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Municipal bonds are taxation without remuneration

By Allen R. Gray

With the May 4, 2024, election, municipal bonds were the main ticket items. Texas municipalities from Anna to Westworth Village passed bond proposals to fund projects that would make for better, beautiful, and safer cities. It is all about infrastructure, the meat and bones of a city. Bond advocates would have you know that a city cannot and does not exist without infrastructure. It makes for the difference in being a vibrant city and desolate prairie. Municipal bonds are the source of financing for the projects that improve and grow a city.

The projects that receive funding are deciding upon even before the bond passes at the polls. The projects are targeted to specific areas. So, municipal bonds benefit the residents of that target area quite frequently to the detriment of some other area. Yet, the bonds are paid for by everyone in that city whether they voted for the bond or not. The projects are determined based on urgency, equity and other undisclosed factors.

Municipal bonds are becoming so common and frequent that it's like the city is asking for a second serving of a meal even before the first serving has been consumed.

The May 4th win meant that



Bonds are used as a vehicle for infrastructure and improvement; but once bonds are passed, shadowy hands often reach into the cookie jar to make significant changes in how funds are spent. (Yuri Krupinen / Unsplash)

the City of Dallas was its voters to make a big commitment once again. It was just in 2017 that the city's voters approved a \$1.05 billion bond that the city is still trying to finish spending. In this most recent election, Dallas voters approved ten bond propositions totaling \$1.25 billion. Bonds consist of a package of propositions that are voted for or against separately.

The 10 May 2024 propositions (A-J) and their allocations are:

- **Proposition A:** Streets and Transportation - \$521,200,000
- **Proposition B:** Park and Recreation - \$345,270,000
- **Proposition C:** Flood Control and Storm Drainage - \$52,100,000

• **Proposition D:** Library Facilities - \$43,530,000

• **Proposition E:** Cultural and Performing Arts Facilities - \$75,200,000

• **Proposition F:** Public Safety Facilities - \$90,000,000

• **Proposition G:** Economic Development - \$72,300,000

• **Proposition H:** Housing & Neighborhood Infrastructure - \$26,400,000

• **Proposition I:** Homeless Assistance Facilities - \$19,000,000

• **Proposition J:** Information Technology - \$5,000,000

The cost to pay back this enormous \$1.25 billion loan will set

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Staring down the death of America

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Troubling rise in infant drug deaths

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People In The News ...



Jeanelle Hope, PhD.



Marian Robinson

NDG Quote of the Week: "If we accept and acquiesce in the face of discrimination, we accept the responsibility ourselves and allow those responsible to save their conscience by believing that they have our acceptance and concurrence. We should, therefore, protest openly everything... that smacks of discrimination or slander."
- Mary McLeod Bethune

Jeanelle Hope, PhD.

By Kerry Laird
PVAMU

Prairie View A&M University Director and Associate Professor of African American Studies Dr. Jeanelle Hope recently garnered significant recognition for her innovative work in African American Studies and interdisciplinary research.

Dr. Hope has been awarded grants from both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies. Through the ACLS



award, PVAMU also receives an extra grant to help develop programming.

“From day one in my role as Director of African American Studies, one of my central goals has been to

ensure our program is well-funded and supported,” said Dr. Hope.

Building the Humanities

For Dr. Hope, receiving a grant from one of the foremost funders of humanities research and programs feels especially rewarding and affirming, given her position as a scholar within the humanities.

At \$150,000, the NEH grant will help support a two-year project designed to develop faculty, curriculum and other resources for a humanities-centered African American Studies program.

Titled “Deepening African American Studies Curriculum and Faculty Development,” the project seeks to introduce additional, innovative courses such as “Introduction to Pan Africanism,” “Black Speculative Fiction,” and “African American Foodways and Food Justice.”

Working in collaboration with PVAMU professors Dr. Farrah Cambrice, associate professor of sociology, Dr. Marco Robinson, associate professor of history and

assistant director of the Ruth J. Simmons Center for Race and Justice, and

Dr. Elizabeth Whittington, assistant professor of communication, Dr. Hope aims to broaden the program’s scope through the creation of new courses and instructional materials, enhancing the offerings from the Brailsford College of Arts and Sciences.

“We are hoping to build a study abroad component into one of the courses,” said Dr. Hope. “Additionally, we aim to develop course readers for existing core African American studies courses like ‘AFAM 1301: Race, Class, and Gender in America’ to allow for greater continuity in

instruction.”

In addition, the added courses, such as those on African American foodways and Pan-Africanism, will cover both history and culture. The funding will help foster a deeper intellectual community for faculty working on the project, said Dr. Hope.

Afro-Asian Impacts

Building on her graduate school research in Afro-Asian solidarity in the San Francisco Bay area, Dr. Hope’s second project, funded by ACLS, delves into the dynamic lives of

See HOPE, Page 12

Marian Robinson

Marian Robinson, mother to former First Lady Michelle Obama, died on Friday, May 31, at 86. Her loved ones said she leaves behind a void in the hearts of many. As a steadfast figure in the Obama White House, Robinson’s presence extended far beyond familial ties, touching the lives of all who knew her.

Marian Lois Shields set out on a journey that was characterized by fortitude and compassion after emerging from the vibrant tapestry of Chicago’s South Side. From her early days as a teacher to her later role as a trusted



secretary, Robinson’s life was a testament to the values of family and service, showcasing her personal achievements and contributions.

In a heartfelt tribute, Michelle Obama fondly recalled her mother’s en-

during influence, describing her as the unwavering pillar of their family. Robinson’s wisdom, honed through life’s diverse experiences, was a beacon of light during times of uncertainty. Her steadfast support and gentle nature were not just sources of strength but unique qualities that endeared her to the entire Obama clan.

Throughout Barack Obama’s historic presidency, Marian Robinson was a symbol of stability, offering sage advice and unconditional love. Despite the grandeur of the White House, she maintained her down-to-earth charm, forging deep connections

with staff and finding solace in everyday routines, thereby extending her influence beyond her immediate family.

Reflecting on her mother’s legacy, Michelle Obama shared cherished memories of their time, illustrating their profound bond. Robinson’s unwav-

ering presence and nurturing spirit created a sense of home amidst the whirlwind of public life.

“Her wisdom came off as almost innate, as something she was born with, but in reality, it was hard-earned, fashioned by her deep understanding that the world’s roughest edges

could always be sanded down with a little grace,” the family said.

Michelle, Barack, Craig, Kelly, Avery, Leslie, Malia, Sasha, Austin, and Aaron joined to pen a heartfelt remembrance of Robinson.

“Our mother, mother-in-

See ROBINSON, Page 14

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee has fought tirelessly for groundbreaking legislation throughout her career. She authored the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, creating the first new federal holiday in nearly four decades, and fervently championed the Violence Against Women Act, ensuring its passage for the first time in almost ten years. Now, the stalwart Texas representative is facing the battle of her life after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

In a statement posted to X on Sunday, the 74-year-old congresswoman disclosed her diagnosis and treatment. “My doctors have con-



firmed pancreatic cancer, and I am currently undergoing treatment,” Jackson Lee shared. “I am confident that my doctors have developed the best possible plan to target my specific disease. The road ahead will not be easy, but I stand in faith that God will strengthen me.”

Jackson Lee has repre-

sented Texas’ 18th District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1995. Now in her 15th term, she serves on the House Committees on the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and the Budget, and is the first female Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee for Crime and Federal Government Surveillance, a subcommittee she chaired during the 117th Congress.

Her legislative achievements are extensive and impactful. Jackson Lee has spearheaded the Sentencing Reform Act, the George Floyd Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act, and the RAISE Act. She has also introduced crucial bills like

See LEE, Page 4



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The death of America as we know it



Dr. John E. Warren
Publisher,
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By now most Americans, but not all, have either heard of Project 2025 or seen some reference to it. But too many still don't know how this radical blueprint will change life in this country as we know it. The sad truth of the matter is the plan is hidden in plain view where we all can see it, but few are paying attention, other than those who have planned the changes.

The plan is called Project 2025, known as the Presidential Transition Project. This project will make widespread changes across our entire government in economic and social policies and the role of the federal government and its agencies. The main idea behind these proposed changes, as put out by the Heritage Institute, is what is called an Executive Theory which asserts that the president has absolute power over the executive branch of our government under what is called, "A Unitary Executive Theory

interpretation of Article II of the Constitution of the United States."

This plan is designed for a "Republican President" such as seen with the Donald Trump Presidential candidacy for 2025. Under this plan the following changes would take place, some immediately: (1) Slashing funding for the Department of Justice (DOJ); (2) Dismantling the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); (3) Eliminating the Department of Commerce and ending the independence of various federal agencies such as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC); (4) Abolishing the Department of Education; (5) Removal of protections against discrimination based on sexual or gender identity; and (6) Termination of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs as well as affirmative action.

Project 2025 advises the future president to immediately deploy the military for domestic law enforcement and to direct the DOJ to pursue Trump's adver-

saries by invoking the Insurrection Act of 1807. It recommends the arrest, detention, and deportation of undocumented immigrants across the country. It promotes capital punishment and the speedy "finality" of such sentences.

Although the project does not promote a specific candidate, many contributors have close ties to Donald Trump and his presidential campaign. This project is proposed under what the Heritage Foundation calls its "Mandate for Leadership" and has been publishing this list of proposed changes to run parallel with each presidential election since 1981. It calls this Mandate its "Policy Bible".

