



North Dallas Gazette

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Poll shows American majority supports affirmative action as the Supreme Court is set to rule

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Most U.S. adults believe colleges should be allowed to consider race as part of their admissions process.

However, an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Research poll also indicated that only some people think race should play a significant role in the final decision.

These findings are critical as the Supreme Court is currently deliberating the fate of affirmative action in higher education.

The May poll, which surveyed a diverse range of participants, demonstrated that 63% of respondents believe the Supreme Court should not prohibit colleges from considering race or ethnicity during admissions.

Remarkably, the poll found that this sentiment was not significantly divided along political or racial lines, indicating a broad consensus on the issue.

While respondents supported considering race in admissions, they placed greater importance on factors such as grades and standardized test scores.

Sixty-eight percent of adults stated that race and ethnicity should not be a significant factor in college



These findings are critical as the Supreme Court is currently deliberating the fate of affirmative action in higher education. (Ian Hutchinson / Unsplash)

admissions decisions.

This preference for academic merit over racial considerations was consistent across different demographic groups.

The poll results suggest that Americans support affirmative action as a policy, even if its future remains uncertain.

The Supreme Court appears ready to rule on lawsuits challenging the admissions systems of prestigious institutions like Harvard University and the University of North Carolina.

With a conservative majority on the court, many college leaders are bracing for a decision that could potentially limit or eliminate the use

of race in admissions.

Interestingly, Americans' views on race in admissions align with the practices colleges claim to follow.

Many colleges, particularly selective ones, assert that race is just one of the numerous factors considered when selecting students for admission.

They emphasize that race is not a dominant influence but can occasionally provide an advantage to underrepresented students in close decisions.

College administrators defend this practice, asserting that racial diversity benefits all students by

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Value of alliances, diplomacy

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People In The News ...



Carmern Lyttle N'guessan



Jay K. Sanders, Ph.D., PPA

NDG Quote of the Week: "The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself—the invisible, inevitable battles inside all of us—that's where it's at."
— Jesse Owens

Carmen Lyttle N'guessan

(24-7PressRelease) -- Carmen Lyttle-N'guessan has earned distinction as a research associate and program manager for Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, leveraging more than three decades of excellence in project management and research. Since 2016, she has focused her efforts on managing projects for funded programs, empowering people by connecting them to research, advising individuals regarding her financial program and writing grants. She is a project



investigator for at least two programs, including for a project that engages in outreach to minority and underserved farmers and ranchers and another promoting agricultural careers

to high school students. Additionally, she has been a project director for the university since 2005 and is a valued member of the Project Management Institute, Inc., the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, Inc. and the American Medical Informatics Association, among other professional organizations.

Likewise dedicated to civil advocacy, Dr. N'guessan volunteers with Big Bend Hospice. She has previously lent her expertise to the Farmer-to-Farmer Program of Partners of the Americas in Kingston,

Jamaica and was a member of the national and Florida chapters of AmeriCorps, earning a Certification of National Service as well as a Certificate of Excellence for Work Performance in AmeriCorps Volunteering in 2019.

Prior to her current role, Dr. N'guessan began her career as an agricultural and integrated science teacher and departmental leader for Oberlin High School in Saint Andrew, Jamaica in 1997. Following this time, she served as a coordinator and program manager for Florida Agricultural and Mechanical

University from 2005 until 2009, functioning as an instructor in 2017 and again in 2020.

Over the course of her career, Dr. N'guessan has also contributed a wealth of research articles to professional journals, including "An economic evaluation of nitrate in groundwater: A contingent valuation survey in Northwest Florida" published by LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing in 2009. In 2016, she was also featured in the ISPOR Student Corner News, which highlighted her team for pioneering research survey on the pharmacy educa-

tion curriculum gaps in universities worldwide to help provide supplemental education. Additionally, she served on the ISPOR Student Peer Advisement Team the same year for the ISPOR Annual International Meeting.

Among her professional accomplishments, Dr. N'guessan is proud to have received an award for being one of the first to develop the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University technology program. The university also presented her with an

See N'guessan, Page 4

Alvin N. White, M. Ed.

(24-7PressRelease) -- Alvin Nathaniel White, MEd, was recently presented with the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award. An accomplished listee, Mr. White celebrates many years' of experience in his professional network and has been noted for achievements, including leadership qualities and the credentials and successes he has accrued in his field.

After 30 years of elementary and middle school education, Mr. White retired from the classroom



in 2011. Shortly thereafter, he became recognized as a self-employed personal trainer as the owner of Alvin's Fitness and Wellness in Staunton, Virginia. Coaching and training clients via a home-based

program at their convenience, he focuses on delivering safe and effective exercises to meet their various health goals. Mr. White also remains abreast of the newest activities and trends to keep his training sessions fresh and exciting and his clients satisfied.

An athlete all his life, the transition from a teacher to a trainer was easy for Mr. White. Looking toward the future, he plans to continue in the field and actively acquire new clientele. He also aims to write a book. Mr. White enjoys giving back during his downtime and is presently volunteering

with the Wildlife Center.

Besides his full-time career in education, Mr. White spent several years as a sportswriter for a local newspaper. His background in sports, which dates to his high school football years, significantly influenced his ability to provide insight, analysis,

and commentary on the world of sports.

Mr. White received a Bachelor of Education at Bridgewater College and a Master of Education at the University of Virginia. He also received certification as a personal trainer in 2013.

Mr. White was named

to his High School Hall of Fame for athletics. He also received several awards for coaching youth sports, which he became involved in shortly after graduating from college. Mr. White attributes his success to having great mentors, his driven and competitive nature, and his integrity.

Kelley Cornish

T.D. Jakes Foundation, a workforce development and community building organization committed to building bridges to opportunity, established by noted entrepreneur and global leader, T.D. Jakes, announced Kelley Cornish as its new CEO. Cornish is a veteran diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) corporate executive who has spent decades championing underrepresented groups.

With a profound commitment to tackling systemic inequities head-on, Cornish envisions an aspect of the Foundation as a dynamic think tank, dedicated to researching and devising innovative solutions for the



most pressing issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion. Cornish's agenda paves the way for transformative change, empowering marginalized communities and fostering a more equitable future for all.

"Bringing Kelley in to lead the Foundation is a

strategic and advantageous relationship that will help our efforts in a unique and inventive way," said Chairman T.D. Jakes of T.D. Jakes Foundation. "We have complete synergy in our visions to uplift communities, and Kelley has the knowledge and experience to bring together corporate and community partners to impact people and transform lives."

"Leading the T.D. Jakes Foundation, an organization that is dedicated to empowering minority communities burdened by systemic barriers is a culmination of the work I've been doing throughout my career," said Cornish. "We want to

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News highlights value of alliances, diplomacy

By Lee H. Hamilton

Creating alliances and exercising diplomacy are key elements of foreign policy, and both are essential for America to play a constructive role in making the world more peaceful and prosperous. Recent developments remind us that these policy tools can be highly successful and deserve our support.

On April 4, Finland became the 31st member nation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The Nordic democracy had long exercised a policy of neutrality in international conflicts, but Russia's invasion of Ukraine early last year pushed it over the edge. Finland shares an 832-mile border with Russia; Vladimir Putin's aggression and expansionist rhetoric are a threat.

NATO is arguably the most successful peacetime alliance in history. Created in 1949 by the United States, Canada and 10 European nations, it had the initial goal of containing the expansion of the Soviet Union after World War II. It was remarkably successful, thanks largely to its found-

ing principle: that an attack against one member would be considered an attack against all.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO took on new responsibilities related to preserving peace. Even so, it was possible to question its relevance. Donald Trump, as president, criticized the organization and complained that other countries were not doing enough to support it.

But with the Ukraine invasion, it became clear that Russia is a threat. NATO has played a key role in supporting Ukraine and uniting the world against Putin. It has helped coordinate assistance and supported the delivery of humanitarian and non-lethal assistance to Ukraine. NATO members have provided extensive military aid, including equipment and weapons. NATO's guarantee of mutual self-defense has given them the confidence to do so.

There isn't perfect unity within NATO. Sweden sought to join the alliance along with Finland but has been blocked by Turkey and Hungary. But NATO's 74-year record of success

demonstrates the importance of alliances in supporting democracy and deterring aggression.

Days after Finland joined NATO, President Joe Biden was in Northern Ireland, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which largely ended decades of violence between Protestants and Catholics in the region. Diplomatic efforts by the United States played a major role in producing the agreement. It's a shining example of successful diplomacy.

Religious and political strife in Ireland go back a long way. Ireland won independence from the United Kingdom a century ago, but Protestant majority Northern Ireland remained part of the U.K. Between the 1960s and 1990s, tensions led to a violent era, known as The Troubles, that left over 3,500 people dead and 50,000 injured. According to one count, there were nearly 37,000 shooting incidents and over 16,000 actual and attempted bombings.

Former Sen. George Mitchell, the U.S. envoy to Northern Ireland, worked tirelessly to end the vio-

lence. He once said the peace talks included 700 days of failure and only one day of success. Importantly, the successful day was the last one. As Biden pointed out, achieving peace was critical to the region's financial success and prosperity, which has seen Northern Ireland's economic output more than double in the past 25 years.

Again, success hasn't been perfect. There are still occasional acts of violence, and Northern Ireland's government has been stymied by disagreements over how to manage border issues that arose with Brexit, the U.K.'s departure from the European Union. But there's no question the Good Friday Agreement changed life in Northern Ireland for the better.

It's easy to become discouraged about the state of the world, given all the violence, conflict and hardship that we read about every day. But NATO and the Good Friday Agreement are examples of how alliances and diplomacy can work. It's worth remembering them when the world's problems seem overwhelming.

The agreement paradox: reducing political polarization through disagreement

By Dr. Luke Conway

In case you hadn't noticed, America is a bit of a mess right now.

The country is as polarized as it has been for a long, long time. In most scientific studies of worldwide increases in polarization, the United States ranks at or near the top. Americans have taken note: Recent polls show that polarization is consistently listed as a main concern among the U.S. populace. Lots of Americans are looking around and wondering "why the heck are all these groups shouting at each oth-

er all the time?"

