast their ballots. Duncan tells individual tales, placing them inside a larger narrative so that kids ages 7-to-12 will understand

why voting is a precious right.

And finally, for the 3-to-5-year who loves a good fable, "Mermaid Kenzie, Protector of the Deep" by Charlotte Watson Sherman, illustrated by Geneva Bowlers (Boyd's Mills Press, \$17.99) is a book they'll love. Mermaids are a big

part of African folklore, and this cute book tells the story of a young girl who loves to swim and to pretend that she protects everything in the sea. Imagine what happens when she learns that she really can help her underwater friends and the home in which they live...

If your child craves more or different Black history books, or if you've got an older child who needs a good book, be sure to ask your favorite librarian or bookseller for help. They've got millions of ideas at their fingertips, including these special books.



# Workers speak out about labor violations at NYC schools contractor

NEW YORK (PRNews-wire) -- Workers from a heating oil supplier for New York City schools testified at a City Council hearing today about retaliation and mistreatment amidst a ten-month union strike. Teamsters Local 553 members from United Metro Energy (UMEC) called on New York City to end fuel purchases from the company

and hold it accountable.

The hearing before the City Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor, chaired by Council Member Carmen de la Rosa, focused on how New York City can strengthen worker rights. The ongoing essential workers strike became a focus for the hearing, as UMEC and its billionaire owner, John Catsimatidis,

face twin investigations by the National Labor Relations Board for retaliating against union activists and the New York City Comptroller's Office for illegally low wages on city jobs.

Andre Soleyn and Ivan Areizaga are oil terminal operators and leaders in the union drive who testified to the committee.

"Over the past ten months,

eight of us have been fired in retaliation for our strike," said Soleyn. "New York City bears responsibility. Despite what John Catsimatidis is doing to us, New York City continues to buy millions of dollars of fuel from the company."

"After just one week on strike, the company stopped our medical benefits," said Areizaga. "My son has Type

1 diabetes. He couldn't get his medication anymore. It's one thing to come after us. It's another thing to punish our families."

Workers at the UMEC oil terminal in Brooklyn have been on strike since April 19, 2021. The workers provided gasoline, diesel, and heating oil to New York throughout the pandemic, while Catsimatidis paid

them wages as much as 50 percent lower than at other city oil companies.

UMEC has received an average of \$21 million each year from New York City agencies since 2015 as a prime contractor, mostly from the Department of Education for heating oil. In total, New York City

See LABOR, Page 14

## CONTRACT, from Page 11

Mayor Ted Wheeler said in a statement announcing the tentative contract agreement.

There are police staffing shortages nationwide. Studies of the drop in recruitment numbers point out that public perception of law enforcement has diminished sharply in recent years with high-profile police killings and strong Black Lives Matter protests in response. Many experts point to the police shooting of unarmed Black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014 as a catalyzing moment that led to more widespread criticism of the culture around law enforcement.

Not everyone agreed that recruitment incentives should take priority.

"I think that recruiting into the PPB without addressing the heart of the cultural problems that PPB

has, and therefore has led to the lack of trust the community has in them, that's not going to solve the problem the community is asking them to," Portland Citizen Review Committee Chair Candace Avalos told The Skanner.

"What I really want to see is more money in Portland Street Response, violence prevention, in helping the economic prosperity of especially young Portlanders," she said. "Those are the things I think are going to solve the larger systemic problems that have resulted in the prison pipeline that have (derailed) people's futures. Putting more funds into archaic and draconian systems does not feel like the right answer."

### Defining Discipline

Avalos was in agreement with the city that including the PPB discipline guide in the contract was a signifi-

cant step forward.

"In the contract it's not just an arbitrary document that can or cannot be used," Avalos said. "I think it's giving more oversight power. I think that it's a strong sign that we got some wins in the contract."

