



North Dallas Gazette

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The drama, tragedy and neglect of a Godforsaken Sandbranch

By Allen R. Gray

Mt. Zion during the time of the Biblical King David was a fortress on a hill—a citadel of protection. Mt. Zion signified the calling of God for His people.

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, located in the unincorporated mostly African American community of Sandbranch, has become a literal fortress of hope for the residents of this godforsaken hamlet.

It's the Saturday before Memorial Day 2022, and the westward drive to Sandbranch from US 175 and Beltline is pleasant and serene. The journey takes one past every type of abode imaginable—from sprawling ranches to trailer parks, from historic dwellings to newly constructed brick homes. Then the right turn onto Burns Drive, reveals dwellings that are, in a way, quite unimaginable.

The parking lot of Mt. Zion Church is desolate and abandoned, save an old pickup truck and a late model grey sedan. Today, there will be no free bottles of fresh drinking water or produce handed out to Sandbranch's needy residents. The North Texas Food Bank delivery truck that usually arrives around 7:30 each Saturday morning did not come. Still, a consistent parade of late model cars drives up hopeful and wanting, but they quickly turn away full of disappointment.



The Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church has been a center of hope for a long overlooked community within one of the most prosperous metropolitan areas in the nation. (Courtesy photo)

The commodity most needed is fresh, unpolluted water, the one thing Sandbranch hasn't had for more than 30 years.

WORLD HEALTH CRISIS

Fresh drinking water is man's most critical element. Studies show that humans can live 8 to 21 days without food—but without water, one's life expectancy decreases to approximately 3 days. An estimated 771 million people do not have access to safe drinking—and 1.7 billion don't have access to a toilet. A water crisis is a major health crisis with nearly 1 million people dying each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases. A child dies every two minutes from exposure to water-related diseases.

But those are all impoverished nations that are without a sustain-

able infrastructure...Right?

Sandbranch residents find themselves among the unfortunate few. It is one of the few places in America that finds itself without clean drinking water, sanitation or trash collection. A 21st Century community living in Third World conditions, located in the heart of the 10th most high-net-worth areas in the world, according to the global analysis firm Weath-X.

HISTORY OF SANDBRANCH

Older residents recall happier, gentler days in Sandbranch. The community was established over 140 years ago as a Freedman's enclave that provided a relatively comfortable way of life. Accessing life's essentials was as simple

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Time to set sights on the Supreme Court

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People In The News ...



Michael Lynch



Cherelle Griner

NDG Quote of the Week: "Every time you state what you want or believe, you're the first to hear it. It's a message to both you and others about what you think is possible. Don't put a ceiling on yourself."
— Oprah Winfrey

Michael Lynch

By Yumiko Whitaker,
Contributing Writer
Los Angeles Sentinel

On June 26, humble community servant Michael Lynch and his family were honored in a surprise ceremony during Crenshaw Christian Center's Sunday service — marking the winning coach's 26-year career, retirement, and upcoming induction into the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Hall of Fame. Lynch was under the impression that he and his family were attending a



final service before relocating to the Atlanta area.

This original Compton son, 27-year Inglewood resident, and 33-year member of Crenshaw Christian Center led Price High and LaSalle High teams, 19

and seven years, respectively, to 626 wins. Lynch also led young players to eight consecutive (CIF) titles, 10 Southern Section championships and eight state championships. He is a five-time CIF Coach of the Year and State Coach of the Year, who has sent multiple players to Division 1 schools, including 36 who went on to play in college and the pros.

Lynch credits this track record of success to his lifelong love for the game of basketball, the faith-focused teachings of Apostle Frederick K.C. Price and Frederick K. Price Jr., its application, and a sincere

desire to help young men and women navigate life and reach their dreams on and off the court.

With solid support from his wife, Becky, and their children, Lynch has fueled the careers of scores of native sons and daughters who have gone on to become doctors, entrepreneurs, business owners, educators, athletic directors, husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers — all shaped by the strong example set by the Lynch family. They have each served as mentors, father and mother figures, loving brother and sisters, counselors, and caring disciplinarians to

many, and have sacrificed to bridge need gaps to propel others forward.

At Sunday's ceremony, CIF Southern Section Commissioner of Athletics, Rob Wigod, announced news of the board's unanimous decision to grant Coach Michael Lynch Hall of Fame status. He congratulated Lynch and recognized his outstanding contributions to CIF Southern Section athletics, which is to be celebrated at an October 12, 2022, awards luncheon. This designation also comes with an esteemed Gold Life Pass.

Also, on hand as a spe-

cial guest was Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Deputy Chief for the South Bureau, Gerald Woodyard, who presented a commendation on behalf of Chief Michel Moore, who entered the academy with Lynch in 1985. Lynch was recognized for his 15 years of service to residents as an officer and detective before he departed to become coach and athletic director of Price High, and head of security for Crenshaw Christian Center. While with LAPD, he loved diverting individuals to alternate life pathways

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Cherelle Griner

One day after the wife of WNBA star Brittney Griner expressed frustration that the family hadn't heard from the White House, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris spoke with Cherelle Griner.

The White House said Biden called Cherelle to "reassure her that he is working to secure Brittney's release as soon as possible, as well as the release of Paul Whelan and other U.S. nationals who are wrongfully detained or held hostage in Russia and around the world."



In a July 4 letter, Brittney Griner pleaded with Biden to help free her and others held in Russia.

"As I sit here in a Russian prison, alone with my thoughts and without the protection of my wife,

family, friends, Olympic jersey, or any accomplishments, I'm terrified I might be here forever," Griner wrote.

"I miss my wife! I miss my family! I miss my teammates! It kills me to know they are suffering so much right now. So I am grateful for whatever you can do at this moment to get me home." Griner has been held in Russia since her February arrest at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport after authorities allegedly found cannabis oil in her luggage.

If convicted, Griner faces up to ten years in prison. Reportedly, fewer than 1%

of defendants in criminal cases win acquittal in Russia.

Moreover, even if Griner wins acquittal, the Russian government has the right to overturn any decision and remand her to prison.

She pleaded with Biden, "Please do all you can to bring us home. 'I voted for the first time in 2020, and I voted for you. I believe in you.'"

Afterward, Cherelle expressed frustration in a nationally televised interview with the Biden administration, saying she hadn't heard from the President.

"It kills me every time that you know when I have

to write her, and she's asking, 'Have you met with them yet?' And I have to say no... I'm sure she is like, 'I'm going to write him and ask now because my family has tried to no avail, so I'm going to do it myself,'" Cherelle told CBS Mornings earlier in the week.

The White House said Biden shared a draft of a letter he planned to send to Brittney.

"The President offered his support to Cherelle and Brittney's family, and he committed to ensuring they are provided with all possible assistance while his administration pursues every

avenue to bring Brittney home," The White House stated.

"[The] call follows calls that National Security Advisor Sullivan and Secretary of State Blinken have had with Cherelle in recent weeks and this past weekend.

"The President directed his national security team to remain in regular contact with Cherelle and Brittney's family, and with other families of Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad, to keep them updated on efforts to secure the release of their loved ones as quickly as possible."

Patrice Withers

Patrice Withers of First United Bank has been named one of Dallas Business Journal's 2022 class of 40 Under 40 award winners.

"Patrice is a stand-out in our organization. She is passionate about our community and is dedicated to making huge impacts in the lives of her coworkers and those First United serves," said Ryan Suchala, First United Regional President.

The 16th annual event honors individuals who are making a significant difference in the North Texas business community. These 20 men and 20 women are



leaders in various companies spanning from some of the largest and most notable companies in DFW to smaller nonprofits or firms. They represent companies from a variety of sizes and stages, a reflection of the diversity of industry and entrepreneurship that com-

prises North Texas' business ecosystem.

After vetting over 300 nominations, judges selected leaders who are making an impression in North Texas. The judging panel, comprised of 40 Under 40 alumni, span a variety of industries and roles at private, public, and nonprofit organizations and evaluated nominations over several weeks.

This year's 40 Under 40 Awards winners will be honored at an event from 4 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 21, at the Marriott Dallas Uptown.

First United's purpose is to inspire and empower others to Spend Life Wise-

ly, which includes a holistic approach to life that encompasses financial well-being, faith, health and wellness, and personal growth.:

Established in 1900, First United has more than 85 bank, mortgage, and insurance locations throughout Oklahoma and Texas. It is one of the largest, well-capitalized banking organizations in the Southwest with assets of more than \$13.5 billion, and it is among the largest privately held community banking organizations in the United States. First United provides a full range of financial services including banking, mortgage, insurance, and investment products and services.

Let us hear from you!

If there is any news, events or anything else we need to know

about, give us an e-mail at:

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Start now to take back the Supreme Court

By Ben Jealous

Did you ever wonder whether elections really matter? Well, the Trump Supreme Court majority has answered that question for good.

Or, more accurately, they have answered it for bad.

In the term that has just ended, the new far right-wing majority on the Supreme Court went on a rampage. They have torn up decades of legal precedent to diminish Americans' rights and legal protections. To justify the results they wanted, they lied in their rulings the way some of them lied to get on the court. It has been a shameful display of power politics disguised as judging.

Not surprisingly, the most attention has been paid to the Court majority overturning the 50-year-old Roe v. Wade decision. A constitutional right that has made a huge difference in the lives of generations of women was wiped away. The impact will be devastating and deadly.

Millions of individuals and couples dealing with unwanted pregnancies, the trauma of rape or incest, life-threatening pregnancy complications, or even a miscarriage that some intrusive government official decides is suspicious, will have their options severely limited or eliminated entirely.

We know that those restrictions and their consequences will fall most harshly on already vulnerable people, including Black people, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and low-income people. Already in Missouri, a major health care system will no longer treat rape victims with emergency contraception because the state abortion ban puts medical care providers at legal risk.