Project 2025 has been developed in collaboration with over 100 partners. The Heritage Foundation president, Kevin Roberts, established Project 2025 in 2022 to provide the 2024 Republican presidential nominee a personnel database and ideological framework after civil

servants refused to support Trump during his attempt to institute a Muslim travel ban, and his effort to install a new attorney gen-

eral to help with his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

Clearly the issue is not just Donald Trump, rather those who would use him or like-minded candidates for the Presidency to overthrow the United States government as it now exists with a Constitutionally based separation of powers. The only safeguard against this concrete plan to destroy America as it now exists is for "We the People" to prepare now to vote in the November election. We can no longer count on the United States Supreme Court which appears to have abandoned the very rule of law it was empowered to protect. It appears we can no longer depend upon the United States Congress which appears to have abandoned its legislative duties and oath of office by which the Republican members swore to "protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic" and substituted that oath with a commitment to a convicted felon. The question is: Where do we stand and for what will we fight?

Mister Rogers' lessons for young learners (and their families, too)

By Gregg Behr and Ryan Rydzewski

It has been off the air for more than two decades, but Mister Rogers' Neighborhood still matters — a fact that might not surprise the program's creator. "I've always said the best time for our program is once it's over," Fred Rogers explained, "and the television is turned off." It sounds counterintuitive. But as we document in When You Wonder, You're Learning: Mister Rogers' Endur-

ing Lessons for Raising Creative, Curious, Caring Kids, Fred knew a thing or three about how learning happens best.

"Television," he said, "can be fairly passive." It is one thing for young children to absorb information from a screen; it is another thing entirely when caring adults help kids use that information in living rooms, classrooms, libraries, and all the other places where kids and their caregivers learn. Modern science backs Mister Rogers up.

Young people with families and caregivers who are actively engaged in their learning tend to do better in school, and not by a little: Students with engaged families are up to 81 percent more likely to graduate from high school and 95 percent more likely to report physical and mental well-being. Studies suggest that engaging young learners today — playing with them, holding them, doing whatever we can to strengthen our bonds with them — will pay dividends

tomorrow, and even for decades to come.

That is the good news. The bad news is that isn't always easy to give young learners the time and attention they deserve, especially when the rent comes due and affordable child care grows ever more scarce. Fortunately, we can look to Fred Rogers to help us spark wonder — anytime and with any child when the television is on and long after it is off.

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Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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U.S. drug-related infant deaths more than doubled from 2018 to 2022

(Newswise) — A new study by Florida Atlantic University’s Schmidt College of Medicine has uncovered a disturbing trend in drug-related infant deaths in the United States from 2018 to 2022.

Infant deaths are those that occur between the time a child is born and age 1. Drug-involved deaths are those in which drugs are either the primary cause of death or a contributing factor and may occur due to maternal drug use, inadvertent or accidental intake of specific prescriptions, illicit or non-medical use of drugs and other incidents where drugs were linked to death.

Results of the study, published in the Journal of Perinatal Medicine, show that in the U.S. from 2018 to 2022, drug-involved infant deaths more than doubled (120% increase) from 10.8% in 2018 to 24.4% in 2022. The largest increase was observed between 2019 (16.9%) and 2022 with the greatest proportion of drug-related infant deaths occurring in 2021 (25.8%). Overall, relative to all other causes of infant mortality, drug-involved deaths became more prevalent after 2019.

Findings show that drug-involved infant deaths also



Chayene Rafiqela/Unsplash

were higher in the postnatal period, ages 28 to 364 days (81.4%), relative to deaths due to all other causes during the same period (34.6%). The most prevalent underlying causes of death included assault (homicide) by drugs, medications and biological substances (35.6%) followed by poisoning from exposure to narcotics and psychodysleptics (hallucinogens) (15.6%), and accidental poisoning from exposure to antiepileptic, sedative-hypnotic, antiparkinsonism and psychotropic drugs (10.8%). The most common multiple causes of drug-involved infant deaths were psychostimulants with abuse potential of synthetic narcotics.

In addition, a significant

proportion of infants who died from drug-involved causes were born to non-Hispanic white (60.4%) and non-Hispanic Black mothers (28.5%). Furthermore, drug-induced mortality was 56.5% in male infants and 43.7% in female infants, a difference which also was statistically significant.

“The differences we observed by race/ethnicity in drug-involved deaths, predominantly among non-Hispanic white and Black infants require a multifaceted approach for clinical and public health interventions,” said Panagiota “Yiota” Kitsantas, Ph.D., corresponding author and professor and chair of the Department of Population Health and Social Medicine, FAU Schmidt College

Houston. She has two children: Jason Lee, a Harvard graduate, and Erica Lee, a Duke graduate and member of the Harris County School Board. She is also the proud grandmother of twins Ellison Bennett Carter and Roy Lee Carter III.

Despite her diagnosis, Jackson Lee remains resolute in her commitment to her congressional duties. “I am committed to working with our Congressional leadership, including Leader Hakeem Jefferies and the Speaker of the House, to serve this nation and be present for votes on legislation that is critical for the prosperity and security of the American people,” she affirmed.

of Medicine. “Addressing the social determinants of health, enhancing access to addiction treatment and implementing culturally sensitive interventions may be important to prevent infant deaths in vulnerable populations. In addition, the underlying causes, which included drug-related assault and various forms of poisoning, also may be areas for clinical and public health interventions.”

From 2018 to 2022, drug-involved infant deaths accounted for 1.18% of all infant deaths, a notable rise from the previously reported 0.64% from 2015 to 2017. This increase was

particularly pronounced during COVID-19, raising questions that require further studies. During this period, drug overdose mortality also increased substantially among pregnant and postpartum women.

The researchers note that during COVID-19 there was reduced access to prenatal care, the emergence of health care deserts and hospital closures, especially in rural areas. These may have contributed, at least in part, to the observed increases in drug-related infant deaths, although more research is warranted.

“Given the alarming increase in the number of

drug overdose deaths in the general population, especially among pregnant and postpartum women, findings from our study are both important and timely,” said Maria C. Mejia, M.D., senior author and a professor of population health and social medicine, FAU Schmidt College of Medicine. “Drug-involved deaths in infants represent a potentially avoidable cause that should be considered in efforts to reduce infant mortality in the United States. Effective strategies will require collaborative efforts among health

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LEE, from Page 2

the Fair Chance for Youth Act, the Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act, and Kaleif’s Law. An unwavering advocate for women and children, she fervently supports the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and has championed outreach to minority- and women-owned businesses in the commercial space industry. Additionally, she authored the Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Research and Education Act.

Recognized as one of the 50 most effective Members of Congress by ‘Congressional Quarterly’ and among the ten most influen-

tial legislators in the House by ‘U.S. News and World Report,’ Jackson Lee’s influence extends beyond legislation. She is a founder, member, and Chair of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus and the Congressional Children’s Caucus, as well as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Energy Braintrust and Co-Chair of the Justice Reform Task Force.

Educationally, Jackson Lee holds a B.A. in Political Science from Yale University and a J.D. from the University of Virginia Law School. She is married to Dr. Elwyn Lee, an administrator at the University of

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Biden campaign faces urgent challenge to reconnect with Black voters

By Stacy M. Brown
 NNPA Senior National
 Correspondent

As President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris ramp up their 2024 re-election campaign, concerns are mounting among prominent Black Democrats and operatives regarding the administration's communication efforts with Black voters. Despite significant policy achievements, there's a growing sentiment that the campaign hasn't effectively conveyed these accomplishments to the Black community.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and Roland Martin Unfiltered, two major Black-owned media entities, weren't formally notified of the campaign's recent Black voter outreach kickoff. The oversight has intensified criticism that the Biden campaign fails to engage adequately with influential Black media.

Martin, a prominent Black-media mogul, expressed his frustration on his show, stating, "The Biden-Harris campaign must get Black people off the couch." He emphasized that many Black-owned outlets, including his Black Star Network, could have helped boost the event, re-



The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and Roland Martin Unfiltered, two major Black-owned media entities, weren't formally notified of the campaign's recent Black voter outreach kickoff. The oversight has intensified criticism that the Biden campaign fails to engage adequately with influential Black media. (Image via NNPA)

flecting a broader disconnection issue.

The campaign has agreed to sponsor the NNPA's upcoming national convention, and Biden and Harris have received formal invitations to address the Black community at the event through the NNPA. The NNPA is the trade association of the 197-year-old Black Press of America, which includes more than 250 Black-owned news publications and media outlets employing dozens of Black journalists nationwide.

Rep. Steven Horsford (D-Nev.), chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, echoed these concerns,

highlighting a "level of disconnection earlier on the message, on the messengers and on mobilization." He told Politico that he directly addressed these issues with the campaign. Similarly, Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas) noted the challenges posed by a fragmented media landscape, noting, "I think that the way that we communicate has changed in such a way that, if you don't invest earlier, it's going to be a problem."

Politico reported that private conversations among Democratic operatives reveal deeper fears, including the notion that Black influencers and media personalities have grown disenchant-

ed with Biden. Moreover, there is apprehension that Biden's limited public engagements and scripted appearances make him less accessible to voters.

While surveys indicate Black voters support Biden's policies, such as student debt relief and funding for HBCUs, many remain unaware of these achievements due to the campaign's communication gaps, which are particularly concerning in battleground states like Georgia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania, where even a slight dip in Black voter support could be decisive.

Adrienne Shropshire, executive director of Black-

PAC, emphasized to the outlet the importance of informing working-class Black voters about Biden's accomplishments. "When you tell people 'Here's what the Biden administration has done,' particularly related to issues the Black communities care about, people are really surprised," she said.