The discipline guide outlines tiers of the bureau's response to officer infractions, from non-disciplinary command counseling to a letter of reprimand, then suspension, demotion or termination. The most serious category, termination without mitigation, would apply to felony crime convictions or "felonious conduct," domestic violence, "untruthfulness," public corruption for monetary gain, use of deadly force that is outside of police policy, and "intentional misuse of police authority based on protected class status."

"The new contract makes great strides in transparency and accountability by pro-

viding a discipline guide that reflects community concerns," commissioner Carmen Rubio said in a statement.

Included in the contract is a rubric-style points system for aggravating factors around an officer's offense, as well as mitigating factors – steps the officer may have taken to course-correct – that are tallied to determine disciplinary action.

"The new discipline guide established by this contract sets the standard for officer accountability by creating clarity and consistency around the assignment of discipline, and includes education-based alternatives so officers are not just penalized but can learn from their mistakes," Mapps said. "This guide is an essential tool for the effectiveness of the future community oversight board."

'Consequences With

Teeth'

Despite the push for accountability, some prominent voices felt excluded from the collective bargaining table.

In June, PPA moved negotiations into mediation, a more hard-ball approach that took the proceedings completely out of the public eye. Although the PPA said in a recent statement all stakeholders had collaborated on the contract, Avalos told The Skanner her group, whose volunteer members are appointed by city council, was never consulted.

"As far as the contract goes, it's been a mystery for many of us," Avalos said. "We don't really know what's going on. I feel like I've been in the dark, and everyone's been really tight-lipped about it...PCRC (members) did not feel they were consulted or involved in the larger vision of what the contract entails."

Still, Avalos saw promise for additional police reform.

"I'm definitely optimistic about the new oversight board," she said. "Honestly, we have to be, because that's a really important step as we continue to reshape what community safety means for us. This aspect of police accountability has to exist. I know there are people that want to move away from the police as an institution, but until then, we need to make sure that when harm is caused, there are consequences and those consequences have teeth."

The city council will hear public testimony on the contract Feb. 16 at 4 p.m., with a final vote planned during the Feb. 24 council session.

For more information on the collective bargaining agreement, visit [www.rethinkportland.com/ppa-contract](http://www.rethinkportland.com/ppa-contract).

## GREEN-FORD, from Page 2

in the capacity of assisting business owners to achieve their goals," Green-Ford said. "My overall focus is to partner with others to create a community where everyone can thrive."

Green-Ford, who owned a training and consult-

ing company for 18 years, has served on the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and the US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce Southwest Corporate Advisory Board. Her business experience

includes working with clients such as DFW Airport, American Airlines, City of Fort Worth and Shepherd Airforce Base.

She is an experienced professional speaker who has addressed audiences in Puerto Rico, England, Canada and the Dominican Republic.

## DC, from Page 5

officials. It also broadens and strengthens the structure of the city government to enable it to deal more effectively with its responsibilities."

D.C. remains deprived of voting representation in Congress and full self-gov-

ernment, which Rep. Norton called undemocratic.

"Statehood is the remedy," she declared.

"Congress has the constitutional authority to grant D.C. statehood. D.C. has a larger population than two states, pays more fed-

eral taxes than 21 states, pays more federal taxes per capita than any state, has a larger budget than 12 states, has a larger gross domestic product than 17 states, has a triple-A bond rating, and federal funds constitute a smaller percentage of its budget than the percentage of total state revenue."

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### Ongoing City of Dallas

The City of Dallas' HR Dept is currently accepting apps for the Budget and Contract Administrator position.

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### 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](https://tao.ai/p/fff/_/dfw)

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### 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.

## City of Dallas website making transition from '.com' to '.gov' designation

Those who access the services of the City of Dallas online will need to know about a significant name change happening.

The City of Dallas is changing its domain in 2022 from DallasCityHall.com to Dallas.gov.

The .gov designation has become the standard for governmental organizations, though there are numerous entities, like the

City of Dallas, which have continued to use the old standard commercial designation.

