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## Pew Research reveals overwhelming discontent with U.S. politics among Americans

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

In a comprehensive Pew Research Center study from July 10 to July 16, released on September 13, responses from a sizeable sample of U.S. adults revealed profound disillusionment among Americans towards the nation's political landscape. Researchers concluded that citizens were mostly exhausted and disillusioned with politics, with many grappling to find viable alternatives to Democrats and Republicans.

The in-depth research by the Pew Center discovered that 65% of respondents admitted feeling persistently drained and exhausted when contemplating politics. The researchers concluded that this widespread exhaustion indicates a broader sentiment of disillusionment with the political sphere. "Yet it is telling that a majority of Americans are unable or unwilling to identify the strong points of the nation's political system," Pew researchers wrote.

The study, which highlighted an ever-dwindling faith in the political system, revealed that only 4% of U.S. adults believe the political



Pew Center research reflects a growing discontent toward each political party, with 28%, the highest percentage in three decades, expressing unfavorable views of both parties. (Photo via NNPA)

system is functioning well or very well, while another 23% hold that it operates somewhat adequately. A striking 63% express little to no confidence in the future of the U.S. political system.

The study authors also found what they called a "trust deficit in governmental institutions," noting favorable views of governmental and political institutions have plummeted to historic lows. A mere 16% of respondents claimed to trust the federal government consistently or most of the time. The authors revealed a depressingly low level of trust, which has

remained for almost two decades, reaching one of the lowest points in nearly seventy years.

"As a society, we've lost faith in the very institutions meant to represent us," one survey respondent asserted.

Also, a growing discontent towards both political parties is evident from the research, with 28% expressing unfavorable views of both parties--the highest percentage in three decades. An equivalent share of adults, 25%, feel inadequately represented by either

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### People In The News ...



Kristen Welker



Judge Rowan Wilson

*NDG Quote of the Week: "I am lucky that whatever fear I have inside me, my desire to win is always stronger."*  
— Serena Williams



## Kristen Welker

Chuck Todd hosted his final episode of "Meet the Press" on NBC, handing the reigns over to White House Correspondent Kristen Welker, who will make history as the first Black person to host the iconic program.

Todd announced earlier this year that he would leave the show he has hosted since 2014. He mentioned feeling concerned about this moment in history but was reassured by the standards they have set for the show. On his final show, which aired on Sun-



day, Sept. 10, Todd thanked his viewers and team and offered a glimpse of what the show would look like with Welker as host.

"The last nine years as moderator of the longest-

running show on television have been the honor of my professional life, and as I prepare to pass the baton to the next custodian, it is a privilege to pass it to someone who needs no introduction," Todd remarked. Welker wasted little time letting viewers know she was up to the task.

"I am ready, Chuck, and I just want to say I am also so thankful and grateful to you for this moment for entrusting me with this monumental, important role," said Welker, who earlier during her final White House briefing was feted with congratulations by White

House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.

"I take this responsibility so seriously. I'm ready because you have helped me get ready, Chuck. You are someone who invests in the people that you care about, and you have invested in me, and I am so eternally grateful for that," Welker said.

The 47-year-old Philadelphia native has served as a White House correspondent for NBC since 2011 and moderated one of the presidential debates in 2020. This week, NBC's Andrea Mitchell marked the historic passing of the

baton with an op-ed, writing, "On Sept. 17, another milestone will be passed for women journalists. Kristen Welker is set to become the 13th moderator of 'Meet the Press,' the longest-running show on American television."

Mitchell noted that for the first time, every Sunday public affairs program will be moderated or co-moderated by a woman as Welker joins Dana Bash, Shannon Bream, Margaret Brennan, Jen Psaki, and Martha Raddatz at the helms for their respective networks. As the 13th moderator in the 75-year history of "Meet

the Press," Welker will be the first Black person in the role. But not, as Mitchell noted, intriguingly, the first woman. That honor belongs to the broadcast's founding host, Martha Roundtree, who launched the program in 1947.

Welker, who has held the title of the network's chief White House correspondent during three presidencies, has a well-earned reputation for being collegial and inclusive. "I can attest to her eagerness to jump into action for others, even while under pressure her-

See WELKER, Page 7

## Judge Rowan Wilson

Judge Rowan Wilson was celebrated by family, friends, and state lawmakers for his groundbreaking achievement as the first Black chief judge of the state's highest court. The swearing-in at the New York Court of Appeals in Albany marked a significant milestone in the Empire State's judicial history, with Gov. Kathy Hochul on hand to administer the oath of office.

Hochul, a Democrat, nominated Wilson after her initial nominee, Justice Hector LaSalle, faced rejection by the Senate. LaSalle would have been the state's first Hispanic chief



judge. Wilson, who had previously served as an associate judge of the Court of Appeals since 2017, assumed the role following the resignation of Judge Janet DiFiore in August 2022. The governor expressed confidence in Wil-

son's ability to restore faith in the government and the judicial system.

"I feel confident you'll be able to restore people's faith in the government, restore faith in this bench, and restore confidence that this court will do the right thing," said Hochul. "This is a milestone, but that is not why he is sitting here today. It is not why he was selected. He has demonstrated through his years already on this court. The intellect, the understanding, the ability to write in such a powerful way, and to really make decisions that matter."

Wilson's appointment garnered favor from Democrats and liberals who

viewed him as an advocate for civil rights, labor, and environmental concerns. As an associate judge, he issued a dissenting opinion in a pivotal decision last year, wherein the court majority determined that the state's Democratic leadership had employed an unconstitutional process in redrawing congressional districts.

"My new role has

brought some new challenges, challenges of a very different nature than studying the law, the facts, and the arguments," the judge shared. Wilson, 62, expressed a commitment to maintaining independence without becoming an adversary, underscoring his intention to work collaboratively with his team to enhance the lives of all

New Yorkers.

"To Gov. Hochul, the executive branch, and to members of the state Legislature, I can assure you that checks and balances means independent, not adversarial, and my team and I look forward to working with you collaboratively to improve the lives of all New Yorkers," Wilson said.

## Coco Gauff

Coco Gauff has etched her name in tennis history as she clinched the U.S. Open singles title, becoming the youngest player since Serena Williams' historic victory in 1999 when she was just 17 years old. Gauff's remarkable triumph came after an intense three-set battle against Aryna Sabalenka, with a final score of 2-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Amidst the crowd's roar and the flashbulbs of countless cameras, Gauff stood on the iconic Arthur Ashe Stadium, her trophy shining brightly, and her victory speech filled with a sense of readiness for the fame that will undoubtedly come her way. "I'm ready," Gauff



proclaimed, her youthful confidence evident. "I embrace it. I know how to keep my peace but also embrace all of this around me."

As Gauff accepted her winner's check of \$3 million, she took a moment to graciously thank tennis legend Billie Jean King,

who stood alongside her on the stage. The gesture highlighted Gauff's perspective, humor, and charm that has set the stage for American sports' next global superstar. "She is so humble," said Pere Riba, Gauff's coach, in the post-match interview. "Her work ethic is so strong, so professional, and she has very good manners. Put all of that together, and she will only get better. She can handle it all."

Gauff has long been earmarked as one of tennis' next superstars. Her maturity on and off the court, intelligence, and ability to articulate herself have endeared her to the American public and the global tennis

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**Publisher's Office:**

publisher@northdallasgazette.com

**Sales Department:**marketing@northdallasgazette.com  
972-509-9049**Editorial Department:**

editor@northdallasgazette.com

**Online:**

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**STAFF****Chairman Emeritus**Jim Bochum  
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1965-2020**NDG Columnist**

Allen R. Gray

**Published by**

Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

**Contributing Writers**

Jackie Hardy

**Special Projects to**the Publisher  
Stephanie Colunga

Lori Lee

Marland Mosely, Jr.

Jacqueline Murphy

Dwain Price

Terri Schlichenmeyer

**Account Executive**

Sterling R. Bradford

**Production**

David Wilfong

**NDG Obituary Dept.**Vicky Richardson-Stewart  
VP of Operations

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# Turning the Page — \$2.2 billion in financial relief for farmers, ranchers, and landowners who faced discrimination

On July 7, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the opening of the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP). This program, established through Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act, provides \$2.2 billion in financial assistance to eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending prior to January 2021.

Stakeholders and program administrators, along with USDA officials, are conducting community outreach to raise awareness about the program. When the program opened, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack affirmed the Department's commitment to providing financial assistance to those who faced

discrimination in USDA farm lending as swiftly and efficiently as possible.

"USDA will continue to work with its national vendor partners and community-based organizations to ensure that eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners have clear information about what is available to them, how to apply, and where to obtain assistance with their questions at each step of the way," said Secretary Vilsack.

The Inflation Reduction Act specifies that the Secretary of Agriculture is responsible for providing this financial assistance through qualified nongovernmental entities, under standards set by USDA. The official program administrators are Midtown Group, which serves as the National Administrator for the program;

Windsor Group, which is responsible for outreach and assistance in states east of the Mississippi River, and Analytic Acquisitions, which serves states West of the Mississippi River.