Anti-abortion state legislators seem to be in competition to see who can pass the most extreme, intrusive, and controlling laws. Some are even trying to limit people's right to travel from one state to another, targeting anyone who helps a person from a state that bans abortion get care in a state that permits it. It reminds me of the old fugitive slave laws that forced free states to help slave states deny people their freedom.

Unfortunately, overturning Roe is just one of the harmful decisions handed down by the Trump Court.

The Court intervened in voting rights cases to protect gerrymandering designed to limit Black voters' access to political power. This comes on top of other rulings gutting the Voting Rights Act.

The Trump Court went after sensible regulation of guns. The far-right justices overturned a New York law more than 100 years old that required people to show a

good cause to get a permit to carry concealed firearms. Communities that are already suffering from the effects of gun crime are likely to experience even greater violence now that the court has robbed public officials of options and given the extremist pro-gun political agenda the power of law.

The court also further dismantled the separation of church and state, which protects religious freedom and preserves equality under law for people regardless of their religious beliefs. The Trump court took a wrecking ball to this pillar of American society. It is forcing states to divert tax dollars to religious schools, like some southern states did when they funded white evangelical segregationist academies that emerged in resistance to the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision outlawing racially segregated public schools. This court has made it easier for public officials, like teachers, to coerce students into prayer or other religious practices. This is a very clear threat to anyone whose faith is different from the one dominant in their community or state.

In other words, the U.S. Supreme Court, which we counted on for generations to uphold civil rights and tear down obstacles to equality, is now acting as an arm of the increasingly aggressive far-right political

movement.

How did we get here? Simple. Thanks to the anti-democratic Electoral College, Donald Trump was elected in 2016 even though almost three million more Americans voted for Hillary Clinton. Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell prevented the Senate from even considering President Barack Obama's Supreme Court nomination so that Trump could fill it instead—and then rushed Trump's third justice onto the court even as voters were casting ballots to remove Trump from office. Behind Trump and McConnell was a massively funded, decades-long campaign to build the political power to take control of the judiciary.

In other words, winning the presidency and controlling the Senate gave the far right the power to force its harmful agenda on the American public long after voters rejected Trump. Taking the Court back from the extremists who now control it will be a long-term project. It starts with this year's elections.

Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way and Professor of the Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. A New York Times best-selling author, his next book "Never Forget Our People Were Always Free" will be published by Harper Collins in December 2022.

Hinojosa: Local officials must protect women

Texas Democratic Party Chairman Gilberto Hinojosa released the following statement calling on Texas mayors and city council members to protect women:

"Since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last month, Texas women have – rightfully so – felt anxiety and fear over the new, draconian, and dehumanizing laws they now must live under: a brutal abortion ban stripping Texans of their bodily autonomy; forcing Texans to carry unwanted pregnancies and give birth against their will – taking

away their most fundamental rights.

"Last month, we strongly encouraged Texas District Attorneys and law enforcement officials to keep their oaths to uphold the Constitution and ensure their communities' safety by refusing to prosecute those seeking healthcare, specifically abortion care.

"Today, we also thank the Denton City Council for, similarly, having approved a resolution de-prioritizing this brand of dangerous persecution – and we are heartbroken and outraged at the

decision by El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser and other members of the El Paso City Council to vote against protecting women in El Paso last night. We expect local elected officials to fight to protect women in this state, not cower to immoral laws designed to hurt them.

"We urge all City Councils, City Managers, and Mayors across the state to follow Denton's courageous lead and protect Texas women seeking to exercise their free bodily autonomy.

"In this dangerous moment, we owe it to our con-

stituents who elected us to do what we were elected to do: be their voice and fight for their human rights.

"We are all working as diligently as we can to elect Democrats up and down the ballot this November so we can right the grave injustice foisted upon us by the extremist Texas Republicans – but in the meantime, we do still have power in local communities across the state to blunt the impact of this blow to our freedom.

"We can and must use that power."

Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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Benefits of participating in clinical trials for diverse patients

The Jacksonville
Free Press

A clinical trial is a type of clinical research. Clinical research is a process to find new and better ways to understand, detect, control, and treat health conditions. Through clinical studies, which involve people who volunteer to participate in them, researchers can better understand how to diagnose, treat and prevent diseases or conditions. Mayo Clinic conducts medical research with the goal of helping patients live longer, healthier lives.

When you visit your doctor, they diagnose and treat your current illness or condition. During clinical studies, researchers are trying to gather new knowledge that will help them improve medical care for people in the future.

Volunteers are an inte-



Mayo Clinic supports community-engaged research projects, education and training, and the reduction of disease burden in minority or underrepresented communities. Staff also provides consultative support and guidance for researchers conducting research with multicultural communities. (iStock photo / NNPA)

gral part of the research process. Researchers need volunteers for a broad range of clinical studies as it supports meaningful research to identify and address health disparities and to help ensure Mayo Clinic patients reflect the diversity of our communities.

People with a particular disease as well as healthy people both can play a role

in contributing to medical advances. Without volunteers, clinical studies simply would not be possible. People volunteer for clinical studies for many reasons. They may have a desire to improve medical care for future generations, connection to a certain disease or illness, whether through personal experience or through friends or

family, or have a personal interest in science. There are research studies that match every interests.

Volunteering for a clinical study is a personal choice. You have no obligation to do so, and participation is not right for everyone. After enrolling in a study, you may leave at any time and for any reason.

Researchers conduct clinical trials to determine the safety and effectiveness of new therapies. Mayo Clinic is committed to encouraging and promoting research to develop new treatments and some of those clinical trials have led to new or improved treatments for many conditions.

Mayo Clinic also recognizes the importance of not only sharing information about new advances in medicine and research with all members of the

community, but also including communities in the research process as partners and advisers.

Mayo Clinic supports community-engaged research projects, education and training, and the reduction of disease burden in minority or underrepresented communities. Staff also provides consultative support and guidance for researchers conducting research with multicultural communities.

Mayo Clinic staff in the Office of Health Disparities Research located in Arizona, Florida and Minnesota support meaningful research to identify and address health disparities and to help ensure Mayo Clinic patients reflect the diversity of our communities.

There are many ways to participate in clinical research at Mayo Clinic.

Three common ways are by volunteering to be in a study as mentioned above, by giving permission to have your medical record reviewed for research purposes, and by allowing your blood or tissue samples to be studied. For more information on clinical trials please visit <https://www.mayo.edu/research/clinical-trials>.

Envision yourself working for a global leader in an industry fueled by innovation and growth. Mayo Clinic has opportunities for you. Join us at Florida's No. 1 hospital by visiting <https://jobs.mayoclinic.org/>. For more information on health care topics please visit Mayo Clinic Jacksonville at mayoclinic.org.

This article first appeared in The Jacksonville Free Press.

Sen. Graham, Giuliani among key Trump players subpoenaed in Georgia

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The damning testimony and potentially criminal findings by the House Congressional Committee looking into the January 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol isn't the only matter that could lead former President Donald Trump to prison.

But Trump, the promulgator of the Big Lie, could begin feeling the heat for trying to overturn the 2020 election in Georgia.

Officials in the Peach State have issued subpoenas to former Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani, South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, and several others whom they believe assisted the desperate attempts to change President Biden's 2020 victory.

Citing court records, The Atlanta Journal Constitution noted that the subpoenas also cover a handful of Trump's other former legal advisers, including John Eastman, Jenna Ellis, Cleta Mitchell and Kenneth Che-

sebro.

Trump has been the subject of investigations in Georgia and in New York, where several former prosecutors said they quit because the District Attorney there refused to bring charges against the one-time reality television show host despite a mountain of evidence showing wrongdoing.

Testimony and evidence revealed during the January 6 Commission hearings have also led many to believe that the arms of

justice is tightening around Trump, whom associates said plan to announce a 2024 presidential campaign bid this month.

The Journal Constitution noted that Fulton County

District Attorney Fani Willis has been leading the investigation digging into Trump's actions in Georgia. Several state officials have already been subpoenaed and have appeared be-

fore the special grand jury. "But the latest raft of subpoenas marks a new phase of grand jury activity that reaches into Trump's inner circle," the newspaper reported.



Photo via NNPA

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The Dallas County District Attorney and District Clerk announce the 6th annual Expunction Expo

The Dallas County Criminal District Attorney's Office and the Dallas County District Clerk's Office, in partnership with the Dallas County Public Defender's Office, among other community partners, are hosting the 6th Annual Dallas County Expunction Expo.

As the nation grapples with a high cost of living and continues to recover from challenges brought on by the Covid-19 Pandemic, leaders of Dallas County's criminal justice community realize how important hosting such a life-changing event is.

"The Expo has continued to grow each year and that means we have been able to help more people get a fresh start and become contributing members of society again," says Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot. "Many people may not be able to obtain gainful employment, attend college or serve in the military because of something on their record that can be eliminated. This is an opportunity for them to change their lives for the better," Creuzot added.



Elena Mozvilo / Unsplash

In 2021, the Expunction Expo received the most applications ever in one week, totaling more than 1,300. Nearly half of all of those applying met the requirements and were invited to participate in last year's Expo. After the applicants are pre-qualified, criminal defense and private attorneys volunteer their time to meet with them to help determine if they, in fact, have an offense eligible for expunction. If so, that attorney assists the individual with preparation and filing the necessary legal documents.

Once again, this year, attorneys will meet with individuals via videoconference, telephone, or in person. The volunteer attorneys, who are vital to

the success of the Expo, include attorneys from the Public Defender's Office, Legal Aid of Northwest Texas, and the Dallas Volunteer Attorneys Program, to name a few, as well as students from the University of North Texas (UNT) Dallas College of Law and the Southern Methodist University (SMU) Dedman School of Law. Dallas County District Judges and the Dallas City Attorney's Office/City of Dallas Community Courts are also vital partners in this endeavor. This year, attorneys from national and local law firms, including Winston Strawn, Jones Day, Perkins Coie, Locke Lord, and Holland & Knight, as well as counsel from American Airlines and Toyota have expressed

interest in helping citizens of Dallas County during the Expo. Additionally, the City of Dallas will be assisting to help increase outreach to underserved communities.