The way out of our polarized society is to stop caring so much about polarization.

To see why that is, let's start with a psychological fact: Disagreement bothers us. That's why people love words like "together" and "unity" and hate words like "torn asunder" and "divorce." Our ideal worlds are generally not populated with separation from others. Thus, it is hardly surprising that psychological research shows we have a fundamental need to belong. We want to fit in; and agreement is one of the main ways we do that.

These motives to agree with others are often healthy. There is nothing wrong with wanting to get along. There is nothing wrong with wanting to belong to a group. We were made for fellowship.

However, ironically, this desire for agreement—when given a too-exalted place—can undermine the very thing it is trying to create. Often, we feel so strongly that we want agreement that we put in top-down pressures to force agreement. We want everyone to agree with us about vaccines, so we force everyone to say the same thing. We want everyone to agree

with us about religion, so we force people to say only one point of view.

But this kind of forced agreement, even when done with good motives, is a disaster for society. Research sheds some light on why this is the case. As Stanley Milgram's and Solomon Asch's classic research taught us, to a surprising degree, people comply with social pressure. If you try and force people to agree, it generally works. But while pressure creates superficial agreement, it also causes two other things to happen simultaneously. First, even if people comply,

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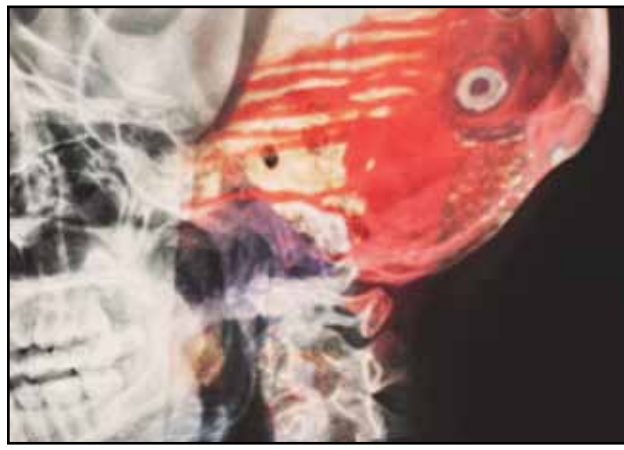
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UC San Diego Health sheds light on stroke awareness

Every minute counts when it comes to responding to a stroke. It is the second leading cause of death worldwide according to the World Health Organization. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity and diabetes are the leading causes of stroke. The faster a patient is diagnosed and treated, the better their chances are for recovery.

Strokes occur when either a blood clot or hemorrhage interrupts the brain's blood supply, and timely treatment is essential to restore blood flow and prevent death or lifelong disability.

As a certified Comprehensive Stroke Center, UC San Diego Health experts



are national leaders in the development of novel therapeutics and diagnostics for stroke care.

"Our interdisciplinary team is leading the future of stroke care in both the hospital and laboratory," said Alexander Khaled, MD, MBA, chair of the Department of Neurological

Surgery at UC San Diego School of Medicine and neurosurgeon at UC San Diego Health. "As a clinical and research center, we are committed to advancing new techniques and treatments to reduce stroke risk, prevent secondary stroke events and find solutions to repair and recover the

brain."

UC San Diego Health was one of the early adapters of a new artificial intelligence (AI) technology called Viz.ai, a platform that is used to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of stroke by searching for signs in the patient's CT scan.

The region's only academic medical center is also a leader in endovascular and surgical treatment of stroke, using specially designed instruments to remove blood clots and restore blood flow in the brain. With the use of new catheter-based systems, some stroke patients who may have died, or been left immobile or unable to speak, are regaining functionality.

Warning signs of a stroke

(BE FAST)

The American Stroke Association recommends seeking immediate medical attention if you notice any of these warning signs:

- **Balance.** Is the person experiencing a sudden loss of balance or coordination?
- **Eyes.** Is there sudden blurred, double or loss of vision?
- **Face.** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- **Arms.** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward? Or is one arm unable to rise?
- **Speech.** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is his or her speech slurred or sound abnormal?
- **Time.** If you observe any of these signs, it's time

to call 911 or emergency medical help immediately.

UC San Diego Health was third in the nation to receive the prestigious designation of Comprehensive Stroke Center by the Joint Commission, which recognizes the significant resources in infrastructure, staff and training necessary to provide state-of-the-art complex stroke care. UC San Diego is one of few health systems in the nation with two sites for comprehensive stroke care, located at UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest and Jacobs Medical Center in La Jolla. Patients with a brain hemorrhage or stroke have better outcomes with fewer complications at a Comprehensive Stroke Center.

Marijuana is going mainstream...But does that make it safe?

OXFORD (MS) —As marijuana is made legal in more parts of the country, it's becoming more normalized than ever before. Now that it is more widely legal, available, and accepted, teens (and even their parents) may believe there are no consequences. Despite most states' attempts to limit exposure to young people, marijuana use is deeply engrained in our culture. Even parents might be wondering what's the big deal if their children become regular marijuana users.

Dr. Larry Walker says it's a big deal indeed. Teens who use cannabis are at risk for a range of serious mental and health-related problems.

"Parents and young people alike may believe that marijuana use is not problematic, but that couldn't be further from the truth where teens and adolescents are concerned," says Dr. Larry Walker, interim director of the National Center for Cannabis Research and Education (NCCRE) at the School of Pharmacy at the University of Mississippi.

"Starting marijuana, especially in one's early years, sets a pattern that can be devastating. We know enough to know that drug abuse in young people changes the way their brains develop."

Teens and young adults need to know that this isn't your mother's or your grandmother's mild marijuana. Street marijuana is far more potent than in recent decades, and it is also more dangerous and addictive now. Dealers and experimenters are finding new ways to strengthen the

drug and rapidly distribute it to the brain. Dr. Walker shares that since the early '90s, the potency of marijuana, which was then running from 3 or 4 percent, is now approaching an average 20% (and many samples are much higher than that). There's been almost a tenfold increase in the potency of marijuana, not to mention other changes that may be going on as we're breeding the plants and selecting them. Someone who isn't well accustomed to using modern marijuana is vulnerable to experienc-

ing serious problems due to its potency alone.

"Parents today have no idea what their children face using street marijuana," says podcast host and student wellbeing activist David Magee, who, in his role as director of operations at the William Magee Institute for Student Wellbeing, focuses on helping students with alcohol and other drug education and support.

There's a link between marijuana use and mental health struggles. "And many students themselves

are duped, unsure of what's happening to them or why. I hear it all the time, and it's the single most surprising thing I learn from so many students I get to engage with from throughout the country."

A number of studies show that there is an exaggerated incidence in mental health and mood disorders in teens who are chronic marijuana users. Young people are much more susceptible to issues ranging from depression, aggres-

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N'guessan, from Page 2

Apple Award, an Outstanding Support and Dedication Award for Help Developing an Academic Program and an Outstanding Student Recognition for Highest GPA and Exemplifying the Educational Philosophy in 2006. She was later honored with a Travel Award for Research Presentation at an International Professional Conference by the

university's FAMU Graduate Studies and Research in 2014 and received a similar Student Shadow Day Internship Travel Award from Xcenda (now the AmeriSourceBergen Corporation) in 2017. In the 2021 academic year, she received a Career Champion of the Year Award.

Prior to embarking on her professional journey, Dr.

N'guessan earned an Associate of Science in agriculture from The College of Agriculture, Science, and Education in Port Antonio, Jamaica in 1986. Following this accomplishment, she attained a Bachelor of Science in agricultural business from Louisiana State University in 1992 and a Master of Science in agricultural sciences from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in

2003. She subsequently gained a Master of Education in industrial arts and technology education in 2006 and a Doctor of Philosophy in pharmaceutical sciences in 2017, both from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University.

Well-qualified in her field, Dr. N'guessan holds numerous certifications, including a basic life support for healthcare providers certification, a graduate

certificate in health informatics and a "Dealing with Dementia" certification from the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, among other qualifications. Having grown up in a small, rural area in Jamaica with a family of farmers, she was keenly aware of the challenges inherent to the agricultural industry from a young age. She aspired to make a difference in the lives of the individu-

als in her community, pursuing her education at a vocational school focusing on agriculture. Within the coming years, she intends to continue her work, utilizing her skills to make decisions in her research that will change lives for the better.

Carmen Lyttle-N'guessan has been included in Marquis Who's Who. As in all Marquis Who's Who biographical volumes.



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Dallas CASA seeks Black volunteers for critical mission

Dallas CASA needs more Black volunteers to serve Black children living in foster care. More than 43% of Dallas County children removed from homes and placed into foster care are Black. However, only 15% of Dallas CASA volunteer advocates serving these children are Black. A CASA volunteer can make a critical and immediate impact in a child's life. Learn how you can help.

Dallas CASA serves children and families of all cultures, abilities, identities and backgrounds. The agency is committed to advocating for the best interest of all children in the foster care system and pro-



viding each child with the highest quality volunteer advocacy possible. To meet this goal, Dallas CASA strives to recruit volunteers of diverse backgrounds so that our volunteers reflect the diversity of the children served.

Guest speakers will include:

- Corey Anthony, senior

vice president engineering and operations AT&T, Dallas CASA volunteer advocate and past chair of the Dallas CASA Board of Directors

- Priscilla Anthony, long-time volunteer advocate at Dallas CASA and finalist for the 2021 Nonprofit Volunteer of the Year Award given by D CEO Magazine

and Communities Foundation of Texas

- Cynt Marshall, CEO of the Dallas Mavericks, current chair of the Dallas CASA Board of Directors and Dallas CASA volunteer child advocate

The trio will share their experiences being Dallas CASA volunteer advocates and how cultural connec-

tions can strengthen a volunteer's advocacy.

The event will take place 6 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, June 29. To register, email Nancy Nevarez at nnevarez@dallascasa.org.