Producers have the option to apply via the e-filing portal at 22007apply.gov or by submitting paper-based forms via mail or in-person delivery to the program's local offices. English- and Spanish-language application are available.

Technical assistance is available for potential applicants through four regional hubs working closely with community-based organizations to conduct extensive outreach using digital and grassroots strategies. This ensures that potential applicants are informed about the program and understand how to

complete the application. Additionally, local events and brick-and-mortar offices are part of a comprehensive outreach process designed to provide farmers and ranchers with multiple options for gaining assistance at no cost.

For more information about DFAP, please visit the official website at 22007apply.gov. Additionally, the website provides comprehensive information on obtaining in-person or virtual technical assistance, supplementary program resources, and detailed program guidelines. The program also offers a call center, 1-800-721-0970, which is open from 8 a.m. ET to 8 p.m. PT, seven days a week, except for Federal holidays. The call center has English and Spanish-speaking agents.

## ALC co-chairs have earned respect of peers, constituents

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's (CBCF) 52nd Annual Legislative Conference again plans to be an event of tremendous significance this year, largely thanks to the distinguished leadership of its co-chairs, Rep. Stacey E. Plaskett (D-Virgin Islands) and Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.).

Colleagues of the co-chairs said they have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of all Americans, making them exemplary representatives for this year's conference.

**Delegate Stacey Plaskett:**  
**A Voice for the Virgin Islands**

Plaskett, currently serv-

ing her fifth term in Congress, has steadfastly advocated for the Virgin Islands of the United States. She has been at the forefront of addressing critical issues concerning her constituents, such as the proposed land exchange between the Government of the Virgin Islands and the National Park Service (NPS) for constructing a kindergarten through 12th-grade school on St. John.

In August, Plaskett hosted a virtual briefing on this important matter, which brought together key stakeholders and congressional representatives, including Rep. Joe Neguse (D-Colo.) and Brian Modeste, counsel for the U.S. House of Representatives. The briefing provided an overview of the history and feasibility of congressional actions related to the NPS land

exchange and allowed Virgin Islanders to voice their opinions on the matter.

Plaskett has been instrumental in informing her constituents about federal actions through community meetings, town halls, press releases, radio announcements, and social media engagement. She has also worked diligently to ensure transparency and accountability in U.S. intelligence work in counterintelligence and other matters as a ranking member of the Intelligence Committee's Subcommittee on National Intelligence Enterprise.

In addition to her dedication to her constituents, Plaskett has played a significant national role as one of the nine impeachment managers appointed by Speaker Nancy Pelosi to prosecute President Trump in the U.S. Senate in 2021.

Her detailed presentations and ability to respond to senators' questions were a testament to her legal insight and commitment to upholding the principles of democracy.

As ranking member of the House Select Subcommittee on Weaponization of the Federal Government, Plaskett continues to work tirelessly to ensure that evidence-based inquiries guide the committee's work, countering wild conspiracy theories that threaten the democratic process.

"I am grateful for Congresswoman Plaskett's continued efforts and advocacy on behalf of the Virgin Islands," Rep. Neguse stated. "She is a tireless champion for her constituents, and I am proud to serve alongside her in the House of Repre-

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## People in good shape take fewer medications for anxiety and depression

“Being in better physical shape appears to reduce the need for anxiolytic drugs and antidepressants,” reports Linda Ernsten, senior author of the article and associate professor from the Department of Public Health and Nursing, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

The research group based its work on the Trøndelag Health Study (HUNT), which since 1984, has received contributions of health data from 250,000 local residents to this comprehensive research project. The data was available to researchers and was used to estimate fitness levels and other factors. The figures were taken from the third data collection round, called HUNT3, conducted from 2006 to 2008. The research group compared the data from HUNT3 with



*Study finds those in good physical shape had a lower prevalence of depressive symptoms and took less anxiety and depression medications. (Nathan Dumlao / Unsplash)*

data from the Norwegian Prescribed Drug Registry, which provided an overview of medications dispensed in Norway.

The researchers found that people in good physical shape during the second HUNT study had a lower prevalence of depressive symptoms in the HUNT3 study 10 years later. A new

study design in the latter study allowed researchers to consider what medications HUNT3 participants had obtained as late as 2018, allowing Ernsten and her co-authors to make the correlation, finding those in good physical shape had a lower prevalence of depressive symptoms.

The researchers concluded that people who are prescribed medication have more symptoms than those who do not see a doctor, as reported by author Audun Havnen, associate professor at the Department of Psychology at NTNU.

Though being in good physical shape helps all age groups and both genders, the researchers noted that some people see greater benefits than others, reporting a heightened benefit of men compared to women. Correlations were less clear for the elderly, the study reports.

The study indicates a protective effect by simply improving physical fitness levels from poor to moderate, making incremental improvements in activity beneficial, Havnen noted.

The researchers recommend that in order to improve or maintain physical

condition, a person should be active in a way that leaves them breathless and sweaty. In fact, Norwegian health authorities recommend adults be physically active for at least 150 to 300 minutes at moderate intensity each week.

The researchers recommend that for those who are busy, aiming for 75 minutes of high-intensity training each week or a combination of moderate and high-intensity training is desired. “Research reinforces the finding that each minute of physical activity counts,” Ernsten said.

It should be noted that researchers considered whether good physical health had helped prevent anxiety and depression or whether those who suffered from anxiety and depression had actually tended to exercise less. And to control for those experiencing

anxiety or depression prior to the study, researchers excluded those who had filled prescriptions before participation in HUNT3 and for three months thereafter.

“We also adjusted for symptoms of anxiety and depression in statistical analyses. To the extent that the figures can be believed, we also feel fairly confident that we started with a relatively anxiety and depression-free cohort in HUNT3,” Ernsten said.

The study authored by Audun Havnen, Ekaterina Zotcheva, Ottar Bjerkeset, Xuemei Sui, and Linda Ernsten, is entitled Cardiorespiratory fitness and incident use of anxiolytics and antidepressants in adults: a linkage study between HUNT and the Norwegian Prescription Database, Journal of Affective Disorders.

## FDA approves updated COVID-19 vaccines amid rising cases

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved updated COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech in response to the surge in cases and hospitalizations. Both manufacturers have reported that their vaccines demonstrate effectiveness against the currently dominant EG.5 strain in the United States.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, an independent expert group advising the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will now assess the safety and efficacy of these updated vaccines and provide recommendations for their deployment. Following approval by the CDC director, the vaccines will be available for administration.

The advisory group plans to convene immediately, suggesting that the vaccines may soon be accessible at select pharmacies and healthcare facilities.

Health authorities have emphasized the urgency of vaccination once the shots become available. The new release coincides with a late summer surge in COVID-19 hospitalizations and growing concerns over the potential impact of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus, in the upcoming fall and winter seasons.

Dr. Peter Marks, director of the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, underlined the importance of vaccination in protecting against severe COVID-19 consequences.

“The public can be assured that these updated vaccines have met the agency’s rigorous scientific

standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality. We very much encourage those who are eligible to consider getting vaccinated,” Marks stated in a news release.

Dr. Dan Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, noted that despite an increase in infection rates and hospitalizations, the rates of severe disease, hospitalizations, and death are still significantly lower than in previous years.

Albert Bourla, CEO of Pfizer, highlighted the significance of this decision, especially with COVID-19 cases on the rise again. He said that nearly all individuals aged six months or older in the U.S. are eligible for this season’s COVID-19 vaccine, even if they have not been previously vaccinated.

The updated vaccines are approved for individuals 12 and older, with emergency use authorization for those aged six months to 11 years. The bivalent Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines are no longer authorized for use in the United States.

According to the FDA, babies and young children from six months to four years who have not been vaccinated can receive three doses of the updated Pfizer/BioNTech shot or two doses of the updated Moderna booster. Those who have been previously vaccinated will follow specific dosage guidelines. For those five and older, a single dose of the updated vaccines is recommended at least two months after their last COVID-19 shot, irrespective of previous vaccination.

Stéphane Bancel, CEO of Moderna, emphasized the critical role of updated

vaccines in protecting the population during the peak respiratory virus season. “COVID-19 remains a leading cause of death in the U.S. and poses a significant threat to vulnerable populations, particularly as we enter peak respiratory virus season,” Bancel stated.

The mRNA vaccines have been adjusted to combat the XBB.1.5 Omicron subvariant of the coronavirus and related strains.

The FDA anticipates that COVID-19 vaccine compositions may need annual updates, similar to seasonal influenza vaccines.

Dr. Ugur Sahin, CEO and co-founder of BioNTech, stated, “Our goal is to provide people worldwide with COVID-19 vaccines that are adapted to circulating virus variants or sublineages.”

The updated vaccines, administered in a single

dose, are expected to be available at no cost to those in need.

Novavax’s updated COVID-19 vaccine has not yet received FDA authorization but is currently under review for individuals aged 12 and older.