Since its inception in 2017, this event has helped clear over 1,700 criminal records.

Frank Crowley Courts Building • 133 N. Riverfront Blvd., L.B. 19 • Dallas, Texas 75207-4399 • 214/653-3600

Per Texas statute, individuals who have offenses on their criminal record MAY qualify for an expunction if any of the following apply:

- You were arrested but a charge was never filed, was no-billed by the grand jury, or was rejected by the District Attorney's Office;
- Your Felony, Class A Misdemeanor, or Class B Misdemeanor charge was dismissed without any type of community supervision or probation prior to the dismissal;
- Your Class C misdemeanor was dismissed, or you successfully completed Class C deferred adjudication;

• You were acquitted (found "not guilty") of your charge by a judge, jury, or appellate court;

• You were convicted of a crime but later pardoned by the Texas Governor or the United States President; or

• You were convicted before 09/01/2021 for Unlawfully Carrying a Weapon under Section 46.02(a) of the Penal Code.

A case is not eligible for an expunction, if:

- It is STILL PENDING;
- You were CONVICTED in the case, even if you only paid a fine;
- You received PROBATION, COMMUNITY SUPERVISION, or DEFERRED ADJUDICATION for a Felony, Class A Misdemeanor, or Class B Misdemeanor you want expunged, even if your case was later dismissed; or
- The case you want expunged is a FELONY, and you were arrested for another offense at the same time that resulted in a conviction, probation, community supervision, or

deferred adjudication.

How do I participate in the Expunction Expo?

You may fill out a Participant Information Form online between July 5 and July 11 via a link on the Dallas County District Clerk's website, at www.dallascounty.org/expunction. Participants will be notified by phone and email no later than September 12, 2022, if they qualify to participate in this year's Expunction Expo. Then, a volunteer attorney will be assigned to you and contact you directly for an appointment between approximately September 19 and October 4, 2022.

Information may also be obtained by calling 214-653-2905.

Those granted expunctions will be celebrated at a graduation ceremony on Saturday, January 21, 2023. Only Dallas County offenses will be considered.

For additional information, individuals may call (214) 653-2905 or visit www.dallascounty.org/expunction.

Black Conservatives celebrate Supreme Court's protection of religious freedom

Project 21
The National Center
The Orlando Advocate

Washington, D.C. — Members of the Project 21 Black leadership network praised a landmark win for religious freedom and free speech, as the U.S. Supreme Court ruled today that a school district wrongly fired a high school football coach who prayed at the conclusion of a game.

"This decision marks a return to America's true history, and its foundation based on the values and the principles of God," said

Project 21 member Reverend David Lowery, Jr.

In the case of Joseph A. Kennedy v. Breerton School District, Coach Kennedy, a high school football coach, was fired because he prayed at the 50-yard line of the public school's field after games. The reason for his dismissal by the school system was for "engaging in demonstrative religious activity" while "on duty."

"As an ex-football player, I remember we always had prayer before and after the games. We prayed for safety and strength while

out on the field. We asked God to protect us from serious injuries," Lowery added. "It is our right as American citizens under the First Amendment to exercise our religious beliefs. The justices today honored what has been written in the law."

In the majority opinion, Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote that the Constitution's Establishment Clause prevents government from being able to "single out private religious speech for special disfavor." He

See FREEDOM, Page 13

LEGAL NOTICE

These Texas Lottery Commission scratch ticket games will be closing soon:

Game #	Game Name / Odds	\$	Official Close of Game	End Validations Date
2353	\$500,000 Jackpot Overall Odds are 1 in 3.81	\$10	7/1/22	12/28/22
2234	\$50,000 Bonus Cashword Overall Odds are 1 in 4.07	\$3	7/8/22	1/4/23
2345	\$1,000,000 Crossword Overall Odds are 1 in 3.42	\$20	7/28/22	1/24/23
2250	Bingo Times 20 Overall Odds are 1 in 4.36	\$5	8/17/22	2/13/23

Texaslottery.com is the official source for all pertinent game information. Game closing procedures may be initiated for documented business reasons. These games may have prizes unclaimed, including top prizes. In addition, game closing procedures will be initiated when all top prizes have been claimed. During closing, games may be sold even after all top prizes have been claimed. Must be 18 or older to purchase a ticket. For help with a gambling problem, ncpgambling.org. © 2022 Texas Lottery Commission. PLAY RESPONSIBLY.

TEXAS LOTTERY

Black educators and leaders gather in Atlanta for UNCF's UNITE 2022

By Madeline Thigpen
The Atlanta Voice

The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) convened at the Atlanta Airport Marriott Gateway for UNITE 2022, the organization's summit for students, educators and professional stakeholders at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Throughout the conference, HBCUs were highlighted and celebrated for the impact they've made on the lives of Black Americans.

Dr. Michael Lomax, president and CEO of the UNCF, reminded the conference of the importance HBCUs have played throughout American history, but especially during



Conference guests point out their school's name at UNITE 2022
(photo courtesy of United Negro College Fund)

the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras.

"Those institutions still gave one of the most important tools that any people can have, and that is the ability to read, to write, to

learn, to develop... and to keep striving," said Lomax.

Speakers at the conference included Dietra Trent, executive director of the White House Initiative on HBCUs; Byna Elliott, Head

of Advancing Black Pathways at JPMorgan & Chase Co.; and Naomi Shelton, CEO of the National Charter Collaborative.

The panel focused on how HBCUs can serve as

an anchor for Black communities, by highlighting the ways Black colleges and universities serve communities beyond providing an education. Black scholars and academics at HBCUs serve as a means of educational enrichment to each other, and often serve as an integral means of support to one another.

Panelists also discussed the cultural significance of HBCUs, as a place where marching bands have flourished and where the next generation of musicians have been trained.

At the conference, UNCF also shared a message from Claflin University student government president Lauren Tolbert, who spoke about how HBCUs enrich

the lives of more than just the students who attend. She also said that as an African American studies major, she has learned a great deal about the injustices Black people have faced in this country.

"Going to an HBCU for me was really important because I wanted to be in an environment that was built for me to succeed," said Tolbert.

Next year's conference has already been announced. UNCF will hold UNITE 2023 from July 17-20, 2023 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

The post Black educators and leaders gather in Atlanta for UNCF's UNITE 2022 appeared first on The Atlanta Voice.

Black Collegiate Gaming Association launches 2022 Corners to Colleges HBCU program

By Christina Norris
The Atlanta Voice

The Black Collegiate Gaming Association (BCGA) kicked off its inaugural Corners to Colleges Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) program this month. The program gives high school students a week of HBCU college prep gaming. While staying a week at HBCU campuses, the students work with esports college advisors in campus gaming and innovation labs. They also work on case studies and projects from BCGA corporate partners.

Student participants of the program receive weekly compensations, certificates of completion, special awards and scholarships to one of the BCGA member institutions. Member institutions include Florida A&M University, Mississippi Valley State University, Edward Waters University, Florida Memorial University, Alabama State University, Alabama A&M University and Jackson



Student participants of Corners to Colleges on the campus of Florida A&M University
(Photo courtesy of Keshia Walker/BCGA).

State University.

"First and foremost, the purpose of the Corners to Colleges program is to let high school students know that the gaming industry is more than just playing the video games at home," said founder and chairwoman of BCGA Keshia Walker. "Secondly, [they receive] exposure to HBCU life and what it's like to stay at an HBCU. Third, [they're introduced] to all things related to gaming and technology."

Walker made history in May by becoming the first African American woman to own a collegiate esports and gaming company in

America. According to the association's website, BCGA's purpose is "to pivot Black and women of color college students into the overall gaming industry, not only as consumers but as contributors."

"I have to give all the credit to my nephew, who was 11 then," said Walker. "He told me that he wanted to get into esports and the gaming industry, but he didn't see HBCUs that had the opportunity for him to attend that school and get into gaming and esports. I told my nephew I was going to do something to change that, and a week later, I started the Black

Collegiate Gaming Association. My mission and life calling are to help more students of color to get into this space, whether they attend an HBCU or not."

There has been a growing conversation about people of color being underrepresented in the gaming industry. Although the gaming industry supports 428,646 jobs, only 2% of those job holders are Black.

"The numbers are dismal," said Walker. "Less than 3% of the industry are Black in terms of corporate leadership, and less than half of the industry is women of color. Over 60% of everything around games

are purchased by Blacks and people of color, but we are underrepresented in decision-making in this space. BCGA was created to address that."

Women are also underrepresented in the gaming industry. According to a survey conducted by Jessica Clement, an internet and e-commerce researcher in gaming, women made up 45% of gamers in the year 2021. However, gaming is still a male-dominated field. Walker talks about the discrimination she has faced due to being a woman in the gaming industry.

"This is a very male-dominated industry," said Walker. "I have faced a lot of sexist issues. A lot of men in this industry are very threatened by women, and unfortunately, a lot of it is coming from men that look just like us. They are threatened by the fact that a woman is coming in and doing something about some areas that have been underserved for a long time."

Today, the BCGA has several contributions from brand sponsors. These sponsors include Sony Playstation, HyperX, Intel, Google Play, Lenovo, Staples and GameStop.

"I've been blessed to be in business for 23 years," said Walker. "That's helped to start the dialogue, and having that background with expertise helped me to have that foundation to be reaching out to the CEOs of these companies to say, 'I need you to help me make history.'"

