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New report highlights two straight years of record highs in U.S. firearm fatalities

(Newswise) — A new report from the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions analyzing 2021 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data reveals another record year for firearm fatalities.

The 48,830 lives lost to firearms in 2021—the second year of the pandemic—is the highest number on record. Both firearm homicides and suicides reached record highs, with over of these deaths attributed to suicide, equaling the highest increase in four decades.

Black people in the U.S. were nearly 14 times more likely to die by gun homicide than those who are white. Young Black males ages 15–34 were most at risk, accounting for 36 percent of all gun homicides in 2021, though representing only two percent of the total U.S. population. Even more distressing, guns were responsible for 51 percent of all deaths of Black teens ages 15–19.

The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence research used CDC data that became publicly available this past January to analyze 2021 firearm fatalities across age, sex, race, and place. The report, U.S. Gun Violence in 2021: An Accounting of a Public Health Crisis,



CDC data for 2021 firearm fatalities show Black people at greatest risk for gun homicide; guns remain leading cause of death for those under 25 (Natalie Chaney / Unsplash)

is thought to be the most comprehensive analysis of the CDC's 2021 firearm data to date.

A growing momentum to prevent gun violence has for decades been blocked by NRA lobbyists, which provoked the Dickey amendment and drastic funding cuts after a 1993 landmark study concluded having a gun in the home tripled the risk of homicide and increased the risk of suicide by five times, KERA reports. Though Congress passed a bill in 2018, which allowed the CDC to resume gun-related studies, funding has been limited up until 2020, when the Federal budget

called for \$25 million in gun violence related research, they report.

The report comes at a time of heightened concern about gun violence in the U.S. as mass shootings and other interpersonal gun violence continue to occur across the country. The report also includes evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at curtailing firearm deaths.

The authors note that an estimated 9,500 fewer people would have died in 2021 if the firearm homicide rate had not risen after

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Time to act on violence, crime, police

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The effects of wildfires on the brain

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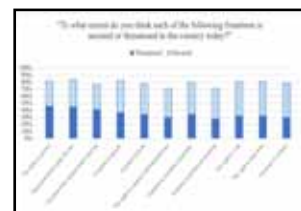
Black victims of shootings by off-duty cops

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FW theater is a window to new worlds

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People In The News ...



Torie Bowie



Tyler Perry

NDG Quote of the Week: "You're not to be so blind with patriotism that you can't face reality. Wrong is wrong, no matter who does it or says it."
—Malcolm X

Torie Bowie

According to an autopsy report, three-time Olympic medalist and world champion sprinter Tori Bowie tragically died due to complications during childbirth.

Bowie, 32, reportedly had a “well-developed fetus” and was eight months pregnant, according to the Florida Orange County Medical Examiner’s Office report.

NBC News reported that evidence indicated that she was undergoing labor at the time of her passing, and her death was ruled natural, with toxicology



results showing no signs of drugs or other substances in her system. The examination highlighted possible complications that contributed to her death, including respiratory distress

and eclampsia, a condition characterized by seizures, or a coma related to pre-eclampsia. This high blood pressure disorder can occur during pregnancy. The Mayo Clinic explained that eclampsia can occur before, during, or after delivery and can manifest without any previously observed signs or symptoms of pre-eclampsia, making it difficult to predict and prevent.

Warning signs that may appear before seizures include severe headaches, vision problems, mental confusion, or altered behaviors. However, in many cases, there are no symptoms or

warning signs.

Bowie’s death highlights the disparities in the maternal experience of Black women, who as a group suffer from the highest maternal mortality rate in the country.

Bowie gained recognition for her remarkable performance as the anchor leg in the 4×100-meter relay team, leading them to a gold medal in Brazil alongside Tianna Bartoletta, Allyson Felix, and English Gardner. She also won the silver medal in the 100-meter event and the bronze medal in the 200-meter event during the 2016 Olympic

Games, and the gold medal in the 100-meter event at the 2017 World Athletics Championships in London.

Raised in Sand Hill, Mississippi, Bowie credited her success to her loved ones, particularly her grandmother.

She described herself as a small-town girl at heart, hailing from a place devoid of stoplights.

Bowie’s tragic death came to light when authorities in Orange County, Florida, responded to a request for a well-being check on a woman in her 30s who had been missing for several days.

In linking Bowie’s tragic death to childbirth complications, Dr. Alison Cowan, a practicing OBGYN and head of medical affairs at Mirvie – a company developing prediction tools for life-threatening pregnancy complications – shed light on the importance of awareness and prevention. In an email to the Black Press, emphasized the preventability of many pregnancy-related deaths in the United States, with cardiovascular causes being the leading contributors.

Dr. Cowan highlighted

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Tyler Perry

In a major development for the entertainment industry, BET has become Black-owned once again after 21 years, while VH1, for the first time, now boasts an African American owner.

According to his longtime friend and television personality Rolanda Watts, Tyler Perry has cemented his place in history by acquiring the two major television networks, making him the first African American to do so.

The acquisition follows the news that Paramount Global has sought to sell a



majority stake in BET.

Earlier this year, the renowned actor and filmmaker expressed optimism about purchasing BET, stating his keen interest if it were a possibility.

Perry, who had already

enjoyed tremendous success in collaboration with BET, partnering with his Tyler Perry Studios banner to create the popular streaming service BET+, was no stranger to the network.

He acknowledged the unexpected nature of the acquisition, stating, “I’ve been there for four years now and had tremendous success... If that is possible, I’m very, very interested in taking as much of it as I can.”

The exact financial details of the deal have not been disclosed, but experts on this sort of transaction have placed a significant

value on the acquisition of the two networks.

With the purchase, Perry assumes control over BET Media Group, which includes other networks such as VH1.

Since its launch, the BET+ streaming service has experienced remarkable success.

In 2021 alone, BET+

was responsible for half of the subscribers and nearly all revenue growth for the channel.

The platform features a wide range of original films and series from the extensive BET program library, captivating audiences with diverse and engaging content.

The acquisition of BET

and VH1 marks a significant milestone in the representation and ownership of the entertainment industry.

Perry’s success as an African American entrepreneur and his commitment to showcasing diverse stories and voices have paved the way for increased opportunities and inclusivity in the media landscape.

Charla N. Burns, MD

HOUSTON (24-7Press-Release) -- With more than two decades of excellence dedicated to the improvement of public health and the betterment of society, Dr. Burns has earned distinction as an epidemiologist and the multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) team lead for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Since 2022, she has focused her efforts on planning, developing, and implementing field research studies with COVID-19 within the emerging and acute infectious disease unit at the State Department. Prior to her cur-



rent role, Dr. Burns was employed at the CDC Foundation as an epidemiologist to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

To prepare for her medical career, Dr. Burns earned a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry/pre-medicine in 2000 from Louisiana State University

and A&M College.

In 2006, she attained a Doctor of Medicine from the UTMB John Sealy School of Medicine, followed by internal medicine residency training at Tulane University Medical Center and its affiliated clinics and hospitals. Well-qualified in her field, she has extensive experience in public speaking on health-related topics at medical conferences and community events.

Dr. Burns’ professional accomplishments include the LSU Greek Excellence Award, West Monroe High School Distinguished Alumni Award, Ouachita Parish School Board Cer-

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Dallas CASA needs more Black volunteers to serve Black children living in foster care.

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6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

Corey Anthony, Senior VP, Engineering and Operations, AT&T
Volunteer Advocate and Past Chair, Dallas CASA

Priscilla Anthony, Volunteer Advocate, Dallas CASA

Cynt Marshall, CEO, Dallas Mavericks
Chair, Dallas CASA

To register for this online event, visit dallascasa.org.





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Time to act on crime, violence and police reform in America

By Andrew M. Cuomo and Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

America 2023: tumultuous times. Yes. Yet, amidst the greatest domestic challenges of American history, our nation has attempted to respond to the challenges through transformative public policy initiatives that have moved America toward a more perfect inclusive union.

Today there are new challenges to be sure, but also there are ongoing battles that have yet to be won. There are civil rights struggles and conditions that harken back to the 1960s that still abuse people of color every day, that still deny justice, equality and opportunity for all.

There's an old saying: The first step to solving a problem is admitting it — and the first step can be painful.

There is still gross inequity in our education system, between rich school districts and poor districts. There is still inequality in access to healthcare, employment, to financial credit and there is a basic violation of civil and human rights in our criminal justice system.

Misguided pseudo-progressive policies such as "defund the police" and soft on crime procedures are literally contributing to the killing of hundreds of Black people and other people of color every day across America.

The truth is, crime is out of control in this country, especially in too many of our cities. While many choose to turn a blind eye, it is people of color who are the majority of the victims: People of color account for 73 percent of rape victims; 72 percent of robbery victims; and 80 percent of felony assault victims; and

68.7 percent of the people in prison are Black and brown and 44% percent of the people killed by police in the United States are Black and brown.

We do need police reform and reform of the entire justice system.