Dallas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) seeks to protect children, restore childhood and help child victims of abuse or neglect achieve their full potential. The agency's trained and supervised community volunteers are assigned by judges to advocate for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and are living in the protective care of the state. For many

children in foster care, their Dallas CASA volunteer is the only consistent, caring adult in their lives during a frightening, uncertain time. Now in its 43rd year, Dallas CASA serves more children than any of the more than 900 CASA programs nationwide. While Dallas CASA envisions a day when all children experience safe and enriching childhoods, the agency currently provides a child advocate for every Dallas child in need. In 2022, 1,324 Dallas CASA volunteers were assigned to advocate for 2,611 children in protective care. To learn more, visit dallascasa.org.

Dallas jumps 10 spots on ParkScore Index as D.C. remains #1

Trust for Public Land recently announced that Dallas placed 43rd on the 2023 ParkScore index, an index that evaluates park systems in the 100 most populous U.S. cities. The new ranking pulls Dallas up to 43rd place in the nation, up ten spots from last year. This, because Dallas has dramatically increased its investments in parks and improved Dallas park amenities. Per person, Dallas now spends \$124 per person.

"I am incredibly proud that Dallas is developing innovative green spaces at an unprecedented pace," Dallas Mayor Eric L. Johnson said. "Parks are critical infrastructure in a modern city . . . I am committed to ensuring Dallas becomes the city with the highest level of park access in Texas."

Why is it important to build parks in Dallas? While researchers don't yet fully understand all the ways that nature benefits health, we know that they probably include stress reduction, attention restoration, improved immune function, and inhaling biogenic compounds released by trees. Not only do trees and plants offset carbon emissions and maintain a healthier air to breathe. Simply being in



Green space serves as a gathering place to promote community cohesion. (Jacob Creswick / Unsplash)

a quiet natural place promotes stress reduction and attention restoration.

A range of studies confirm health improvements, including lowered blood pressure, improved birth outcomes and healthier child development, reduced cardiovascular risk, less anxiety and depression, better mental concentration, and enhanced sleep quality.

Green space also serves as a gathering point that fosters community cohesion, allowing for people to know their neighbors and form social bonds that promote health and safety," says Dr. Georges C. Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association."

Insufficient social connection is tied to disease, stroke, anxiety, depression, and dementia, the U.S. Sur-

geon General reports. And even without structured group activities, parks offer a place where people can meet and get to know each other, fostering bridgebuilding between different racial and ethnic groups.

Texas cities are among the national leaders working to promote community health in its parks, including Dallas, which offers health screenings, and Plano, which gives free guided nature walks. Fort Worth also offers the Blue Zones Project to promote walking and healthy social activity in parks. In fact, cities ranking in the top 25 are healthier places to live, being 9% less likely to report poor mental health and 21% less likely to be physically inactive, according to newly published research by The Trust for Public Land.

Most cities have had great success with programs that welcome beginners or those uncomfortable in traditional sports-oriented settings and report those reporting non-competitive activities, like wellness-oriented yoga or dance as most effective. Many programs have added accessible equipment to also welcome those with disabilities.

"Innovation is the key to future success." Today, parks departments are writing new playbooks to ensure residents can enjoy the

physical and mental health benefits of parks, said Regas.

For the third year, Washington, DC ranks the highest in the country on the ParkScore index. While 24% of land in D.C. is reserved for parks, park space per capita is distributed nearly equally in Washington, meaning Black, Latino, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders are equally likely to live within a 10-minute-walk of a park as whites.

In other parts of the coun-

try, neighborhoods that are mostly Black or low income, have access to between 42 and 43% less park space than white Americans.

Plano ranked first among Texas cities and continues to place high nationally at 16. It received high marks for its large investment and median park size of 13.8 acres. Eighty percent of Plano residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, above the national ParkS-

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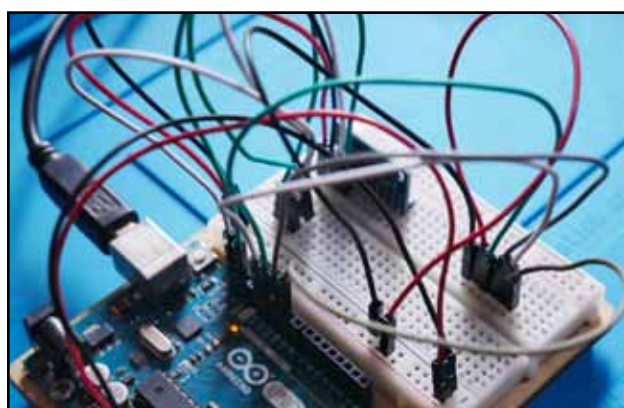
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T.D. Jakes Foundation, Dallas Mavericks, Goldman Sachs and Steward Family Foundation partner to host STEAM Academy

T.D. Jakes Foundation, a workforce development and community building foundation committed to building bridges to opportunity, announces its fourth annual STEAM Academy in partnership with the Dallas Mavericks, Goldman Sachs and the Steward Family Foundation. Running June 5th to June 16th from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., the two-week creative science program for students ages 11-15 will focus on engineering for week one and technology integration and innovation for week two. The event will bring together more than 1,000 students over two weeks to participate in a free, immersive experience in technology and innovation.

“Our program encourages students to work to-



gether and provides them with experiences to explore, create and problem-solve using STEAM methods,” said Chairman T.D. Jakes. “Our goal with the STEAM Academy is to create a spark that can lead students to career paths that they might have not have ever considered. We want to provide exposure, so they know the kinds of job opportunities that exist, and

that there are no limits.”

“There’s no greater joy than to give,” said David L. Steward, founder and chairman of World Wide Technology and Kingdom Capital. “Our family learned from our parents the importance of service and giving back to our neighbors and community.”

“We are honored to be presenting STEAM Acad-

emy again,” said Cynt Marshall, CEO of the Dallas Mavericks. “Over the past four years, we have seen the immense, life-changing impact this program has on the students who attend, and it’s a privilege to partner with T.D. Jakes Foundation on yet another innovative experience.”

Goldman Sachs Texas Engineering designed and will run the first week of programming focusing on the engineering process and mindset. Students will hear from inspirational speaker and musician, SaulPaul, and then take a deep dive into technology. Tech industry leaders, college professors, researchers and students, and Goldman Sachs leaders will give presentations and keynotes.

Students will also participate in hands-on activities guided by nearly 200 volunteer Goldman Sachs software engineers. They will learn how to code and apply their new knowledge to create digital music, program electronics and compete in eGaming and a virtual car racing grand prix.

“Goldman Sachs is committed to giving back to our communities and participating in this event is always a highlight for our Texas Engineering team. This camp is a great way for our software engineers to work alongside students and provide them with insights on what it means to be a STEAM professional,” said Ramanathan Narayanan, Head of Goldman Sachs Texas Engineering.

“We are excited to continue our partnership with the T.D. Jakes Foundation and the Dallas Mavericks, and we are grateful for the instruction and technology brought to the STEAM Academy this year by AWS Deep Racer, the University of Texas at Dallas’ professors, students and their Dallas Formula Racing Team and Veena Somareddy, CEO of NeuroRehab VR.”

The second week of the program in partnership with Robotopia will be geared towards turning today’s gamers into tomorrow’s roboticists, in which students will emerge into an exciting week of robotics, engineering and other fun advanced technologies to shape their innovative mindset for a bright future.

Dallas Public Library kicks off summer, incentivizing reading in SMART Summer reading challenge

The Dallas Public Library’s SMART Summer program will be offering incentives for reading to Dallas kids this summer. The programs will bring science, math, art, reading and technology activities to all 30 library locations.

Reading fosters social-emotional development and elevates the importance of lifelong learning as. A child who grows up around books learns to value reading, and the books they read become a part of their identities.

The summer programs provide educational experiences that are free and



Suad Kamadeen / Unsplash

which may otherwise be out of reach for a number of Dallas families, said SMART Summer Honorary Chair Mayor Eric L. Johnson.

After kicking off the summer on June 3 with parties across the city, the libraries are now offering students 18 and younger,

who sign up for the SMART Summer reading challenge, a free book for every 10 days they read at least 20 minutes, up to five times through August 12. When students have read 50 days, they will be entered in the grand prize drawings. Plus, there are online activities they can complete on their

own for more chances to win.

Kids can also flex their science, math, art and technology skills at the weekly programs. Events include performers, such as magicians, music, and live animals, and hands-on projects that include cardboard engineering, games, hand-made instruments, and more.

“SMART Summer has reading at its core, but the library’s programs help students practice their science and math skills as well,” Director of Libraries Jo Giudice said. “SMART Summer keeps those skills

sharp.”

Reading in summer helps kids continue to learn and develop despite that school is out.

Adults can also participate. Parents and caregivers who read set a good example for their kids and make reading a family value.

“The City of Dallas is a national leader in youth engagement,” Johnson said. “SMART Summer is one example of the incredible array of free and low-cost activities offered by the City of Dallas that will allow our kids and teens to keep cool, get active, expand their knowledge, and

— most importantly — stay safe this summer.”

Sponsors include Pizza Hut and First Book, The Eugene McDermott Foundation, Margot Perot, Lauren and Will Waldrop, Santander Consumer USA, Altrusa International (Downtown Dallas), The Freebie Guy, Southern Methodist University and Whataburger. For the complete list of sponsors, visit www.supportdpl.org/smart-summer

Online registration is now open at www.dallaslibrary.org/smartsummer.

For more information, visit www.dallaslibrary.org/smartsummer.

Celebrate dad with immersive Disney animation at Lighthouse Artspace Dallas

This Father’s Day can bring magical memories with dad at Immersive Disney Animation at Lighthouse Artspace in Downtown Dallas, where the ultimate interactive experience can make dad feel like a kid again.

From modern produc-

tions like Encanto, Zootopia, and Frozen, to all the classics--The Lion King, Peter Pan, and Pinocchio. Audiences will feel like they’ve entered the incredible worlds of beloved Disney characters and become one with them. Creating iconic animated stories for

all ages for nearly a century, Walt Disney Animation Studios has joined forces with North America’s top creator of experiential projection exhibitions (including The Original Immersive Van Gogh) to present the music and artistry within Disney Animation’s

canon of films.