Under the Affordable Care Act, most insurance plans cover the total cost of vaccines, eliminating co-pays for insured individuals. The uninsured or underinsured can access the vaccine at no cost through the CDC’s Bridge Access Program, a temporary initiative set to conclude by December 2024.

Officials noted that this is the first instance of vaccines being provided through the commercial market. According to CNN, during a Pfizer investor call in October, officials estimated a potential list price of \$110 to \$130 per single dose for adults.



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# House GOP tensions escalate as government shutdown looms: Minority Leader Jeffries calls it a 'Civil War'

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Amidst the looming threat of a government shutdown as funding expiration at the end of the month draws ever closer, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, a Democrat from New York, has characterized the Republican Party as being "in the middle of a civil war." The statement comes as both major parties engage in heated negotiations to reach an agreement to prevent the shutdown.

Speaking on ABC News' "This Week," Jeffries stated unequivocally, "Let's be clear: House Republicans are in the middle of a civil war. The House Republican civil war is hurting hard-working American taxpayers and limiting our ability to solve problems on their behalf."



*"Let's be clear: House Republicans are in the middle of a civil war. The House Republican civil war is hurting hard-working American taxpayers and limiting our ability to solve problems on their behalf." (Photo via NNPA)*

Jeffries' comments were made in response to House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's decision to initiate an impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden. That move contradicted his stance that a full chamber vote would be required for such proceedings.

"There are no facts on the record to suggest that President Biden broke the law in any way, shape, or form. This is an illegitimate impeachment inquiry," he stated. "It's a product of the House Republican civil war. Why in the world, in the middle of all the issues that we are trying to tackle, all of the problems that we are trying to solve on behalf of the American people, would House Republicans inject this illegitimate impeachment inquiry in the middle of us trying to do the business of the American people? It's quite unfortunate, it's wrong, it's distracting, and it should end now."

In response to McCarthy's actions, Jeffries assured that the White House would cooperate with the impeachment inquiry, asserting that there was "nothing to hide."

Members of McCarthy's caucus on the hard right threaten to unseat him from the speakership unless he meets their demands, including spending cuts and policy add-ons to must-pass government funding legislation. Also, they have signaled their unwillingness to support a stopgap bill to buy more time before the impending government shutdown deadline at the end of the month.

In response to the ongoing negotiations, McCarthy expressed optimism that progress had been made over the weekend in an interview with NBC News. He also revealed plans to incorporate border security into a continuing resolution and expressed confidence that an agreement would be reached "this week."

During a separate television appearance, McCarthy emphasized his commitment to putting a bill on the floor, regardless of whether it passes or fails, to showcase where lawmakers stand on crucial issues. "I gave them an opportunity this weekend to try to work through this, and we'll bring it to the floor win or lose and show the American public who's for the Department of Defense and who's for our military," McCarthy declared.

Rep. Nancy Mace, a Republican from South Carolina who appeared on the same program, criticized Jeffries for using the term "civil war" to describe the internal tensions within the GOP. According to Mace, Republican use of such language would spark outrage and be considered divisive.

## Civil Rights Attorney Ben Crump and Levi McCathern file defamation lawsuit against NCAA on behalf of Reggie Bush

INDIANAPOLIS – Nationally renowned civil rights and personal injury attorney Ben Crump of Ben Crump Law and co-counsel Levi McCathern have filed a defamation lawsuit against The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) on behalf of Reggie Bush, alleging an NCAA spokesperson made false and damaging statements that implied Bush was involved in a "pay-for-play" arrangement.

After one of the most legendary performances in college football history, Bush was stripped of his University of Southern California record, declared ineligible, and subsequently forfeited his Heisman Trophy due to findings from a flawed investigation by the NCAA.

A district court later criticized the NCAA's "unprofessional conduct" and ruled that the NCAA's investigatory report was "false in several material ways. A California appel-



After one of the most legendary performances in college football history, Bush was stripped of his University of Southern California record, declared ineligible, and subsequently had to forfeit his Heisman Trophy due to findings from a flawed investigation by the NCAA. (Gage Skidmore / Wikipedia)

late court chastised the NCAA for relying on a record "so recklessly constructed" and found the testimony of a witness against Reggie to be "unclear, unreliable, speculative, vague, and so unresponsive," it would have been stricken from the record if made in court.

Then in 2021, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled

the NCAA cannot enforce limits on education-related benefits that colleges and universities offer to students who play Division I sports, the NCAA changed its rules to allow the kind of behavior the NCAA accused Reggie of. Yet, the NCAA did nothing to vacate the sanctions against Reggie.

Instead, in 2021, NCAA

spokesperson Megan Durham told ESPN in a statement when asked if they would reconsider sanctions imposed on Bush that, "NCAA rules still do not permit pay-for-play type

arrangements." In fact, The NCAA investigation never found or alleged that Bush was involved in a "pay-for-play" arrangement. The lawsuit alleges this statement was false, defamatory,

and made with malice. "The NCAA clearly defamed Reggie Bush by implying that he was involved in a "pay-for-play"

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# U.S. Dept. of Energy powers NAACP's ACT-SO Olympic nationals

(Newswise) — It's a team effort getting young high school researchers participating in the NAACP's Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO). The U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory is partnering with Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory and the DuPage County branch of the NAACP to support students in research and participation.

In July, the NAACP National Convention brought together gold-medal-winning students from more than 200 counties across the United States. The students who went to the finals in Boston worked on a range of projects, including the effects of psychological stress on blood pressure, predicting the magnitude of tornadoes, evaluating the viability of



Eleven students participating in the ACT-SO program under the DuPage chapter of the NAACP qualified for the National ACT-SO competition. (DuPage ACT-SO/Newswise)

solar sails, and monitoring air quality, among other ambitious pursuits. At the event, six high school students showcased scientific work.

ACT-SO provides students the opportunity to learn about and compete in fields like performing arts, humanities, visual arts, business, culinary arts and STEM.

Its main purpose is re-

ally to give students an opportunity to showcase their talents and explore areas they might not have an opportunity to explore without the agency's help. Their efforts help students find out what they want to do when they get out of high school, said ACT-SO coordinator Thomas Reed.

Armstead, a 12th grader, created a thermal vest to help people with sickle cell

anemia in cold weather. "When your hands and feet tend to get cold first it's because your blood vessels start constricting and blood goes back up to your core," said Armstead. As she has sickle cell anemia, she could measure the effects of the vest for herself. 11th grader Namowicz worked on predicting the magnitude of tornadoes, using machine learning.

She and her fellow students said they appreciated hearing from speakers from Fermilab, Argonne and other places as part of the ACT-SO program. "It really helped to inspire us as high school students to hopefully have similar outcomes like they did," said Namowicz. "They were very inspirational and were able to help encourage us to lead similar paths."

Other projects involved understanding the psychological stress on blood pressure using supercomputer simulations, which has never been done before. Agwuncha, a 10th grader who analyzed air-quality levels around Chicago, said of her experience: "The program uncovered one of my hidden strengths," Agwuncha said. "I discovered that I delivered confident and concise oral presentations. Working with a scientist

taught me valuable work ethic skills, such as communication and time management."

"The whole goal for this partnership is really to fill the pipeline to get more diverse people into the sciences, into STEM in general. That's one of the things we try to do with ACT-SO," said Reed. "We're focused on African-American students in this program, and we want to see them go all the way through college, grad school, then work in research labs throughout the U.S. and the globe or become professors."

The projects benefit society, either through environment, medicine, or other social impacts. Said Marco Mambelli, a senior software developer at Fermilab and ACT-SO mentor, "It's very nice to see how the students are interested in doing research and making a better world."

## Students to solve community problems in all-girls student hackathon

In a 12-hour virtual civic hackathon, students will be asked to think about a community problem and solve it using technology. Netscout Systems Inc. (NASDAQ: NTCT) and Shooting Stars Foundation will sponsor the 10th annual civic hackathon.

Civic hackathons grow students' interest in STEM

topics and community issues by providing an opportunity to practice 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, technology literacy, collaboration, and innovation. No experience—no problem. Students, who may or may not have coding experience, will develop creative solutions to address those anticipated

needs and challenges, with support from mentors as needed.

At the end of the day, student teams will pitch their solutions to a panel of judges. 100 girls from many middle and high schools have registered for the event from cities like Allen, Plano, Frisco, McKinney, Irving, Little Elm,

Prosper, Heath, Mansfield, Lewisville, Coppell, Euless and Bedford.

In advance of the event, registered students will be offered pre-event workshops in website design and app building and will have other exciting opportunities to engage. NETSCOUT employees will serve as mentors, guiding brain-

storming and advising students on their projects throughout the day. The NETSCOUT employees will also serve as judges for the students' final presentations, awarding prizes in several categories.

The event will include keynote addresses from prominent local leaders, including Assistant City Man-

ager Rebecca Vice of City of Allen and Nadia Bilal, professor of computer science at Collin College.

The event will take place on Saturday, September 23, from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Central Standard Time. For more information, visit the event website at [www.star-hacks.org/2023-netscout-hackathon](http://www.star-hacks.org/2023-netscout-hackathon).