"If they are watching Joy Reid, they know Biden's accomplishments," said Cornell Belcher, who has conducted focus groups for BlackPAC. "If they are spending time in the Shade Room or a dozen other social media news sites, [they] never hear that Biden used an executive order to ban chokeholds in federal office."

Polling and focus groups indicate a declining enthusiasm among young Black voters and Black men. One prominent poll found that only 41 percent of Black Americans ages 18 to 39 are sure to vote this year, down from 61 percent in June 2020.

Despite those challenges, a senior Biden campaign official acknowledged the need to improve awareness of Biden's accomplishments among Black voters. "If it was the flip side or the inverse and every Black person across the country

knew everything that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris had done for their lives, we wouldn't need to advertise [with] paid media," the official said.

The campaign has recently invested in Black media, including new television and radio ads, meetings with key Black community leaders, and interviews with Black journalists. However, some Black operatives argue that these efforts are not reaching the broader, non-college-educated Black electorate, mainly because most of this is with Black-targeted outlets instead of a robust investment in Black-owned media.

"Talking to Black men at Morehouse, talking to Black men who own businesses—you're not talking to the majority of brothers who are sitting out elections," W. Mondale Robinson, founder of the Black Male Voter Project, told Politico.

With time running out, the Biden campaign faces a critical challenge in re-engaging and mobilizing Black voters. As Cornell Belcher warned, "They have a shorter runway than they think," and the campaign's ability to bridge the information gap and address the concerns of Black voters will be pivotal in securing a victory in the 2024 election.

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2530	Ju\$T 1 Buck Overall Odds are 1 in 4.46	\$1	7/17/24	1/13/25
2321	\$50,000 Bonus Cashword Overall Odds are 1 in 4.07	\$3	7/17/24	1/13/25
2464	100X Cash Blitz Overall Odds are 1 in 3.86	\$10	7/17/24	1/13/25
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2418	200X The Cash Overall Odds are 1 in 3.80	\$20	7/17/24	1/13/25

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Prepping for graduations and a busy summer season



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Dallas ISD graduation season is here! Congratulations to not only the

graduates, but also to their families, teachers, mentors, and community members who taught them, encouraged them and guided them along the way. The years of hard work and dedication have paid off and we are excited to celebrate this milestone with our gradu-

ates and their families. Graduation ceremonies will be held at various locations throughout the district and will be streamed live. For more information and links to the live graduation streams, visit <https://www.dallasisd.org/graduations>. Be sure to use #DallasIS-

DGrad24 on your social media posts. Don't miss out on Dallas ISD's free summer programming. The Summer Breeze 2024 programming provides an array of exciting learning experiences that are designed to engage students in rigorous

tasks that accelerate learning while improving social and emotional well-being. They include programs such as pre-K summer school camp, extracurricular camps such as mariachi and drill team, extended school year, high school credit boost, and robotics

and science camps. Camps will be offered throughout the district at designated campuses. For more information and to access the Summer Breeze guide, visit the Summer Breeze page at <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/87416>.

South Dallas Club closes year awarding \$60,000 in scholarships

By Gwendolyn H. Daniels

A record-breaking \$60,000 in scholarships is what the historic South Dallas Business and Professional Women's Club, Inc. launched a campaign last fall to raise by the close of the 2023-2024 fiscal Club year.

With the completion of this outstanding accomplishment, a total of twelve high school graduates are scheduled to begin receiving funds this summer as they enter their 2024 fall college semester.

Dr. Lavern J. Holyfield, president, and Atty.



Simmons Event Photography / Courtesy

Gwendolyn E. Hunt, luncheon chair, introduced the idea of a "Donate \$60"

campaign to the membership. Club sisters compelled family, co-workers

and friends to join them in donating towards this outstanding goal. For the

first time in Club history, \$60,000 in scholarships was awarded at the 60th V. Alyce Foster Trailblazer Luncheon.

Recipients from the Dallas metroplex include: Michael Akinnibosun (Cedar Hill Collegiate High School); William Anoka (Grand Prairie High School); Isaiah Gardner (Skyline High School); Ray C. Gulley, III (Rowlett High School); Ava Horton (James Martin High School); Miles Johnson (Barack Obama Male Leadership High School); Jourdan Jones (Faith Family Academy); Abiba Moner-

iffe (DeSoto High School); Xyler Myles (South Oak Cliff High School); Skylar Phifer (South Oak Cliff High School); Reginald Turner, II (Naaman Forest High School); and Xavier Wright (Lakeview Centennial High School).

The 75-member South Dallas BPW Club of the South Central District is a 70-year member of the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.

For more information, visit their website at southdallasbpw.org or contact them at southdallas1954@yahoo.com.

Newly crowned 2024-2025 Miss, Mr. PVAMU set to inspire

By Alex Byrd
PVAMU

In a night filled with anticipation and excitement this spring semester, Chloe Tolbert and Alexander Kirk emerged as the newly crowned 2024-2025 Miss and Mister Prairie View A&M University. Tolbert, a rising senior from Dallas, became the 92nd Miss PVAMU, while Kirk, a rising senior from Pontiac, Michigan, became the 42nd Mister PVAMU.

The annual scholarship pageants at PVAMU celebrate not just beauty and charisma but also leadership, academic excellence and community involvement. Both Tolbert and Kirk embody these quali-



PVAMU

ties, having demonstrated exceptional dedication to their studies, extracurricular activities and their visions for the future of PVAMU.

As they step into their new roles, they share a common goal: to leave a lasting, positive impact on the University and its students.

Strengthening Community and Engagement

Tolbert kickstarted her collegiate journey with curiosity. She was drawn to the idea of attending an HBCU because of the incredible stories she heard about the transformative experiences and opportunities these schools offer.

"None of my family members had ever attended an HBCU, so I decided to create a legacy by choosing to attend the HBCU closest to my home," Tolbert said. "This way, I could still be near my family while immersing myself in the rich culture and academic excellence of an HBCU."

Tolbert envisions her role as Miss PVAMU as a catalyst for deeper connections and greater activism within the University community. She is passionate about creating a network that not only supports current students but also bridges the gap between alumni and the University. With a focus on empowerment and civic engagement, she is committed to cultivating a

vibrant and united campus culture.

"I would like to strengthen ties within the community, foster a supportive sisterhood among Prairie View women, and advocate for social justice by actively encouraging our student body to exercise their civic duty to vote," she said. "As I carry out this platform, I aim to reignite the Panther pride and motivation among students, ultimately boosting student engagement and excellence within our Panther community."

Her dedication to student involvement and civic duty is evident from her involvement in initiatives like March to the Polls. Recently inducted into Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.,

Tolbert has previously held titles such as Miss Black and Gold 2023-2024, Miss Sophomore, and Miss Junior.

"Knowing Miss Prairie View A&M holds a significant role as one of the most inspiring and influential women on campus, I felt compelled to step into this position and fulfill the responsibilities that come with it," Tolbert said. "I aim to leave behind a legacy that contributes positively to the campus community and embodies the values and spirit of Prairie View."

To get to this point, Tolbert sacrificed a lot of sleep and social activities with her friends because of

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Dallas CASA's Parade of Playhouses opens at NorthPark Center June 14

The 29th annual Dallas CASA Parade of Playhouses will take place June 14 to 30 at NorthPark Center.

This beloved event, sponsored by Crest Cadillac, features extraordinary children's playhouses designed, built and donated by generous architects, builders, organizations, corporations and individuals. The playhouses are available to win by raffle, with proceeds allowing Dallas CASA to provide more volunteer advocates to help children experience safe childhoods and grow into resourceful, healthy adults.

"For too many children, home represents instability, addiction, fear and violence, and many families lack the resources to



Dallas CASA / Courtesy

overcome these challenges," said Kathleen M. LaValle, president and CEO of Dallas CASA. "These playhouses represent what everyone at Dallas CASA would like home to be for all children and their families – safe, loving, protective and full of hope about

the future."

Playhouses will be displayed in the hallways of NorthPark Center, which has hosted the event since 1996. Parade Grand Marshal is KDC. The 16 houses on display this year feature an array of creative designs, including a pink-themed

playhouse, an A-frame design, an ice cream shop, a castle, a fire station and a Dallas Mavericks-themed athletic shoe. Many are designed both for playing and climbing, with rope ladders, slides, a catwalk and climbing walls.

Some houses feature special touches like metal roofs, polycarbonate panels designed to look like stained glass, shake siding and a hinged window. Three playhouses are being built by girls from Women Leading Technology, a local nonprofit that seeks to expose young women to STEM topics. Kimley Horn's house, "Stars at Night," will feature wood grain designed to look like swirling galaxies. OMNI-

PLAN's design, built by Austin Commercial, resembles a mountain ready to be summited.

"Our volunteers are the heartbeat of this agency, and we count our playhouse builders as volunteers," LaValle said. "They donate not just their time and creativity, but their hearts as well. Each one of these houses is built on a foundation of care and concern for the most vulnerable in our community."

Raffle tickets to win a playhouse can be purchased during the event for \$5 each or five for \$20 on the Dallas CASA website at dallascasa.org or at NorthPark Center. Winners will be randomly selected on the final day of the event on June 30.

Dallas CASA volunteers are assigned by the courts to the cases of children living in the protective care of the state. Volunteers work with children, their families, therapists, educators, attorneys and more as they seek to protect children and make supportive connections. In 2023, 1,088 Dallas CASA volunteers were assigned to advocate for 2,151 children.