Interactive features within the projection show include responsive floor projection design that moves with the audience and custom bracelets that light up in sync with the projections, based on the audiences’ movements through the

galleries. In a particularly show-stopping moment, the Gazillion Bubbles special effects team fills the 500,000 cubic feet of galleries with bubbles.

Ross captures the excitement both Disney and Lighthouse Immersive feel for the project as he

describes how it begins: “Just imagine journeying through Zootopia with Judy Hopps, diving to the ocean floor with Ariel, flying on a magic carpet with Aladdin, and stepping into Casita with Mirabel and the fam-

See DAD, Page 13

Pickleball courts coming to PSA in partnership with Plano Parks and Recreation

The City of Plano Parks and Recreation Department is excited to announce a new partnership with Plano Sports Authority (PSA) to provide additional Pickleball courts for our community. It all starts on June 19th.

Due to the explosion of pickleball popularity, residents have been asking for more courts. The City has heard their requests, and

they are responding. Plano City Council members approved a change to the City's lease agreement that will allow the public to play pickleball at PSA 1, located at 6500 Preston Meadow Drive in Carpenter Park.

There are currently several opportunities to play Pickleball in Plano. Twelve indoor courts are available during scheduled open play times at Plano rec-

reation centers, including Carpenter, Liberty, Oak Point and Tom Muehlenbeck Recreation Centers. There are also 32 outdoor courts available at several Plano ISD school sites and at High Point Park Tennis Center, where there are 8 outdoor lighted pickleball courts. Pickleball is available outdoors at Bowman, Carpenter, Otto, Robinson and Rice Middle Schools,

and High Point Park Tennis Center. Each school-based court has four outdoor pickleball courts (Bowman has eight pickleball courts) that are free and open to the public after school hours and when not in use by PISD.

More information about the new Pickleball courts will be available on both the Plano Parks and Recreation and PSA websites.



Joan Azeka/Unsplash

Spread the Love launches to feed kids this summer

MESQUITE – The City of Mesquite has launched its annual Spread the Love campaign to help feed kids over the summer break.

Residents are invited to donate jars of peanut butter and jelly during the collection campaign which runs through Labor Day, Sept. 4, 2023.

This year, the City also is calling for donations of alternative butters that are safe for kids with nut allergies, such as sunflower

seed butter or pumpkin seed butter.

Donations are being collected at four locations:

- George A. Venner, Sr. Municipal Center, 1515 N. Galloway Ave.
- Mesquite City Hall, 757 N. Galloway Ave.
- Main Library, 300 W. Grubb Drive
- North Branch Library, 2600 Oates Drive

The City partners with Sharing Life Community Outreach to distribute the

food collected. Sharing Life is a Mesquite-based nonprofit that runs a food pantry and provides other services including a clothes closet, job placement assistance and emergency financial support. Sharing Life accepts financial donations toward Spread the Love year-round at sharing.life/donate.

The Spread the Love program was developed because many kids rely on free or reduced lunches

during the school year but don't have access to these programs over the summer. Spread the Love provides nutritious food kids can make at home by themselves.

Since the campaign started in 2016, Spread the Love has brought in hundreds of pounds of food as well as thousands of dollars from sponsorships. To learn more, visit www.cityofmesquite.com/spreadthelove.



Aaron Doucet / Unsplash

POLL, from Page 1

fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

The poll shed light on the uncertain landscape of race-conscious admissions, as the extent to which colleges consider race in their admissions processes remains unknown.

Notably, nine states, including California, Michigan, and Florida, have outlawed the use of race in admissions.

Among all respondents, 13% believed that race should be a very or extremely important part of the admission process, while 18% considered it somewhat important.

Black and Hispanic adults expressed a stronger belief in the importance of race in admissions compared to other racial groups.

The poll also revealed similar attitudes toward considering gender in admissions. Only 9% of adults regard gender as very important, with 14% perceiving it as somewhat important.

Men and women shared similar views regarding the role of gender in college admissions.

By contrast, most Americans (62%) believed that high school grades should carry substantial weight in admissions, with 30% considering them somewhat important.

Nearly half of the respondents indicated that standardized test scores should be highly important.

Historically, the Supreme Court has upheld affirmative action in its decisions since 1978.

The ongoing lawsuits against Harvard and UNC accuse these universities of discriminating against white and Asian students. However, lower courts have upheld the admissions systems of both schools.

The poll also examined the significance of other factors in college admissions, such as athletics and family ties.

Interestingly, most Americans believed that athletic ability should have little in-

fluence on admissions (9% very important, 29% somewhat important).

Some participants believed family ties should be a significant factor in the admissions process.

Legacy preference, the practice of granting preferential treatment to the children of alums, has faced criticism in recent years for allegedly favoring wealthy, white students.

Some prestigious institutions, like Amherst College and Johns Hopkins University, have discontinued this practice.

If the Supreme Court strikes affirmative action, some experts speculate that more colleges will follow suit and abandon legacy preferences, thereby removing potential obstacles for students of color.

The poll also gauged public confidence in the Supreme Court as a whole. Following the court's controversial Dobbs decision last year, which overturned Roe v. Wade and allowed states to impose severe restrictions on abortion, confidence in the court has di-

minished.

The poll found that only 12% of Americans expressed great confidence in the court, while 48% had some confidence, and 39% had hardly any.

As the Supreme Court deliberates its decision on affirmative action, the poll results indicate a nuanced perspective among Americans.

While there is broad sup-

port for considering race in admissions, it is clear that most individuals prioritize academic factors and want to avoid race being a determining factor in the final admissions decision.

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Summer tennis tutoring scholarships set at Juneteenth Tennis Exhibition

Let's enjoy a different spin on Juneteenth. Celebrate it with tennis at the Juneteenth Tennis Exhibition at Kiest Tennis Center!

The Juneteenth Tennis Exhibition has family fun for everyone. High school players from Southern Dallas will participate, hustling to earn three tennis tutoring scholarships.

In addition, two special events are scheduled. One is the awesome Celebrity Doubles Match. Celebrities include Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson; City Council Member Chad West; Director of Missional Outreach and Assistant to the Bishop



Director of Children/Youth and Lay Speaker at The Village UMC, Melissa Clay; Director of Missional Outreach and Assistant to the Bishop of the North Texas Conference, UMC Rev. Andy Lewis; City Council Member Chad West; and District Superintendent for the North Texas Conference, UMC, Edlen Cowley. (Courtesy photo)

of the North Texas Conference, UMC, Rev. Andy Lewis; District Superintendent for the North Texas Conference, UMC, Rev. Edlen Cowley; and Director of Children/Youth and Lay Speaker at The Village UMC, Melissa Clay.

The charity event is or-



ganized by Camp Wisdom UMC and primarily supports its Youth Outreach.

We hope to spur more interest in tennis among youth and in more communities, says General Berry, Jr., committee chair. "We're also thrilled to have Chad, Melissa, Edlen and Andy



in our Celeb Match—accomplished folks making a difference. The gathering simply demonstrates wide support for our program.

"It's for a good cause, and folks attending should have plenty of fun seeing our celebs play their hearts out and sweat a little bit."



The "New School vs. Old School" Match is also scheduled to return. "It pits two young players against two very old dudes," Berry says.

Tickets may be purchased at the event or online at tithe.ly. Simply scan the QR code here, which will take

you to the payment process. From the drop-down menu, select Tennis Exhibition, and scroll to the bottom. Please place a "check mark" to cover the processing fee.

The exhibition opens at 7 a.m. on June 17 at Kiest Tennis Center, located 2324 W. Kiest Rd., Dallas, 75224. The celeb match is scheduled to start at 8:30 a.m.

For more information, contact the Camp Wisdom's Administrative Assistant, Pat Wilson at info@cwumcdallas.org, 817-680-6203, or, Ms. Beasley at minnie.faye@sbcglobal.net or 214-205-9991.

Winners announced at 12th annual Broadway Dallas High School Musical Theatre Awards

High school students, teachers, parents, friends, arts advocates, celebrities and city officials celebrated as winners and scholarship recipients were announced at the 12th Annual Broadway Dallas High School Musical Theatre Awards (HSMTA). The ceremony was hosted by Broadway veteran Major Attaway and took place live at the Music Hall at Fair Park on Saturday, June 3, featuring student performances, award presentations including \$60,000 in scholarships, and acceptance speeches from the winners.

The Broadway Dallas HSMTA aim to inspire and honor excellence in high school musical theater, and to recognize the importance of musical theater and arts education within the North Texas community. This regional program culminates at the Music Hall with an awards ceremony, modeled after the Tony Awards®, to recognize outstanding musical theater productions and students.

The 2023 Outstanding Musical Award went to Guyer High School's production of Anastasia and the awards for Outstanding Lead Performer were presented to Fabiola Carabal-



The cast of "The Wiz" at Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts scored high marks with the judges at the Broadway Dallas awards presentation. (Courtesy photos)

lo Quijada (Tyler Legacy High School) and Corbin Ross (Guyer High School).

A list of all 2023 winners, participating high schools, and their productions can

be found at <https://broadwaydallas.org/education-community/hsmta/>.

"As we always say, the Broadway Dallas High School Musical Theatre Awards is our favorite night of the year and this year's ceremony was nothing short of spectacular," said Ken Novice, president and CEO of Broadway Dallas. "We are so proud of these hardworking students and teachers, and it's our honor to be able to celebrate them on the Music Hall stage."

Congratulations to all the 2023 nominees and winners!"

A total of 74 productions from 72 participating high schools were evaluated by a diverse group of highly qualified judges from the North Texas theater community. Awards were presented in 14 categories and scholarships were awarded to outstanding graduating seniors who were nominated by their teachers and selected by the Broadway

Dallas scholarship panel. Through funds raised by private donations, Broadway Dallas HSMTA awarded \$60,000 in scholarships to continue to foster the great talent North Texas has to offer. To date, the Broadway Dallas HSMTA College Scholarship program has awarded more than \$500,000 in cash scholarships to deserving students.