## Documentary tells the untold story of Black librarians

Amidst the rising challenges of book banning and censorship, a documentary sheds light on the contributions of Black librarians who stand on the front lines, ensuring equitable access to knowledge for all. Titled "Are You a Librarian: The Untold Story of Black Librarians," this eagerly anticipated documentary is scheduled for release at the top of 2025. The production promises to captivate audiences with a narrative that unveils the often-overlooked role of Black librarians in shaping



"Are You a Librarian: The Untold Story of Black Librarians" acknowledges unsung heroes who have devoted their lives to ensuring access to information for all. (Courtesy photo)

our collective understanding of the world.

From historical accounts of resilience to modern-day triumphs, the film will

weave personal stories with archival footage, interviews, and compelling

See LIBRARIANS, Page 13

### Policy of Non-Discrimination

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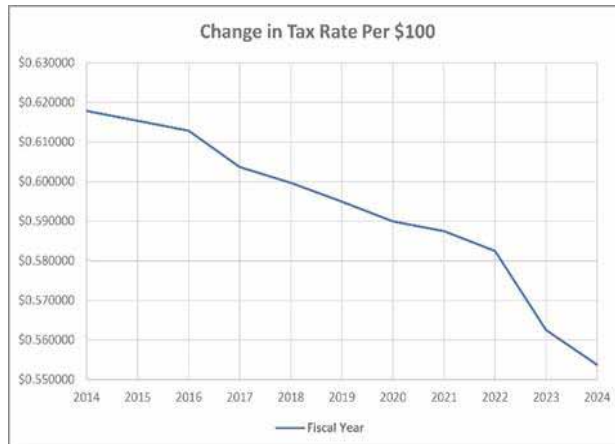
The Corporation shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the employment of its personnel.



# Carrollton City Council adopts budget and lowers tax rate for FY24

At its last council meeting, Carrollton City Council voted to adopt the City's annual budget, while approving a reduced property tax rate for the 10th year in a row.

The City's overall strategy for managing the City's infrastructure includes utilizing a combination of capital debt and paying for certain capital improvement projects on a pay-as-you-go basis. Taxes used for pay-as-you-go capital improvements are classified as maintenance and



operations, regardless of the size of the project. Over \$120 million in investments in Capital Infrastructure are planned for Fiscal Year 2024.

The Fiscal Year 2024 budget, beginning Octo-

ber 1, lowers the property tax rate from \$0.5625 last year to \$0.553750 per \$100 assessed value. The City also increased the Senior and Disabled Exemptions to \$87,000 this year, the most the State will allow. With average homestead market value at \$437,553, up 25.60% from last year, the average taxable value is at \$278,363. Based on this rate, taxes on the average homestead with the 20 percent homestead exemption and applicable value caps will be \$1,541, a \$132 in-

crease from the Fiscal Year 2023 amount of \$1,409.

New solid waste rate changes were adopted at the Tuesday meeting as well resulting in a rate increase for residents from \$22.25 per month to \$23.15 per month. The rate will go into effect Sunday, October 1 for residential customers. Charges for an extra cart will increase from \$9.05 to \$9.33 per month.

The decision to apply a rate increase this year is due to the contractual increase in costs from the

City's solid waste service provider Republic Services. The City, along with Republic Services, will continue to provide quality solid waste, recycling, bulk waste, and brush collection services. For more information on solid waste services in Carrollton, visit [cityofcarrollton.com/solid-waste](http://cityofcarrollton.com/solid-waste).

For more information on the City's adopted annual budget and property tax rate, visit [cityofcarrollton.com/finance](http://cityofcarrollton.com/finance) and [cityofcarrollton.com/taxes](http://cityofcarrollton.com/taxes).

## 'Sticking to the Plan' tells the story of Plano's journey

Plano, "City of Excellence," started with a plan. And by sticking to that plan as it grew, the city has achieved excellence. The public release of "Sticking to the Plan: Plano's Journey to Excellence" is part of the

Plano History Project in commemoration of Plano's 150th birthday.

For the nine-minute mini-documentary, Media Relations Director Steve Stoler and Senior Digital Producer Evan Reitzel

conducted on-camera interviews with dozens of people who played prominent roles in Plano's history, including members of pioneer families, former mayors, city managers and planners.

The mini-documentary tells the story of how the city grew from a small rural farming community to the successful city that it is today. The film includes stories from the community about its early days when

there were only a few hundred people living in Plano. It also explains the ideas of visionaries like H. Ross Perot and other prominent leaders and how their ideas came to fruition.

Now with more than

293-thousand residents, Plano is a thriving business/corporate community with a reputation as one of the best cities in America in which to live.

You can watch the video on Youtube.

## Murphy seeks volunteer members for boards, commissions

The City's annual drive to ask citizens to step forward and become part of the decision-making process has begun. The City welcomes volunteers for its boards and commissions, with at least 32 positions on the various advisory bodies possibly coming open. Appointees remain in their respective positions for two-year terms starting on Jan. 1, 2024.

The advisory bodies include the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee, Board of Adjustment, Building and Fire Code Appeal Board, Ethics Re-

view Commission, Murphy Community Development Corporation, Murphy Municipal Development District, Parks and Recreation Board, and the Planning & Zoning Commission. A full list of the advisory bodies as well as a brief summary of their duties can be found at <https://www.murphytx.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=869>.

Individuals interested in being considered for any of these advisory bodies may obtain more information by contacting Kandi Jackson at [kjackson@murphytx.org](mailto:kjackson@murphytx.org) or by calling 972-468-4011.

The deadline to apply for consideration for an appointment is 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, October 22. Appointments will be announced and approved at the City Council meeting on Tuesday, December 5.

Applications can be found at <https://murphytx.civicweb.net/Portal/CitizenEngagement.aspx>. An automated confirmation email will be sent to verify the application has been submitted. Applicants or returning appointees will undergo an interview with a panel of Council members during November.

## WELKER, from Page 2

self," Mitchell wrote. "A conversation with her usually begins with her asking, 'How can I help you?' She is a rare combination: a pit bull when chasing a story and the kind of friend you know you will treasure forever."

Welker received widespread praise for her remarkable composure and

exceptional handling of the high pressure as the moderator of the final debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden in 2020. Mitchell heaped more praise on Welker for her accomplishments and predicted more award-winning journalism from her colleague.

"Welker will now lead

the most venerable program on television, inheriting the legacy of such predecessors as Tim Russert and Chuck Todd," Mitchell noted.

"There is still a long way to go in the march to equal representation, but Welker will be an example to follow. Not that long ago, 'woman journalist' was almost an oxymoron, especially in broadcast news."

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# The bell has rung, and we're off to a promising new school year!



**Joyce Foreman**  
Dallas ISD  
District 6

I was pleased to make the rounds with Chief Tiffany Huitt and Executive Directors Dr. Wright and Dr. Kelly on the first day of school. We visited T.W. Browne Middle School, Kimball High School, Carter High School, Birdie Alexander Elementary, Bedford Law Academy, and Adelle Turner Elementary, where the Mavericks' Cyn Marshall joined us.

It was a great start to a great year! And, for me, it was even better because I have a great-niece now in PreK-4 at Birdie Alexander and a great-nephew in the P-TECH program at Carter High School.

So I not only talk about what needs to get done, I'll

## Rooting for a winner

I'd like to shout out a former Carter High School student and track team member, Sha'Carri Richardson, who is the 100-meter world champion! She set a new record in the finals at the 2023 World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary! Richardson is the first American woman to win a 100-meter world title since 2017. She added to that feat by claiming a bronze medal in the 200 meters and anchoring Team USA's gold-medal win in the women's 4x100-meter relay. Her performance should be a lesson for all of us: Never give up! I am extremely proud of this 23-year-old woman, and I'm proud to sport a ring symbolizing the time when she helped the Carter track team win back-to-back championships in 2017 and 2018.



Courtesy photos

be trying to make sure we get it done in my family.

## Summer grads take a big step

It was an honor to speak to our summer graduation class at their commencement earlier in August, where Trustee White joined me. As I told the grads, the village is here

to support them in their future choices of college, career, or military. They have made a significant step by getting their high school diplomas.

## Welcome, new principals

I'd like to welcome the new school leadership in District 6. We don't have a lot of turnover, but I

have three new principals, and I look forward to working with them: At T.G. Terry Elementary School, welcome to Principal Krishaunda Ivery. At Judge Louis A. Bedford Jr. Law Academy, welcome, Principal Kelisha King, and at Clinton P. Russell Elementary School, welcome, Principal Chara Pace.

## Congrats, innovative teachers

Kudos to the 38 Dallas ISD team members who received Junior League of Dallas Grants for Innovative Teaching, and

especially to our District 6 winners, ShaDerika Finley of D.A. Hulcy STEAM Middle School and Pamela Jenkins of Martin Weiss Elementary School.

These grants of up to \$2,500 are awarded to support unique programs that fall outside of school budgets to help improve education in Dallas ISD. These innovative teaching projects span all grade levels and subjects and will contribute to student success. Thank you, teachers, and thank you, Junior League!