After the Corners To Colleges HBCU program finishes this year, the BCGA will be hosting a free gaming and sports academy in the fall. The academy will focus on conversations about ways to get into the gaming industry.

For more information, visit <https://bcgausa.org/>

The post Black Collegiate Gaming Association launches 2022 Corners to Colleges HBCU program appeared first on The Atlanta Voice.

Carrollton Fire Rescue receives American Heart Association Recognition Award for the fifth year in a row

Carrollton Fire Rescue (CFR) received the 2022 Mission: Lifeline® EMS – Gold Plus Level Recognition Award from the American Heart Association (AHA) for superior response efforts specifically in the area of cardiac care. This is the fifth year in a row that CFR has received the EMS – Gold Plus Recognition Award.

The AHA developed the

Mission: Lifeline Recognition Program to recognize emergency service organizations that meet the guidelines from the AHA and the American College of Cardiology in the pre-hospital care of patients with ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) – the deadliest form of a heart attack.

The Gold Plus award is built on the maintenance of previous years' successes

and is specifically representative of the care delivered throughout 2021. The care includes documented measurements of patients with non-traumatic chest pain, patients transported with pre-hospital contact, and patients needing treatment for severe heart attacks.

Collaboration among pre-hospital and hospital providers is the essence of Mission: Lifeline.

The AHA recognizes the vital importance EMS providers deliver to the overall success of Mission: Lifeline STEMI Systems of Care.

The correct tools and training allow EMS providers to rapidly identify incidences of STEMI, promptly notify the destination center, and trigger an early response from the awaiting hospital personnel.



City of Carrollton

LYNCH, from Page 2

while working in patrol, narcotics, gang intervention and juvenile restoration. He also coached the department's basketball team. "You mentored me by your example, and I am grateful," lamented Deputy Chief Woodyard. He continued, "your efforts resulted in young people staying out of trouble, which is our shared community-wide goal."

Pastor Frederick K. Price remarked about a coach being someone who offers wise counsel, and how through the years, he has personally appreciated Coach Lynch's counsel to him as the second man in addition to his father, Apostle Price, whom he regards to possess impeccable character and integrity.

Angela Evans, President, and CEO of Crenshaw Christian Center coordinated this surprise effort to give Lynch flowers while he is alive encouraged by Colossians 2:6-7. "The ministry honors Coach Michael Lynch because of what he means to our church body, to our school, and to coaches and young men and women throughout our city and beyond. He is one of our own, as well as a stalwart member of the community, and we are immensely proud of him. It is our great pleasure to celebrate him on his retirement per Proverbs 3:27, 'Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.'"

Heartfelt commendations were also provided

by the offices of Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Supervisor Holly Mitchell and City of Inglewood Mayor, James Butts and presented to Lynch by Angela Evans and Pastor Price.

Throughout his coaching career, Lynch has always told people that they can do whatever they have faith for — and served as their living example — buoyed by many other coaches, staff, volunteers, and supporters through the years. He was moved by the outpouring of love and gives God all the glory for what He has done in and through him. "Thank you! I am so very humbled and honored," Lynch extolled to congregates and guests. He is looking forward to raising up new generations of coaches, leaders, and

young people through his established nonprofit, "A Coach Is." Learn more at

acoachis.org.

The post Beloved Basketball Coach Michael

Lynch Lauded in Surprise Ceremony appeared first on Los Angeles Sentinel.



DARTable STAYCATIONS

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Keeping the fleet fed...



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (June 17, 2022) Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Cameron Spears, from Fort Worth, Texas, stores food in a storeroom aboard USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) during a replenishment-at-sea with USNS Supply (T-AOE 6) and USNS Robert E. Peary (T-AKE 5), June 17, 2022. The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe area of operations, employed by U.S. Sixth Fleet to defend U.S., allied and partner interests. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman T'ara Tripp)

Black Jewish leader works to boost community, inclusiveness

By Deepa Bharath
LA Focus News

Nate Looney is a Black man who grew up in Los Angeles, a descendant of enslaved people from generations ago. He's also an observant, kippah-wearing Jew.

But he doesn't always feel welcome in Jewish spaces — his skin color sometimes elicits questioning glances, suspicions and hurtful assumptions. Once, he walked into a synagogue dressed for Shabbat service

in slacks and a buttoned-down shirt and was told to go to the kitchen.

"The last thing you want to happen when you go to a synagogue to attend a service," Looney said, "is to be treated like you don't belong."

Now Looney is in a position to do something about that, after being named to the new role of director of community, safety and belonging for the Jewish Equity Diversity and Inclusion team at the Jewish Federations of North America, or

JFNA, in April. He believes he can channel his painful personal experiences into healing divisions and changing perceptions, and help make a trip to the synagogue a spiritual rather than a scarring encounter for Jews of color.

In this new role, Looney has been tackling the delicate task of producing guidelines on how to be more welcoming of Jews of color, even as synagogues and community centers strengthen security in the wake of recent attacks in-

cluding mass shootings in Pittsburgh and Poway, California. The concern is that such boosted security increases the likelihood of racial profiling incidents affecting congregants of color.

It's a relatively small but growing demographic. A Pew Center survey in 2021 showed just 8% of U.S. Jews identify as Hispanic, Black or Asian, but that nearly doubled to 15% among respondents aged 18

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Nate Looney is a Black man who grew up in Los Angeles, a descendant of enslaved people from generations ago. He's also an observant, kippah-wearing Jew. (Photo via NNPA)

SANDBRANCH, from Page 1

as going to the well outback and drawing up a cool clean drink. There were eggs in the henhouse and pigs in the pen; and a quick trek to the corner store made all sorts of confections available. At one point, there were over 500 residents living and thriving in Sandbranch, with their only source of water being the spring that was accessed by a family's well. Still, with successive generations Sandbranch's population dwindled down to as little as 100 inhabitants.

Then in the 1980s the well ran dry. The water began to discolor and became tainted. Then the water began emitting a rotting smell. People who dared drink the water fell ill. Extensive testing revealed bacterial contamination had made its way into the spring water that feed the wells. This rendered the water too polluted and harmful to drink or to even bathe in. That diagnosis was made over 30 years ago...The water is still tainted and too harmful to drink or to bathe.

Sandbranch residents believe gravel mining near the hamlet to be the source of the bacteria. Although Dallas County, in which Sandbranch is located, submits that the bacteria may have been the result of hogs — which were a widespread staple in the area — created a flow of waste that ultimately poisoned the water table. No one can say conclusively what the source of the bacteria is, only that it

exists and that it makes the water unfit for human consumption.

WHY THE POLLUTION HASN'T BEEN FIXED

A bitter irony of this situation is that Sandbranch is located in close proximity to a Dallas Water Treatment Center. Yet while other nearby unincorporated areas were having water pipes installed, Sandbranch went without.

Sadly, a time when Sandbranch will receive fresh water may be never come as the community is laden with a myriad of unfortunate and unrelenting circumstances:

- Since the 1970s, Sandbranch has been declared a floodplain area placing it under federal rules that limits new development, which means no new tax dollars

- With a populace of less than 100 residents left to pay taxes, a matter of financial viability comes into play

- Dallas county is not obligated to provide water infrastructure for that area of town

- In the 1990s, the county looked at creating a new water utility for the area but not even one of the townsfolk wanted to run it

- The well water cannot be filtered and cleansed of its bacterial pollution

- Less than 100 people — with an average income of \$750 — isn't enough to defray the estimated \$6 million cost of installing a water system.

AN INNOVATIVE SOURCE

Rev. Leo Woodberry is an environmental advocate with the African American Environmental Justice Action Network (AAEJAN). AAEJAN is on a crusade to unite people of color across America, and to support impoverished communities disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards.

Woodberry has worked in the areas of water, air, and renewable energy with a host of environmental solutions organizations like The Environmental Protection Agency National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, Green Faith, and the South Carolina Environmental Justice Network to name a few.

Woodberry's solution leans toward a more scientific solution with the use of hydropanels, which can literally pull fresh water from thin air. Hydropanels are solar-powered and are used to draw air into the system, where a thermal unit heats air. Then, the hydrogen and oxygen in the air condenses and is pumped to a dispersal, where the newly formed water is ready for consumption.

Hydropanel technology for the production of fresh water are currently installed in at least 52 countries around the world and are represented on at least 450 separate projects.

Woodberry is currently using a hydropanel system at his church in Florence, South Carolina. "We've had it since March 5th," Woodberry said, "and it's

producing 224 16oz bottles of water a week."

Woodberry is certain that this is a solution in-part to Sandbranch's "environmental problem." The hydro-panel system would indeed be a welcomed relief to Sandbranch residents, but that solution has its limitations.

The 224 16oz bottles of water Woodberry's South Carolina system produces equates to roughly 28 gallons of water per week. A normal household of three people undergoing normal activities can easily use well in excess of 50 gallons of water per day. For an entire community of 100 people 28 gallons of water per week would merely be a drop in a bucket.

Another drawback to hydropanels as a solution is the thing that has plagued Sandbranch since its water problems began, the high cost of bringing water to an unincorporated area. Installing a two-panel array in each home would be an answer, but that would come at a cost of about \$6,000 per unit.

A FALLEN LEADER

Despite its blighted conditions, Sandbranch found a glimmer of hope in the person of Pastor Eugene Baron Keahey, who became pastor of Mt. Zion in 2013. By 2017, Keahey had made folks at the national level aware of the devastating environmental conditions in Sandbranch. He had pulled together a group of likeminded water advocates who made connections with the US Environ-

mental Protection Agency and the US Department of Agriculture. One report has Keahey boasting that a total 11 heads of governmental agencies would be making an official visit to Sandbranch to investigate for a possible solution.

Taking his mission as far as Washington D.C., Keahey's plan was to use his bureaucratic connections to obtain grants to finally put pipes in Sandbranch and then buy fresh water from the city of Dallas. Pastor Keahey believed fresh water would flow into the homes of Sandbranch within a year or two. Then came a most regrettable night...