The live ceremony was

See WINNERS, Page 12



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"Still I Rise"



"Up from Slavery to Freedom"





'Puzzles of Color' offer a proud challenge for hours of fun

Puzzles of Color, a family-owned jigsaw puzzle company, which produces frameable pieces of art created by artists of color. The art celebrates their experiences and creativity.

Started by brother and sister Ericka Chambers and William Jones, the company is based locally in Richardson.

Their mission -- to promote interactive art featuring the works of artists of



color and to create experiences and memories to last a lifetime.

Puzzles of Color founders began doing puzzles as a family in elementary

school. "We enjoyed the challenges and spending time together toward a common goal," their website states. "But in doing so, we noticed we seldom found images that represented us and our experiences."

Chambers said she got the idea for the company during the pandemic when she and her family began cutting jigsaw puzzles with a machine purchased in Er-

icka's garage.

Since, the company has gained the attention of local CBS news and other outlets, they were able to expand to a warehouse, drop two more collections, and add children's puzzles. Recently, their puzzles have been featured in every Target store.

The art represented comes for Black artists, including Nolan Anderson, Domonique Brown, Craig

Carter, Ija Charles, Nick Davis, Kaitlin Edwards, Kwanzaa Edwards, Laylie Frazier, Mariell Guzman, Hanifa Abdul Hameed, Emmanuel Ignatius, Stephanie Littlebird, Aaron Marner, Solonge & Aquabah, Bryant Small, Melrick Steele, Joseph Watson, Tabitha Whitley and Lauren Young.

For more information, go to www.puzzlesofcolor.com.

Film Review: 'White Men Can't Jump' may be past its time

By Dwight Brown
NNPA film critic

(**1/2) White men who can't dunk and the Black men who chide them was a fresh, chuckle-worthy idea back in the day. In today's world, not so much.

When b-ballers Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson trashed talked each other in the R-rated 1992 sports/comedy "White Men Can't Jump," their digs were edgy and hilarious. In this update, with Sinqua Walls (Friday Night Lights) and Jack Harlow (Grammy nominee Best Melodic Rap Performance for "First Class"), the humor seems too homogenized, too PG-13.

Calmatic, the former Grammy winning director of Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road" video, marked his feature film debut with the 2023 update of "House Party." The dance party scene in the film showed glimmers of his brilliance, but the rest of the footage proved that he was still working out the kinks in his technique as he transitions from video king to filmmaker.

He holds the reins over this revise, and this time out, nothing stands out visually. Not even the way he shoots basketball games. When the ball and players are in motion, it's a perfect time to show fluid, jerky, in-your-face camera movement and flaunt DP skills. There is none. Nothing is eye-catching. This is a missed opportunity.

Kenya Barris, whose TV comedy chops are superb ("Black-ish,") and film screenplays are hit ("Girls



Jack Harlow and Sinqua Walls in *White Men Can't Jump*.
(Photo via NNPA)

Trip") and miss ("Shaft"), scripted this venture.

The characters are set, and there are problems aplenty. The narrative builds, fizzles, builds, fizzles...

As a teen basketball champ, Kamal (Walls) had a bright future and a strong parental figure (Lance Reddick, TV's Blacklist). An incident blew his chances for success, and now he's a twentysomething set adrift and playing L.A. streetball where he can. Jeremy ("Harlow") damaged his ACLS so bad playing the game. He swore to his lady friend Tatiana (Laura Harrier, "BlacKkKlansman")—and his knees—that he was giving up the brown ball.

The Black brother and young white man meet. Yea, there's some tension between the alphas as they assess each other's skills, game and hustle. A bet is placed on who can win a game. It's on. Kamal: "You think you're slick, huh. Showing up to courts dressed like a dumbass, acting like you can't hoop." Jeremy: "You assumed I couldn't hoop, because I'm white, which

is incredibly outdated." Kamal: "No, I assumed you couldn't hoop because you were dressed like a white girl at Whole Foods."

Before you know it, they've joined forces. They're hustling, betting on games they set up with unsuspecting players. Jeremy is the bait. Kamal, his friends Renzo (Myles Bullock) and Speedy (Vince Staples) join in. The boys are making cash. Circumstances and money woes push them towards a basketball competition that could be lucrative.

Jeremy has Tatiana as an anchor. Kamal's woman/friend Imani (Teyana Taylor, A Thousand and One) keeps him grounded. The two couples struggle, differently. One is well off, the other, always looking for a payday. But both relationships have trouble with deception. Gen Zers will relate to their challenges—too old to be totally irresponsible but too young to have it all together. The turbulent history between Kamal and his dad adds a depth that gives the shallow narrative needed umph.

But keep in mind that

the model for this film was an uproarious comedy that was thorny, with putdowns, insults, jibes and banter that were delivered by the mischievous comedy king Harrelson and consummate actor, Snipes. They milked each scene with macho bravura and laughs. These two new leads don't recreate that tense energy. And in this screenplay, Kamal's buddies, played by Bullock and Staples, are the court jesters,

Greek chorus and wacky observers of race relations, while Taylor, Harrier and Reddick get weighed down in drama. It's different.

Harlow is feeling his way around movie sets for the first time. He delivers his lines, shows some personality but has a lot to learn. Walls is a veteran but doesn't exhibit the command of humor that could have made his character more engaging. Smarter casting would

have paired Pete Davidson and Kevin Hart. The visuals alone of tall young skinny Pete and short older muscular Kevin hustling basketball games would be hysterical. That's before they even opened their mouths. And we know both can talk a lot of funnies—t!

Considering this is a film and not a TV show, the lack of locations is noticeable.

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LIVE NATION

Grace Jones lights up the 2023 Blue Note Jazz Festival

By Dwight Brown
Entertainment Critic
DwightBrownInk.com
and NNPA News Wire

She started off with a bang!

The 2023 Blue Note Jazz Festival takes place all over New York City, May 31st to July 2nd. From the Blue Note's iconic Greenwich Village jazz club (Ron Carter's Foursight Quartet) to Summer Stage in Central Park (Buddy Guy), BRIC in Brooklyn (Anderson Paak, Robert Glasper) and Manhattan's Hammerstein Ballroom, former site of the Metropolitan Opera Company. Hammerstein kicked off the fest with the diva of divas, Grace Jones.



Dwight Brown

A scheduled start time of 8pm was laughable, considering Jones's penchant for being late. And, not feasible when literally thousands of fans had to be screened before entry into the 12,000 sq ft venue. A gigantic dance

floor is the centerpiece. A big, wide stage is in the front of the cavernous room, with boxed seating on the sides and two balconies in the back. Thousands of concert

See GRACE, Page 12

Nothing but the Blues' makes a Dallas appearance at the Meyerson June 23-25

The blues originated in this country in the southern states after the Civil War. Largely created and played by Southern Black men, many of whom were agricultural workers, the music was influenced by field hollers, shouts and chants, minstrel shows, ragtime, folk, and gospel.

Explore the early music that started the Blues and is at the heart and soul of nearly every form of popular music of the past 100 years, as we pay tribute to Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Ma Rainey, Louis Armstrong, and more. These are the first musi-

cal legends who sang their way into history.

This concert features the stunning vocals of Shayna Steele returning to the Meyerson stage to perform with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. There's no need to boast about her work. Her impressive credits speak for themselves. Her colleagues praise her ability, her dedication and drive to perfecting her craft as a professional singer and knockout performer. With a voice that the London Jazz News says "unleashes enough voltage to light up the West End," Shayna Steele has made her mark

as an in-demand vocalist in the studio and on the stage.

Join us for an exciting concert of songs that influenced artists like Eric Clapton, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin and countless others. Songs include "St. Louis Blues," "House of the Rising Sun," "Nobody Knows When You're Down and Out," and "Baby Won't You Please Come Home."

The show runs June 23-24 at 7:30 p.m. and at 3:00 p.m. June 25 at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center at 2301 Flora St. in Dallas, 75201.

Film Review: 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse'

by Dwight Brown
Film Critic for NNPA and
DwightBrownInk.com

(**1/2) Buckle up, Spider-Man fans. What feels like a barrage of one billion cartoon images is coming your way. Digital effects so massive and rapid-fire your eyeballs will scream for mercy.

The Oscar®-winning 2018 Spider-Man Into the Spider-Verse is a distant 2018 memory. Back then bug-bit, highschooler Miles-Morales (Shameik Moore) lived with his Puerto Rican mom Rio (Luna Lauren Velez) and African American, police officer dad Jefferson Davis (Bryan Tyree Henry) in Brooklyn. He'd been mentored by OG Spider-Man Peter J. Parker (Jake Johnson) and befriended and smitten by Gwen Stacey (Hailee Steinfeld)—aka Spider-Woman. Miles and other folks banded together to fight what was evil. It was a challenging feat made easy to discern by Phil Lord and Rodney Rothman's screenplay and expertly directed by Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey and Rodney Rothman.



That filmmaking team has turned over the reins to directors Joaquim Dos Santos, Kemp Powers and Justin K. Thompson. Phil Lord's co-writing team now includes Christopher Miller and Dave Callahan. The difference is night and day. The ultra-contemporary dialogue sounds like kids on the street expounding on life, parents who don't understand them and the ambivalent feelings they have for others. Multiple extraneous characters are piled on to the point of oversaturation, but are easy to tell apart, nonetheless. The plotline splinters in a various directions. Some fascinating. Some not. Still, what's on view is astounding to see 99% of the time.

The Spot (Jason Schwartzman) is a villain who blames Miles for his deformed existence. The white ghost of a figure, with

black spots on his body, seethes: "I'm going to take everything from you like you took everything from me!" Spider-Man's clear assignment is to stop him. The waters ahead are muddied by a band of Spider-People from the Spider-Society. They're led by Miguel O'Hara (Oscar Isaac), who wants to implement a different approach to saving the Multiverse. They clash. They clash big time. And nothing will thwart a mission like a bunch of narcissistic super-heroes disagreeing. Miles: "Everyone keeps telling me how my story is supposed to go. Nah. Imma do my own thing!"