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## Regional premiere of 'Bondage' comes to Undermain Theatre this month

Celebrating 40 seasons of light underground, Undermain Theatre opens its 40th season with the regional premiere of Star Finch's "Bondage." September 28 marks the play's opening, with performances running until October 15.

Taking place in a pre-emancipation setting on a small island in the Caribbean, "Bondage" follows two teenage girls who grow up on a haunted plantation as companions—one free and one a slave.

Star Finch's Afrosurreal, gothic tale gives us the story of an enslaved girl who dares to follow her own instincts toward liberation by any means.

Star Finch is a native San Franciscan trying her best to hold ground amidst the Black-erasure of gentrification. She is currently the Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Campo Santo and Crowded Fire Theater. She's also a resident playwright at Playwrights Foundation.

Finch seeks to split open seams of expectation to offer a peek into the abyss of horror and wonder veiled by the status quo and is interested in exploring the normalcy and constancy of menace as they pertain to the feminine. To that end, her plays are layered collages of the surreal and sacred nature of humanity.

Her plays include "Josephine's Feast at the Magic Theatre," "H.O.M.E." [Hookers on Mars Eventually] and "Bondage," developed and premiered by the AlterTheatre Ensemble with "Relentless Award" honorable mention.

The cast includes Rhonda Boutté\* as Azucar, Christian Cranshaw as Emily, Kristi Funk Dana as Ruby, Jim Jorgansen as Philip, and Victoria Lloyd as Zuri. The play is directed by Jiles R. King II. The design team includes Scenic Designer Robert Winn,\* Lighting Designer Steve Woods,\* Costume Designer Ava Kamaria, Sound Designer Josh Nguyen and

Properties Designer Linda Noland (Undermain Company member), as well as Producing Artistic Director Bruce DuBose, and Managing Producer Anthony L. Ramirez.

The regional premiere of "Bondage" comes to Undermain Theatre this month. Performances are set to run September 28 through October 15. The theatre is located at 3200 Main Street in the historic Deep Ellum section of Dallas.

Tickets range from \$15 to \$35 and are on sale now. Student, Senior and KERA discounts are available by calling the box office at 214-747-5515.



Regional premiere of "Bondage" comes to Undermain Theatre beginning September 28. (Courtesy photo)

## American Fiction wins the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival People's Choice Award

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*1/2) The people have spoken. Amuse them and there will be acclaim. Hence the bestowing of TIFF's People's Choice Award on a screen adaptation that's fueled by wit, sarcasm and tepid drama.

It's blatant cynicism. Those who aren't Black buying Black books that are filled with tropes, clichés and stereotypes that fulfill previously conceived notions. The Black authors who pander to that crowd for big bucks deserve scorn too. That's the driving force in Percival Everett's book *Erasure: A Novel*. That's the theme and storyline screenwriter Cord Jefferson (Emmy winner for *Watchmen*) utilizes as he attempts to transform a bleak comic tome into a big screen comedy.

Thelonious "Monk" Ellison (Jeffrey Wright) is an intellectual, author and college professor. He hasn't written a book that's made a penny in years. He has a beef. Writers like Sinatra Golden (Issa Rae) are making a fortune by peddling blaxploitation books like

*We's Lives in Da Ghetto*. He's pissed. So pissed he strikes back by writing a mock novel written in the same genre, under the pseudonym Stagg R. Leigh. Surprise. He becomes a bestselling author too. But he's ashamed, especially as he visits his family in New England.

Jefferson's script weaves

in Monk's personal life: elderly mother (Leslie Uggams), gay brother (Sterling K. Brown), budding romance (Erika Alexander, *Get Out*), ambitious agent (John Ortiz) and put upon sister (Tracee Ellis Ross). The irony and ridicule aren't consistently laugh-out-loud funny. The family drama is shallow, like TV's *This Is*

Us. However, the screenplay does skewer the haughty, enigmatic world of Black establishment literature. One where being scholarly, envious and competitive is a norm and hawking manuscripts a constant challenge. Book fans and buppies may find it all entertaining. Other

See **TORONTO**, Page 12



Jeffrey Wright in *American Fiction* (Photo courtesy of the Toronto International Film Festival)

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# 'Afro-Atlantic Histories' concludes its U.S. Tour at the Dallas Museum of Art

This fall, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) presents "Afro-Atlantic Histories"—an unprecedented exhibition that visually explores the history and legacy of the Black diaspora, with a focus on the transatlantic slave trade on the final stop of its U.S. tour. Initially organized and presented in 2018 by the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), the exhibition comprises around 100 artworks and documents produced in Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe from the 17th century to the present day, including works from the DMA's own collection. The presenting sponsor for this exhibition is Bank of America.

"Now more than ever, we appreciate the power of the arts to foster human connection and encourage greater cultural understanding. Bank of America's support of the DMA over the years, including the "Afro-Atlantic Histories" exhibition premiering in October, is core to our commitment to champion diverse voices, enrich and educate our society, and champion the communities we serve," said Jennifer Chandler, Bank of America



*Critically acclaimed exhibition charts the legacies of the African diaspora through works from the 17th century to the present day (Courtesy photo)*

Dallas president.

"Afro-Atlantic Histories" is a rich and revelatory exploration of visual culture that offers a deeply international vision of Black aesthetic traditions," added Ade Omotosho, The Nancy and Tim Hanley Assistant Cura-

tor of Contemporary Art.

"Rather than organize artworks chronologically, the exhibition unfolds thematically, which yields compelling juxtapositions that reveal the ways the past lingers in the present," she said.

Works span different eras, geographies, genres, and media. The groupings together offer an expansive retelling of the many histories of the Afro-Atlantic. The Maps and Margins section focuses on the beginnings of the slave trade and the passage between Africa and the Americas, and how artists have represented and reinterpreted the histories within. Invoking and responding to imagery of slave ships and the continents they traveled between, this section traces the forced migration that resulted in an interconnected Atlantic world.

The Resistances and Activisms grouping responds to the powerful pursuit of self-determination, beginning with Haitians' declaration of independence in 1804. Works in this section reflect visual protest strategies in demonstrations, banners, textiles, and performance that have circulated throughout the Black Atlantic and have played a central role in the continuing struggle for full and dignified freedom.

The Enslavements and Emancipations section considers the violence and terror of slavery in the context

of the struggle for emancipation, centering resistance within the histories of enslavement. These works confront brutality by incorporating historic images of slavery, evoking the horrors and trauma from these histories, which still persist today.

The Portraits grouping presents depicts Black people from the 17th century through the present, including some of the most celebrated Afro-Atlantic portraits in the history of art and others not traditionally memorialized in historical American and European portrait galleries.

The Rites and Rhythms section highlights spiritual and musical practices that have been central to the cultures of the Black Atlantic, depicting various types of music and dance from merengue in the Dominican Republic to jazz in the United States, as well as the many interconnected forms of festivals, ceremonies, and religious rituals across the Americas and the Caribbean.

The Everyday Lives segment includes images of daily life in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas

that reflect moments of labor and leisure in Black communities. Thematically organized paintings propose a dialogue within the contexts of farms, markets, street scenes, and interiors, with works made by Europeans and Euro-Americans that often romanticized Black subservience. These works hang alongside later imagery by Afro-descendant artists detailing daily activities of Black life in more humanistic ways, in addition to the realities of racial inequities and state violence.

Juxtaposing historical artworks with contemporary works by artists of the Black diaspora, including Kara Walker, Hank Willis Thomas, Titus Kaphar, Firelei Báez, Zanele Muholi, and Nina Chanel Abney, the exhibition fosters dialogues across time and reexamines histories of enslavement, resistance, and the struggle for liberation from a global perspective.

"Ambitious in its scope and scholarship, "Afro-Atlantic Histories" offers a wide range of new perspectives and a deeper under-

See DMA, Page 13

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# Swift execution of Inflation Reduction Act funding continues as USDA sees record interest in conservation and clean energy

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government is seeing record interest in conservation and clean energy programs funded under the Inflation Reduction Act, this on the heels of the first anniversary of the act.

"It is clear there is a significant appetite among producers and rural communities for clean energy and conservation programs, specifically those that were boosted by the law. I am proud of the swift work USDA has done to create, expand and streamline programs in order to put resources directly into communities," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

The nation's largest-ever investment to combat climate change, the act has met overarching demand, awarding almost \$20 billion to USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) over five years. The investment will help farmers and ranchers expand conservation, which increases carbon



storage, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Consistent with the direction of Congress under the act, NRCS funded \$850 million in FY 2023 and is already seeing substantially more interest than there is funding available under the law.

For the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), nearly 9,000 applications came in totaling about \$475 million, with only \$250 million of available funding. Similarly, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

received over \$180 million in applications for only \$100 million in funds. Other conservation programs have well exceeded their funding limits as well.