Thanks to the support of events like Parade of Playhouses, Dallas CASA has been able to provide an advocate for every Dallas child who needs one for the past five years. The agency is able to accept appointments from all 10 courts to every Dallas County child welfare case.

Trump accused of witness tampering in new investigative report

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

While Donald Trump awaits a July 11 sentencing in New York on his recent felony convictions, a new investigative report by ProPublica has unearthed potential instances of witness tampering by the twice-impeached and four-times criminally indicted former president.

An in-depth exposé by the award-winning news site noted that, despite being convicted on all 34 felony charges brought by the Manhattan District Attorney's office, the GOP's presumptive presidential nominee, who promised to be a dictator "on day one," could see his legal woes mount as ProPublica suggested that he was involved in a concerted effort to sway eyewitness testimony in the trial that ended last month with 34 unanimous guilty verdicts.

The report said that nine witnesses embroiled in criminal cases against Trump had received "significant financial benefits," including substantial pay raises, hefty severance packages, and prestigious

positions within his campaign and media empire. The perks, distributed at pivotal junctures during the case, has cast yet another shadow over the integrity of Trump and those who vouched for the MAGA leader.

Neither Trump's campaign on Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg returned messages left by the Black Press seeking comment.

However, ProPublica quoted legal experts who opined that such benefits could potentially constitute evidence of criminal behavior if the intent was to influence witnesses' statements. Barbara McQuade, a former U.S. Attorney, told ProPublica that there were "grave concerns" over the potential corrupting influence of such action. McQuade also cautioned that it could prove a difficult case to prosecute.

While ProPublica said it did not find direct evidence linking Trump to the pay increases, the site said it's well-known that he closely monitors his operations and prides himself on being frugal. One former aide likened working for the Trump Organization to

"a small family business" where every employee "in some sense reports to Mr. Trump." Trump's demand for loyalty from his subordinates is a consistent theme, exemplified by his reaction when Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself from the Russia investigation, prompting Trump to angrily question, "Where's my Roy Cohn?" referring to his former fixer.

Journalists on the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalism team reported that several notable figures in Trump's circle have seen significant financial benefits. For instance, Trump campaign adviser Boris Epshteyn's pay more than doubled, and Susie Wiles, head of Trump's campaign, saw payments to her firm spike while her daughter was also hired by the campaign. Trump aide Margo Martin received a roughly 20% raise, and Dan Scavino was appointed to the board of Trump Media. Trump attorneys Jennifer Little and Evan Corcoran saw dramatic increases in payments to their law firms, while Allen Weisselberg, a Trump Organization executive, received a lucrative severance package.

According to ProPublica,

witness tampering and efforts to influence testimonies have been recurring themes in Trump-related

investigations and criminal cases. In past instances, Trump's former campaign manager and adviser were

convicted on federal witness tampering charges,

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Women of color, a potentially strong voice in the Fall elections

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

Women of color make up one of the fastest-growing communities of voters in the U.S. today. This rapidly expanding voting block, which includes Latinx, African American and Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) women, has the potential to weigh heavily in the November election.

Yet according to Salinda Lake, President of Lake Research Partners, women of color may be lacking enthusiasm about voting this Fall. As a reliable voting block, politicians are not connecting with these voters enough, as reflected in a recent poll by Intersections of Our Lives, a group of researchers focused on civil rights, justice, health and equality issues.

The potential among women of color to make change is enormous, said Lake. This is because the group is large in number and because, according to the poll, they believe in the power of their vote to create change.

African American voters, in particular, tend to be reliable voters, explained Dr. Moss. They see the best way of holding officials accountable is by voting regularly and by voting on their priorities. Black women are some of the most committed and decisive voters, adds Moss, nine of ten stating voting is very important to them, according to this research. They realize their ancestors died for the right to vote, and they do not take it lightly, and this is especially true for older Black women, who remember the struggle for civil rights, she said.

Twenty years ago, people of color were more optimistic, and now, a persistent pessimism has been expressing itself as apathy amongst voters that have been trying to make change, said Nedungadi.

Though a large majority is only somewhat motivated to vote this Fall, the



DWGStudio

poll indicates that 53% of API women, 57% of Black women and 60% of Latina and Latinx women are still very motivated to vote this Fall.

Though division and partisanship are strong, voter motivation is weak right now, and it appears voters may not turn out until they see enough change that impacts their lives, said Lake. The power of women of color lies in their faith in each vote to make a difference. This is why having conversations with the public is important, so voters can hear their concerns being heard.

A top priority for those polled is rising costs, said Roshni Nedungadi, chief research officer for HIT Strategies, a firm involved in the study. After exploring their responses, researchers found that voters are not only considering the cost of groceries, but other, less obvious costs, like affordable health and reproductive care and fair housing. Affordable housing, which strongly impacts the cost of living, is a critical concern for 90% of Black women, 82% of AAPI, and 83% of Latino women polled who recognized a need for more affordable home options.

Job creation is another economic priority across the board, Nedungadi reported, with 92% of Black, 89% of API women, and 88% of Latinx women prioritizing well-paying jobs. The women polled were also concerned with closing the pay gap between men and women, accord-

ing to the poll, said San Yan Chamorrow, Executive Director of National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum.

Other concerns include environmental justice issues like access to clean drinking water and healthy air for those living in high-density areas, reported Lupe Rodriguez, executive director of National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice.

A top issue was found to include access to affordable abortion care, according to AAPI, Black and Latinx respondents polled. Racial and reproductive justice are crucial to these voters, explained Dr. Regina Davis Moss, President and CEO of In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda. Concerned that fewer resources may be available to such groups, Moss suggests lower standards for healthcare, housing, employment and education may result in fewer opportunities and substandard care for people in this category.

High maternal mortality rates are particularly important to Black women, said Moss, and abortion bans are already negatively impacting these death rates.

Women of color are very, very strongly engaged with the reproductive justice agenda, adds Rodriguez. In states that have put abortion on the ballot, women of color are rejecting abortion bans and attacks on freedom across the country, including Latinx voters.

Women of color are es-

pecially concerned with body autonomy and strongly tie their concerns about rising costs to access to

reproductive health care, said Chamorrow. In fact, women's rights and abortion combined to tie with rising costs as the number one concern for women of color. Latinos are also connecting concerns about rising costs to reproductive health care affordability, added Rodriguez.

For Korean American women, the top issue was women's rights, which includes abortion and gender-based issues such as wage discrimination. Korean women were also concerned with issues that threaten democracy.

Abortion access has risen for all women of color as a very top priority. This includes Indian American women, who noted priorities for ensuring medication abortion and affordable health care. Three quarters of Indian and Chinese women polled support abortion access, as similar numbers of Vietnamese and Korean populations feel the same. For Vietnamese women, affordable prescription drugs ranked among their top two concerns, and notably, voting issues.

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Will Smith and Martin Lawrence in *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*. (Photo via NNPA)

Film Review: 'Bad Boys: Ride Or Die' will please the loyal fans

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(**1/2) They're older. Wiser? Well older. Boyz II middle-aged men. They still got it? And if they do, whatcha gonna do when they come for you?

Bad Boys (1995) and Bad Boys II (2003), starring Martin Lawrence and Will Smith as rambunctious Miami cops Marcus Burnett and Mike Lowery, were directed by the flashy director Michael Bay. Bad Boys for Life (2020) had new life breathed into it when the young, edgy Belgian/Arab team of directors Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah (Black, Rebel and Gangsta) took command. These filmmakers, Lawrence and Smith have gone back to the same well one more time for this latest venture. Anything left?

The character of Captain Conrad Howard (Joe Pantoliano), the guys' much loved commanding officer, was a constant in the three previous movies. In the last chapter, he was assassinated by the sniper hitman Armando Aretas (Jacob Scipio), who happened to be Mike's son. This new, formulaic script by Chris Bremner and Will Beall starts where the last film finished. Howard's legacy as an honorable, trustworthy cop is being

besmirched by crooks who try to tie him to a deadly cartel. Howard speaks from beyond the grave, "Boys we have rats in our walls!" Outraged, Marcus and Mike try to clear his name. It's a premise that provides lots of forward momentum.

The guys' investigation is aided by former rookie cops Kelly (Vanessa Hudgens) and Dorn (Alexander Ludwig). As their new boss, Captain Rita Secada (Paola Núñez), seems skeptical a stealth hitman named Banker (Eric Dane) connives to kill all the good guys who get in his way. It's on.

You'd think that this tight ensemble would be just enough. But the franchise has so much baggage, more and more characters show up: Marcus's wife Theresa (Tasha Smith), his war veteran son Reggie (Dennis Green) and grandchildren. Mike's new wife Christine (Melanie Liburd). Conrad's enraged Federal Marshall officer daughter (Rhea Seehorn, Better Call Saul) and innocent granddaughter Callie (Quinn Hemphill). Add in a smarmy politician (Ioan Gruffudd) and a bodacious strip club owner (Tiffany Haddish) and it's a full house.

If there's a star in this movie, it's the action

scenes. Adil & Bilal excel at bringing the car chases, gun fights, brawls and violence. The footage (cinematographer Robrecht Heyvaert) starts with a bang in a convenience store, kinetic energy is well measured throughout (editors Asaf Eisenberg and Dan Levental) and doesn't let up until the last deadly shot hits its mark. During the mayhem, Marcus is on the hood of a car pumping bullets at the bad guys, an art gallery becomes a battlefield, a helicopter loses control, loved ones are in jeopardy and an old amusement becomes a burial ground. The one action sequence misstep involves the boys driving a van totally engulfed in flames. It's silly, stupid and improbable. But for the most part, the steady supply of adrenaline-pumping scenes gives action/comedy genre fans what they want, and the Lawrence/Smith team exemplifies the wacky buddy cop pairings moviegoers like.