• One: we need to change the culture and premise of policing. Our basic police system was designed in the mid-1800s — a different time and place. Today,

We need to fill gaps in the background check system so it's universal and nationwide.

And we need to bring back the assault weapons ban because weapons of war have no place on our streets or in our communities. Assault weapons enable the horrific mass shootings that continue to plague our country.

• Third: We need to reduce recidivism. The vast

or failure to pay a fine. In fact, some of the most horrific examples of police abuse occurred when a minor crime arrest escalated: Eric Garner killed for selling loose cigarettes; Rodney King beaten within an inch of his life for speeding; George Floyd killed for a bad \$20 bill; Alton Sterling killed for selling CDs; Philando Castile killed for a broken taillight; and, Michael Brown killed for jaywalking.

We believe that the time to act is now. These specific categories of civil rights have been violated for too long and the time to make a difference is surely too short. As a nation we cannot afford to remain silent about extremists' hatred, violence, crime, and the fear-filled deterioration of American cities and towns.

This is for us a sense of urgency and civic responsibility. We have decided to work and act together, and to speak out publicly with recommended common-sense solutions to crime, violence, guns, and police reform that we know the majority of the American people support.

Andrew M. Cuomo, American lawyer who served as the 56th Governor of New York from 2011 to 2021, Chair of the National Governors Association, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and former Attorney General of New York.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), Executive Producer/Host of The Chavis Chronicles on PBS TV stations across the nation; former Executive Director and CEO of the NAACP, and today serves as a National Co-Chair of No Labels.

The truth is, crime is out of control in this country, especially in too many of our cities. While many choose to turn a blind eye, it is people of color who are the majority of the victims: People of color account for 73 percent of rape victims; 72 percent of robbery victims; and 80 percent of felony assault victims; and 68.7 percent of the people in prison are Black and brown and 44% percent of the people killed by police in the United States are Black and brown.

it's estimated that less than 10% of police officers' time is actually fighting violent crime. We need a different vision, we need to rethink how we police — 911 calls signal an emergency, and we need more specialized and better trained emergency responders for different needs: domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, homeless issues, gang problems as well as violent crime in progress.

• Second: We need dangerous guns off the streets and all guns away from dangerous and mentally ill people. By far, most gun crimes are committed in urban areas with handguns.

We need to reduce not increase concealed weapons in our cities.

We need to keep guns out of the hands of anyone under 21.

majority of violent crimes are repeated by a small number of people who keep hurting others over and over.

• Fourth: We need to have more effective alternatives to incarceration, safer jails, but dangerous and repetitive violent people must be taken off the streets to protect all Americans, and in particular for the most vulnerable who are disproportionately victimized by violence and crime in Black and brown communities.

• Fifth: We have to stop over criminalizing petty, non-violent acts. 80 percent of crimes are for misdemeanors, and many are petty non-violent acts. And some charges are deliberately vague and are subject to discretion that can be abused by police, like loitering, vagrancy, trespass,

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In addition to lungs and heart, air quality from wildfires is bad for the brain

PHILADELPHIA (Newsweek) -- Air pollution is projected to kill approximately 9 million people each year and has been designated by the World Health Organization as the single greatest environmental health concern.

"Air pollution is a major public health issue related to a variety of ailments, such as asthma, lung cancer, heart disease, and stroke," says Domenico Praticò, M.D., Professor and Director of the Alzheimer's Center at Temple. We now have evidence that air pollution, such as wildfire smoke, poses a hazard to the brain as well," Praticò says.

Recent research suggests a link between dementia



Matt Howard / Unsplash

and exposure to tiny particles or droplets in the air that are two and one-half microns or less wide, known as PM 2.5 particles.

The brain is protected from pathogens and larger molecules by the blood-brain barrier, reports the National Institutes of Health. However, studies

suggest these tiny particles can also enter the nose and be carried straight to the brain via the olfactory nerve, bypassing the blood-brain barrier, while carrying dioxins, iron, lead, and other toxins to do damage, said Masashi Kitazawa, molecular neuropathologist at the University of California, Irvine.

nia, Irvine.

According to a recent study published in the British Medical Journal that looked at 16 different observational studies, there is strong evidence for a biological relationship between PM 2.5 exposure and the onset of dementia. The authors discovered a 17% increase in the incidence of dementia for every 2 microgram increase in annual PM 2.5 exposure per cubic meter of air.

According to the World Health Organization, over 50 million individuals worldwide suffer from dementia, with this figure anticipated to triple by 2050.

As the Environmental Protection Agency fights to tighten air quality rules, it

is estimated that up to 90 to 95% of the world's population is exposed to harmful levels of PM 2.5 particles. Although the mechanisms by which air pollutants affect the risk of dementia are not fully known, it is clear that these small particles can have a deleterious impact on brain function.

Reduced exposure to air pollution can have a substantial influence on public health, potentially helping to lower the global incidence of dementia.

While reducing air pollution has been a struggle due to the strong influence of producers of fossil fuels on our government, it is an important step towards improving public health and lowering the global burden

of dementia. We can work towards a better future for ourselves and future generations by adopting individual and communal actions like walking, biking, or taking public transportation instead of driving. Indoor air quality can also be improved by employing air purifiers and limiting the use of polluting goods like certain cleaning chemicals and paints.

Domenico Praticò, MD, is the Scott Richards North Star Charitable Foundation Chair for Alzheimer's Research, Professor and Director of the Alzheimer's Center at Temple, and Professor of Pharmacology at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University.

Researchers using AI to create better, more potent medicines

(Newsweek) — COLUMBUS, Ohio – While it can take years for the pharmaceutical industry to create medicines capable of treating or curing human disease, a new study suggests that using generative artificial intelligence could vastly accelerate the drug-development process.

Today, most drug discovery is carried out by human chemists who rely on their knowledge and experience to select and synthesize the right molecules needed to



Novel framework could offer chemists greater drug options (National Cancer Institute / Unsplash)

become the safe and efficient medicines we depend on. To identify the synthe-

sis paths, scientists often employ a technique called retrosynthesis – a method

for creating potential drugs by working backward from the wanted molecules and searching for chemical reactions to make them.

Yet sifting through millions of potential chemical reactions can be an extremely challenging and time-consuming.

Researchers at The Ohio State University have created an AI framework called G2Retro to automatically generate reactions for any given molecule. The new study showed

that compared to current manual-planning methods, the framework was able to cover an enormous range of possible chemical reactions as well as accurately and quickly discern which reactions might work best to create a given drug molecule.

"Using AI for things critical to saving human lives, such as medicine, is what we really want to focus on," said Xia Ning, lead author of the study and an associate professor of computer

science and engineering at Ohio State. "Our aim was to use AI to accelerate the drug design process, and we found that it not only saves researchers time and money but provides drug candidates that may have much better properties than any molecules that exist in nature."

This study builds on previous research of Ning's where her team developed a method named Modof

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Geographic disparities revealed in US depression rates, new study shows

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a thorough analysis that revealed significant variations in the prevalence of diagnosed depression among adults across various states.

The recently published report unveils intriguing findings, indicating that

the proportion of US adults who have ever been diagnosed with depression varies considerably based on their geographical location.

According to the study, which analyzed data from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System in 2020, approximately 18.4% of US adults reported having been diagnosed with depression at some point.

However, the percentage of adults reporting depres-

sion varied substantially from state to state, ranging from an estimated 12.7% in Hawaii to 27.5% in West Virginia.

Researchers from the CDC and the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education in Tennessee noted in the report that there was a considerable geographic disparity in depression prevalence, with the highest rates observed along the Appalachian and southern Mississippi Valley regions.

Medical experts said the findings shed light on the urgent need for targeted resource allocation to areas where the prevalence of depression is most significant.

The research team utilized survey responses from nearly 400,000 adults across all 50 states and Washington, DC, focusing on answers related to previous diagnoses of depressive disorders received from healthcare profes-

sionals.

The data highlighted the ten states with the highest prevalence of adults reporting a depression diagnosis: West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Vermont, Alabama, Louisiana, Washington, Missouri, and Montana.

Further analysis at the county level revealed an even more comprehensive range of prevalence, with depression rates ranging from 10.7% in Alaska's

Aleutians East Borough County to 31.9% in Logan County, West Virginia.

In addition to geographical disparities, the study also found notable variations in depression prevalence based on gender and age.

The overall prevalence among women was 24%, compared to 13.3% among men. Younger adults aged 18 to 24 experienced a

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Study reveals off-duty police kill Black men at unacceptably high rates

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

A recent study in Health Services Research found that off-duty police officers commit homicides more often than previously thought, and media coverage of these events is limited.

The research analyzed murders by victim race and gender and the context surrounding these incidents.

The study revealed significant disparities in the victims of homicides and the media attention they receive based on their race and gender.

Black men emerged as the most frequent victims of off-duty police killings, accounting for 39.3%.

They were followed by white men at 25.2%, Hispanic men at 11.2%, white women at 9.1%, men of unknown race at 9.1%, and Black women at 4.1%.