This USDA's Forest Service has experienced overwhelming demand as well, with \$6.4 billion in applications for the Urban and Community Forestry Program, gobbling up the \$1.5 billion in funding available to increase tree cover in urban spaces and boost equitable access to nature. The program protects people from extreme heat, storm-

induced flooding, and other climate impacts. Last week, USDA awarded over \$1 billion of this funding to nearly 400 projects in every U.S. state.

USDA has already put meaningful resources directly into the pockets of farmers and small business owners, meeting 45% of the 10-year total of available funding under the act.

The agency has provided much needed monies to over 20,000 distressed Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan borrowers, helping them reach long-term stability. It has also awarded 1,234 grants to agricultural operations and rural small business owners to access clean energy systems and to improve efficiency. USDA has also funded training and support to sustain the next generation of the workforce.

\$300 million was allocated to improve mea-

surement, monitoring, and verification of greenhouse gas emissions and carbon sequestration in climate-smart agriculture and forestry, with another \$300 million to 50 selected projects that increase access to markets and capital for land for farm ownership and to improve land succession and business planning.

USDA's Rural Development is moving quickly to give farmers and rural

communities relief through clean energy that will lower energy bills and reduce pollution. And with only \$1 billion available in funding, the Powering Affordable Clean Energy Program (PACE) cannot meet a fraction of its overarching demand, which totals \$7.6 billion for clean energy projects and rural energy storage. To help transition

See IRA, Page 12

## BUSH, from Page 5

arrangement. Reggie never accepted money or gifts in exchange for him playing football at USC," said Crump. "The hypocrisy demonstrated by the NCAA toward Reggie is outra-

geous. Reggie's groundbreaking collegiate career generated millions for the NCAA and USC meanwhile, Reggie was trying to make do with a \$1,000 monthly stipend for all his

expenses,

Crump called on the NCAA to publicly apologize and restore his collegiate records so that he could recover his Heisman and assume his rightful, celebrated place in college football history.

## GAUFF, from Page 2

community.

Even prominent figures in the political arena couldn't contain their excitement. President Joe Biden took to X, formerly known as Twitter, to congratulate the young champion. "Congrats to U.S. Open Champion Coco Gauff," he tweeted. "You electrified Arthur Ashe stadium and the entire nation — the first of more to come and proof that anything is possible if you never give up and always believe. You've made America so proud."

Former President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama, who cheered Gauff during her first-round match against Laura Siegmund, also extended congratulations. "We couldn't be prouder of you on and off the court — and we know the best is yet to come," Barack Obama wrote. The former First Lady paid tribute to Gauff's "hard work and grit" and shared a cherished photo of their meeting after that memorable first-round match.

Former President Bill Clinton joined the chorus of praise, describing Gauff's victory as "incredible" and expressing optimism for the future of American tennis. Serena Williams, whom Gauff credits for inspiring her dreams, shared her excitement on Instagram, writing, "Ahhhhh!!!! Amazing!!!!"

Gauff reflected proudly on her victory. "My dad took me to this tournament, sitting right there, watching Venus and Serena compete, so it's really incredible to be here on this stage," she stated.

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# Biden-Harris administration secures voluntary commitments from more companies to manage the risks posed by AI

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

President Biden and Vice President Harris announced they have taken decisive action to limit Artificial Intelligence (AI)

risks and maximize advantages. The White House said it is working on regulations for AI and partnering with top AI companies to improve responsible AI development. For example, in July, the Biden-Harris Administration received

voluntary commitments from seven prominent AI businesses to enhance stable, trustworthy AI.

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients, and senior administration offi-

cials scheduled a meeting with industry leaders at the White House on Tuesday, Sept. 12, to announce that eight companies—Adobe, Cohere, IBM, Nvidia, Palantir, Salesforce, Scale AI, and Stability—have pledged to help develop

AI technology safely, securely, and with trustworthiness.

The Biden-Harris Administration said its holistic approach to AI's promises and risks includes several commitments that bridge government action.

The Administration said it would develop an Executive Order and pursue bipartisan legislation to promote responsible AI development in America.

The firms' immediate

**See AI, Page 13**

## Study shines light on why companies use a variety of dark money strategies

AUSTIN — As public concerns mount over lack of transparency in political giving, a new study from researchers at The University of Texas at Austin is the first to illuminate how and why corporations choose to legally conceal their lobbying and campaign contributions.

U.S. companies are required to disclose the total amount they spend on political activity. However, beyond that, the disclosure

is incredibly vague, according to Tim Werner, associate professor of business, government and society at the McCombs School of Business.

"We don't even know which individual members of Congress they meet with," Werner said. "If you're only looking at observable political activities of corporations, it is like looking at the tip of the iceberg."

Below the waterline, when corporations conceal their political activities, Werner and colleagues Nan Jia and Stanislav Markus found they can use a wide variety of strategies. These may include lobbying people who are not obvious political players, secretly creating a "citizens coalition" to advocate for their position, using obfuscation to spin an issue in their favor, and contributing to groups that

are not legally required to report their donors, known as "dark money" groups.

How do corporations decide when to use these strategies? The researchers developed a mathematical model of a company's political decision-making to help predict which activities it's most likely to hide. Their calculus finds:

- The lower the costs of concealment or of being caught, the more likely

companies are to attempt it.

- Companies are more likely to conceal their activities on issues where they reap most of the benefits or bear most of the costs.

- The harder it is to win a lawmaker's support, the more a company will try to hide its spending to influence that lawmaker.

Werner said this line of research opens an important conversation. "The more we understand about

the reasons a business does or does not conceal its political involvement, the more informed our decision-making around policies related to transparency," he said.

Read the McCombs Big Ideas story. The research is published in Academy of Management, and the article is posted in the "Press Releases" section of the UT News website at <http://news.utexas.edu/>.

## IRA, from Page 11

to clean, affordable, and reliable energy, the Empowering Rural America Program (New ERA) has already closed applications after receiving overwhelming interest from member-

owned electric cooperatives in over 40 states and Puerto Rico.

Consistent with the direction from Congress, USDA has allocated all Inflation Reduction Act funds, or

\$38 billion, to programs that invest in communities and producers. The agencies have worked diligently and efficiently to expand existing programs and create new funding opportunities while undergoing a rigorous review of spend-

ing plans by USDA's Office of Budget and Program Analysis.

These investments are powering the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to make USDA programs more inclusive, accessible and available to greater

numbers so benefits can be felt for generations to come. Many, also part of President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, advance environmental justice by ensuring 40 percent of overall benefits of certain federal investments reach disad-

vantaged, marginalized communities overburdened by pollution and underinvestment.

For more information on the USDA's implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act, visit: [www.usda.gov/ira](http://www.usda.gov/ira)

## POLITICS, from Page 1

party. For most of the more than 8,400 respondents in the survey, recent candidate choices have been underwhelming. As the 2024 presidential campaign gains momentum, 63% of Americans express dissatisfaction with the candidates who have emerged thus far. The discontent is mirrored in the broader assessment of political candidates, with only 26% rating their quality as very or somewhat

good. "Where are the candidates who truly represent our interests?" questioned another participant.

Reflecting the public's frustration, significant portions of Americans advocate for changes in the political system. Proposals such as age and term limits, along with eliminating the Electoral College, draw substantial support. "It's time for a system that truly represents the people, not

just the powerful," declared another survey respondent, who also highlighted the divide and discontent in American politics. Republicans and Democrats were found to agree on one thing in an era of ferocious partisanship: 86% think that the parties prioritize infighting over problem-solving.

The survey underscored the public's enduring belief that big interests and campaign donors heavily influence politics, with a resounding 72% concur-

ring that a small group of people with selfish interests control the government. Further, views of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the President are at historic lows. Approximately 72% hold an unfavorable view of Congress, while 54% harbor negative opinions of the Supreme Court. President Biden's approval rating still languishes at around 40%, while 63% of Americans said they are dissatisfied with all the current presidential candi-

dates.

Many Americans also believe elected officials have lost touch with their constituents. "Their end goals are personal and not for the betterment of the voters who elected them," says a man in his 60s. According to survey results, engaged citizens are the most exhausted and angered by politics. "A democracy shouldn't leave its citizens feeling this weary and angry," remarked another respondent.

The public also has grown more frustrated with the erosion of respectful debate, with many respondents lamenting the decline in respectful and fact-based political discourse over recent years. This reflects a broader frustration with the state of the nation's politics. "Nearly half of those who identify as politically independent or with something other than the Democratic or Republican Party view both parties negatively," researchers found.

## TORONTO, from Page 9

ers may yawn.

Jefferson's direction is very standard issue and doesn't show much style, though he certainly has command of this production. The cinematography (Christina Dunlap) features

lighting that glares when it could be subtle. The musical soundtrack is filled with soul music that breathes life into scenes that otherwise would be dull. For every negative, there's a positive.

This is more a charac-

ter study built around self-involved archetypes than an engrossing movie with consistent momentum and deep emotions. Hard to like anyone in this urbane, literature-focused fable. Once you note the social implications, family schisms and giggle a bit, there's nothing

left to ponder. The white audiences who adored Get Out may have the same glee for this parody, even if they don't realize that the joke is on them.