February 28, 2019, Cedar Hill, Texas.

At around 4:30 a.m., a Cedar Hill police officer arrived at a burning home on 705 Lovern Street. That officer was able to assist two individuals to escape from an upstairs window, even before firefighters arrived to extinguish the flames.

Left inside the home were a mother and daughter, Deanna Keahey and Camryn Keahey, both dead as a result of the fire. Darryn Keahey, 17-years-old, died of her fire related injuries over a month later. Also, inside the fire ravaged home was the body of Pastor Keahey.

Dallas County Medical Examiners determined that Pastor Keahey died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The cause of the fire was not immediately conclusive, but it was considered "suspicious." There are reports from neighbors that they

heard gunshots prior to seeing smoke and fire coming from the home.

News of the deaths left friends and neighbors puzzled and generated more questions than there were answers. Having known Pastor Keahey, and the work he was doing, left acquaintances doubtful as to the cause of the fire. Pastor Keahey's untimely death left a congregation of already bewildered people to grieve and wonder how this tragedy could have happened.

The Sandbranch Development and Water Supply Corporation put out this statement after Keahey's death: "We haven't given up on Sandbranch, and neither should you. Pastor Keahey's dream is still alive, and, with your support and cooperation, we'll continue fighting to make it a reality. It won't happen overnight, but it will happen."

The absence of Pastor Keahey left a great void in the lives in and around Sandbranch. The needs of Sandbranch are great but the laborers are few—but even wake of a death, life for others must go on, and the thirst of a people must be quenched.

Until a permanent solution can be found, decided upon and funded, Mt. Zion is the lifeforce and central location for the distribution of water, and food items. The charitable contributions are not just for the residents of Sandbranch—although Sandbranch residents are the priority of service—but to all needy individuals looking just to survive.

Black life empowers 2022 American Black Film Festival



By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

The 2022 American Black Film Festival featured in-theater screenings and a virtual component too. Issa Rae (*Insecure*) reigned as the festival ambassador and introduced her new HBO Max series “*Rap Sh!t*.” Crowds watched feature films, docs and shorts and participated in talk events, networking and of course partied hard. To stay tuned to Black film 24/7/365 go to ABFFPLAY.COM. Meanwhile, these distinguished films were part of the programming.

Civil (**1/2)

Often, when there’s a crisis regarding police malfeasance and concerning an African American victim, attorney Benjamin Crump is near. Not as a prosecuting or defense attorney, but as the counsel to aggrieved families who seek justice through lawsuits—the kind that hit negligent police forces and municipalities where it hurts. In the wallet, Crump has established himself as a player, much like Johnny Cochrane. His client list is impressive beyond words: Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor... He’s a hero to many but does have his detractors. Some are rankled that his work is not pro-bono, at least not on the well-known cases. His law firm “Ben Crump Trial Lawyer for Justice” has amassed millions for their clients—and themselves. They receive 500 calls a day seeking advice and service.

Director Nadia Hallgren

takes a balanced approach to establishing all Crump’s personae: media-savvy attorney, savior, counselor, extended family member, spokesman, activist. Even as a young man he was on a mission: “Lead me. Or follow me. Or get the hell outta my way.” And these days he knows his value: “People seek me out because they want somebody they can trust.” As the footage rolls newsclips and videos of Crump, his ego is front and center along with his noteworthy achievements. He has time-tested strategies (make the press an ally), big enemies (Fox News hates him) and repped less visible cases (Black farmers dealing with pesticide illnesses).

Hallgren’s doc style is pretty routine. From a tech standpoint, nothing is extraordinary: editing, cinematography, music... In fact, considering Crump’s accomplishments as a lawyer and civil rights advocate, his deeds seem far more impressive than this non-fiction film. After all, he’s the trial lawyer who answered one of the most significant calls in American history: “My cousin was just murdered by a Minneapolis police officer. His name is George Floyd.” A suitably factual doc that needed to be insightful and instructive too.

Our Father, The Devil (***)

This isn’t a pleasant story. It’s a revenge saga that traps you and makes you feel queasy. With venom writer/director Ellie Foubmi tells a tale about a victim and perpetrator of violent war crimes. Her muse is an Af-

rican refugee named Marie Cissé (Babetida Sadjo). She’s the head chef at a re-

tirement home in Luchon, a small-town in southwest France. On the outside she’s

cheery with her co-worker Nadia, and a café waiter named Arnaud (Franck Sau-

rel) who flirts with her. Her

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The Dream Con Anime and Gaming Convention returns to Esports Stadium Arlington

Real Dreamers Change the World (RDC World1) will return to Esports Stadium Arlington to host Dream Con, a premier anime and gaming convention, taking place Friday, July 15 through Sunday, July 17, 2022. The highly anticipated event will consist of pop culture, comics, art, cosplay, music and much more.

"This is year four of hosting Dream Con and the event has continued to grow and attract anime and gaming lovers from all over the world," said Johnathan Newton, Dream Con Event Producer and RDC World1 member. "We are extremely excited to be back in North Texas where attendees can conveniently travel to enjoy a fun weekend of interactive activities, competitions, and shopping all while connecting with like-minded individuals who have common interests."

A three-day event, Dream Con will feature an array of great highlights including a



traditional artist alley, engaging meet and greets, a music concert, wrestling, dodgeball, blaster battle, indoor basketball, smash bros, a gaming tournament, and a cosplay contest. The event will also showcase a variety of panels and discussions with special guests such as well-known voice actors, content creators, cosplayers and gamers. In addition, attendees

will have the opportunity to shop from over 200 vendors. Newly added this year is a dodgeball charity match presented by Pizza Hut with a \$100,000 prize being awarded to the first-place winner and \$25,000 awarded to both the first and second runner ups. The monetary awards will be donated to a charity of the winners' choice.

"Dream Con is more than

a convention, it is a celebration of diverse cultures, backgrounds and people from all walks of life," said Mark Phillips, Dream Con and RDCWorld1 founder. "Attendees can truly be their authentic selves without the fear of being judged. Whether a novice, avid fan, black, white, brown, purple or green like Piccolo, everyone is welcome to come out, have fun and

to simply have a great overall experience."

Founded in 2017, Dream Con was birthed as a result of a gap that existed in the anime, gaming and comic convention space for people of color. After continuously being rejected by major conventions, University of North Texas graduate, Mark Phillips and the RDC World1 Team, decided to transform their obstacle into an opportunity by using their unique gifts and talents to create a convention of their own. Their vision was to create an inclusive event where anime, gaming and comic lovers, similar to them, could come together in a welcoming and inclusive environment to connect, network and transform their dreams into a reality. Today, the convention, along with their online social media platforms, have attracted people from all over the world.

Dream Con is supported by event sponsors: Pizza

Hut, House of Highlights, Bud Light Next, YaBoy-Roshi, Viz Media, Texas Kaizoku, Urban Anime Lounge, Otaku Lamps, Geek E Love, Gel Blasters, Right Stuf, Air Optix Color Contacts, D-Spirits, Liquid Death, Real Ninja Reviews, Real Deal Designs, and LAN Party.

The Dream Con event will take place at Esport Stadium Arlington located at 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington, Texas, 76011. During these unprecedented times, health and safety continue to be a high priority. To attend Dream Con, participants must be fully vaccinated or provide a negative PCR test 72 hours before the event. Tickets to this year's event are sold out, however tickets for the 2023 Dream Con will become available in late July.

You can learn more about Dream Con, view the full event schedule of activities and see highlights from past events, by visiting www.dreamconvention.com.

FILM, from Page 9

demeanor changes drastically the day a charismatic Catholic Priest, Father Patrick (Souléymane Sy Savané), comes to the home. Others are impressed by him. Marie is repulsed. This man was a murderous warlord.

Foumbi's script masterfully encompasses human rights violations, social issues and feminist leanings. Her unusual storyline mimics elements of Stephen King's Misery. It's enough to keep the narrative fairly engaging, but possibly not in ways film fans would favor. Credit Sadjo and Savané for making more out of the 1h47m thriller than is on the page. The lead actress in particular skillfully wears her emotions on her face, is quite earnest and surprisingly diabolical: "You took everything that was good from

me and shredded it. You're not leaving here alive!"

As a director, Foumbi has assembled an outstanding tech crew. The film's look (cinematographer Tinx Chan; production designer Phillippe Lacomblez) is art house. Its sounds (composer Gavin Brivik) are alluring. And the pacing (editor Roy Clovis) rhythmic. Though the increasingly unbelievable plot builds to an improbable scene with Nadia, Marie and Patrick, the drama does intensify up to a fulfilling ending. A perfectly acted and crafted modern-day thriller with imperfect plotting.

Lovely Jackson (**1/2)

It's a record no one wants. Ex-inmate Rickey Jackson was incarcerated for 39 years for a murder he didn't commit. That's purportedly

the longest prison time anyone who has been wrongfully accused and convicted has ever served. Director/cowriter Matt Waldeck and co-writer and film's subject Jackson retell this injustice using Jackson's personal experiences and anecdotes. A cast of younger actors reenact important moments filling in the cracks. They portray participants in a Cleveland, OH convenience store robbery that resulted in the murder of a white money-order collector. Jackson was young when he was arrested, the police department railroad him, a weak star witness accused him, and eyewitness didn't have the courage to clear his name.