Notably, Black women



The study revealed significant disparities in the victims of homicides and the media attention they receive based on their race and gender. (Photo via NNPA)

had the highest rate of off-duty police-perpetrated killings relative to white men.

The study also found significant discrepancies in news reporting based on the victim's race.

Incidents involving Black and Hispanic victims were three times more likely to receive news coverage than other cases.

Moreover, news reports often identified the perpetrator as an off-duty officer when the victim was Black

or Hispanic.

"Black men were the most frequent victims of off-duty police violence," said Emmanuella Asabor, lead author of the study and an M.D.-Ph.D. student at Yale School of Medicine and Yale School of Public Health.

"And that's consistent with the literature on policing. Due to the weapons allowances for off-duty police officers and that off-duty and even veteran police officers are imbued

with a great degree of power to intervene, we felt that off-duty policing was worthy of investigation," said Asabor, who reported the findings to Yale University News.

According to the analysis, less than half of the victims allegedly carried a weapon at the time of their killings, and nearly all were shot.

And while only 6.3% of the U.S. population identified as Black men in 2021, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 39.3% of those killed by off-duty police officers were Black men, the study found.

"Black men were the most frequent victims of off-duty police violence," Asabor said. "And that's consistent with the literature on policing."

Conducted using a convergent mixed-methods design, the study drew upon the Mapping Police Violence database to create a comprehensive dataset of

off-duty police-perpetrated killings.

Researchers also used data from Media Cloud to evaluate the extent and nature of news coverage surrounding these incidents.

The study shows concerning findings and emphasizes the urgent need for clear rules and more investigation into off-duty officers' roles.

Through qualitative analysis of the narrative text accompanying the quantitative data, researchers uncovered several alarming patterns in off-duty police-perpetrated killings.

The study uncovered that off-duty officers exhibited violent behavior within their social networks, escalating situations, and intentionally concealing information regarding their use of lethal force.

Additionally, the research revealed a disturbing trend of off-duty officers frequently intervening while impaired and target-

ing individuals in crisis, endangering both the victims and potentially causing secondary trauma to witnesses.

Breaking down the percentages of individuals killed by off-duty police officers in comparison to on-duty officers, the study found that a disproportionately higher percentage of Black women victims (12.8%) lost their lives at the hands of off-duty officers, compared to 87.2% of on-duty officers killed.

This stark contrast in victim demographics signifies the significant impact of off-duty officers on Black women.

Conversely, the study highlighted that only 1.5% of white men fell victim to off-duty officers, in contrast to 98.5% who on-duty officers killed.

"That says to us that the rate of off-duty police perpetrated killings of Black

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City approves DART agreement on unallocated sales tax revenues

On Wednesday, the Dallas City Council approved an agreement with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) that will allocate \$90 million in unallocated sales tax revenues to the City of Dallas for critical community mobility projects that complement DART's public transportation system, including:

- Reconstruction of 22 traffic signals at intersections along major DART bus route corridors, with priority given to those routes in Equity Priority Areas
- Completion of phase 1 of the Sidewalk Master Plan
- Construction of more than 90 percent of missing ramps near DART bus stops and light rail stations
- Funding for the FY 2024 traffic lane markings program
- Bike lane upgrades
- A City of Dallas parking operations study and smart parking pilot projects
- Support for DART pass-



David Wilfong / NDG

es that the City distributes to middle and high school students for free, and support for transit services for homeless individuals

• Funding for ongoing maintenance of the City-owned Dallas Streetcar, and professional services for studies to optimize operations

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is also partnering with the City and DART to provide funding on several additional projects.

"We want to thank our staff, as well as our partners at the Regional Transportation Council, for their role in getting us to today's suc-

cessful outcome. Decisions like these will impact our communities for decades, and it is important that we get it right," said Omar Narvaez, Chairman of the City's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

"For almost 40 years, DART's partnership with the City of Dallas, and each of our service area cities, has provided us the opportunity to empower the residents and communities of North Texas to more easily access jobs, health care and education," said Nadine Lee, DART President & CEO. "Together, we can continue to develop a truly seamless and inte-

grated mobility system that will help all our residents go where they want, when they want, to live their best lives."

Wednesday's City Council action is also a significant step toward investing

in critical improvements that improve transit access as well as speed and reliability of bus service within the City of Dallas.

"Safety and quality of life for Dallas residents have been our top priorities

throughout the development of this project. I am grateful to have reached a resolution with our partners at DART to advance this mobility connection for our peer cities," said T.C. Broadnax, City Manager.

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Groundbreaking for Jane & John Justin Foundation Omni Theater marks a new era of science education

FORT WORTH – The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History last week celebrated a significant milestone with the groundbreaking ceremony for the Jane & John Justin Foundation Omni Theater. The event, held at the museum, brought together community leaders, philanthropists, and representatives from the Jane & John Justin Foundation to commemorate the beginning of an exciting chapter in science education.

The Jane & John Justin Foundation Omni Theater plans to revolutionize the way visitors experience science and educational documentaries, offering an immersive and awe-inspiring journey that engages and educates audiences.



Branol/Unsplash

The cutting-edge theater powered by Cosm technology, will offer a captivating and immersive experience for all ages. Its innovative technology and state-of-the-art facilities will allow visitors to embark on thrill-

ing journeys through the wonders of science, fostering curiosity and inspiring a deeper understanding of the world around us.

During the ceremony, attendees witnessed the symbolic groundbreaking,

signaling the commencement of construction and the realization of a new era of the Omni Theater, and Museum President Orlando Carvalho, Board Chair Marianne Auld, and City of Fort Worth Mayor Mat-

tie Parker took the stage to share their memories of the Omni Theater and its significance for the Fort Worth community. They emphasized the pivotal role this groundbreaking project will play in advancing science education and promoting lifelong learning.

"We are immensely grateful to the Jane & John Justin Foundation and all our supporters, partners and stakeholders who have contributed to making this renovation a reality," said Orlando Carvalho, president of the museum.

"The Jane & John Justin Foundation Omni Theater will serve as a beacon of knowledge and inspiration in Fort Worth, enabling us to deliver transformative

educational experiences and propel science education into the future."

The Jane & John Justin Foundation Omni Theater will feature a colossal digital dome and new immersive sound system, all designed to transport audiences into the heart of scientific discoveries and captivating narratives. It will become a hub for dynamic programming, including educational films, live presentations, and community events that foster engagement and inspire a love for learning.

"We think Jane and John would be thrilled to be part of this project, which will enhance education and

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Young racial justice philanthropists gain international attention

NEW YORK (Black PR Wire) – As part of a major initiative to create a new generation of philanthropists, The New3Rs, a 501c3 nonprofit, is enrolling students in its summer program, teaching students about Black history, civics, compassion, and responsive philanthropy. The students participated in the global "We Give Summit 2023," featuring young students passionate about helping people through philanthropy. The students participated in a session, "A Young Giver's Journey to Responsive Philanthropy" and also donated funds to a school in Zimbabwe.

The participating students were Amiri Ar-



New York's Youngest Racial Justice Philanthropists Gain International Attention (Clay Banks / Unsplash)

chibald, Blake Ansari, Ethan Fertil, and Sunay Chawla, all part of the organization's Youth Responsive Giving Circle. "Our

students are the youngest responsive philanthropists globally investing in Black lives, and they deserve recognition," said Dr. Starita

Boyce Ansari, founder and EduTech Innovator of The-New3Rs.org.

"These students work so hard to create the "More Perfect Union" former President Obama envisions for our country. They are donating their time, talents, treasures, and testimonies to make America a safer and better place for Black people."

The New3Rs launched its online education program for families of 6th to 10th graders in December of 2019. New3Rs educates and empowers through the ART of social justice storytelling, building relationships, and fostering a sense of responsibility.

The organization has

gained recognition from NASDAQ, The Wise Fund, Indiana University, Purdue University in Indiana, and Philanthropy Together.

Families who enroll in the courses tap into more than 10,000 Black history artifacts curated by Dan Gore, the organization's historian, whose work is celebrated on the organization's website. They also participate in mindfulness conversations about equity, compassion, civics, and racism around the world.

This summer, the students are launching a campaign against the coco industry and the enslavement of Black children in Africa. Dr. Ansari says, "Knowing Black History is essential

to the pursuit of social justice. And no one can know the history of America without the stories of Black contributions."

The New3Rs.org is a community of Asian, Black, LatinX and White families committed to racial justice. The students are the youngest philanthropists awarding grants to Black-founded organizations in Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States.

To learn more about The-New3Rs.org or to make a donation, go to its website or email compassion@the-new3Rs.org. Follow The-New3Rs.org on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

BURNS, from Page 2

tificate of Excellence, Young Conqueror under Forty Female of the Year, and recognition as "One Million Women in STEM." She is a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., an organization where she has proudly served for

the past 25 years. Dedicated to civil advocacy, Dr. Burns serves as the treasurer of the board of directors for SHE VOTES, a nonpartisan non-profit organization that supports young women in becoming registered voters. She also

lends her expertise as an advisory council member to the Cummings Graduate Institute for Behavioral Health Studies.