With Jerry Bruckheimer as the prime producer (Top Gun: Maverick and Pirates of the Caribbean), everything is bigger, excessive and more outlandish than it needs to be. Especially the finale scenes. What if this chapter had been a reboot that took the guys back to

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India.Arie announces hiatus from touring: 'I need healing too'

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

In a deeply personal open letter, four-time Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter India.Arie announced her decision to step back from touring, citing the need for personal healing and mental health care. The announcement comes from an artist who has been a powerful voice in the music industry for over two decades.

"I've sat quietly all these years because the things that inspired me had disappeared, and I've been healing from great disillusionment," Arie wrote on her social media page. Despite recently accepting a few shows to gauge her feelings, Arie was overwhelmed. "Everything in me is screaming 'no.' My nervous system is a wreck," she confessed, highlighting the toll that recent years have taken on her mental and physical



The announcement comes from an artist who has been a powerful voice in the music industry for over two decades. (Photo via NNPA)

health.

Born on October 3, 1975, in Denver, Colorado, India Arie Simpson began her musical journey in Atlanta, Georgia, after moving there with her mother and siblings following her

parents' divorce. In Atlanta, she picked up the guitar and started collaborating with local artists, eventually forming the music group "Groovement." At 24, Motown Records discovered and signed her, launching

her solo career.

The soulful musician and a beacon of authenticity made her mark with her debut album, *Acoustic Soul*, in 2001. The RIAA awarded this masterpiece a double platinum certification and gave it seven Grammy nominations. Her musical journey continued with albums like *Voyage to India*, which won Best R&B Album at the 2003 Grammy Awards, and *Testimony: Vol 1, Life and Relationship*, and *Testimony: Vol 2, Love and Politics*. Her global influence is evident in her record sales, with over 10 million records sold worldwide, and her numerous accolades, including four Grammy awards, 21 Grammy nominations, two BET awards, and four NAACP Image awards.

Despite her illustrious career, Arie has been candid about her challenges. In her open letter, she explained that she left her touring life in September

2019, seeking a break from the demands of her career.

Though filled with success, Arie's journey hasn't been without its challenges. She candidly shared the toll her career took on her health, especially in 2019. "I sacrificed my health, enduring deaths, root canals, and lack of management support, just to secure higher pay for my performances. I was underpaid for years," she revealed in her post.

The open letter touched on her evolving perspective since 2020, which has seen significant global upheaval. "Now that I see the world all different ways since 2020, as we all do, I'm having a hard time being inspired to take on the absolute heavy lifting it takes to go on the road with 19 people," she wrote. The singer emphasized the importance of mental health, acknowledging her need to prioritize her well-being over financial gain. "I need healing too," she stated

plainly.

Apologizing to her fans, promoters, and band, Arie expressed regret for any disappointment her decision may cause. "I'm sorry to anyone who is disappointed, that means you love me. And I love you back," she said. Despite the hiatus, Arie hinted at new music and more authentic connections with her fans in the future. "I hope to meet you in a more authentic space with all the new songs I have at some point here soon," she promised.

During her hiatus, Arie said she's not just stepping back from touring, but also into a new role. She plans to host meditation gatherings in her hometown, creating a healing space for herself and her community. As a certified meditation teacher and a long-time practitioner, she said she's dedicated to providing a truly restorative environment. "This is my offering for now," she concluded.

FILM, from Page 9

their roots? What if instead of a grandiose style the filmmaking was stripped down to its roots? This would have given the two leads a bigger chance to spotlight their comic chops. Imagine if this episode was as close to the ground and

gutter as the Safdie Brothers' *Uncut Gems*. But funny. What if audiences got to see the seamy side of Miami and not the Hollywoodized version? Well not even Hollywoodized, because the supreme irony is that the film was largely

shot in Atlanta. Authenticity be damned.

In case audiences had forgotten, Martin Lawrence always stole these movies from Will Smith. He got the most hilarious lines and knew how to handle his comic business. Weird facial expressions, great timing, whining, bug-

ging out... Now, this script gives him an incident that makes him become overly spiritual—to the point of feeling he's untouchable and becoming reckless. It's a nice gimmick that gives him room to shine. Marcus, "I spent my whole life being scared!" Better than the secondary characteristic

laid on Smith, which has him freezing up at inopportune times. All other cast members are good, too. But Haddish, in a small club scene, leaves her bawdy scent all over everything. She's hysterical.

They're older. Worn and frayed like a pair of old shoes with holes in the bot-

tom. But they've got their loyal followers who'll ride or die with Marcus and Mike forever in any imperfect buddy cop movie. Why? Because Lawrence and Smith know how to charm and disarm.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrown-Ink.com.

ROGERS, from Page 7

Wonder Aloud

Fred brought his joyful curiosity to every episode of *The Neighborhood*, where he permitted himself to ask the questions that were on his mind (and on the minds of his viewers). Today's adults can follow his lead. Hedda Shrapan, who worked on *The Neighborhood* for decades and who writes a wonderful newsletter for the Fred Rogers Institute, shares the example of an "Ask It Basket" she once saw in a

classroom: "When the children would ask a question, [the teacher] would write it down and say, 'That's a great one to put into the Ask It Basket.' That simple action told children that their questions matter."

What if every family had an Ask It Basket on their kitchen table? What if, occasionally, we took some time to wonder aloud with young children — to ask questions big and small, and to search for answers side by side?

Schedule

Unscheduled Time

Mister Rogers' *Neighborhood* was full of moments in which nothing much happened, like when Fred showed viewers the length of a minute by letting one pass in silence. He even had a song about such moments: "Let's Think of Something to Do." Fred knew that wasting time is not always a waste of time. "When a child has nothing to do and must fill the time, creativity can emerge," write Roberta Michnick Golinkoff and Kathy Hirsh-

Pasek in *Becoming Brilliant: What Science Tells Us About Raising Successful Children*. "It can be right there in a file drawer or a kitchen cupboard or those shiny new markers lying on the table."

What if, once or twice a week, families made a point of wasting time together? What might we dream up when we are not rushing from place to place, scrambling to finish a project, or staring at our screens?

Do More of What You Love

The *Neighborhood's*

viewers remember Officer Clemmons — the Black police officer played by François Clemmons. In addition to famously sharing a swimming pool with Fred, Officer Clemmons also shared his deepest creative passion: opera singing. Fred knew how important it was for children to see adults indulging their creative side. "The best teacher in the world," he said, "is the one who loves what he or she does, and just loves it in front of you."

What do you love to do?

Whether it is singing or painting, reading, or taking a walk, it is essential to love these things in front of our kids. Even if young people decide that our passions are not for them, they still get something worthwhile: They see an adult who loves to learn, and who cares enough about them to take them along for the ride. And that may be the most valuable gift we can give young learners. As Fred himself reminded us, "A love of learning has a lot to do with learning that we are loved."

CDBA and NBA launch new program to boost deposits at banks targeting underserved communities

WASHINGTON (PRNewswire) -- The Community Development Bankers Association (CDBA) and National Bankers Association (NBA) are proud to announce the launch of the Advancing Communities Together (ACT) Deposit Program. This innovative initiative is designed to

channel vital funding to banks serving low-income and minority communities while also ensuring all deposits are eligible for FDIC insurance.

At launch, four major financial firms have deposited \$35 million in the program, with additional deposits anticipated from a broad range of depositors,

including corporations, foundations, and universities.

“The ACT Deposit Program created a secure and efficient way for community development banks to attract and retain large institutional deposits,” said Jeannine Jacokes, Chief Executive Officer of CDBA, which represents

CDFI, MDI, and climate-focused banks. “The support from these firms and future depositors will create a lasting positive impact in underserved areas.”

Nicole Elam, President and CEO of the NBA, emphasized the program’s benefits: “The ACT Deposit Program offers a streamlined approach for provid-

ing essential deposits to minority banks serving the underserved and communities of color. This initiative empowers our members to facilitate homeownership, business growth, and financial stability, contributing to job creation and the overall vitality of communities across America.”

The ACT Deposit Pro-

gram’s four founding firms are Blackstone, BNY Mellon, Warburg Pincus, and IntraFi.

Martin Brand, Head of North America Private Equity at Blackstone, said: “Community banks play an essential role in boosting economic growth and job

See BANKS, Page 16

BONDS, from Page 1

Dallas taxpayers back approximately \$1.8 billion over the life of the bond.

That payback amount could have been more had Dallas not received a high rating from Stand and Poors (S&P) Global Rating. If not for that rating, which is something akin to a credit score, that \$1.8 billion payback amount could have been well over \$2 billion to taxpayers.

The S&P bond rating for a city is measured on a scale. A city with an Investment Grade of AA, AA, A, BBB is considered as best quality to good quality but somewhat vulnerable to changing economic conditions. A “Non-Investment Grade” (also referred to as Junk) is in the grade range BB, B, CCC, CC, which means a city’s credit is speculative from the least degree of speculation to the highest. A rating of D means a city is in payment default.

On February 16, 2024, Dallas Chief Financial Officer, Jack Ireland sent a memorandum to the Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council regarding the city’s S&P bond rating. Ireland informed them that, “On February 12, 2024, S&P Global Ratings (S&P) assigned its ‘AA-’ credit rating and stable outlook to the anticipated General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2024A, affirming the credit rating on the City’s long-term general obligation debt. The

rating by S&P continues to reflect the City’s “strong economy with an anchoring broad, diverse Metropolitan Statistical Area [MSA]....”