Curiously, the filmmakers use of dramatizations neither helps nor hinders. The most riveting part of

See JACKSON, Page 13

2022 Juneteenth Unity Weekend draws thousands to Dallas and nearly doubles economic impact for the city

Thousands of people attended the star-studded event featuring some of the top stars in entertainment and poured more than \$3.7 million into the local economy

This Juneteenth holiday, Dallas Southern Pride infused the city of Dallas with a myriad of events celebrating Juneteenth and Pride Month, including community and health events, entertainment, and concerts featuring performances from K. Michelle, Yo Gotti, City Girls, Erica Banks, Saucy Santana, Yella Beezy and more. The events were also attended by other celebrities and influencers including Beat-King, Fat Pimp and DJ Chose. As the official annual celebration for Black Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans and Queer (GLBTQ+) people in the southern United States, the event was created to celebrate the brilliance and culture of Black people.

With ticket sales more than doubled, this year's Juneteenth Unity Weekend poured more than \$3.7 million into the local economy, impacting consumer sales across multiple industries including airlines, hotels, ground transportation, food, and clothing. The event also created jobs for hundreds of event employees, contractors, and gig workers throughout the city. Additionally, the HIV positivity rate dropped to its lowest in event history, with less than 6 percent of the more than 200 people tested testing positive. COVID-19 vaccinations were also administered. In partnership with Stonewall Democrats of Dallas and the national organization, Black Voters Matter, dozens of people were registered to vote in Dallas, Tarrant and Collin Counties.

Alongside the entertainment events and the provision of free healthcare screenings, the five-day



DallasSouthernPride.com

experience included a free Family Day at Samuell Grand Aquatic Center and a Juneteenth/Father's Day event where 500 underserved youth and an adult household member were sponsored to attend the

Dallas Children's Aquarium for free food, stingray feedings, face painting and more!

The sold-out weekend experience started on Thursday, June 16th with the HISTORI Conference, which presented findings in research that contributes

to ending the HIV epidemic in Black communities in the United States and the Cypher Party that showcased top local talent. On Friday, guests were treated to a first-class welcome reception on the Pegasus Lawn at the Omni Hotel. On Saturday, thousands of patrons filled the pools at Samuell-Grand Aquatic Center while the City Girls and Saucy Santana turned up the Texas heat with fiery performances at the Juneteenth Unity Festival and Pool Party.

The night continued with the sold-out mega party at Amplified, which included performances by Yo Gotti, Erica Banks and Yella Beezy. The weekend of entertainment ended with the signature brunch, hosted by Kirk Myers-Hill and a dynamic finale performance by K. Michelle at the Sunset Rooftop Pool and Club Party held at The Pool at Crowne Plaza. With 72% of attendees coming in from outside the city of Dallas, two of the three host hotels were once again sold out.

The City of Dallas continued its support of Juneteenth Unity Weekend, lighting the Dallas skyline in the Black Gay Pride colors and the Juneteenth

colors. The Omni Dallas Hotel also displayed the words, Dallas Southern Pride and Juneteenth. Dallas Police Chief, Eddie Garcia, also attended Juneteenth Unity.

Weekend events, along with several local elected officials and community leaders. In another historic moment, the Dallas Southern Pride Official Pride flag was raised for the first time on Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard.

"On behalf of Dallas Southern Pride and the 2022 Juneteenth Unity Weekend Planning Committee, we thank you, for once again making our celebration an historic and impactful commitment to Black excellence and el-

evation," said Kirk Myers-Hill, President of Dallas Southern Pride. "With the help of Dallas city leaders, Dallas Police Department, our sponsors, and our community, we unified to maximize economic impact, engagement, enjoyment and safety. We look forward to seeing you in September for Dallas Black Pride."

The extended five-day experience continues to make a positive impact by unifying the community, celebrating freedom, providing a safe space for community gathering and infusing millions of dollars into the local economy.

For more information, visit <https://dallasouthernpride.com>.

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Comcast pushing program offering free internet service for millions of households

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

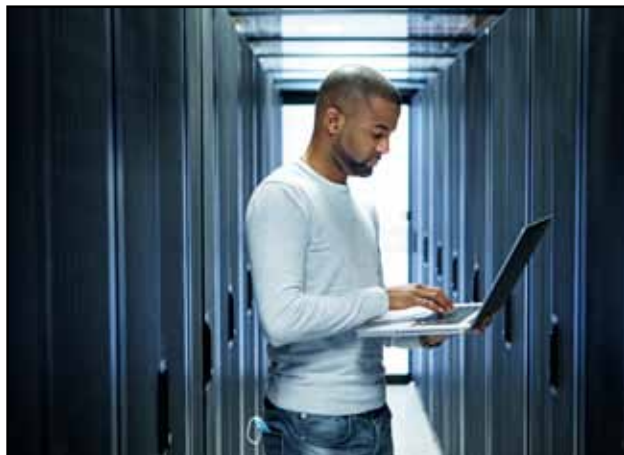
After the White House announced a plan to expand access to affordable high-speed internet for millions of Americans, particularly low-income families, it didn't take long for Comcast to ensure its customers took advantage.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), created under the historic bipartisan infrastructure bill, has allowed Comcast to offer free and discounted internet service to customers.

The program provides \$30 per month toward the cost of internet or mobile service to eligible low-income households.

Maryland has agreed to provide an additional \$15 per month.

"The impact means for eligible households, there's no reason anyone should have to pay for internet service," said Misty Allen, the



Qualifying households either earn below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level or have a member who receives other government benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, or Supplemental Security Income. (iStock photo / NNPA)

vice president of government affairs for Comcast's Beltway Region.

"In Baltimore, eligible households can get \$30 applied through the federal government, and the state of Maryland is providing an additional \$15, so that's up to \$45 each month," Allen remarked.

"So, when you talk about impact, we know that there are three major barriers to internet subscription. One is relevancy, where people

ask, 'why do I need internet service when I have a phone?'

"Do I have the skills? Maybe I don't have a computer. The third is affordability. This takes affordability off the table because internet service effectively can be free for Maryland residents."

According to a release from Comcast, Customers who qualify also can apply ACP credits to any tier of Xfinity Internet, including

Internet Essentials or Xfinity Mobile.

Comcast and its community partners in the Beltway Region – including Montgomery Housing Partnership, The Green Beret Project, and The Senior Zone – are hosting ACP awareness events throughout the summer where residents can learn about eligibility, benefits, and how to sign up.

The ACP program should help households of color where government officials provided statistics that show Latino Americans are 15% less likely to have high-speed internet than their white peers, while Black families are 9% less likely.

Additionally, about 35% of all people living on

Tribal lands lack access to broadband services.

The Biden-Harris administration estimated that 48 million households qualify for the ACP, accounting for about 40% of all households in the U.S.

Qualifying households either earn below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level or have a member who receives other government benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, or Supplemental Security Income.

"The success of the program is highly depended upon people being aware that's it available," Allen stated.

"We are emailing our customers, running television commercials, and doing everything we can as providers, but we're work-

ing with community leaders, elected officials, and nonprofits.

"We're getting that information out to them and asking them to help us spread the word. We are working with the Y's, the Boys & Girls Clubs, Catholic Charities of Baltimore, Fight Back, and the Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition has a hotline to help people who call in looking for resources."

Allen continued:

"We are working the social fabric of these communities to help get the word out because these are the folks doing it every day to help their communities."

For more information or to sign up for the ACP program, visit www.Xfinity.com/ACP.

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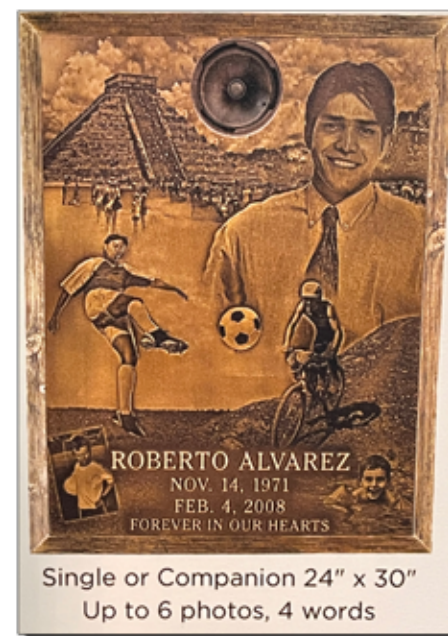
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Amid growing inflation, Biden calls for the suspension of gas tax

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

President Joe Biden recently called on Congress to suspend the federal gas tax through September after taking action to boost oil and gas supply chains, including the release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

According to a White House Fact Sheet, Biden has also encouraged oil companies and refiners to boost capacity and output

to get more supply on the market.

Saying that American consumers have suffered under Russian President Vladimir Putin's price hike, Biden has called on states to provide relief by suspending their gas taxes or helping in other ways.

Gas prices are up nationwide by about \$2 per gallon.

According to the Fact Sheet, Biden has also called on Congress to make sure that a gas tax holiday has no adverse effect on the

Highway Trust Fund.

Some states and local governments have already acted.

In Connecticut and New York, governors temporarily suspended their gas taxes, and in Illinois and Colorado, governors delayed planned tax and fee increases.

In places like Michigan and Minnesota, states and local leaders are considering several forms of consumer relief – from tem-

porary suspensions and pauses on state sales tax on gas to consumer rebates and relief payments, administration officials noted further.

The White House noted that the latest announcement follows a series of actions the President has taken to lower gas prices for American families.

The President announced the release of a record 1 million barrels per day from our Strategic Petro-

leum Reserve, which just last week a leading oil market analyst confirmed has been critical to keeping prices from rising even more.

According to the Fact Sheet, Biden rallied international partners to join us, releasing a combined 240 million barrels of oil on the market.

He expanded access to biofuels like E15 – gasoline that uses a 15 percent ethanol blend – to increase supply and lower prices at

thousands of gas stations across the country.

Biden and his administration are engaging with oil and refining companies to ask them to work with the administration to bring forward concrete solutions that increase refinery capacity and output.

Secretary Granholm plans to meet soon with those CEOs.

The post Biden Calls for the Suspension of Gas Tax appeared first on Houston Forward Times.