Here are a few fundamental reasons to change.

- This change will increase the security and searchability of our online presence.

- The first set of standards for domains, developed in the 1980s, originally designated .com for commercial

purposes and .gov for government.

- To maintain domain integrity, eligibility is limited to qualified government organization and programs.

- Having a managed domain name such as .gov assures users that they are accessing an official U.S. government site.

"There are several reasons why the switch from .com to .gov is necessary.

The biggest reason is that .gov is controlled by federal government domains that are more secure and harder to spoof," says Chief Information Security Officer, Brian Gardner Ph.D.

DallasCityHall.com emails will forward to Dallas.gov addresses until the migration is complete. DallasCityNews.net will eventually forward to Dallas.gov.



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### NAN Chapter President

The National Action Network is looking for a President for its upcoming Dallas chapter. This is a volunteer position that requires an activist heart and an interest in civil rights.

The President:

- Presides at meetings and acts as Chairman/Chairwoman of the Executive Committee.
- Appoints all committees not directly elected by the Chapter.
- Between meetings of the Executive Committee and subject to the approval thereof, exercises executive authority on behalf of the Chapter.
- The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- Shall work with other members of the Executive Committee to develop a program agenda for a defined fiscal year.
- Acknowledges he/she is the primary force within the Chapter in establishing a working relationship and communication with the National and Regional Office(s); ensures that these offices receive all reports, including quarterly reports, and reports of elections.
- Is familiar with pertinent governing documents including: The NAN by-laws and Chapter rules.

Interested parties should contact Robert D. Bush, president of the Las Vegas Chapter, at (702) 626-0158.



# It Was a Shoofly Pie Moment

By Dr. James L. Snyder

During holiday seasons, I enjoy indulging in special food. My favorite during this time of year is the Shoofly Pie. Nothing hits the spot quite like this.

Although the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage restricts this kind of culinary activity during the rest of the year, I tried to get a pass for it during the holidays. I don't care what holiday it is, a holiday is a holiday and deserves special food.

I don't remember when I had my first shoofly pie, I only focus on my next pie.

When I first brought it into the home, my wife

asked me what in the world it was. I told her it was a Shoofly Pie..

Looking at me rather quizzically, she said, "What is a Shoofly Pie?"

Not even thinking about it, I smiled and replied, "It is a piece of heaven this side of heaven."

Then she wanted to know where in the world that name "Shoofly Pie" came from.

Not really knowing, I "baked up" a story I thought would please her.

The story went something like this. A lady in Pennsylvania was trying to make a special pie for her husband. It took her several days to figure out how she would make this special pie.

Finally, she came up with something she had never seen before.

When presented to her husband, he was dumbfounded and said, "What is that pie?"

Before she could answer, a fly seemed to hover over the pie, and she swatted it and said, "shoofly." The husband looked at her and said, "That is marvelous. Whoever heard of a shoofly pie? You're a genius."

And thus, the Shoofly Pie adventure began. Whether that comes near the story or not, it sounded good to me at the time, and I presented it to my wife.

Where we live, it's tough to find any Shoofly Pie. Typically, I have to order it

from someplace up north.

Once we were at a nearby restaurant, I talked to the waitress about the Shoofly Pie of which she had never heard. My wife had the recipe, so we shared it with her. She wanted to surprise us with a homemade Shoofly Pie.

When she gave it to us, it was nothing like a real Shoofly Pie. We joyfully took it, but it really wasn't the real thing.

As I was thinking about this shoofly pie mystery, I thought of how this concept would work in other aspects of life.

For example. I would like to develop a Shoo-Politician Pie. Perhaps this would be a great experience for us.

Every time we see a politician, we present him with a Shoo-Politician Pie. How much greater our life would be if politicians would not be the center focus of our life.

When a politician gives a speech, he or she will be charged one dollar per word. After all, one dollar isn't much and neither is there speech. Of course, this would need to be paid upfront. As soon as the politician reaches the end of his word count, everybody would say, "Shoo-Politician."