Dr. Burns is a licensed life insurance agent at PHP Agency, Inc., where she engages in financial literacy seminars and retirement planning for a variety

of clients. She is also a notary public with the Office of the Texas Secretary of State. She plans to continue her work as an epidemiologist while encouraging the younger generation to be more involved in the voting process, emphasizing the impact they have on laws and legislation

regarding the healthcare system. In the community, Dr. Burns serves as a motivational speaker, political activist, and youth mentor. In her spare time, she enjoys painting, sculpting, and playing the piano.

Charla N. Burns, MD, has been included in Marquis Who's Who. As in all

Marquis Who's Who biographical volumes, individuals profiled are selected on the basis of current reference value. Factors such as position, noteworthy accomplishments, visibility, and prominence in a field are all taken into account during the selection process.

Dallas plans for Forest Audelia Multipurpose Center, includes new park and community center to revitalize Northeast communities

Dallas officials recently shared plans for a new park and multipurpose center to be built at Forest Audelia Village, to replace a section of the underutilized, city-owned shopping center located there. The center will bring recreational options to a community where walkable access to programs and facilities are limited. Dallas Park and Recreation says the new green space will provide options for residents to focus on their health, socialize, enjoy the outdoors and encourage new business development in the area.

The first phase of the project will begin with the demolition of a section of an existing shopping center and portions of the parking lot at the current location as well as the outdoor space construction and renovation of approximately 10,000 square feet of the



shopping center interior. Officials expect this phase to be completed by the end of 2024.

In addition, renovations to the building interior will create spaces for cultural and leisure activities, a library, fitness area, community classrooms and a police storefront.

Despite light rain and mist, city leaders joined with the community for a ceremonial demolition at the future park site. Those giving remarks included

Adam McGough, Dallas City Council, District 10; Kathy Stewart, Dallas City Councilmember-Elect District 10; Arun Agarwal, President, Dallas Park and Recreation Board; Scott Goldstein, Dallas Park and Recreation Board District 10; Robb Stewart, former member, Dallas Park and Recreation Board; and Andrew "Andy" Acord, Retired Deputy Chief Dallas Police.

While the event did not feature a live demolition,

attendees had a chance to see the actual construction equipment and renderings of the park and building renovations.

"Forest and Audelia will be an example of what our city can do to partner first with the community and then with other partners to transform an area," said McGough. "We have focused years of attention and resources, and now is the time for the city to step up and serve this community. This area should be a destination that people come from all around to play, learn and be safe. I am deeply grateful to have played a role in this progress, and I can't wait to see what happens next."

"Soon, this block will be transformed into a new green space and community center that represents a new lease on life for this community and for its

residents. This park will be more than the land where it sits. It will be a pathway to this community's happiness, health, well-being, social interaction, pride, economy, and much, much more. It will be essential to vibrant, thriving communities," said Agarwal.

The one-acre park will sit on the southern end of the site facing Forest Lane and feature a playground, multi-use sport courts, pavilions, landscaping, and trees. The building renovation will create a lobby area, fitness/exercise room, group exercise room, classrooms, child area and space for four city departments: Dallas Public Library, Office of Arts and Culture, Dallas Police, and Dallas Park and Recreation.

"Our department is thrilled we can bring recreation options to this community so families can feel

a sense of community that parks and public spaces create when they come together. Parks and recreational activities transform lives. Dallas is tearing down a section of this underused shopping center to build something new that will bring much-needed leisure and social infrastructure to this community," said Crystal R. Ross, Deputy Director, Dallas Park and Recreation Department.

Park officials said the cost to build the park is \$1.9 million while the renovations will cost \$5.6 million. Funding will be provided by the Skillman Corridor Tax Increment Financing District funds, the City of Dallas, and monies from the 2017 bond program.

Dallas Park and Recreation is to share additional details and timelines about the project.

OMNI, from Page 6

foster the growth of our Fort Worth community," expressed Roy Topham, Executive Director of The Jane & John Justin Foundation. "The Omni Theater will empower individuals of all ages to explore the

wonders of science and ignite their curiosity, paving the way for Fort Worth to be at the forefront of science education."

The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History expects to complete the Jane

& John Justin Foundation Omni Theater in Fall 2024 and eagerly awaits its grand opening, where visitors will have the opportunity to embark on extraordinary educational journeys and experience the thrill of scientific discovery like never before.



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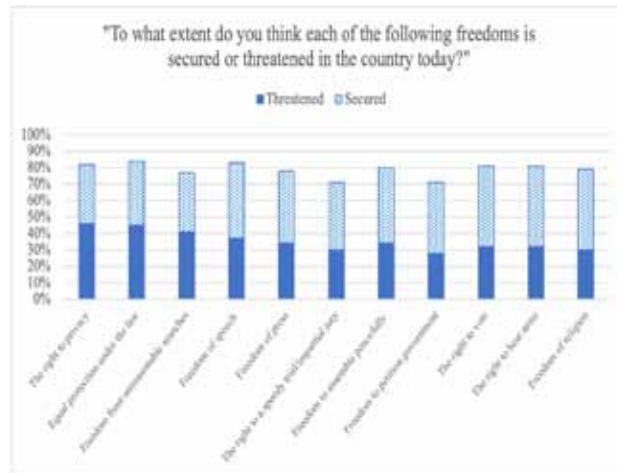
LIVE NATION



UT/Civitas Institute poll finds less than half of people polled regard U.S. democracy positively

AUSTIN, Texas — The inaugural American Civic Life Survey conducted by the Civitas Institute at The University of Texas at Austin has revealed that many Americans are concerned about the state of democracy. The survey, conducted from April 24 to May 1, encompassed a wide range of questions about democracy, capitalism, First Amendment rights, political actors and institutions, and issue priorities.

"There is general agreement among Americans that the country's founding principles remain correct and appropriate," said Daron Shaw, Civitas Institute faculty fellow and the Frank C. Erwin, Jr. Centennial Chair of State Government who helped lead the survey. "But the poll shows that citizens are skeptical



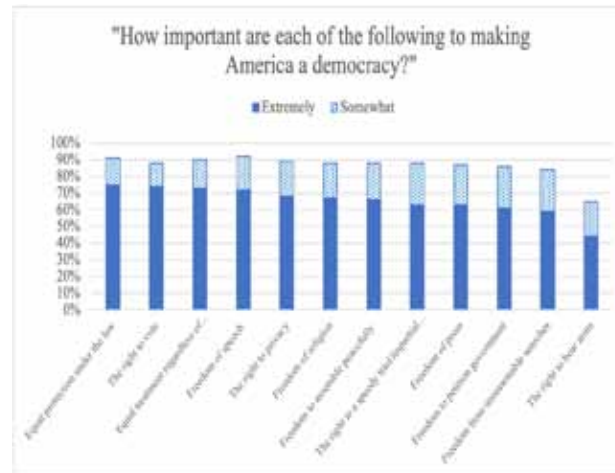
cal about the ability of our leaders and institutions to protect and sustain those principles."

YouGov provided data collection, and the institute will continue to conduct similar surveys twice yearly for three years.

When asked about the effectiveness of democracy in the United States, 46% offered a positive assessment

of democracy in the U.S., while 38% gave it a negative rating, and 16% said it was neither good nor bad.

The survey also reveals a divide in economic issues facing the United States. On the American economic system, 49% gave positive assessments of capitalism and the free enterprise system, whereas 32% offered negative ratings and 17%



gave it a middling rating.

However, the Americans surveyed do agree on a fundamental principle: The rights and liberties outlined in the Bill of Rights are important to democracy. All told, 11 of the 12 rights or liberties show at least 80% rating them as either somewhat or extremely important. Only the right to bear arms falls below this

marker, with 65% rating it as important.

The right to privacy is viewed as the most threatened right. By 10 percentage points, Americans are more likely to say that the right to privacy is more "threatened" than "secured." Other rights that are viewed as more threatened than secured are equal protection under the law

(by 6 points) and freedom from unreasonable searches (by 5 points). The most secured rights are freedom of religion (19 percentage points more secured than threatened), the right to bear arms and the right to vote (17 points each) and the freedom to petition the government (15 points).

When asked to rate (using a 1-7 scale) how well the rights of Americans are taught to K-12 students, respondents gave the highest marks for the right to vote (39% scored the schools at the high end of the scale), followed by freedom of speech (33%), freedom of religion (30%), freedom to assemble peacefully (29%), and freedom of the press (29%). Fewer than a quarter gave positive marks

See POLL, Page 16

DEPRESSION, from Page 2

higher prevalence rate of 21.5%, while older adults aged 65 and above had a rate of 14.2%.

The study also highlight-

ed higher depression rates among white adults and individuals with less than a high school education.

The most recent findings

support a different Gallup report from May, which found a comparable national prevalence of depression among adults in the United States.

The Gallup report indi-

cated that approximately 18% of adults reported being depressed or receiving treatment for depression, representing a significant increase of over seven percentage points since 2015.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health cannot be overlooked, as it has undeniably contributed to the rise in clinical depression rates, health officials said.