FREEDOM, from Page 5

continued: “The Constitution and the best of our traditions counsel mutual respect and tolerance, not censorship and suppression, for religious and non-religious views alike.”

Project 21 helped get Coach Kennedy's case over the goal line and in front of the justices with an amicus curiae (“friend of the court”) legal brief that asked the Court to consider the case. Project 21 was a co-amicus on a brief filed by Advancing American Freedom – an organization founded by former Vice President Mike Pence – and Young America's Foundation.

The brief called the lower court ruling against Coach Kennedy “flat wrong.” It further noted that it was “absurd to label an act of obvious personal gratitude and humility governmental speech that is prohibited by the Constitution” and that

Americans' expressions of personal speech cannot violate the Constitution's Establishment Clause “simply because the public can see them.”

“The First Amendment protects every American's right to freely exercise their faith. Today we confirmed that everyone includes public school coaches,” said Project 21 Steven Mosley. “Prayer is essential to the Christian faith, as we are called to pray without ceasing. Coach Kennedy's practice of praying after football games should have been celebrated as a picture of religious diversity. Instead, he was discriminated against and fired for simply practicing his right under the First Amendment. It is great to see the Supreme Court rule that Christians – and all people of faith – have the right to pray where they live, work, worship and play.”

JACKSON, from Page 10

this doc is Jackson himself. His metamorphosis from innocent kid to, young adult convict, to sage older man is a wonder. He's in an amazing state of grace. Not embittered and philosophical about his life. The black and white footage works as an artistic choice (cinematographer John Turk). Jacques Brautbar's entrancing musical score keeps you focused.

The questionable reenactments are helped by Dred Geib's production design, Annin Geib's art direction and the costumes by Inda Blatch-Geib and Sydney Dematteis-Geib.

For more information go to ABFF.com.

Visit NNPA Syndication Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com and BlackPressUSA.com.



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- 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.

An Apple Fritter on My Mind

By James L. Snyder

The last few weeks have been rather hectic, and I've struggled to keep up with everything. If it weren't for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I probably would not have gotten where I am today.

I don't know anybody who can plan out a day, week, or month better than her. She has everything planned down to the smallest detail.

On the other hand, I am not very good when it comes to these detailed plannings. I'm the kind of in-the-you moment person. Therefore, I really get things screwed up as far as scheduling.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage can think of a dozen things at the same

time. I can only think of one thing at a time. This gets me into trouble because sometimes, what I'm thinking about isn't what I should be doing at that time.

I think what it's called is multitasking. This is something that I cannot do even though I have tried for a long time. I can only keep one task and focus at a time. Usually, it's the wrong task I'm thinking of at that particular time.

Women are famous for multitasking. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is certainly the Queen of multitasking. No matter how much she has in her hand, she is always has room for one more task.

I've never been able to do that, and I don't have a good reason. Usually, at the end of the week, I go

over my list of tasks and discover several things I forgot about. That usually is the very frustrating part of my week. I started out with good intentions, but then something else came into view, and I forgot what I was supposed to do.

It is quite frustrating because Monday morning, my wife will make out her list of tasks for the week several pages of them. On Friday afternoon, she celebrates the fact that everything on her list is checked off and has been duly completed.

How she does it is above my pay grade. I'm glad she can do it, and I'm jealous of that talent.

The other week I had a pile of tasks needed to have done. Every one of them was necessary to complete.

I hate it when something has a due date attached to it, but all were crucial in fulfilling.

I started Monday quite cheerful about my list of tasks. Friday afternoon, I was frustrated because not one of those tasks had been fulfilled. I don't know what happened, but I do know that nothing happened.

I just felt jittery all day long. Since my heart attack last year, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage convinced me to drawback on my Apple Fritters. There was a time in my life when I had an Apple fritter a day and sometimes more than that.

Looking over my list of unfulfilled tasks, I could only think about an Apple Fritter at the time. Nothing would really calm down

my nerves but one of those Apple Fritters.

Through the years, I have tried to convince my wife that an Apple Fritter is a fruit. I can't convince her even though I have tried every con I know.

It's been a long time since I was this jittery about my schedule. I knew the only thing that would calm me down a little was sneaking out of the house and getting an Apple Fritter. The more I thought about it, the more I thought about it.

I looked at my list of tasks for the week and put at the bottom of it the letters "A F". I knew what it meant, and I was hoping the other person in our residence did not know what it meant.

I laid my list on the table, not thinking too much

about it, and then my wife picked it up. She looked at it, then looked at me and asked what "A F" meant?

At first, I didn't know what she was talking about, and then it dawned on me that I had put those letters on my task list. I did not know how to respond to her, but in a few moments, I said, "That simply means Article Finishing." Then I smiled one of my gregarious smiles.

She looked at me and wasn't smiling but giving me one of her "stares." I suspected I was in trouble.

"Are you sure," she asked, "that it does not mean Apple Fritter?"

It was such a frustrating week; it was hard for me to bounce back with a credible

See FRITTER, Page 15

JEWISH, from Page 8

to 29. The poll also found that 17% reported living in a nonwhite or multiracial household.

Looney, 37, has led a life that has taken several turns. He served in the military police as part of the Louisiana National Guard and spent nine months overseas training Iraqi police forces. He has worked in real estate and has even done urban farming, selling microgreens in local markets.

His spiritual journey began at 13 when a friend asked Looney, whose father was Baptist and mother was Episcopalian, about his own religion. Despite his family's Christian faith, Looney said he never felt connected to it.

"I was obstinate that (Christianity) wasn't for me," he said. "When I think about African enslavement in America and how religion was something that was forced, I believed that the religion I was practicing was not true to who my ancestors were."

Looney embraced Judaism while still a teen because he viewed it as a faith that gives believers permission to ask difficult, uncom-

fortable questions, though he didn't formally convert until age 26.

It was after the police killing of George Floyd and the racial reckoning of summer 2020 that Looney began working with organizations to raise awareness about Jews of color. It was also during that time that JFNA launched its diversity, equity and inclusion initiative.

Looney said Jews of color are often subjected to questions about their Jewish origins. Even when well intentioned, those queries can be painful because they cast doubt on their identity right away and imply they don't belong, he said.

Add to that the increased security at synagogues, and there's even greater potential for people to feel othered or unwelcome.

"How do you strike a balance? You don't want to exclude anyone, and yet you want to be discerning of who is coming in the door," Looney said. "Cultural competency is important. Just the fact that someone who is Black is walking in shouldn't raise alarms."

He knows from personal

experience. The morning of the Tree of Life synagogue mass shooting in Pittsburgh on Oct. 27, 2018, Looney was unaware it had taken place because he was not using his phone in observance of Shabbat. When he entered a synagogue, he got more questions and "experienced deeper scrutiny" from security guards, and it was painful.

"If that were my first time entering that community," he said, "I would've never come back."

The guidelines he is working on will be shared with Jewish federations across North America and, Looney hopes, implemented at the local level by synagogues and community centers. Just two months into his job, he says they are a work in progress but will continue to evolve over time.

One goal is to inculcate in security guards a deeper understanding of the diversity of the Jewish community, he said. "We're starting to have these types of conversations and that's a great beginning."

Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein, who founded the diversity, equity and inclusion initiative and serves as JFNA's

public affairs advisor, said Looney's professional experience as a military policeman and his lived experience as a Jewish person of color make him uniquely qualified to boost inclusivity while being cognizant of the sensitive relationship between law enforcement

and people of color.

"Security and belonging don't have to be mutually exclusive," said Rothstein, who is the son of a white father and a Black mother and has seen his darker-skinned relatives being treated differently in synagogues. "Nate is helping us bring

an equity lens to make sure all our institutions are safe and secure while creating a culture of belonging for all Jews and our loved ones."

The post Black Jewish leader works to boost community, inclusiveness appeared first on L.A. Focus News.

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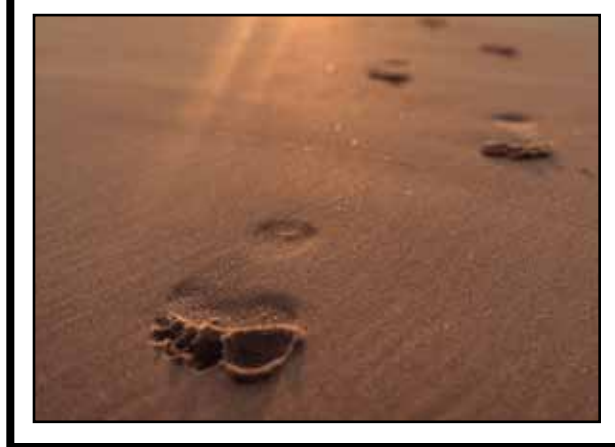


Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
Editor

I read these long ago; they caused me to ponder and gave me comfort. Perhaps you have read or heard these before. You may read these for the first time, or read these again, which ever, these are things to enjoy and make you think.

Imagine you and the Lord are walking down the road together. For much of the way, the Lord's footprints go along steadily, consistently, rarely varying the pace.

But your footprints are a disorganized steam of zigzags, starts, stops, turnarounds, circles, departures, and returns. For much of the way, it seems



to go like this, but gradually your footprints come more in line with the Lord's; soon they are paralleling His consistently. You and Jesus are walking as true friends!

This seems perfect, but then an interesting thing happens. Your footprints that once etched the sand next to Jesus' are now walking precisely in His steps. Inside His larger footprints are your smaller ones; you and Jesus are be-

coming one.

This goes on for many miles, but gradually you notice another change. Your footprints inside Jesus' footprints seem to grow larger. Eventually they disappear altogether. There is only one set of footprints; the two footprints have become one.

This goes on for a long time, but suddenly the second set of footprints is back. This time it seems even worse! Zigzags are

all over the place. There are stops, starts, gashes in the sand. There are a variable mess of prints. You are amazed and shocked.