Ireland also included that S&P said that Dallas has “very strong management with strong practices, policies focused on long-term planning, reserve maintenance,” and a “strong institutional framework.”

But S&P also assessed that Dallas had credit weaknesses with deficiencies in its pension-plan-contribution.

(To review Dallas Chief Financial Officer’s memorandum concerning its bond rate see: Stand and Poors Ratings Revised Outlook (dallas.gov))

Now comes the rub.

It has been suggested that the simplest and fairest way to go about it would be this: if a street or accoutrement was repaired or improved in a particular area of town, that area would be exclusively responsible for those costs. For example, if a street repair were done on Skillman Avenue in North Dallas the people in and around Skillman Avenue, who directly benefit from the improvement would be responsible for repair costs. Likewise with Overton Road in South Oak Cliff. But that is not how it works.

As it stands, when a repair or improvement is made on Skillman Avenue, everyone residing in the city pays for repair by way of taxation—whether repairs are done on

Overton Road or not.

The “everyone pays for it whether your repairs are done or not” scenario has repeatedly happened in the past and is a sure bet to happen in the present.

The expenditures and projects from the 2017 \$1.05 billion Dallas bond package are about 97% complete and/or in progress.

What about the missing 3%?

The 2017 bond allocated \$2,213,532 to the South Dallas and Bonton areas for “Economic Development.” South Dallas and Bonton have not seen one red cent of that bond money, because leaders in charge of the bond changed their minds.

That is how the purveyors of bonds operate. They might list an item, or an amount attached thereto, to cause the bond to be appealing to voters come election time—but post-election those bond items are subjected to change at the purveyor’s discretion. And it is all considered fair game because it is all a part of the way things operate.

That is how a city operates.

That is how America operates.

That is how systemic racism operates.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines “Systemic Racism” thusly: policies and practices that exist throughout a whole society or organization, and that result in and support a continued unfair advantage to

some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race.

Denton, Texas born author and internet yeller Ijeoma Oluo, who penned “So You Want to Talk About Race,” had this to say. “Systemic racism is a machine that runs whether we pull the levers or not, and by just letting it be, we are responsible for what it produces. We have to actually dismantle the machine if we want to make change.”

Stanford University professor Dr. Destin Jenkins is a historian of capitalism, democracy, and inequality in post-Reconstruction America. Dr. Jenkins has explored inequities practiced by a variety of American financial markets; as well as the causes that consistently make African Americans come out on the losing end of the finance game.

Dr. Jenkins’ prizewinning book, “The Bonds of

Inequality: Debt and the Making of the American City” (2021), has produced startling revelations about the trillion-dollar municipal bond market. The book uncovers some things investors and lenders may not want everyone to know.

The North Dallas Gazette will explore those revelations in the upcoming article: “Systemic Racism by Way of Municipal Bond, Who Profits, Who Loses”



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IRS announces permanent expansion of Direct File for 2025 tax season

The Internal Revenue Service announced that its Direct File program will become a permanent option for federal tax returns starting in the 2025 tax season. Biden-Harris administration officials said the move follows a successful pilot program and positive feedback from a broad range of stakeholders.

The IRS plans to broaden Direct File's availability to make more taxpayers eligible by 2025 and beyond. Officials said the expansion includes examining ways to cover more tax situations and inviting all states to partner with the program. Further details on

the expansion are expected ahead of 2025.

The decision stems from a highly successful pilot during the 2024 tax season, in which 140,803 taxpayers from 12 states used Direct File. The IRS collected and analyzed data from the pilot, held numerous meetings with stakeholders, and received feedback from users, state officials, and representatives across the tax landscape. Hundreds of organizations, over a hundred members of Congress, and potential future users provided input. While some stakeholders said they believe current free electronic filing options from

third-party vendors suffice, the IRS found substantial support for Direct File.

Based on initial post-pilot analysis, the IRS determined that making Direct File permanent was viable. Commissioner Danny Werfel recommended the move to Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen, who accepted. Werfel cited overwhelming user satisfaction and improved ease of filing taxes as critical reasons for the recommendation.

"The clear message is that many taxpayers across the nation want the IRS to provide more than one no-cost option for filing electronically," Werfel said.

"Starting with the 2025 filing season, the IRS will make Direct File a permanent option for filing federal tax returns. Giving taxpayers additional options strengthens the tax filing system. Adding Direct File to the menu of filing options fits squarely into our effort to make taxes as easy as possible for Americans, including saving time and money."

Building on the pilot's success, which targeted taxpayers with relatively simple tax situations in 12 states, the IRS is exploring ways to expand eligibility nationwide. For the 2025 filing season, the IRS will

work with all states wishing to partner with Direct File, with no limit on participating states. Several new states are expected to join the program.

The IRS also plans to gradually expand the range of tax situations supported by Direct File. Over the coming years, officials said the goal is to accommodate the most common tax scenarios, focusing on those affecting working families. Announcements about new state partners and expanded eligibility are expected soon.

"User experience—both within the product and integration with state tax

systems—will continue to be the foundation for Direct File moving forward," Werfel said. "Accuracy and comprehensive tax credit uptake will be paramount concerns to ensure taxpayers file a correct return and get the refund they're entitled to. Improving the tax filing experience and helping taxpayers meet their obligations as easily and quickly as possible will be our guiding principles."

Officials stated that many taxpayers expressed a desire for no-cost filing options throughout the review process. Millions of

See IRS, Page 13

TRUMP, from Page 7

with the latter advising a witness to lie to investigators. Trump later pardoned both individuals. Additionally, during the congressional investigation into the January 6 Capitol riot, a

former White House staffer testified about receiving a call suggesting she stay loyal to Trump in her testimony.

A former Trump employee, who was a key witness

in the classified documents investigation, recounted being offered various benefits, including golf tournament tickets and a raise, upon quitting his job. This witness, Brian Butler, declined the offers, but noted the timing of these benefits raised

suspicious about their intent.

The issue of financial rewards for witnesses has surfaced in Trump's New York trials as well. In a civil fraud case, prosecutors questioned a former Trump Organization controller

about his \$500,000 severance agreement, which he continued to receive during his testimony.

Steve Witkoff, a longtime friend, and real estate executive, testified as an expert witness for Trump's defense and subsequently

received over \$370,000 from the Trump campaign for air travel expenses. The Trump campaign confirmed using Witkoff's private jet for multiple trips, citing "availability, space, and convenience" as reasons for the choice.

HOPE, from Page 2

Reverend Cecil Williams and Janice Mirikitani within the context of Afro-Asian activism and Third World liberation theology at Glide Memorial Church.

Titled "In Love, Celebration, and Solidarity: Janice Mirikitani & Cecil Williams' Afro-Asian Activism and Practice of Third World Liberation Theology at Glide Memorial Church," this political biography explores the intertwined narratives of love, activism, and solidarity.

"Growing up in Oakland at the intersection of Black and Asian American communities, I have long been interested in Black-Asian relations, activism, and shared politics," said Dr. Hope. "Much of my earlier research wrestles with these topics, and I am excited to be able to write a biographical work that contends with the history of Afro-Asian solidarity via the lives and marriage of Janice Mirikitani and Cecil Williams."

Through meticulous research and analysis, Dr. Hope illuminates the enduring commitment of Williams and Mirikitani to marginalized communities, particularly Black and Asian Americans in San Francisco. This project underscores the intimate connections between personal relationships and broader social movements, emphasizing the "intimacies of solidarity-building."

The ACLS HBCU Faculty Fellowship and Grant Program was crafted in collaboration with faculty and academic leaders from HBCUs through a series of on-campus workshops, discussions, and virtual focus groups.

Each recipient receives \$10,000 to bolster the early-stage development of projects and undertake shorter-term endeavors. Additionally, all recipients will gain entry to networking opportunities and scholarly programming tailored to

their academic aspirations and institutional settings.

As part of the award package, ACLS allocates an extra grant of \$2,500 to the recipient's home institution to fortify humanities programming or enhance infrastructure.

"Funding will be used to support faculty via summer salary and stipends for writing instructional materials like the course reader," said Dr. Hope.

Inspiration in Action

In her role as Director of African American Studies at PVAMU, Dr. Hope envisions these projects as pivotal contributions to the academic landscape and the understanding of African American history and culture.

The NEH grant not only facilitates the expansion of course offerings but also fosters a vibrant intellectual community among faculty members. Furthermore, the grants signal a significant milestone for the African American Studies Department at PVAMU, affirming

its dedication to scholarly excellence and community engagement.

Dr. Hope's remarkable achievements underscore PVAMU's commitment to excellence in scholarship and its dedication to fostering interdisciplinary research that resonates be-

yond the confines of academia. As her projects unfold, they promise to enrich scholarly discourse, deepen the understanding of historical narratives, and inspire future generations of scholars and activists.

"It is important that we continue to build upon the

momentum developed over the last five years in building out African American Studies at PVAMU, and receiving external funding helps us further that work that was championed by President [Ruth J.] Simmons and Dr. [Melanye] Price," said Dr. Hope.

NDG is looking for a Journalism Intern for a 6 month assignment to cover community events on site in the Irving area.

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National Science Board elects first industry leader in 30 years

(Newswise) — Dario Gil, Ph.D., IBM Senior Vice President and Director of Research and a member of the Board of Trustees for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), has been elected chair of the National Science Board (NSB).