I think this would bring a lot of sanity back to our country today.

Then I thought of another pie to develop. I'll call this

the Shoo-Telemarketer Pie. This is second only to politicians.

To date, I have received over 1 million calls that said, "This is the last call you'll get to renew your car warranty."

I have searched my dictionary to discover what the definition of "last call" is. I guess it has a different meaning to different people. Even my wife agrees with me on this. And you know, that's a monumental achievement.

I don't know why they call them telemarketers, but I sure would like to tell them a thing or two.

Another pie I would like

**See PIE, Page 15**

## LABOR from Page 12

agencies have spent a total of \$153 million on UMEC contracts since 2013. In addition to the Department of Education, other city agencies that also purchase fuel from UMEC include The City University of New York, the Department of Education, the Department of Environmental Protec-

tion, and the Department of Social Services.

"United Metro Energy has committed numerous violations of federal labor law, but New York City checks keep flowing to the company," said Demos Demopoulos, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 553. "Worker abuse should not be treated

as business as usual by New York City government. When immigrants and workers of color are exploited, New York City public dollars should not be paying for it."

UMEC terminal workers, fleet mechanics, and service technicians voted to join Local 553 in February 2019, but Catsimatidis dragged out negotiations for a first

contract for two years, precipitating the strike. While other unionized fuel terminals in New York City pay good wages and provide quality benefits, UMEC has for years undercut those wages and only offered an expensive health plan that is not accepted by many doctors.

The company has sent letters to a majority of the

workers over the course of the strike telling them that they have been "permanently replaced." The firings have illegally targeted union activists. The National Labor Relations Board is currently investigating the firings, among other charges.

In November, the New York City Comptroller opened an investigation into

complaints that UMEC has not paid workers the prevailing wage when delivering heating oil to City buildings.

Teamsters Local 553 is affiliated with Teamsters Joint Council 16, which represents over 120,000 workers in the tri-state area and Puerto Rico. For more information, go to <http://teamsters.nyc/>.

## BARRIERS, from Page 6

and inequities in income, wealth, health and education restrict the pathways to stronger and broad-based economic growth. We have before us a blueprint of the work we must do to build a more inclusive economy that values and honors the work of Black Americans."

Added Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Joyce Beatty, "As Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, a member of the Joint Economic Committee, and the first Chair of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion, I applaud the efforts made to compile this critical report.

"The gaps identified throughout this report do not lend themselves to quick fixes. Hundreds of years of

structural exclusion and systemic oppression cannot be simply erased. However, the status quo is not tenable for Black Americans or for the US economy as a whole."

Chair Beatty continued: "This report aims to identify multiple entry points for action—and underscore the urgency of getting started. As a nation we must embrace the transformational powers of diversity and inclusion, and by harnessing the unique skills, tools, and talents of all people, at all levels in the private and public sectors, we can create a stronger economy and brighter futures for everyone."

The JEC recently held hearings examining the racial wealth gap and the gender pay gap, with a par-

ticular focus on the "double gap" faced by Black women, who experience the effects of both the gender and racial wage gap.

The Congressional Black Caucus is committed to advancing Black families in the 21st Century through addressing the economic disparities that have plagued our communities for generations, creating opportunities that combat poverty, and closing the worsening racial wage and wealth gaps in America.

The CBC supports policies that strengthen protections for workers and expand Black entrepreneurship, business development, partnerships and reports such as this one. The CBC will continue to champion economic justice for Black families throughout the nation, until true equity is achieved.