The visuals kick ass. Quick, kinetic illustrations thrown at the screen like a series of colorful, pop art paintings. Special attention to shapes, shades, textures, layers and angles. An uncanny mixture of old-school

drawings and futuristic animation. The action sequences thrill, too. Folks dangling from webs, gliding through the air. Fist fights, annihilations. More people, more superheroes. Jumbo-size, comic book words plastered on the footage. It's a lot to

absorb. Stunning to look in the most ingenious ways. An assault on the senses. A good one. Makes you want to ask the film's creators how many psychedelics or magic mushrooms they took before they dreamed up this fable. And if drugs weren't

involved, they all need psychiatric help!

Minus a few expository moments, it's like an eclectic, staccato MTV video is blasted at you for 2h 20m (editor Mike Andrews). Or,

See FILM, Page 11

June is Men's Health Month

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Graphic Artists Guild appoints first ever co-chairs of the DEIB Committee

(Black PR Wire) The Graphic Artists Guild is proud to announce a dynamic duo to the positions of co-chairs of the national diversity committee, Yanique DaCosta and Delanie West.

"The Guild must be leading this important conversation in our role as an advocacy champion," West said, referencing the long-time advocacy focus the Guild has structured its programs around.

DaCosta, who since being appointed DEIB committee co-chair, has also



Delanie West, (Courtesy photo) Yanique DaCosta (Courtesy photo)



taken on the role of Guild President. DaCosta brings eight years of experience volunteering in Guild leadership, including as the

South regional representative, Social Media and Advertising (SMAC) Committee chair, Guild Treasurer, Guild representative to the

International Council of Design (ICoD), and ICoD Vice President.

Her creative firm, YKMD, stands as a standard for design excellence. DaCosta's fully remote firm, staffed with team members from around the world, helps save time and money for corporate event marketing teams while providing thought provoking and impactful design solutions. DaCosta says that bridging the gap of inclusion for underrepresented groups has been her long-time passion as a United

States immigrant from Jamaica.

"No matter where they are from, everyone working within my design firm should feel at home, supported and empowered. I believe it should feel the same for Guild membership," said DaCosta. These things have given her a unique perspective on what creative professionals need from a DEIB program.

West has an equally impressive resume. While raising to the executive role

of VP General Manager of Product Development of Wilton Brands and later VP Product Development and Design for Faber-Castell, Creativity for Kids, West founded her company, Be Super Creative, a brand development firm offering creative solutions to small solopreneurs and multi-national organizations alike.

She is also President of Black Creatives, the first digital community for

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FILM, from Page 10

like you just took a punch and are still seeing stars. The colors (art directors Dean Gordon and Araiz Khalid), costumes (Brooklyn El-Omar) and sets (Patrick O'Keefe) are stunning. The non-stop visual, digital, audio and animated effects are completely arresting. When Daniel Pemberton's blaring musical score (driving bass and soaring strings) isn't revving up emotions and energy, the most upbeat, neo-soul, funk, rock playlist is streamed, like it was culled from Spotify's top ten: "Sunflower," by Post Malone; "This is My

Time," by Lecrae; Familia," by Nicki Minaj.

When the script isn't selling bombastic, self-indulgent, big-picture visuals, it finds time to explore deep-seeded feelings. Heartfelt emotions between a teen boy and his worried parents. Between an angst-riddled adolescent girl and her struggling-to-understand single father (Shea Whigham). These moments are precious. Calming oases amid a stormy onslaught that's as invigorating as it is exhausting. For the first 40 minutes of setup, the hurricane of hallucinations and fantasies

are entertaining. But as the film rattles on, the younger moviegoers may stay more attentive than adults, who may become weary.

The entire cast conveys more drama with voices, tones and inflection than in-the-flesh actors could ever do in a live-action treatment. The new additions of Issa Rae, Daniel Kaluuya, Karan Soni, Jorma Taccone and Amanda Stenberg bring more life to the party.

It might be hyperbole to say that this state-of-the-art animation is about as genius as it gets for the genre. But for kids, teens and twenty-somethings, raised on MTV, comic books and TikTok,

that isn't an overstatement. It's their truth. This is their holy grail. Their generation's take on what a superhero parable should be. Zillions of images hurled at their eyeballs until they're dizzy and in ecstasy.

In theaters June 2nd.

Visit NNPA News Wire Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

JUMP, from Page 9

What's on view seems like a series of half-hour episodes pulled together and not a film that could hold a theater audiences' attention for 1h 41m (editor Jonathan Schwartz, Modern Family). That's why streaming on Hulu and not screening in a cineplex is a smart idea. A

flat screen TV may be kinder to the film's flaws.

Walls has his TV fans. Harlow has millions of music fans. Teens and young adults may tune in.

Certainly the 1992 OG White Man Can't Jump has a premise worthy of a refresh. This execution is competent,

not excellent, and doesn't get the job done. Different casting, saltier language and a better feel for filming sports scenes might have made this pretender a contender.

As is, this update jumps, but never high enough.

On Hulu May 19th.

Visit NNPA News Wire Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

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POT, from Page 4

sion, schizophrenia, and addiction, says Dr. Walker. Early marijuana users may struggle more later on in life. A study from New Zealand that has monitored the educational, economic, and social success, and mental health of marijuana users suggests that early users of the drug fare worse in adulthood in a number of areas. They earn less money, have more family problems, more addiction, more societal adjustment issues, and they perform worse on IQ tests.

Legal or not, marijuana can be highly addictive. Though it does not create dramatic withdrawal symptoms like heroin or crack, cannabis causes serious withdrawal symptoms, and many users are surprised to find that they cannot stop without professional help. Magee, whose late son William struggled with drug addiction before dying of an accidental drug

overdose, recalls how marijuana slowly took over his son's life.

"Some may not have physical withdrawals, but rather emotional withdrawal symptoms," says Magee. "My son wrote journal entries describing how emotionally difficult it was for him to separate himself from marijuana. Because for him, it had become a ritual that began when he woke up, continued at midday, and concluded at night so he could go to sleep. And I hear the same things from students I talk to in middle schools and at colleges and universities. It becomes this daily part of their life that feels harmless. But over time it grows and takes them over."

The lesson we can take from this is that we not only need to keep our children away from marijuana, says Dr. Walker, but we need to educate and caution them about the associated risks



Ahmed Zayan / Unsplash

of using the drug.

Marijuana isn't the "magic cure" for anxiety that many believe it is... Marijuana is often touted as a treatment for various anxiety disorders, causing some parents to look the other way if their teen uses it for that reason. But Dr. Walker wants parents to know that while canna-

bis might alleviate anxiety symptoms in some people, it is far from being a silver bullet. "Marijuana may lower anxiety in some users, but in others, it can create an anxiogenic reaction," he says. "This could be due to the users' genetics, or the dose, or other factors." Either way, it isn't for everyone, and especially not for

young people who may be struggling with their mental health.

And medical marijuana is problematic too. While marijuana does have some legitimate health benefits (such as easing nausea in cancer patients), there are still issues with making it legal. Overall, medical cannabis companies have limited medical oversight; the range of products is wide and very variable; some states have better programs than others; and there is little guidance available about dosing, management of patients, and treatment protocols. This can contribute to issues like unwanted side effects, abuse problems, and addiction problems in users, including young people. The bottom line: even if your child uses marijuana for a medical reason (for example, anxiety), they can still end up using too much or using it too often.

"It's important that parents, teachers, and organi-

zations promoting health and wellness get on the same page about their messaging around marijuana," concludes Dr. Walker. "It's not about legality. Legal or not, today's marijuana is unsafe for children, teens, and young adults. But understanding this truth is power. When young people and the people who love them know the truth, they can avoid going down a road that leads to suffering."

Parents should push back on the notion that marijuana is safe just because it is legal, says Dr. Walker, the latest featured guest on The Mayo Lab Podcast with David Magee, a research-based guide for parents, educators, and students.

Hear Dr. Larry Walker discuss the effects of cannabis on young people's brains and mental health on The Mayo Lab Podcast with David Magee at <https://themayolab.com>, on Apple or Spotify.

WINNERS, from Page 8

hosted by North Texas native and Broadway veteran Major Attaway. Attaway is best known for making his Broadway Debut as "Genie" in Disney's Aladdin in 2016. From 2017-2020 he took over the Tony Award-winning role

and is the longest running Broadway "Genie" with over 1500 performances.

In addition, award-winning producer, writer, and founding artistic director for the Bishop Arts Theatre Center, Teresa Coleman Wash will be presented

with the 2023 Fullinwider Award in honor of her accomplishments within the North Texas theater community and beyond. Wash is a National Arts Strategies fellow having studied at Harvard Business School and the recipient of several accolades including the Theater Communications

Group's prestigious Peter Zeisler Memorial Award for Artistic Integrity and Ingenuity in 2019, the Irma P. Hall Theatrical Excellence Medal in 2020, and most recently the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce' Quest for Success Award.

The Fullinwider Award

is presented to artists with roots in the North Texas community who have gone on to have had significant impact on the local, regional, and national theater communities. The award is named for Leah and Jerry Fullinwider, the founding donors of the Broadway Dallas High School Musi-

cal Theater Awards. The award was created to honor the Fullinwiders for their initial gift of \$100,000, which helped fund and produce the HSMTA program in 2012.

(Editor's Note: For a complete listing of winners check out our online edition.)

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U.S. Patent and Trademark Office expands, extends Climate Change Mitigation Pilot Program

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the expansion and extension of its Climate Change Mitigation Pilot Program, initially launched in June of 2022.

Beginning on June 6, 2023, the USPTO will expand the program eligibility requirements to encompass a more robust group of innovations in any economic sector that advance progress toward achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Included innovations will be those designed to:

- Remove greenhouse gases already present in the

atmosphere;

- Reduce and/or prevent additional greenhouse gas emissions; and/or

- Monitor, track, and/or verify greenhouse gas emission reductions.