The Gallup data demonstrated a notable escalation in depression rates over recent years, aligning with the overall upward trend observed in the U.S., officials stated.

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LIVE NATION

Black filmmaker Kareem Mortimer lands US distribution for Caribbean show

This is Paradise, the first Bahamian television series to secure a distribution deal with a major American streaming service, is officially on Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment's free streaming service Crackle. The show premiered on May 30, 2023. The six-episode series was produced and directed by award-winning pioneering Bahamian filmmaker Kareem Mortimer and can be accessed for free through Roku, Samsung TVs, and numerous other devices.

The series is a triumph for the Bahamian entertainment industry and Caribbean television as a whole. With an all-Bahamian/Caribbean cast, crew, and production team, This is Paradise is a representation and cultural authenticity pioneer. Filmed on the picturesque island of Eleuthera, the production created employment opportunities for Eleutherans as cast members, crew, cater-



Courtesy photos

ers, and more.

This is Paradise tells the captivating story of two contrasting women who discover their shared heritage as half-sisters after the sudden passing of their father. United by this revelation, they must come together to rescue their father's dilapidated hotel in The Bahamas. With six episodes, This is Paradise presents a heartwarming narrative set against the stunning tropical backdrop of the island.

Mortimer, the visionary creator of the series, is the executive producer, infusing the project with his

unique perspective and creative prowess. Joining him are executive producer Julia Woolley Chatwin, producer Henrietta Edgecombe, and producers Nicole Sylvester and Trevite Willis. The series features an exceptional ensemble cast, including Dana Deveaux, Julia Woolley Chatwin, Michael Olodeye, Timico Sawyer, and Z'hane Newbold. The dynamic directing team consists of Kareem Mortimer, Henrietta Edgecombe, and Lavado Stubbs, while the enchanting scripts are penned by Tim Papciak, Stephen Hanna, and Kerel Pinder.

"Highlighting and advocating for the diversity of Black cinema has been a core focus throughout my career," said Gregory Maurice, senior director of global acquisitions & co-productions at Crackle. "This is Paradise showcases a fun and refreshing portrayal of Black people that breaks away from stereotypes. Kareem and his team have made history, and it is an honor for us to be part of this groundbreaking series by presenting it on our platform."

The premiere of This is Paradise coincides with Caribbean Heritage Month in the United States which is celebrated in June. As streaming platforms increasingly embrace au-

thentic African films and shows, the series presents The Bahamas in its true light, featuring genuine accents and locations outside of Nassau, New Providence. Filming took place on the island of Eleuthera, the first colonized Bahamian island known for its unspoiled natural beauty and celebrity residents that included Mariah Carey, the British royal family, and local favorite Lenny Kravitz. It was also the film location of Tyler Perry's Why Did I Get Married, Too?

Zhane'o Newbold, a Caribbean social media sensation and comedian known for his Sarge character, described working on the project as incredibly thrilling.

"I was surrounded by a multitude of talented creatives and professionals operating on a grander scale," said Newbold who plays Walcott in This Is Paradise. "Moreover, I am immensely honored to share a slice of this Bahamian history. My hope is that the viewers will have the opportunity to witness the remarkable and varied talent that thrives in the Bahamas, brilliantly expressed through this captivating endeavor."

Newbold said he wants to establish a profound connection with his audience and enable them to truly engage with the rich essence of Bahamian culture.

"Showcasing our talent

See SHOW, Page 11

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Dallas Opera announces 2023 Maria Callas Award winner, new board chair, and the annual General Director's Award

The Dallas Opera named countertenor Kangmin Justin Kim as the 2023 "Maria Callas Debut Artist of the Year" for his captivating Opera debut as Hansel in Humperdinck's Hansel and Gretel.

The annual award, selected exclusively by Dallas Opera subscribers, is given to a single performer each season in recognition of a particularly memorable and outstanding company debut. OnstageNTX called his performance "marvelous," delivered with "a strikingly sonorous and strong mezzo-timbered voice, excellent acting chops, boundless energy, and a touch of modern-day punk."

Born in South Korea and raised in Chicago, Mr. Kim studied voice, opera, and musical theater at Northwestern University and the Royal Academy of Music, London. In the summer of 2022, he created the role of Song Liling in the world premiere of M. Butterfly at Santa Fe Opera, receiving rave reviews for his "al-



From left, Kangmin Justin Kim, Board Chair Quincy Roberts, and TDO Guild President Susan Geyer. (Courtesy photos)

luring, ringing tone" and his "sensitivity as an actor" (The New York Times).

Audiences can watch Kangmin Justin Kim's award-winning performance in Hansel and Gretel on thedallasopera.tv now through July 31 for free.

Quincy Roberts, CEO of Dallas-based Roberts Trucking, Inc., was elected today to serve a two-year term as Board Chair. Holding a bachelor's degree in music, voice, and opera from Indiana University Bloomington, Quincy experienced his first Dallas Opera performance at the age of 10. In the last 30 years, he has served as a

patron, usher, chorister, Trustee, and on the Board of Directors, as well as numerous committees. During the pandemic, he brought The Dallas Opera's OperaTruck to life, an 18-foot flatbed truck that continues to make significant impact by bringing opera to communities outside the Dallas Arts District. Mr. Roberts is the first African American Board Chair in the history of The Dallas Opera.

"The Dallas Opera had a significant impact on my life since childhood and planted a seed that continues to blossom today. Being elected as Board Chair

is a true honor and I look forward to working together with our CEO, board members, staff, patrons,

and community partners as we continue to redefine TDO as a world-class leader in opera on and off the stage," said Roberts. The Kern Wildenthal General Director and CEO, Ian Derrier added "We are so fortunate to have both Quincy's deeply rooted passion for opera and business acumen at the helm of our Board of Directors. There couldn't be a better match for the role, and we're excited to see what the future holds."

Susan Geyer received the 2022/2023 General Direc-

tor's Award for her exemplary leadership and volunteer contributions to The Dallas Opera. Having attended TDO performances since 1982, Susan became a Trustee in the 2010/2011 Season and Secretary of the Board of Directors in July 2020. A champion of arts education, Susan has volunteered for TDO's Education Committee since 2010 and has served as Co-Chair and Chair since 2014. Susan was also part of the

See OPERA, Page 11

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May report indicates strong reductions in inflation

WASHINGTON (The White House) -- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) indicates continued reduced inflation in May and the lowest yearly inflation rate since March 2021. Falling energy prices—down 3.6 percent in May—were the key factor in May's slower inflation relative to April, as gasoline prices fell 5.6 percent in May, subtracting 19 basis points (hundredths of a percent) from the monthly inflation figure and just under a percent-

age point from the yearly figure.

Core inflation, which omits food and energy prices, rose 0.4 percent in May and 5.3 percent on a yearly basis. Given that food and energy are critical components of the market basket for households, some may reasonably wonder why economists closely track the core index. The main reason is that their inherent volatility, as well as the fact that price movements of both of these commodi-

ties are influenced by global markets, makes them less indicative of where U.S. inflation is headed. In other words, we track the core, and a few other sub-indices, to get a better read on the underlying, or more persistent, component of inflation.

Overall inflation has been falling for a number of months. On a yearly basis (navy blue line), it is down 11 months in a row, and down by 5.1 percentage points from its peak

last year of 9.1 percent. Prepandemic, in 2019 (Dec.-Dec.), CPI inflation rose 2.3 percent, so 4 percent is still an elevated yearly inflation rate. But the figure also shows the more timely, though jumpier, three-month annualized rate of overall inflation, which was 2.2 percent in May, a point below April's three-month annualized rate of 3.2 percent and the lowest such rate since November 2020.

The combination of the

persistently strong U.S. labor market and the decline in overall inflation has contributed to inflation-adjusted earnings gains. In May, real average hourly earnings rose 0.3 percent over the month and 0.2 percent over the last 12 months, the first 12-month rise in real earnings since March 2021. In this way, the tight labor market is supporting solid consumer spending, a key variable in terms of sustaining macroeconomic

growth.

Last month, we argued that a useful way to extract signal from noise in the inflation data is to plot annualized changes from different points in time on a 12, 6, 3, and 1-month basis. Along with the height of the bars showing the level of inflation, bars that trend downward over shorter time periods (e.g., 3 months versus 12 months)

See MAY, Page 13

MEDS, from Page 4

that was able to generate molecule structures that exhibited desired properties better than any existing molecules. "Now the question becomes how to make such generated molecules, and that is where this new study shines," said Ning, also an associate professor of biomedical informatics in the College of Medicine.

The study was published today in the journal Communications Chemistry.

Ning's team trained G2Retro on a dataset that contains 40,000 chemical reactions collected between 1976 and 2016. The framework "learns" from graph-

based representations of given molecules, and uses deep neural networks to generate possible reactant structures that could be used to synthesize them. Its generative power is so impressive that, according to Ning, once given a molecule, G2Retro could come up with hundreds of new reaction predictions in only a few minutes.