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## A little bit of online Black History



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG  
Religion  
Editor

Dr. Philip Emeagwali, is considered “a Father of the Internet; he helped give birth to the supercomputer, the technology that spawned the Internet; and thanks to Mr. John Ross, my friend, and my Black History mentor, when I called inquiring about, “a Black man considered to be, “a father of the internet,” to get the story for my column, he told me about Dr. Emeagwali’s and how



**Dr. Philip Emeagwali - Computer, supercomputer and internet.**  
*A father of the Internet and a Nigeria Africa Black inventor.*

to pronounce his name. Dr. Emeagwali was voted History’s 35th greatest Af-

rican. However, not being too computer savvy, I didn’t know about Dr. Emeagwali

until just recently. When I need to verify Black History Facts, I call on John.

President Bill Clinton extols Dr. Emeagwali as a “great mind.” A poll of 300 million search entries proves it (he is ranked “the most searched” for scientist.)

For additional information on Dr. Emeagwali, visit his website, [www.emeagwali.com](http://www.emeagwali.com) it will be worth your time and I believe that you will enjoy reading his information.

**A little bit of Black History in American Politics**  
Reconstruction was the

period immediately after the Civil War, during which the freed slaves and their northern supporters tried to make America more racially inclusive.

From 1869 to 1901, there were 22 African Americans in the House of Representatives, but the defeated South remained determined that white supremacy should be maintained by any means.

George H. White, born in Rosindale, NC was the last black Reconstruction Congress person, and the last former slave to sit in the

House. White, not surprisingly, found it difficult to make his mark in Congress.

However, he was able to obtain back pay for Black Civil War veterans, but his colleagues refused to hear his federal anti-lynching bill. However, twenty-five years later, Oscar De Priest of Chicago, was the next African American that was elected to Congress.

*(Editor’s note: This column was originally published in the North Dallas Gazette in February 2014)*

### PIE, from Page 14

to develop would be the Shoo-Grumpy Pie. I have found so many grumpy people lately. I’m not sure where they come from and I’m not quite sure where they’re going, but I do have my guesses.

I cannot identify with grumpy people because I’m not quite sure why they’re grumpy. The thing I have noticed lately is, grumpy is not a matter of age. There are grumpy people of all ages. I’m not quite sure how this began.

If anybody has the right to be grumpy, it’s someone

like me who has to listen to those people who are grumpy.

How much happier this world would be if there were no grumpy people in it? I know there are grumpy moments, but that shouldn’t be forever. Nothing is more frustrating than standing in line at the cash register behind some old grumpy customer exhibiting grumpy-itis. I wonder if it’s contagious?

Thinking about this, my list is getting longer and longer. There are so many things that I would like to

Shoo from my life that I probably need to go into the “Shoo Pie Baking Business.”

Thinking along this line I remembered a verse in the Bible. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

The older I get the more things I see that I need to “shoo” from my life. At times, it’s difficult, but the end result is what really matters. One last pie would be the “Shoo-Sin Pie.”

*Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of*

*God Fellowship, Ocala, FL 34472, where he lives with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Call him at 352-216-3025 or e-mail [jamesnyder2@att.net](mailto:jamesnyder2@att.net). The church web site is [www.whatafellowship.com](http://www.whatafellowship.com).*

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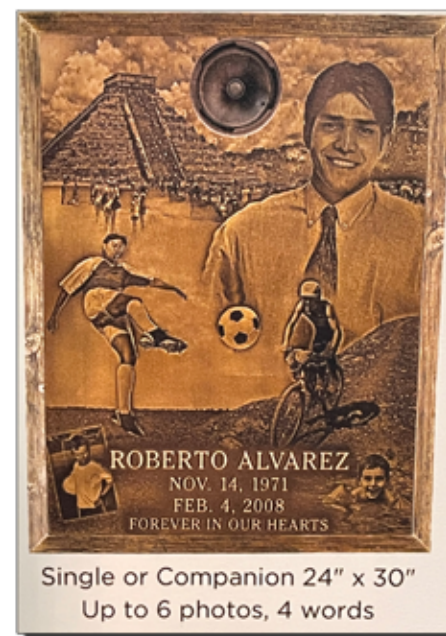
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