Your dream ends. Now you pray: "Lord, I understand the first scene, with zigzags and fits. I was a new Christian; I was just learning. But You walked on through the storm and helped me learn to walk with You." "That is correct," said the Lord.

"And when the smaller prints were inside Yours, I was actually learning to walk in Your steps, following You very closely." "Very Good . . . You have understood everything so far."

"When the smaller footprints grew and filled in Yours, I suppose that I was becoming more like You in every way." "Precisely," said the Lord. "So, Lord, was there a regression or something?"

The footprints separated, and this time it seemed worse than at first." There is a pause as the Lord answers with a smile in His voice. "You didn't know? It was then that you had a victory, you did a Holy dance!"

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under Heaven: a time to weep, a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4)

-- Author Unknown

TAKE TIME

Take time to "Think", it is the source of wisdom; and wisdom comes from God. Take time to "Dream", it is the fountain of the future. Jesus said

that without a vision, the people perish. Take time to "Play", it is the way to stay young at heart; and to enjoy life to the fullest.

Take time to "Reflect", it is the way to know God; and to know God is to love God. Take time to "Smile", it is the road to happiness; and it takes less muscles to smile.

Take time to "Laugh", it is the music of the soul. Take time to "Love", it is God's greatest gift; and God is Love.

Take time to Pray, it is the greatest power on earth; and a wonderful way to talk to God.

-- Author Unknown.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in July 2015)

FRITTER from Page 14

answer.

"You do know," she said very seriously, "that you are not to have Apple Fritters because of your health?"

Trying to come up with an answer, I simply said, "I was just thinking that maybe if I thought a little bit about an Apple Fritter, it would make me feel a little

bit better about my week."

Looking at me, she said, "I think that finishing your tasks during the week, is what will make you feel better."

Later I was reminded of what the Bible says. "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been

faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

I don't have to do everything, just a few things that I can handle for the glory of God.

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 web site is www.whatafellowship.com.

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NDG Book Review: 'My Old Kentucky Home' tells the tale of the tune

By Teri Schlichenmeyer

Raise your voice in song. Let it carry to the skies, high notes above the clouds like so many birds in flight, low notes scraping the tips of the grass. Sing your happiness out loud, and let your sadness be carried softly to a better place. Raise your voice in song, even if, as in the new book "My Old Kentucky Home" by Emily Bingham, it sends someone else down.

Stephen Foster was in a bad way.

Unhappily married less than a year and father to a child he suspected wasn't his, he struggled to do the



right thing, by mid-1800s standards, and support his family. Foster owed his brother many hundreds of dollars for rent on a room, the debt was racking up, and he was miserably unhappy. He'd been working hard on the songs he was

writing, but he was frustrated and embarrassed that the only interest anyone showed was for minstrel music. Minstrelsy, says Bingham, featured white people on-stage in cork-blackened faces, depicting Black people as "uncivilized, inane, emotional, crude, overly sexual, but also 'naturally' musical and athletic."

For a songwriter, she says, minstrelsy "smelled the worst."

It was a living, but not the one Foster wanted. His marriage in shreds, his wife gone, he moved into what was basically a closet, where he died of alcoholism.

By that time, though, audiences at minstrel shows had come to love a song about which Foster had "thought better of what he'd done," and had reworked. Gone was its offensive title and the fake "Negro" dialect. The song was called "My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night."

Still, it was racist, says Bingham, but Frederick Douglass called it "our national music," and so it stayed a part of our musical heritage. Post-Civil-War Black performers included it in their acts, much as they disliked the song. "In the first decades of the [last] century," says Bingham,

the song "became a newly beloved hymn..." Later, even Eleanor Roosevelt expressed her appreciation for it. And it was sung at the Kentucky Derby this year, albeit with several important edits...

Pick up "My Old Kentucky Home" and it says right there on the cover that this is a story of "an Iconic American Song." But it's so much more than that. This is a biography of racism through music.

In her introduction, author Emily Bingham tells how, as a young girl, she came to the sudden realization that the song she loved was full of words she

didn't. This kind of relativity runs through the book, gluing together the story of the song while also explaining that its lyrics and meanings through the years were signs of the various times. This doesn't mean Bingham waves away the problematic issue of the song itself; rather, she cleaves it to national issues of post-Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and modern times on a razor's edge of forgiveness and outrage.

Musicologists will enjoy this book, as will historians who also love music. Surely, "My Old Kentucky Home" will raise good conversations.

With help from Ben Crump, NNPA columnist Jeffrey Boney makes case for Black community to have more in new book

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

African Americans should never forget the generation of leaders that came before them, nor disregard those who laid a solid foundation and left a trustworthy blueprint to follow.

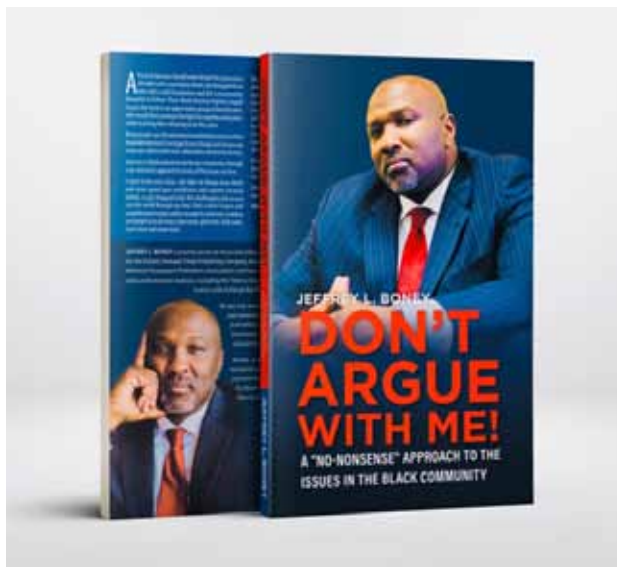
"Those Black freedom fighters hoped to pass the torch to an appreciative group of beneficiaries, who would continue the fight for equality and justice while teaching their offspring to do the same," said Jeffrey L. Boney.

The Houston Forward Times Associate Editor, NNPA Columnist, and Missouri City, Texas, Councilman obviously wears many hats – and he's pretty good at each.

Boney, an outspoken purveyor of Black news and information, isn't seeking a verbal spat. And that's a good thing for many who might want to oppose him, as often an opponent in such a battle with Boney finds themselves unarmed.

Quite simply- Don't argue with him.

Incidentally, that's the name of Boney's newest book, "DON'T ARGUE WITH ME! A No-nonsense approach to the issues in



the black community."

Civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump, Boney's Omega Psi Phi fraternity brother, penned the book's forward.

"I've known Ben Crump for several years, and he was a freedom fighter even before he blew up in the national spotlight," Boney remarked.

"He's always advocated for African Americans, underserved, and disadvantaged individuals. So when I told him I was writing this book and shared with him the premise, he wholeheartedly and without hesitation said he wanted to write the forward and that we needed to have this dialogue in real-time across this coun-

try."

A graduate of Texas Southern University, Boney has always sought to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors.

He served as an adjunct professor in the school of Business Administration at Houston Community College, earning recognition as a trailblazer helping to lead Black students and others in achieving their goals.

For more than half a decade, Boney has served as the host of the nationally recognized daily radio program called "Real Talk with Jeffrey L. Boney."

As Associate Editor for the historic Houston Forward Times, the largest Black-owned and indepen-

dently published newspaper in the South, Boney has carved out quite the following with his various feature stories and articles, including his popular weekly column, "J Boney Speaks."

In November 2017, Boney added Missouri City Councilman to his bevy of responsibilities and now serves as Mayor Pro Tem.

"One of the things that I talk about in my book is reading," stated Boney, who titled one chapter in the tome, "It's Not My Fault Black Folks Don't Read."

"Reading is fundamental," he said before delving into the history of an America that prevented African Americans from gaining a solid education.

"In slavery, it was a crime for Black people to read. If they were caught reading, they would be killed, whipped, lynched, or ostracized," Boney relayed.

"Some even would have their hands cut off. There's a reason they wanted to keep us illiterate and in chains mentally so that they could control us."

Boney continued: "Carter G. Woodson said, 'if you can control a man's thinking, you don't have to go out the back door. He'll build one and walk out of

it."

On what went into his decision to run for public office, Boney offers little hesitation.

"I was always saying that someone needs to run for office. When I looked at the makeup of the city council in Missouri City, and then Donald Trump ran for president in 2016, I said on my radio program that if folks weren't careful, Trump would win. He did, and I said I don't want that same vitriol in my community, so if not me, then who? I felt like I had the time, commitment, and care for my community to become a public servant."

Boney argues that more should involve themselves politically.

"You don't have to run as I did, but you need to be aware," he asserted.

In the book, Boney talks about a time when community meant more than anything to African Americans.

He spoke fondly of a woman named Leola, a busybody for sure but a neighborhood caretaker above all.

"I think people respect and love what is real," Boney insisted. "They know genuine people when they see them. I'm not an actor. I would not say

something here and there. I'm consistent."

He continued: "It's important. We need hard truths. We need to be dealt with as our elders did back in the day. They were straight up with you. Ms. Leola would always snitch on everyone. We'd see her raise her blinds open and peeping at what was happening in her neighborhood, where she raised her kids, owned her home and paid her taxes. Many people didn't like it, but they respected her because she looked out for the neighborhood."

Boney further argues that Black people need to return to their foundational roots and ensure that the community's many issues are addressed "in real, substantive, and practical ways."

"I want to be very clear," Boney again asserted.

"My take on things may shock and even upset your worldview and current societal beliefs, so get strapped in for this challenging ride as you see the world through my lens. Only a dose of pure and unadulterated reality will be enough to motivate, mobilize, and propel us to do more, learn more, give more, help more, have more, and want more."