"Our generative AI method G2Retro is able to supply multiple different synthesis routes and options, as well as a way to rank different options for each molecule," said Ning. "This is not going to

replace current lab-based experiments, but it will offer more and better drug options so experiments can be prioritized and focused much faster."

Having such a dynamic and effective device at scientists' disposal could enable the industry to manufacture stronger drugs at a quicker pace – but despite the edge AI might give scientists inside the lab, Ning emphasizes the medicines G2Retro or any generative AI creates still need to be validated – a process that involves the created molecules being tested in animal models and later in human trials.

"We are very excited

about generative AI for medicine, and we are dedicated to using AI responsibly to improve human health," said Ning.

This research was supported by Ohio State's President's Research Excellence Program and the National Science Foundation. Other Ohio State co-authors were Ziqi Chen, Oluwatosin Ayinde, James Fuchs and Huan Sun.

SHOW, from Page 9

on an international platform is an immense opportunity," added Newbold. "The Bahamas requires greater global visibility, allowing us to establish our unique identity and consistently demonstrate our exceptional abilities. I firmly believe that this is just the start of a remarkable journey towards even greater achievements. My devoted fans have always wished for my triumphs and eagerly anticipate witnessing my expansion into international territories. Their excitement stems from witnessing my growth from humble beginnings to reaching new pinnacles of success."

Dana, who landed the

lead role of Kiesha, agrees that being a part of the project is nothing short of amazing.

"There was something very special about working on authentic Bahamian material while utilizing the breathtaking landscape of the island of Eleuthera, which is also a character in the show," said Dana. "It gives viewers a chance to experience the Bahamas in a completely new light, and I think this fresh take is only the beginning of the type of artistic work viewers can expect from Bahamian creatives. There is bigger and better to come – this is just the beginning!"

Dana plays one of two

women who discover their shared heritage as half-sisters after the sudden passing of their father. United by this revelation, they must come together to rescue their father's dilapidated hotel in The Bahamas.

"Securing a deal to reach millions of viewers in the United States has been a long time coming, and we are tremendously grateful," said Kareem, executive producer, and creator. "Joining the Crackle family, associated with Redbox and Chicken Soup For The Soul, surpasses our expectations. This achievement demonstrates that perseverance is worthwhile. I am delighted to work with this incredible team and, as we say, take 242 to the world."

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FTC takes action against Amazon for enrolling consumers in Amazon Prime without consent and sabotaging attempts to cancel

In a complaint filed this week, the FTC charges that Amazon has knowingly duped millions of consumers into unknowingly enrolling in Amazon Prime. Specifically, Amazon used manipulative, coercive, or deceptive user-interface designs known as “dark patterns” to trick consumers into enrolling in automatically-renewing Prime subscriptions.

Amazon also knowingly complicated the cancellation process for Prime subscri-

ers who sought to end their membership. The primary purpose of its Prime cancellation process was not to enable subscribers to cancel, but to stop them. Amazon leadership slowed or rejected changes that would’ve made it easier for users to cancel Prime because those changes adversely affected Amazon’s bottom line.

“Amazon tricked and trapped people into recurring subscriptions without their consent, not only frustrating users but also costing

them significant money,” said FTC Chair Lina M. Khan. “These manipulative tactics harm consumers and law-abiding businesses alike. The FTC will continue to vigorously protect Americans from “dark patterns” and other unfair or deceptive practices in digital markets.”

For now, the FTC’s complaint is significantly redacted, though the FTC has told the Court it does not find the need for ongoing secrecy compelling. Nevertheless,

the complaint contains a number of allegations related to the company’s decision not to make changes to prevent nonconsensual enrollment in Prime and the difficulties consumers faced in attempting to unsubscribe from the service. Specifically, the complaint charges that Amazon used so-called “dark patterns” to cause consumers to enroll in Prime without their consent, in violation of the FTC Act, and the Restore Online Shoppers’ Confidence Act.

During Amazon’s online checkout process, consumers were faced with numerous opportunities to subscribe to Amazon Prime at \$14.99/month. In many cases, the option to purchase items on Amazon without subscribing to Prime was more difficult for consumers to locate. In some cases, the button presented to consumers to complete their transaction did not clearly state that in choosing that option they were also agreeing to join Prime for a recurring

subscription.

The FTC charges that Amazon put in place a cancellation process designed to deter consumers from successfully unsubscribing from Prime. Previous reporting about the process in the media has noted that Amazon used the term “Iliad” to describe the process, which the reporting cites as an allusion to Homer’s epic poem set over twenty-four books and nearly 16,000 lines about the decade-long Trojan War.

MAY, from Page 11

signal slowing inflation and vice versa.

Figure 2 focuses on core inflation, which has come down relative to a year ago, but is still high in level terms and “sticky” in terms of its pace. Figure 3, however, shows clear evidence that overall inflation, including food and energy,

is easing both in terms of its level and in terms of its pace of time.

These patterns suggest a bit of a conundrum. Economists tend to view core inflation as a more reliable signal of where inflation is headed. But for a while now, core has remained elevated and sticky

while overall inflation has persistently slowed. One “mechanical” reason for this is that energy and food prices have eased in recent months, though within food prices, more so for groceries than restaurants (grocery prices rose 0.1 percent last month after falling 0.5 percent in the prior two months). These price movements reduce overall

inflation, but are less of an influence on core inflation (there is some pass through from overall to core, say, through airfares reflecting fuel costs).

Another force in play are housing costs, which account for a particularly large share (61 percent) of 12-month CPI core inflation. Housing costs rose 0.5 percent in May, and 8.2

percent over the past year (versus, say, 3.4 percent over 2019). As the CEA argued in a recent blog post, we expect housing prices to ease as the year progresses. If so, this should especially help ease the pace of core inflation, but there is considerable uncertainty as to when, or to what extent, this rollover might occur.

The patterns depicted

in figure 3 above provide some important inflation relief to American consumers and workers. However, as prices remain elevated and core inflation, though down from its peak, has fallen less quickly than overall inflation, our work is not complete. The CEA will continue to closely track these developments as new data come in.

POLICE, from Page 5

women diverges from broad public discourse on policing, which tends to under-estimate the over-representation of Black women among policing victims,” Asabor said.

The researchers emphasized the importance of media outlets reporting on all killings by off-duty police officers, irrespective of the victim’s race.

They urged journalists

to seek information from diverse sources instead of solely relying on statements provided by the police.

Furthermore, the researchers emphasized that establishing more precise distinctions between off-

icers’ roles on and off duty is crucial in addressing the issue.

By defining these roles more effectively, law enforcement agencies can work towards resolving the systemic challenges associated with off-duty officer

conduct.

“Reconsidering officers’ relationships to other citizens, particularly when they’re off duty, is critical for the conversation on police reform,” Asabor remarked.

“One message of our

study is that there is space to reconsider the extent to which the broad deputization of off-duty police officers, in terms of their weapons carriage and their conduct, is potentially causing more harm than good.”

GUNS, from Page 1

2014, after reaching a 40-year low.

“Our country is breaking records for all the wrong reasons—record gun sales combined with increasingly permissive gun laws are making gun violence a pervasive part of life in our country, leading to a sharp increase in gun deaths,” says Ari Davis, MPP, policy adviser at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and the report’s lead author. “Perhaps most troubling is these spikes in homicides and suicides are almost entirely connected to guns.”

In 2021, guns continued to be the leading cause of death for children and teens

ages 1–19 as well as young adults under the age of 25. In fact, young people ages 15–34 had a gun homicide rate twice the national average, accounting for three out of every five homicide deaths. This was driven by the high rate of firearm fatalities among Black people in these age groups.

For gun suicides in 2021, white males, who comprised 29 percent of the population, accounted for 70 percent of all firearm suicide deaths, while surprisingly, those 75 and older were at the highest risk.

The researchers analyzed 2021 firearm data from 2019 to 2021 collected by the CDC’s Wide-ranging

Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) database, considered to be the most reliable national source of gun death data available in the U.S. The data, based on death certificates, reflect the primary cause of death.

In the first two years of the pandemic, guns drove suicide and homicide rates in the U.S., increasing homicides by 45 percent, and non-gun homicides by 7 percent. Black and Hispanic/Latinos experienced drastic increases in gun homicides over these two years, while American Indian/Alaska Natives experienced the largest suicide increases, up 55 percent. Similarly, the Black population experienced an in-

crease of 38 percent over these two years.

The report emphasizes that effective gun violence prevention laws can help reduce gun violence. In state-to-state comparisons, the authors found that the highest gun-related death rates tended to be in states with weaker gun laws and higher rates of gun ownership, while gun-related death rates were lower where gun violence prevention laws were stronger. In 2021, a person living in Mississippi was ten times more likely to die by gun violence than someone living in Massachusetts.

The report recommends evidence-based policies to address gun violence including:

- Implementing permit-to-purchase laws, also known as gun purchaser licensing.

- Using Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Extreme Risk Protection Orders—sometimes called “red flag” laws—to temporarily remove firearms from individuals determined to be at elevated risk for violence.

- Investing in community violence intervention programs.