The NSB is the governing board of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and adviser to Congress and the President on policy matters related to STEM research and STEM education.

“Dario Gil’s insights and innovative thinking will be

indispensable to his leadership of the NSB,” said RPI President Martin A. Schmidt, Ph.D. “His election speaks volumes about his exceptional talents and dedication to advancing science and underscores the crucial role that industry plays in shaping the future of research and innovation. His leadership will undoubtedly usher in a new era of collaboration and progress, bridging the gap between academia and industry to tackle the most pressing challenges facing our world today.”

It has been more than 30 years since the NSB had a chair who was working in industry at the time of his or her election. Of the three previous industry leaders on the NSB, two had strong affiliations with RPI: Dr. Mary Good (AlliedSignal) and Dr. Roland Schmitt (GE). Dr. Good was also a member of RPI’s Board of Trustees and Dr. Schmitt was RPI’s president 1988-1993.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues to build bridges across the federal, business, academia,

and philanthropy worlds to renew our commitments to STEM education, workforce development, and to tackling ambitious grand challenges to outpace our greatest strategic competitors,” says Gil. “It is time to join forces across sectors to ensure the long-term success of the United States.”

Gil also has the distinction of being one of only three NSB chairs under 50 at time of election.

Gil is a member of the NSB class of 2020-2026. Over the last two years, he

chaired the Board’s Committee on External Engagement, leading the Board’s engagement strategy and initiatives. Gil has also served on NSB’s Committee on Strategy and chaired the sub-committee on Technology, Innovation and Partnerships, which worked with the NSF to launch the agency’s first new directorate in 30 years.

As Senior Vice President and Director of IBM Research, Gil is responsible for one of the world’s largest and most influential corporate research labs, with over

3,000 researchers. He leads the technical community of IBM, directing innovation strategies in hybrid cloud, AI, semiconductors, quantum computing, and exploratory science.

Gil, who received his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from MIT, was recently elected to the National Academy of Engineering for his contributions to the “advancement and practical use of artificial intelligence and quantum computing in industry and society.”

IRS, from Page 12

taxpayers from non-pilot states visited the Direct File website or requested the service for their state.

Direct File will become a permanent option among the various filing methods

available to taxpayers. The IRS said it’s not intended to replace other services offered by tax professionals or commercial software providers, who remain essential partners with the

agency. The IRS said it also continues its commitment to Free File Inc., having recently signed a five-year extension with the industry.

As the IRS expands Direct File, other free filing options will be enhanced, including the Volunteer In-

come Tax Assistance program (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly program (TCE).

Post-pilot analysis identified three key conclusions supporting Direct File’s permanent establishment, including, high user sat-

isfaction, a simplified tax filing experience, and a catalyst for digital transformation.

“We’re mindful that the most important decision we made during the pilot was to focus on execu-

tional certainty,” Werfel said. “We took the time to get it right. We will apply that same critical lesson for next year as we take a strategic approach to expanding Direct File’s availability and capabilities.”

INFANT, from Page 4

providers, public health agencies and community partners, and should focus on preventing and treating maternal substance use disorders, enhancing prenatal care access and addressing broader social and behavioral risk factors.”

For the study, researchers used data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) and selected the period of 2018 to 2022 because 2018 was pre-COVID-19 and 2022

represents the most recent data available. Infant deaths were described by year of death, underlying cause and multiple cause of death, age of infant at time of death, gender and maternal race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic, Hispanic and other race).

Study co-authors are Charles H. Hennekens, M.D., Dr.PH, first Sir Richard Doll Professor of Medicine and senior academic advisor; Sebastian Densley and Meera Rao, FAU medical students; Lea Sacca,

Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department of Population Health and Social Medicine; and Robert

S. Levine, M.D., affiliate professor of medicine; all within FAU’s Schmidt College of Medicine.

WOMEN, from Page 8

Intersections of our Lives is made up of three organizations and is driven by the intersectional experiences of women of color to make voicing the priorities of women of color a priority in their research.

The group made up of Lake Research Partners and HIT Strategy, released new national polling data that reveals the connections between women of color voters and their priorities.

Their poll found connections among Asian-american and Pacific Islander, Black in Latina, Latinx women. These researchers spoke with 850 Latina women registered voters, 850 Asian American Pacific Islander registered voters and 850 African American in Texas, Georgia, Florida and Virginia. The mixed mode poll included online, text and telephone responses.



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What If I Do Have A Brain?

Dr. James L. Snyder

After about a month on a health hiatus, things started returning to normal, and then I had a doctor's visit scheduled for a checkup.

I don't know why they call us patients because I'm not very patient with these doctors.

At my visit, the doctor thoroughly examined me but couldn't find anything wrong, and then I saw him standing there scratching his chin. Then he said, "I wonder if maybe you had a mini stroke?"

These doctors sometimes over think.

He looked at me a little bit and then said, "I think maybe you did have a mini stroke and we need to take some more examinations to check it out. I'll schedule you for an MRI next week. I want to see if maybe there is any brain damage."

I certainly wasn't ready for that kind of thing. After all, do I have a brain?

Quite often, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage would tell me when I screwed something up, "Do you have a brain or what?"

I've been married long



enough to realize that there are many things that you don't respond to, and this was one. If I would answer, I would screw things up a lot worse than what it is. Controlling my tongue is the greatest challenge I have in life.

She will also tell me when I don't get things done precisely on schedule, "Where is your brain today?"

A few weeks ago, I was trying to fix something, and nothing was going right. Then, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage walked in and casually told me, "If only you had a brain." She laughed and then left.

Our relationship works so well because there is

nothing I can't break, and there is nothing she can't fix. So, between the two of us, everything is working out right.

If I had a brain, it might not work out as it does now. If I had a brain, I would think things through, and I don't believe it would come out that well.

But now that the doctor wants to check my brain to see what condition it's in and if I had a mini-stroke. This brings me to a new crossroads in life.

What if, for example, the doctor finds I have a brain and has the proof? How would that set with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage?

If they find my brain, I'll definitely keep any pictures

they might have.

Then, when The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage says, "If you only had a brain." I could pull out the picture of my brain, show it to her, and say, "Oh, my dear, here is a picture of my brain." What's she going to say then?

Of course, the other side is, if they do not find my brain and have evidence to show that I don't have a brain, I'm going to be in severe trouble. Or am I?

There is the idea that if you don't have a brain, you're not responsible for what you do. I have to explore that idea. When The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage catches me up in something I'm doing wrong, I could always respond by saying, "Well, my dear, I don't have a brain, so I'm not responsible. Here's my evidence."

I don't know if that will work, but it might be worth trying.

The worst side of this scenario is that if the doctor does find my brain, and he has evidence that I do have a brain, then, the worst days of my life begin. No matter

what I do, it is my responsibility now. After all, I do have a brain.

Not having a brain can be an advantage. And then, having a brain can be an advantage. The thing is to understand the difference between having no brain and having a brain. I'm not sure how that's going to turn out.

I was sitting in my easy chair drinking coffee when The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came in and sat down.

She asked me, "Are you ready for your MRI tomorrow?"

I was quiet for a moment, and then, looking at her, I said, "What if they find out that I do not have a brain?"

Without skipping a beat, she said, "Well, if that happens nothing will change. You'll be the same person you've always been."

Staring at her, she suddenly broke into hysterical laughter.

It took her a while to calm down, and when she did, she explained her laughter.

"As long as I've known you, you have worked quite

well without using your brain. I'm sure that will continue for a long time yet to come."

I'm not sure when, but one of these days, I will use my brain and surprise her. I'm not sure how she will handle that shock, and I'm not sure how I will do it. I'm just going to have to wait for the results of the MRI.

As I was waiting for my doctor's appointment, I thought of Bible verses in James 1:19-20, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

My father always told me, "Listen and think before you speak." This has been the great challenge of my life. My tongue does not seem to be attached to my brain for some reason.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnsnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnsnyderministries.com.

ROBINSON, from Page 2

law, and grandmother had a way of summing up the truths about life in a word or two, maybe a quick phrase that made everyone around her stop and think," they wrote. "Don't sweat the small stuff. Know what's truly precious.

"As a parent, you're not raising babies — you're raising little people. Don't worry about whether anybody else likes you. Come home. We'll always like you here."

The family recalled that, as a young woman, Robinson studied to become a teacher before working as a secretary. She fell quickly and madly in love with Fraser Robinson, another South Sider with a "boxer's strength and jazz-lov-

er's cool." Together, they raised two children, Craig, and Michelle, in a tiny upstairs apartment on Euclid Avenue in South Shore.

Robinson volunteered for the PTA and taught her children to read at an early age, sitting together as they sounded out words on a page, giving them the strength and confidence to walk to school — and out into the world — all on their own.

She once chewed out a police officer who had accused Craig of stealing a bike, demanding that the adult apologize to her son.

On summer nights, she'd pack the family into the car with a steaming plate of chicken for a trip to the drive-in mov-

ies. On New Year's Eve, she'd pass around pigs in a blanket and raise a toast to Auld Lang Syne. And every night, for years on end, she and Fraser would hold court at the dinner table, where they indulged all manner of questioning, teaching their children to believe in the power and worth of their own voices.

"On Election Night in 2008, when the news broke that Barack would soon shoulder the weight of the world, she was there, holding his hand," the family wrote.

"With a healthy nudge, she agreed to move to the White House with Michelle and Barack. We needed her. The girls needed her. And she ended up being our rock through it all."

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Becoming Aware of God



Sister Tarpley
NDG
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“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.”