If this ambitious foray into the Black book business community has a saving grace, it's the always

amazing lead actor. Jeffrey Wright mimics egghead professors and fake ghetto writers with a zest that makes the footage worth a watch even when it doesn't deserve it.

As one sardonic character puts it: "Potential is what people see when what's

in front of them isn't good enough." American Fiction has great potential.

For more information about the Toronto International Film Festival go to <https://tiff.net/>.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at [DwightBrownInk.com](http://DwightBrownInk.com).



## AI, from Page 12

promises emphasize three fundamental AI principles—safety, security, and trust—and are a crucial step toward responsible AI. As innovation accelerates, the Biden-Harris Administration has pledged to act decisively to defend Americans' rights and safety.

Among the pledges made by top AI startups include:

- Ensuring product safety before it is publicly released.
- Building security-first systems.
- Earning the public's trust.

Even as innovation accelerates, the Biden-Harris

Administration will act decisively to defend Americans' rights and safety. The White House noted that independent specialists would conduct tests against biosecurity, cybersecurity, and the societal impacts of AI.

AI corporations would invest in cybersecurity and insider threat protection for proprietary and unreleased model weights. "The most important aspect of an AI system is its model weights, which organizations agree must be released only when necessary and security threats are assessed," administra-



*The White House said it is working on regulations for AI and partnering with top AI companies to improve responsible AI development. (iStockphoto / NNPA.)*

tion officials wrote in a release.

"The businesses [must] promise to help third parties find and report AI system problems. After an AI system is released, a ro-

bust reporting process can find and fix any remaining faults." Further, the firms will create watermarking systems to alert viewers to AI-generated content. "This boosts AI creativity

and production while reducing fraud and dishonesty," administration officials declared.

They said corporations would disclose their AI systems' capabilities, limitations, and suitable and inappropriate use. According to the White House, this would address security and societal threats like fairness and bias.

Additionally, the corporations would prioritize AI system social hazards research, including avoiding negative bias and discrimination and preserving privacy. The history of AI indicates the potential size and prevalence of these threats, and organizations

commit to implementing AI that mitigates them, officials stated.

The firms also promise to create and implement robust AI systems to solve society's biggest problems. Administration officials asserted that, if managed well, AI can improve prosperity, equality, and security through preventing cancer, mitigating climate change, and more.

"Today's announcement is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to securely and responsibly develop AI, defend Americans' rights and safety, and prevent harm and prejudice," officials declared.

## DMA, from Page 10

standing of the connections between the cultures of the Black Atlantic."

In support of "Afro-Atlantic Histories," the DMA will host a free two-day community celebration, with performances, tours, films, art making, food trucks, and more! Entrance to the special exhibition "Afro-Atlantic Histories" will be

FREE the entire weekend—"Revelation & Celebration: Black History and Culture" on November 18 and November 19 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., underwritten by Arlene J. Ford, PhD, and Christopher P. Reynolds, with free special exhibition admission presented by Kimberly-Clark.

"Afro-Atlantic Histories"

is on view at the DMA from October 22, 2023, through February 11, 2024.

For a list of partners and

supporters of the exhibit and to learn more about The DMA, visit [www.dallasarts-district.org/events/](http://www.dallasarts-district.org/events/).



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## LIBRARIANS, from Page 6

visuals. The producers anticipate a late 2024 to early 2025 release date, ensuring that the documentary resonates deeply with audiences and contributes to a broader understanding of the librarians' profound impact on society.

"Are You a Librarian: The Untold Story of Black Librarians" aims to be a powerful and thought-provoking cinematic experience that will inspire viewers to acknowledge the unsung heroes who have devoted their lives to ensuring that all people have needed access to information.

The project's master-

mind, Rodney E. Freeman Jr., shared, "Our aim is not only to commemorate our journey but to illuminate the global stage with our presence and exceptional contributions as Black librarians."

As a precursor to the documentary's release, a sizzle reel will be unveiled at the ASALH Conference 2023 in Jackson this September. The event is hosted by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. This sneak peek is expected to generate further anticipation within the librarian community and the general public.

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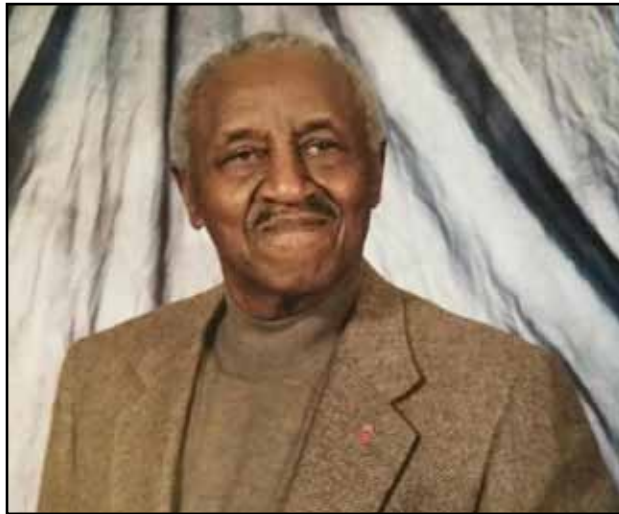


## En Memoriam: Garland Ledru Washington

*"For when the One Great Scorer comes to mark against your name, HE writes - not that you won or lost - but HOW you played the Game."*

— Grantland Rice

Garland Ledru Washington was born in the New Bethel Community near Tyler Texas, to the parentage of John Albert Washington and his wife, Ethertie Smith Washington. Garland was the 11th of 12 children, all have preceded him in death: McKinley, Johnny, Beatrice, Governor, George, Arlene, Tyeska, Rather, Wavely, Travis, Garland and Ross Earl.



Garland Ledru Washington (Courtesy photo)

Garland came to Christ early in life in that close knit church community of

New Bethel and under the loving care of his father and mother. He joined the

fellowship at Cedar Crest CME in the 60's and faithfully served in teaching the E.M. Wyatt Sunday School class, the Music Ministry (Male Chorus) and also serving on the Finance Committee.

He graduated from Stanton High School and then entered the US Army, serving honorably during WWII. Returning home after the war, he used his veterans benefits to complete his Bachelor of Science degree at Prairie View A&M University. Later he went on to earn his Master of Education degree at the then North Texas State Uni-

versity, now UNT-Denton.

He chose education and administration as his career path and excelled in it. Beginning in the West Texas communities of Ranger and Eastland, Garland was principal, teacher, coach and Scout Leader. Later he moved his family back to Dallas, and served as a science teacher and coach at Seagoville HS. DISD promoted him to Assistant Principal, serving under Mrs. Eleanor Doty at Zumwalt Jr. HS. And then serving as Assistant Principal at South Oak Cliff High School, where he retired from his DISD career in the

mid-1980's.

Garland is lovingly survived by one son Douglas Carl Washington, two daughters Vickie Washington-Nance (Norvis) and Cheryle Washington; one step daughter, Michele Crear; grandchildren: Djore' Nance, Terence Nance, Classi Nance, Nelson Nance, Tony Swindle, Everett Little, and Jemahdi Blueford; great-grandchildren: Malakai, Jahsir, Talib, AnuAsha and Audwin; special friend, Doris Hart and many loving nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

## Oh, Memory, How I Miss Thee

By Dr. James L. Snyder

Driving home from a luncheon with friends, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage asked me a stunning question.

She is a specialist regarding questions I can't answer. I am trying to evade her questions and have been very good up until now.

"Did that story you told really happen?" She glanced at me with one of her quizzical looks.

Because I told several stories at lunchtime, I was wondering which one she was referring to. To the best of my knowledge, everything I say is true. Of course, people have different views of truth.

"Which story are you referring to, my dear?"

My plan has always been to deflect the attention away from the real question.

"You know. The one about the chicken attacking you."

Since I told quite a few stories, I couldn't remember that one exactly. My memory has a problem with really staying focused. I can tell one story one time and tell it again, and it is pretty different. If you heard both, you would know they were the same

story.

It's not that I lie. I have a creative attitude and imagination with the stories I tell.

It's not the story I'm telling but rather the point I'm trying to convey.

"Well, my dear, if I told it, it must be true because I do not lie except when I go to bed." But I smiled at her and nodded in a very affirmative way.

She didn't think that was funny and said so.

"Well," she said very seriously, "I've heard you tell that story at least six times and each time it's different. What do you have to say about that?"

Looking at her rather soberly, I said, "The only thing I can think of is that they were six different stories."

That is one of the astounding things about memory. If it's my memory, I should be able to tell it how I want to. After all, I can't remember back that far in my life. And, to tell the truth, it may not have happened at all. Who knows?

That is why if I tell any story, it is one before I met The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. All during our marriage, she has been very faithful in correcting the stories I tell while I'm

telling them. At least those stories that happened while we were together.

That is the challenge I have just about every day of my life. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has a flawless memory. Don't let her know I said this, but I suspect she remembers things that never happened. But with my flawed memory, there's no way I could correct that.

She knows everything that has ever happened since the day we first met. If only I had half of her memory skills. [Sigh!]