The expansion also includes an increase in the maximum number of non-provisional applications an inventor is allowed to “make special,” or those that qualify for expedited initial review by the agency under the pilot program.

“Continuing this program is an important part of our efforts to incentivize and widen access to the intellectual property system for those inventors on the cutting edge of technolo-

gies that effectively address climate change,” said Kathi Vidal, Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO. “Accelerated review of climate change-related patent applications provides another tool to help move these innovations from idea to impact.”

“NOAA is a proud supporter of the USPTO’s Climate Change Mitigation Pilot Program to help advance cutting-edge innovations that mitigate the effects of climate change,” said Dr. Richard W. Spinrad, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere & National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration (NOAA) Administrator. “This initiative fits cleanly into the Biden administration’s clean energy agenda that seeks to address the climate crisis by tapping into our country’s innovative spirit to help preserve our environmental sustainability for generations to come. We are excited to work with our sister agency—the USPTO—and all of Commerce to move this initiative forward.”

As with the existing program, qualifying utility nonprovisional applications accepted into the expanded program will be advanced out of turn (accorded special status) until

a first action on the merits—typically the first substantive examination—is complete. Applicants will not be required to satisfy the current requirements of the accelerated examination program or the prioritized examination program.

The expanded program will run from Jun. 6, 2023 until either Jun. 7, 2027, or the date the USPTO accepts a total of 4,000 grantable petitions (taking into account both the existing and expanded programs), whichever occurs earlier, subject to the USPTO’s discretion to terminate prior.

The expansion and extension of this program supports the USPTO’s on-

going commitment to address climate change by encouraging and accelerating innovations that lead to net-zero emissions. By affording more opportunities for participation with a broader pool of eligible innovations, the expanded program aims to complement other efforts to fight against climate change.

Additional information on the conditions, eligibility requirements, and guidelines of this program is available in the 2022 Federal Register Notice and the 2023 Federal Register Notice, as well as on the USPTO’s Climate Change Mitigation Pilot Program webpage.

DAD, from Page 10

ily Madrigal.”

Collaborating with Lighthouse Immersive is the Creative Legacy team of Walt Disney Animation Studios, which helps bring their library of films to audiences in a manner never before experienced.

The creative team for Immersive Disney Animation is led by Oscar®-winning producer J. Miles Dale (Best Picture 2018 -The Shape of Water) who said, “Trailblazing in a new medium is always exciting, and this has truly been the most challenging and rewarding project of my career. Being entrusted with Disney’s rich archive of animation is a great honor but also a tremendous responsibility. With such a wealth of material and a treasure trove of memorable characters, it is a thrill to bring the work of all the great Disney animators and performers to life in a 360-degree immersive environment.”

Mexico City-based Colab worked with Dale and the Creative Legacy team at Walt Disney Animation Studios to develop

the program for Lighthouse Immersive Studios. Special Projects Producer Dorothy McKim (Oscar-nominated, “Get A Horse!”) is spearheading the project for Disney Animation.

Beyond the unparalleled projection design that Lighthouse Immersive is known for, Immersive Disney Animation is further enhanced by expansive environmental design by Lighthouse Immersive’s Global Creative Director David Korins (Tony Award®-nominee whose credits include more than 20 Broadway shows including Hamilton, and an Emmy Award® for Grease Live).

Developed in collaboration with Walt Disney Animation Studios, Immersive Disney Animation was called “awe-inspiring... perfect for all ages” by the Toronto Guardian. Elite Daily remarked, “you really feel like you’ve stepped inside your fave film.”

The entertainment will be at Lighthouse ArtSpace DALLAS (507 S. Harwood St.) bow through Septem-

ber 2023.

Tickets start at \$29.99 and are available at light-houseimmersive.com/disney.

Bundle and save with the Family Pack (groups of four or more) by visiting <https://bit.ly/3IT9pG1>.



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I Feel Sorry for My Good-Looking Friends

By James L. Snyder

The one place in our humble residence I would prefer to avoid, especially in the morning, is my bathroom. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has her bathroom, and I have mine.

I make visiting my bathroom in the morning as quick as possible. As I walk into my bathroom, on the right side is that awful and terrible thing called the mirror. Whenever I look into it, some old man looks back at me and then smiles.

I have asked The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage if I could put a curtain in front of my mirror so that I would only see it when I had to.

She would laugh and say, "Oh, you silly boy, you need that mirror to help you look the best you can."

Her mirror is a lot different from my mirror. My mirror shows some grumpy old guy, whereas her mirror shows a charming young lady. I have offered to exchange mirrors, but she would not have anything to do with that.

I'm not very concerned about how ugly I look. After all, ugly isn't really that big of a deal.

In the pharmacy section of Publix the other day, one of the workers came and asked me if I wanted some skincare products that were on sale. "It'll sure make your face look a lot better."

I declined her offer and left the store.

As I was thinking about this, it reminded me of some of my good friends who are rather good-looking despite their age. They spend much time and money keeping themselves looking young

and beautiful.

I would rather use my money to buy Apple Fritters than any skincare products.

Many of my friends spend a lot of money and time to keep themselves as young looking as possible. They exercise, go on a strict diet, and some even have surgery to make them look better than they are.

I have one friend, a very wonderful lady, whom I've known most of my life. One thing about this young lady is that she wants people to think she's young and works tirelessly to keep looking young.

Her biggest concern is wrinkles, and she seems allergic to them.

I love my wrinkles because they are a product of getting older. And I plan to get as old as I can.

But this young lady, I

will not mention her name for obvious reasons, seems quite allergic to wrinkles. She has had several facelifts to make sure all of the wrinkles disappear. Whenever she sees a wrinkle, she has to stop whatever she's doing and take care of it, no matter the cost.

I don't see her often anymore, but whenever I do, I usually say something like, "Is that a new wrinkle on your face? I think it's a wonderful wrinkle."

She will laugh and then disappear into the bathroom in a few moments to check out that wrinkle. Sometime that week, she will be at her doctor getting rid of that wrinkle.

If I had all the money she has spent caring for her wrinkles, I would be wealthy and could afford all the Apple Fritters I want.

That is why I'm very

concerned about some of my good-looking friends. I don't know, and I have yet to ask any of them how much it costs to look as young and good-looking as they appear. It does not come without cost, I assure you.

I have not spent a single nickel dealing with my wrinkles, and have the wrinkles to prove it.

If I had the time and money my friends used to eliminate the wrinkles, I could retire in luxury.

Many try to show how young they look whenever we have a family get-together. They walk around smiling, hoping somebody will notice how young they look.

For some of them, when we plan to get together, it takes several weeks to prepare for that get-together. I can get together overnight

and have no problems with that.

I try to contain myself, but it is tough when you have all my wrinkles. Whenever I meet one of those people, and I know who they are, I always compliment them on their good looks. They always smile back and thank me.

Then, out of nowhere, I sometimes say, "You don't have as many wrinkles today as you did the last time I saw you." I laugh, but they usually don't join in.

I don't know any of them that like me saying that sort of thing, but that's the cost of trying to look young when you're old.

It must be a very hard job to stay young anymore. On the other side of the mirror, I have an easy life of looking as old as possible. Ev-

See FRIENDS, Page 15

CORNISH, from Page 2

become a think tank for answers to the issues that have impacted wealth, home ownership, financial literacy, women in corporate America and more."

"There is a trend with Black women leaving Corporate America for many reasons including lack of leadership support and recognition while feeling undervalued in their roles in the workplace more

than any other racial group," said Cornish. "This is on top of their personal struggles where many are juggling caregiving, insufficient health advice, finances, and access to capital needed to create advancement and generational wealth. We want to be part of the solution for these women."

Also recently appointed to the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce,

headed by Dale Petroskey, as a board member, Cornish will continue to foster the T.D. Jakes Foundation's existing relationships with Goldman Sachs and Dallas Mavericks among many other notable organizations with ongoing initiatives. The Foundation's commitment to STEM/STEAM education and workforce development will continue, highlighting new programs this year geared toward financial literacy, home

ownership, and supporting businesses and career development for minorities, especially Black women.

Last month, Wells Fargo and the T.D. Jakes Group, a global conglomerate that includes T.D. Jakes Real

Estate Ventures, LLC (TD-JREV), T.D. Jakes Enterprises (TDJE) and T.D. Jakes Foundation (TDJF) announced a strategic partnership to drive economic vitality and inclusivity in communities across Ameri-

ca. Over the next 10 years, the partnership between these organizations could result in up to \$1 billion in capital and financing from Wells Fargo, as well as grants from the Wells Fargo Foundation.

GRACE, from Page 10

goers stood body-to-body on the floor, drinks in hand, swaying to piped-in music as they waited and waited. At 9:35pm, the sheer lavender curtains rose to reveal a rock/soul/reggae band. Jones's distinct contralto voice filled the ballroom, as she sang her hit "Nightclubbing."

Jones purred the lyrics: "Nightclubbing, we're nightclubbing. We're what's happening. Nightclubbing, we're nightclubbing. We're an ice machine. We see people, brand new people. They're something to see. Nightclubbing, we're

nightclubbing. Oh, isn't it wild?" The time spent waiting for her evaporated and was a distant memory. The audience was fully engaged by the performance. They were into her entrancing vibe. Snared. Enraptured.

Umpteen costume changes later, after crawling across the stage, blowing kisses and some very provocative dancing, she ended the show with her latest hit "Hurricane." "I am woman. I am sun. I can give birth to she. I can give birth to son. And I can be cool, Soft as the breeze. I'll be a hurri-

cane, ripping up trees."

The 2023 Blue Note Jazz Festival started with an explosion. A rebirth. A phoenix rising from the ashes. Jones will tour Great Britain this summer and return for a September concert at Forest Hills Stadium in New York. Anyone who sees this style icon/performance artist will discover that her club style, avant-garde songs from back in the day are au courant now.

Grace Jones is soft as a breeze and ripping up trees.

Visit *NNPA News Wire* entertainment critic *Dwight Brown* at *DwightBrownInk.com*.