- Adopting child access prevention laws mandating safe firearm storage in households with children and/or teens.

- Enacting stronger concealed carry permitting laws; and repealing “stand-your-ground” laws.

“Each life lost to gun violence represents a family torn apart, a community suffering,” says Cassandra Crifasi, PhD, co-director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and a report co-author. “The data are clear that states with stronger gun violence prevention laws have lower rates of gun violence. Passage of evidence-based solutions would help end the needless suffering happening in all corners of our country.”

“U.S. Gun Violence in 2021: An Accounting of a Public Health Crisis” was written by Ari Davis, Rose Kim, and Cassandra Crifasi, with contributions from Lisa Geller, Silvia Villarreal, and Tim Carey.

Black couple, creators of soul food starter packets sold in grocery stores, launch Black education fund

Claude and Crystal Booker created their time-saving seasoning packets, Booker's Soul Food Starters, to help folks reconnect at the dinner table. Dedicated to bettering the community to whom they serve simple homestyle cooking, the husband-and-wife team have started the Booker Soul Food Starters Black Education Fund. Every purchase made supports Black youth beyond the dinner table – helping as many young Black people as possible to receive a quality education without financial barriers or systemic limitations.

“From sharing a table to being provided equal opportunity, when we come together, we can all excel and thrive. There’s always room for everyone to succeed and have a seat at the table one wants,” says Claude.

Booker's Soul Food Starters does not only do-



Behind the brand of the family mealtime staple is a husband-and-wife team who want to ensure Black students across the U.S. can thrive without financial barriers and systemic limitations. (Courtesy photo)

nate a portion of its purchases to its education fund, but also pledged \$100,000 to support the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity State of Georgia STEM Program. The four-year partnership will provide resources and funding for the fraternity's S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Initiative. Booker, who is a Life Member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity presented the first year's check of

ability to showcase my natural intellect and excel academically. Fortunately for me, educational disparity ended there,” Claude says.

“Arriving at Jonson & Wales University and discovering I had equal access to education was a life-changing moment for me. I excelled in classes and achieved the highest nationwide GPA amongst my Omega Psi Phi fraternity brothers. I even earned the opportunity to become one of the university's first Black teaching assistants,” he said.

“As a proud member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, I am thrilled to see Booker giving back to the community in such a meaningful way. Booker's commitment to helping young people succeed is truly inspiring. It is truly about making a positive impact

in our community, and this donation to the Omega Psi Phi State of Georgia S.T.E.M. initiative is just one example of his dedication. With this support, we can help more students access the resources and opportunities they need to succeed in these critical fields,” says David C. Jones Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Georgia State Representative.

The Bookers' passion for food, family, community, and education remains the heart and soul of his brand and charity fund, which is managed by the Spartanburg County Foundation, the oldest community foundation in South Carolina.

The Spartanburg County

Foundation's rich history and modern, best practices, management work in harmony to ensure that every dollar spent makes maximum impact on the lives of Black students.

To learn more about the Bookers Soul Food Starters Black Education Fund or to make a direct donation, visit <https://soulfoodstarters.com/pages/supporting-black-education>.

Booker's Soul Food Starters are available for purchase at your favorite local grocers including Giant Eagle, Food City, Winn-Dixie, Kroger, Stop & Shop, Food Lion, and more. The meal starters are also available online at SoulFoodStarters.com.

Dallas Park and Rec Career Fair at the City's Central Public Library

The City of Dallas Park and Recreation Department will be holding a career fair on Jun. 29, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at J. Erik Jonsson Central Library at 1515 Young Street, L2ES, Dallas 75201.

The City of Dallas wants you to make plans to attend its hiring fair. Opportunities will include part-time positions, as well as full-time and seasonal job opportunities.

opportunities.

Same day interviews with potential on-the-spot job offers will be possible. Also, onboarding paperwork can be done at the job fair itself.

Please make plans to attend the event at J. Erik Jonsson Central Library downtown.

For more information, please visit PKR-TellHR@dallas.gov.

← OPERA, from Page 10 →

initial 2015 founding Committee for the Hart Institute for Women Conductors. A long-time member of The Dallas Opera Guild, she is now completing her term as Guild President along with her husband, Mark. Most

recently, her tireless advocacy for developing younger audiences helped inspire the transition of The Dallas Opera Guild to Bravo—a new program designed to attract new devotees and volunteers.

\$25,000 at the 7th District conference, recently held in Huntsville, Alabama.

“Throughout high school, I found myself in remedial classes without access to the same opportunities as my fellow students. We were given no tools for success, not even the same books. This educational track limited my

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If Only I Had It My Way

By Dr. James L. Snyder

Every once in a while, I have a little thought giggling in my brain to the effect that if only I had it my way. I don't have it often, but I try to take it seriously when I do.

My personal history is that it turns out to be a disaster whenever I have everything my way. And, boy, have I had disasters in my life.

I often think of Frank Sinatra's song, "I Did It My Way." For the life of me, I do not know what that is all about. Maybe it worked for him, but it hasn't worked for me, at least not yet. If I did everything my way, I'm

sure I would be locked up in jail or an insane asylum by now. I'm not sure which is worse.

Regarding this, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has several PhDs in "Doing It My Way." If I were smart and not saying I am, I would let her always have it her way.

There is only one place I can have anything my way: my Personal Interior Castle, my office. I sit at my desk; look at my computer, surrounded by thousands of books. In this "safe place," I can have it my way every day.

Occasionally, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage will come into my

Interior Castle and say something to the effect, "Would you like me to do any organizing in here?"

I smile as best I can and respond, "You can organize in here if you permit me to go to your craft room and organize there." I then chuckle, knowing she would never permit me to enter her craft room, let alone organize anything.

Don't let this get out, but a couple of times when she's away, I sneak into her craft room and move things around so she can't find them when she needs them. When she returns, she will go into her craft room, and I will stand outside to listen and hear her say something

to the effect, "Now, where is that? I know it was right here when I left."

I have to be careful that, you know who, does not hear me chuckling.

She has her space to do her thing her way, and I have my space to do my thing my way, and the twain shall never entangle themselves.

One of my great pleasures is that when she does something her way, and it turns out to be wrong. I have to keep my laughter under control in those circumstances.

We often go across town for appointments, and when we do that, I allow her to take her Sissy Van,

and I ride along strap in on the passenger side. Driving across town, she always decides which way to go.

Just recently, we had an appointment across town at some new location. We'd never been there before, so we had to be careful driving to that location.

When we got to a certain traffic light, I told her, "You need to turn right here on this street."

Looking at me, she said, "I'm driving, and so I know where I'm going. I don't need any information from you. Sit back and let me do it my way."

With that, she turned left, and I could hardly hold my laughter because I knew

where that street would end up.

Looking at me, she said, "Why are you laughing?"

"I was just thinking of a joke."

"Oh, yeah. What was that joke?"

I looked at her, and in a moment, I said, "Why was six afraid of seven?"

"I don't know, why was six afraid of seven?"

"Because," I said, "seven, eight, nine."

"So," she graveled, "that was the joke you were thinking of?"

It wasn't, but I had to use something to cover up my laughter.

See SNYDER, Page 16

Permission, Sir

By Daris Howard

Merrill hadn't been back to the army camp long before everyone was summoned to line up for roll call. He had just been heading to the restroom when the call came, but he rushed to his place in line, hoping roll call would be quick.

But quick was not what the commander had in mind. They had just finished basic training the week before and had been given a day of leave. It wasn't enough time to go home, but everyone could go to town and enjoy some things they had missed. But now that they were back, having just returned, few looked sharp and ready for inspection.

"Soldier," the commander said to the first man in the line, "have you ever considered ironing your uniform? You look like you wadded it up and stuck it in a drawer. Is that how we treat what we wear?"

"No, sir," the man said.

The commander scolded him some more, then moved to the next man. "How long has it been since you took a shower?" the commander asked. "You look like you spent your leave in a mudhole."

The commander con-

tinued to find something wrong with everyone. Finally, Merrill could wait no longer. He hated to draw attention to himself, but he raised his hand. The commander moved in front of him.

"Is there something you need, soldier?" the commander asked.

"Permission to use the restroom," Merrill said.

"Why didn't you use it when you returned to camp?" the commander asked.

"I did, sir," Merrill said.

"You did, and you need to go again?"

"Yes, sir," Merrill replied.

"Something you ate?" the commander asked.

"Likely, sir," Merrill replied.

"Well, you go," the commander said. "Then, when you return, you can tell everyone all about it."

Merrill knew the commander meant to make it an embarrassing moment, but he was just glad to have permission. He hurriedly used the restroom, then returned to his place in line.

The commander immediately came and stood in front of him. "Now, soldier, why don't you tell everyone about your little tummy problems?"

"Yes, sir," Merrill replied. "I am not used to this California heat, so when we went on leave, the only thing I could think of was getting something cool to drink. But instead, I came across a watermelon stand."

I had just enough money to buy the biggest, ripest watermelon I could find."