I learned this long ago, so if I tell a story, it was before I met Miss Know-It-All. Then, I can tell it according to my memory, which is somewhat flawed.

One of the blessings of a flawed memory is that I can tell a story that happened way back half a dozen times, and nobody would know it. Most of the time, I don't know it.

A long time ago, I accepted that I should not try to correct a story whenever she tells it.

Once, and only once, I thought I would agitate her, and as she told a story, I would correct it.

"No, my dear, it wasn't on a Tuesday, it was on a Friday."

On and on I went until

I could see behind those beautiful eyes of her and growing agitation; that was a warning sign for me to SHUT UP. And UP, I SHUT.

On our way home that time, we had a long discussion. It was not a discussion; it was a monologue of what she thought about me correcting her when she was absolutely right about everything.

Common sense told me not to do that again. I think about it occasionally and can't help but chuckle. I want to do that one more time just before my funeral.

If I had her impeccable memory, my life would be so dull. I often change the memories that I do remember because nobody would know the difference, and I'm having fun.

Long ago, I stopped telling stories after I met The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage because one slip up there will have a lifetime consequence.

I was sitting in my easy-chair with a hot cup of Joe reflecting on these things. I thought of what Solomon said about memory. "Blessings are upon the head

See MEMORY, Page 16

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# Knowing Versus Doing



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG  
Religion  
Editor

*"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection..."*

- **Philippians 3:10**

If I asked you the purpose for which God made you, what might you say? You might give a lot of answers that required some action on your part.

However, the simplest answer to that question relates to one primary thing: fellowship. The most important thing God desires from us today is to have a deep and intimate fellowship with each of us.

The apostle Paul said he wanted to know Christ, and by knowing Christ he could experience the power of His resurrection.

I find this to be the hard-



est thing for many of us workplace believers to do. So often it is much easier to be busy with the urgent (or even Christian) activity than spending quiet moments before the Lord.

Before we realize it, days have passed since our last quiet time with Jesus.

Jesus understood how important quiet moments were with the Father.

*"After He had dismissed*

*them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone."*

- **Matthew 14:23**

The more mature I become in my relationship with the Lord, the more precious this time becomes to me.

It is a time I look forward to almost daily. It offers me a time to reflect, to share my concerns with my Lord,

and to hear Him speak.

I have come to understand that Jesus views us as His friend and He wants to spend time with us.

We are depriving Him of His time when we put Him aside for the urgent. An interesting thing happens when we make prayer a priority: Urgent things seem to wane as we focus on Him. He makes all these other things fall into place.

Today look up and remember how God created all things and that He owns the cattle upon the hills, the water that springs from the earth, the skies that span our view, and everything good.

It is God who can provide for and bless the earth and the inhabitants thereof. Pray for the many people who are in difficult circumstances right now and need a touch to help them with their basic needs.

Pray for those who need financial income to pay

their living expenses, those who need jobs to bring in that income, who need good health to be able to do those jobs; and for those whose jobs do not provide sufficient income for their needs.

Pray also for those who have the income, but do not know how to properly manage it for the best outcome.

Pray for those who have much and can give much. Ask God to connect the right people with jobs, and the right people with the right people, to do what needs to be done.

Pray that God will meet

every need; that He will bless the lives of those who follow His guidance and those who are thankful for what God provide. Ask God to hear the cries of the needy.

Ask God to bless those who give from the abundance that He allows them to have, for sharing and ministering in ways that others cannot.

Thank God for hearing and answering prayers in Jesus' name pray.

*(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in September 2016.)*

## ALC, from Page 3

sentatives."

**Sen. Raphael Warnock:**

**A Son of Georgia**

Warnock's journey from growing up in Kayton Homes public housing in Savannah to serving in the United States Senate remains an inspiring testament to his resilience and commitment to public service. Raised in coastal Georgia, Warnock comes from a humble background with twelve siblings.

After graduating from Morehouse College, Warnock earned a Ph.D. and embarked on a career in ministry. For over 16 years, he served as Senior Pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, the historic pulpit of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., making him the youngest pastor to hold this leadership role.

In a runoff special election in January 2021, Sen. Warnock defeated Kelly Loeffler to become the new senator of the United States.

A year later, he retained his seat by defeating Republican Herschel Walker. Since taking office, he has served on several important committees, including Agriculture, Nutrition, Forestry, Banking, Housing, Urban Affairs, Commerce, Science, and Transportation. His work on these committees has focused on issues critical to the well-being of Georgians and all Americans.

Warnock's commitment to his constituents was evident following Hurricane Idalia's devastating impact on southern and coastal Georgia last month. Alongside Sen. Jon Ossoff (D), he urged the Biden Administration to promptly provide federal disaster recovery assistance, recognizing the extensive damage to communities and agricultural infrastructure.

"Based on the severity of the damage to many southern Georgia com-

munities and the extensive need in affected areas, if the Governor of Georgia requests federal assistance, we encourage your team to move quickly to support Georgians impacted by this deadly storm," Warnock wrote to President Biden.

**Fighting for Justice in 'Challenging Times'**

As co-chairs of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 52nd Annual Legislative Conference, Plaskett and Warnock bring a wealth of experience, dedication, and a commitment to justice and equity to the forefront.

"In these challenging times, it is essential that we come together to address the threats to our democracy and protect the hard-fought freedoms we cherish," said Nicole Austin-Hillery, president and CEO of CBCF. "The Annual Legislative Conference provides a platform to examine these issues comprehensively, foster dialogue, and identify actionable solutions."

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# NDG Book Review: 'Hush Harbor' is a complex, intriguing tale

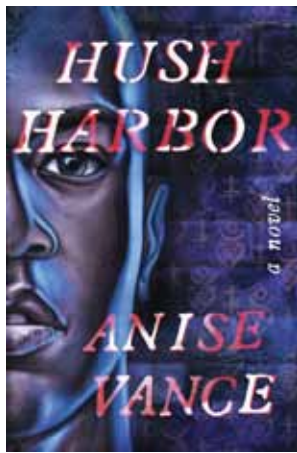
By Terri Schlichenmeyer

In the past few years, you've carried your share of cardboard on sticks.

You've chanted, marched, and showed displeasure for something you're passionate about, and you've walked miles to display your support for what's good and decent. You have the absolute right to protest, but in the new book, "Hush Harbor" by Anise Vance, beware the signs.

Malik's grandfather didn't want him to go.

Why, he wondered, would Malik travel from Durham to New Jersey, to



the tip of an island he'd never seen, to take a stand for a teenager he didn't know?

But how could he not? When a boy named Kemba was killed by a cop with white supremacist ties

and nothing real was done about it, wasn't it natural that anger might spill over? Who could blame activists for seizing an abandoned old bunch of government housing to create their own society? Who'd blame them for any of this?

Not Malik. In his core, he knew that going to what was now called Hush Harbor was the right thing to do. He could make a difference. And once there, he was happy to help Jeremiah Prince to lead the revolution.

When Jeremiah looked at his desk and saw a sea of paperwork, he was glad his sister, Nova, had brought Malik to his office. Jeremi-

ah needed help to tame the documents, to ensure the activists were safe and fed, and to gather information about what was outside the perimeters. Malik was intelligent and watchful; he brought a lot to the cause – so did Nova, for that matter – although Jeremiah and Nova had very different ideas about how to move forward.

Jeremiah didn't want to say why, but he was willing to take outside help. Nova wanted the revolutionists to be sustainably independent, without white influence or money. Both wanted to find the killer, the leader of the white supremacists, who was rumored to be hiding

very near Hush Harbor's barricades.

For Jeremiah, it was personal...

Right from the start, from its very first pages, "Hush Harbor" has a delicious, ice-down-your-spine foreboding that you can't shake, as long as you have the book open. Nearly everything happens in the dark, in a storm, or underground, and that dystopian-Armageddon feel is on point.

As for the story, well, that could be another matter.

This novel is taut, like walking a tightrope over flames, but it's also very, very confusing. The char-

acters are many, explanations for their presences are sometimes easy to miss, and ongoing dialogue is hard to determine when the word "said" is missing as much as it is here. There are some good twists in the tale, but they're often lost in the complications. And just as you're about to cheer for a revolution, the story dives into a dual romance. Heavy sigh.

Readers who are eager for a perfectly, finely-set apocalyptic novel and who can patiently tease out its nuances will probably enjoy "Hush Harbor." Readers who aren't prepared for a complex tale might have trouble sticking with it.

## MEMORY, from Page 14

of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall

rot" (Proverbs 10:6-7).

Then I was reminded of what Peter said. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain

his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Peter 3:10-11).

Memory can be a tricky

thing for many, especially me. I'm trying to process Peter's warning here to "refrain my tongue from evil, and my lips that they speak no guile." If I'm honest with myself I must be

honest with everyone else. Also what Solomon said, "The memory of the just is blessed" is important.

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](mailto:jamesnyder2@att.net). The church web site is [www.whatafellowship.com](http://www.whatafellowship.com).

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