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Things We Can Learn...



Sister Tarpley
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That God is someone we can know: In all of His fullness; His forgiveness of sin, His comfort and tender care; His peace and joy within.

Of God's gentle hand of guidance, His rod of correction, His compassion and love, His Holy perfection . . . In Christ, we can learn about Him.

Of God's burdens and sufferings, His resurrection power, His Holy Spirit; we can learn of Him this very hour . . . He is a God we can know.

That we cannot make someone love us. We can only try to be someone who is not difficult to love.

That sometimes it takes years to build up trust; but seconds to destroy it. We can learn that it's not what



we have in life, but who we have in our life that counts.

We can learn that we can do something in a few minutes that will give us heartache for life; that we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.

We can learn that heroes are the people who do what has to be done, regardless of how they feel.

We can learn that maturity has more to do with attitude, dependability, and

taking responsibility for our life than the number of birthdays we've had.

That no matter how good a friend is, that we are going to hurt each other every once in a while, and forgiveness is essential to lasting friendship; and that forgiving others is sometimes easier than forgiving ourselves.

We can learn that there is something exhilarating about the forward look; and

that we should always look forward to something.

We can learn to look forward when a person becomes a Christian and renounces his love for the world; that he must not look back.

The Israelites continued to look back to the flesh pots in Egypt. They couldn't get Egypt out of their minds.

We can learn that we can profit from history, if we allow ourselves to learn from it.

We can learn that there are four possible looks: The backward, the inward, the upward, and the forward look.

The backward look is retrospective; for the most part it is liable to arrest us and we become entangled again in the things of the world.

The inward look has value, but it has its dangers in that we can experience "paralysis through analysis."

The upward look is helpful and lifts us to the spiritual stratosphere. The for-

ward look is challenging and fruitful; it is accompanied by faith, courage, and enthusiasm.

How can we learn the above things? By Faith! "But without faith it is impossible to please Him . . . (Hebrews 11:6a)

Faith is a combination of things: TRUST -- Faith enables us to approach the Lord in trust. It causes us to say by our actions: "Lord, I trust you.

CONFIDENCE -- Faith enables us to approach the Lord with confidence. Our confidence is not in the abilities, cleverness or inge-

nuity of man—but of God.

It is confidence that God will keep His promises. ASSURANCE -- It tells us that God is everything His Word says He is; that He is intervening on our behalf and for our deliverance.

COURAGE -- Faith is the courage needed to approach God with needs and to know He hears our prayers and answers them for His glory and honor.

ACTION: Faith has a passive side. It can be received as a gift from God and it also has an active side. Faith prompts action.

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Priscilla Anthony, Volunteer Advocate, Dallas CASA

Cynt Marshall, CEO, Dallas Mavericks
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SPRJ55189

NDG Book Review: Juneteenth Books by various authors and illustrators

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

The celebration is coming soon, you can feel it in the air.

Your entire family will gather together for one special day. There'll be picnics and tasty foods, dancing, and storytelling. No, it's not Christmas or your birthday, not Easter or Ramadan. It's Juneteenth and these three new books will help you understand why that day is important....

For the uninitiated, Juneteenth has a lot of traditions! In "Jayylen's Juneteenth Surprise" by Lavaille Lavette, illustrated by David Wilkerson (Little Golden Book, \$5.99), a young boy learns how all the pieces fit in his new favorite holiday. The fun begins when Paw



Terri Schlichenmeyer

Paw Jimmy comes to visit, and he introduces Jayylen to the frottoir, a musical instrument that means there's going to be dancing. With the cute and simple illustrations in this book and the excitement it conveys, you

know it's gonna be a party, and this book is a great (and inexpensive!) Juneteenth introduction for kids ages 3 to 5.

In David's house, Juneteenth doesn't start until Grandma's ready to tell sto-

ries and in "The Night Before Freedom: A Juneteenth Story" by Glenda Armand (Crown Books / Random House Kids, \$18.99), the best one is the one that her grandmother told her. Mom Bess was just a little girl when the first Juneteenth arrived, and hearing the story is a can't-miss for David and his family. Five-to-8-year-olds will love this tale, told as a beautiful, fantastical memory. Parents will love the artwork by Corey Barksdale inside the covers.

Find "A Flag for Juneteenth" by Kim Taylor (Neal Porter Books / Holiday House, \$18.99) for your 5-to-8-year-old, and share it with your favorite seamstress. Here, all the illustrations are quilted,

crafted, and embroidered, leaving readers with nostalgia to match the tale of almost-ten-year-old Hulda, who wakes up on her birthday morning to hear the best news ever. "All slaves are free," she and her parents are told, and everyone celebrated – everyone, that is, except the plantation owners. And while her neighbors danced, some women sat down and sewed freedom flags that looked like warm, soft quilts. The children found branches for use as flagpoles, and their fathers carved the branches with designs and symbols like the intricate "Fawohodie. It means independence and freedom." Be absolutely sure that you read the author's note at the end of this story; it's a great

explanation, written for parents who will appreciate knowing about the work that went into this book.

These three tales might not be enough for your family, which is why your favorite librarian or bookseller is waiting for you. They'll have something perfect for every age group and everyone in your household who'll partake in your Juneteenth picnic or party. They'll know just the thing you want to read for yourself, or read aloud.

One of the best parts of Juneteenth is the storytelling, and these great books will help you do that in a way your child can understand. Make them a new tradition in your house, and add to the celebration.

PARADOX, from Page 3

they are really upset at being told what to do. This is what psychologists call reactance. People don't like their freedom being taken away, and pressure to agree does exactly that. Second, people who observe the forced agreement believe it is artificial, something our lab calls informational contamination. If I believe you said you agreed with vaccine mandates only because you were forced to, I don't trust your stated belief. And this interferes with our ability to come to anything like real common ground. Ironically, in forcing agreement, we cut off the actual poten-

tial for genuine, meaningful agreement to grow. In the place of potentially solid ground, forced agreement provides a psychologically contaminated, shifting sand upon which it is hard to build anything lasting.

That's partially where we are now. We've increasingly responded to our divisions by trying to bludgeon the other side into some kind of forced agreement. The results have been disastrous. Divisive figures like Donald Trump weren't the cause of our disagreements; they were the symptoms of forced agreement. Even people who agree with the

side being pushed upon the populace lose faith in their own side when they feel agreement is forced. This isn't sustainable long-term. If we keep trying to bludgeon the other side into agreement, we'll find there really is no "there" at the end of that road—for either side.

Fortunately, this paradoxical psychological analysis implies a very straightforward solution to our problem: Let's stop caring so much that we all disagree. If we stop obsessing over the fact that we are polarized, we will become less polarized. A desire for agreement partially got us into this mess; and a tolerance of

disagreement can get us out of it. Rather than trying to agree, we should vigorously disagree without fear.

But a moment's reflection shows that "love = agreement" is a lie. In fact, the exact opposite is true. Love doesn't end where agreement ends. Love begins where agreement ends. It is easy to "love" someone who agrees with you, who validates yourself and your place in the world. True love involves fully disagreeing with someone and loving them anyway.

That's probably why Jesus Christ spends a striking amount of time talking about loving people from whom we get no benefit.

You see, we are prone to falling into the SAE trap. Jesus says in Luke 6:32, "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you?" Applied to our present case, this suggests we need to separate out the benefits we get from agreement from the duty we have to love others. What we really need is to separate loving our neighbor from agreeing with our neighbor.

Realizing this is freeing. We need to resist the subtle psychological lie that a stable relationship, a stable family, or a stable society means that we have to agree on everything. In fact, that is dishonest and unproductive. Our society was origi-

nally formed on a better principle: The acknowledgment that disagreements are inevitable and often healthy. The founding fathers weren't so much trying to create a world where everyone agreed as they were trying to provide a stable mechanism where people could disagree as much as they liked, where we could vigorously work out our disagreements in the public sphere. That's what separates America from almost everywhere else. And what the country really needs is to get back to that, to release the valve that says, "we must all agree" and instead foster more and more respectful disagreement.

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core average of 76 percent.

Other North Texas cities which made the top 100 include Arlington (74th), Fort Worth (88th), Garland (87th) and Irving (99th). The annual ParkScore® index ranks park systems in the 100 most populous U.S. cities and is widely considered the gold standard for park evaluation.

ParkScore rankings are based equally on five factors:

- Percentage of residents within a 10-minute walk of

a park

- Park equity, comparing per capita park space and 10-minute-walk access in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods

- Median park size and the percentage of city area dedicated to parks

- Park spending per resident

- Park amenities, like basketball hoops, off-leash dog parks, playgrounds, splashpads and water-play structures, recreation and senior centers, and restrooms.

Cities that ranked highest in the country this year included D.C., Saint Paul, Minneapolis, Irvine, Arlington, Virginia, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, New York, and Boston.

The ParkScore index uses advanced GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and spatial analysis to evaluate park accessibility, considering the location of park entrances and obstacles to access, like highways.

Municipal leaders use ParkScore information to guide park improvement efforts, studying park access

on a block-by-block basis and pinpointing the areas where new parks are needed most.

The ParkScore website, www.tpl.org/parkscore, is free and available to the public, empowering residents to hold their elected leaders accountable for achieving equitable access to quality parks for all.

This analysis was based on PLACES data produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which holds true after controlling for race/ethnicity, income, age, and population density. The research is

based on nearly 800 examples of park-based health-focused activities shared with Trust for Public Land researchers, including innovative partnerships with health care providers, such as writing "prescriptions" for spending time in nature and funding fitness classes at parks and community centers.

For more information on health benefits of parks, read "The Power of Parks to Promote Health," published by The Trust for Public Land.

Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit that

works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. As a leader in equitable access to the outdoors, TPL works with communities to create parks and protect public land where they are needed most. Since 1972, TPL has protected more than 4 million acres of public land, created more than 5,364 parks, trails, schoolyards, and iconic outdoor places, raised \$93 billion in public funding for parks and public lands, and connected nearly 9.4 million people to the outdoors. To learn more, visit tpl.org.