"And you ate it all?" the commander said, barely able to hold the grin from his face.

"Yes, sir, but that's not all," Merrill said.

"Do tell," the commander said with a smirk.

"The owner of the stand asked me if I liked it. I told him it was wonderful. I said that if I had any more money, I would buy another one. He told me his son was fighting in the Battle of the Bulge in Europe. He said he wished he could send a watermelon to him. Then he said that since he couldn't, he was going to give me a free watermelon in honor of his son."

"Don't tell me," the commander said. "You ate it, too?"

"Yes, sir," Merrill replied.

The commander grinned. "Well, for enjoying yourself so much and having to drop out of line, you get to run a mile after roll call."

"Yes, sir," Merrill said.

Roll call continued, and by the time there were still about a quarter of the men for the commander to berate, Merrill was in desperate need again. Once more, he raised his hand.

The commander came to face him. "Don't tell me. You need to use the restroom again?"

"Yes, sir," Merrill said.

"Do you know what this means?" the commander asked.

"Another mile?" Merrill asked.

"That's right," the commander said. "One for each watermelon."

After roll call was over and Merrill had run his two miles, he joined the other men at the barracks. When he walked in, the others all

stood and clapped.

"That is the first time we've seen the commander unable to hold back his grin," one of them said.

Daris Howard, award-winning, syndicated columnist, playwright, and author, can be contacted at daris@darishoward.com; or visit his website at <http://www.darishoward.com>, to buy his books.

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Fears That Keep Us from His Presence



Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
Editor

"Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So He got into the boat and left." St. Luke 8:37

Jesus did many miracles when He lived on earth. One of those miracles involved the deliverance of a demon-possessed man. The people of the community witnessed this awesome demonstration of God's power when Jesus commanded the demon spirit to come out of the man and go into the herd of nearby pigs. The man was healed and sat at Jesus' feet.

You would expect the people who witnessed this to embrace Jesus as one performing good deeds and



to honor Him. The opposite was true. Instead, they were overcome with fear. Why?

Many of us respond the same way to Jesus when He does an out-of-the-ordinary act among His people. We are fearful because we have never personally experienced this before. So, we draw wrong judgments. The result is that Jesus removes Himself from us.

The Lord is able to do far exceeding above what we think. Jesus does not remain in the places where there is fear of His goodness. It is often subconscious fears

that prevent us from going to a deeper level with Him.

The people in Gerasenes could not benefit from Jesus' presence because of their fears. Have you feared Jesus because of what He might require of you?

Have you feared that He might ask of you something you are not prepared to give? Do not let your fears drive Him from your presence.

All that is necessary is that you understand His roadblocks for you. "And Joshua said, 'Ah, Sovereign Lord, why did You ever

bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of Jordan!'" Joshua 7:7

Have you ever felt like you were doing what God wanted you to do, but your plans were totally frustrated? This was how Joshua felt. The Lord had been with the people of Israel as they entered the Promised Land. They defeated every enemy because of God's blessing and protection. They had just taken the city of Jericho. The next battle was the city of Ai. They scouted the enemy and determined it would require only 3,000 men to defeat them. They attacked, and soon the reports came back that they were being routed. Joshua could not understand this. He cried out to God asking why this was happening. The Lord said to Joshua, "Stand up! What

are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated My covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction." Joshua 7:10-12. Whenever we open our-

selves up to sin, we become liable. God removes His protective shield from our lives in order for the sin in our lives to be purged out. He often uses the enemy of our souls to accomplish the task. If you feel you are being thwarted in some way, examine your life to see if there is any sin that is the cause of the problem. Adversity is not always due to sin, but it can be. Ask God; He will show you. As with Joshua,

God immediately answered this prayer when

See TARPLEY, Page 16

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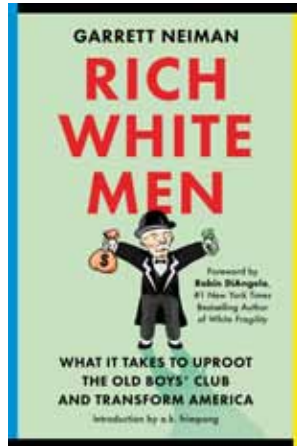
NDG Book Review: 'Rich White Men' takes a shot at the patriarchy

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

One step ahead, three steps behind.

That's how your life feels sometimes. You make movement forward and something comes along to push you back to where you were two weeks ago. Progress is made, and just as quickly taken away. You get to where you need to be, and you're clawed back. Welcome to the real world and, as in the new book "Rich White Men" by Garrett Neiman, come meet the culprit.

Six years ago, at a summer retreat for the non-profit that he'd founded, Garrett Neiman felt cer-



tain that his organization – one that served students of color who wanted to attend college – reflected the diversity of its clients. His staff, though, saw things differently. They emphatically told Neiman where he could do better.

He was devastated and, seeing how white privilege affected his work, he vowed to make changes. White privilege, particularly within a patriarchy, he suggests, is the root of inequality at work and at large.

We like to tell one another, for instance, that hard work pays off but it's not that easy. Even considering population rates, white men are many times more likely than Black women to be billionaires. Some of the wealth that white men enjoy was "unearned" (inherited) and some of it came from property ownership, both of which were historically difficult for people of color

to achieve. These situations are often in-place even before any system is gamed by those in-charge – which can happen, beginning with students in school.

Equal opportunities do not equal outcomes, Neiman says, and the distribution of wealth today goes back more than two centuries. Bias and bigotry, whether overt or subconscious, play a part in the way things are, and that sometimes extends to stereotypes in the kinds of work non-white, non-male, non-cisgender employees are assigned to do. Tokenism hides the problem, and pretending that the past has no bearing on today only

exacerbates the issues.

For sure, "Rich White Men" seems earnest and very well-meaning. Author Garrett Neiman begins with a confession that obviously plagues him, and he vows to do better in a category that's important to him. This book, alas, isn't quite it.

It's very helpful that Neiman looks at all aspects of white male patriarchy in finance, real estate, and industry – but for BIPOC, LGBTQ, and female readers, it's preachin' to the choir. It's great that he factors in the generally unfactored, including the tiniest details that sometimes go unnoticed, but again: the

choir.

The argument could be made that white, wealthy men might read this book and make changes, but the tone of it seems to doubt that possibility. Advice on moving things forward is hard to find and clear-cut help is in here, but it's scarce.

There are a lot of personal tales inside this book, and a propensity to nickname transgressors (and then explain the nicknames!), both of which are rather irrelevant and may just irritate some readers. Yes, "Rich White Men" might be of some help, or you may want to set it behind you.

SNYDER, from Page 14

All I had to do was wait, and when we came to the end of this street, we would find out that we were at the wrong end of town. Oh, I love it when a plan comes together.

When she finally realized we were at the wrong end

of town, she looked at me, "Don't you dare say what you're thinking."

Then she turned around and headed in the right direction.

My problem is that I caught her doing it her way, and it was the wrong way,

and I can't exploit it. I have to pretend that it didn't happen. Oh, how I wish I could remind her of this mistake every time we are in the car.

Of course, I know if I do that, there will be heavy consequences on my side to deal with. Sometimes it's best to keep some things under lock and key. But I

do confess there are times while she is driving that I think of that mistake, and I can only smile.

Later that day, I was reminded of what the apostle Paul said. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may

be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (1 Corinthians 3:18-19).

My craftiness has never done well for me. I choose to trust God in every situation that is before me. After all, He knows best.

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

TARPLEY, from Page 15

Joshua asked. He desires for His children to live in a right relationship with Him. Opportunities abound. Ask God to help you to discern when an opportunity is something He has placed

before you and when it is something that would be contrary to His will for you. Ask God to stir your conscience and bring questions, examples and Scripture to your mind that will guide

you in this process. Ask for help to consider biblical values; ethics; the gifts, skills, and abilities that He has given you; your family and other commitments; and anything else that may

open your eyes to the truth. Seek encouragement to grasp the opportunities that

God gives you and to turn from the opportunities that you should not touch.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in July 2014.)

BOWIE, from Page 2

the significance of educating the public about the risks of pre-eclampsia, a high blood pressure disorder during pregnancy that can have severe consequences

for both the mother and the infant. Those who are pregnant should be aware of the signs and symptoms of pre-eclampsia and attend regular check-ups to monitor

their condition, she said, noting many women who develop pre-eclampsia have no identifiable risk factors.

Like her fellow runner, Allyson Felix, Bowie was an elite athlete impacted by this condition.

POLL, from Page 8

for freedom from unreasonable searches or arrests (21%), the right to a speedy trial with an impartial jury (23%), and freedom to petition the government (24%).

The Civitas Institute aims to further explore these findings and engage in discussions with policymakers,

scholars and citizens to foster a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing American democracy. American Civic Life Survey results can be found here. The approximately 1,200 panelists included in this survey were invited based on

their age, gender, race and education, in proportion to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Responding panelists are then weighted according to their demographics, voter registration status and 2016 presidential vote. Respondents identified as 28% liberal, 30% conservative and 33% moderate.

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