Genesis 28:16. (KJV)

Jacob was forced to flee his family after receiving the blessing of God from his father, Isaac. He ran because of his broken relationship with his brother, Esau, who threatened to kill him. He was alone after leaving his family and was sleeping in the wilderness. It is here that Jacob encountered God personally for the first time. In a dream Heaven was opened up to him. The Lord spoke to him there and gave him a promise to give him the

very land on which he was lying.

This encounter with God made him realize that God was in this place, even though he had not been aware of it. God had to remove Jacob from all that was of comfort to him in order to reveal Himself to Jacob. What began as a crisis that forced him to be removed from his family and friends led to an encounter with the living God and a fresh vision of God’s purposes for his life.

How often we go about our daily routine and fail to recognize that God is in the place where we are. God had to bring Jacob to a place of separation from his old life and remove all

his worldly possessions. He was alone with God at Bethel; nothing else could distract him from an encounter that would change his life.

God often must do radical things in the life of the Christen in whom He has special plans: separation from family, removal of physical and/or emotional resources. These are often hallmarks of ownership by God that build a vision into a life.

But, what you must do is hear God speak to you. My older sister would often tell me that God speaks to His children in a quiet voice and we must slow down, get in a quiet place and listen to what he is saying.

“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: . . .” John 10:26-28 (KJV)

There is a story of an Englishman and his encounter with a Muslim while walking in the country. The Englishman wanted to share the gospel with this man but knew little of Muslim beliefs. The two men agreed they would each share their beliefs with one another. The Muslim went first and dominated the time of sharing. The Englishman asked the Holy Spirit how to share his faith with the Muslim. He then asked the man if he consider his god his father who speaks. “Certainly not,” replied the Muslim man.

“That is one of the big differences between your god and my God. I consider my God as my Father who

speaks to me personally.” “You cannot prove that,” stated the Muslim man. The Englishman again prayed to himself, “Lord, how do I prove this to this man?” A few moments later the two men began walking toward two young ladies on the other side of the road coming toward them. As they approached, the Englishman spoke to the ladies and made small conversation. He then said to one woman, “I believe you are a nurse, is that correct?” The woman was startled that a man whom

she had never met had just informed her of her occupation. “How would you know that? I have never met you before,” she questioned. He replied, “I asked my heavenly Father and He told me.” The Muslim had his proof. Many of us do not hear God’s voice because we do not believe He speaks or desires to speak to us. In order to hear, we must listen. In order to listen, we must believe that He speaks.

(Editor’s Note: This column originally ran in June 2012.)

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(about going to the doctor)*

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NDG Book Review: 'Negotiating While Black is a good deal to study

By Terri Schlichenmeyer



Absolutely not. And that's the final answer. Nobody's budging on it, nobody will hear any argument, it's done, the answer is just plain "no." Or is it – because isn't there some wiggle room in nearly any controversy, a toenail's worth of space to find a middle ground? Read "Negotiating While Black" by Damali Peterman, and you could find maybe between the N and the O.

You want something. You're denied, and it's frustrating. Between your ask and the other party's rejection, what went wrong?

Damali Peterman wondered that, too, when she tried to buy a new car before the pandemic and the first dealership all but turned her away.

Was it because she's

Black, a woman – both or neither?

Peterman is the founder and CEO of Breakthrough ADR, and an expert in dispute resolution. "Negotiation is my life," she says, and she knows there are always two sides to an argument. Finding a happy middle to a dispute or negotiation is usually possible; at the very least, there may be compromise to be found.

First of all, don't be afraid of negotiation; any time you make a decision or figure something out with someone, you're negotiating. Also know that there's not a "one-size-fits-all" way of give-and-take; you need

to find what works best for you.

When you're asking for something, keep in mind the "Five Elements in Every Negotiation": know what you want, what you need, how to listen closely, how to communicate, and when to close the deal. Pay close attention to the other person's body language and properly validate what they are saying. Always "be your authentic self"; not doing so is why things collapse well after the deal is set. Do your research and "peek inside their bag" so you have "more material... to work with" in negotiating. Always be the first to make the offer, but

don't show your hand too quickly. Know how to overcome bias. Apologize when needed. And know what to do when "high-stakes negotiations" could be a matter of safety...

You're the sort of person who knows what they want. You've thought it through and you want it now. So learn how to get it by reading "Negotiating While Black."

Ask pretty please? It often doesn't work that way in real life, so author Damali Peterman shows readers a number of better ways of talking things over and reaching a consensus that works for both parties in nearly any situation, in or outside of the

office. Her methods are gentler but firm, smart but not smug, flexible but not bend-over-backward, and kind but not pushover. Yes, some of the advice here is common-sense but it also comes with new perspective, including easy-to-grasp lessons for marginalized readers who want to go beyond the frustration of being abruptly dismissed.

When "please" doesn't cut it anymore and demanding is not the right move, "Negotiating While Black" is the book you want. It shows you the way to ask with a velvet fist.

Should you miss it? Absolutely not.

BANKS, from Page 11

creation across the country. We're pleased to support this innovative partnership to help expand access to capital in underserved markets throughout the United States."

"Empowering our clients and partners with solutions to advance a more inclusive economy, and to enable their own sustainability objectives is core to what we do," said Laide Majiyagbe, Global Head of Financing and Liquidity at BNY Mellon. "We are proud to play a central role in the ACT Deposit Program via our Liquidity-

Direct platform to connect socially motivated investors and community banks to help fuel growth for local communities across the country."

Steven Glenn, Managing Director, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Warburg Pincus, said the ACT Deposit Program aligns with the firm's commitment to growth investing. "We look for opportunities where our resources can help organizations grow and make a positive change in the communities they serve," Glenn said. "Providing ac-

cess to reliable financial solutions is an incredibly important service. We are excited about the increased lending and financial inclusion provided by the ACT Deposit Program and look forward to following the program's impact and progress."

Key Benefits of the Program

The ACT Deposit Program simplifies the process for businesses, nonprofits, community organizations, and high-net worth individuals to place at least \$5 million with a community development financial institution (CDFI) or minority depository institu-

tion (MDI) bank. Deposits made through the program are distributed among the more than 70 participating CDFIs and MDIs, amplifying the impact of each deposit.

The program is powered by IntraFi through its ICS service, which includes 3,000 banks nationwide. This collaboration offers millions of dollars in aggregate FDIC insurance.

Participating depositors can choose a CDFI or MDI as their relationship bank, which will then allocate part of the deposit to other participating banks. This ensures benefits are shared across all banks in the

program. Depositors can also choose to spread their funds among all participating CDFIs and MDIs, with all deposits eligible for FDIC insurance.

Why This Program Is Needed Now

CDFI and MDI banks need deposits to leverage the more than \$6 billion in capital they received from the Treasury Department in 2022 as part of the Emergency Capital Investment Program (ECIP), which aims to boost lending in communities hit hard by the pandemic.

To date, 75 CDFIs and MDIs have joined the program. Deposits in the

program will yield near-market interest rates, and depositors will receive regular reports on how their funds are being used to support communities.

The ACT Deposit Program is open to any depositor looking to make a positive impact through socially responsible investments in underserved markets while ensuring their deposits are protected by FDIC insurance.

For more information about the ACT Deposit Program, and a list of its participating banks, please visit the program's website: <https://www.intrafi.com/act-deposit-program>.

PVAMU, from Page 6

her pursuit of three of her goals all at once—making straight A's, joining Alpha Kappa Alpha, and earning the title of Miss PVAMU.

Before diving into a medical career, Tolbert is considering summer 2024 internships at UT Southwestern Medical Center and a Johns Hopkins summer program.

"I plan to continue my education with nursing school, graduate with my bachelor's in nursing, then further my education to become a pediatric nurse practitioner and open up my own practice," she said.

From the Midwest to PVAMU

Like Tolbert, Kirk's decision to attend PVAMU marked a significant personal sacrifice, leaving behind his familiar surroundings and family to move more than 1,300 miles to Prairie View, Texas.

"I will admit that some days are rough, as I'm very close with my parents because I'm an only child," Kirk said. "However, to grow as a man and try to change my life, there's not a day that I regret that decision."

Kirk, a mechanical engineering major and ac-

tive member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., has taken on numerous leadership roles, including serving as Director of National Programs for his fraternity's chapter at PVAMU.

He also participates in the Campus Vote Project-Democracy Fellows Cohort, Student Government Association, Panther Advisor Leaders (PALs), and Michigan Club. Additionally, he served as Mister Freshman and Mister Sophomore.

"It was a culture shock coming from up north, and I've experienced so much in three years than I could've ever imagined," Kirk said. "I love my HBCU!"

Kirk works hard inside and outside the classroom and with anything he puts his mind to. In 2023, he interned with Abbott Laboratories, one of the top medical diagnostic companies in the world. He was an operations intern in the cardiovascular division in Plymouth, Minnesota.

When he's not working toward building his legacy, he likes to take it easy and recharge.

"In my free time, I love to listen to music and watch movies," said Kirk. "I love music because it's a direct line to my emotions and helps to keep me not only happy but motivated. I love

movies because I grew up watching movies all the time with my dad, and it's something that's passed down to me."

As Mr. PVAMU, Kirk aims to promote professional and student leadership opportunities and enhance support for on-campus organizations.

"I want to foster more professional and student-leadership opportunities for the students on our campus and work with the Office of Student Engagement to bring attention to the smaller organizations on our campus," he said. "I also want to get the on-campus organizations on one accord

when it comes to support, spotlight and events, and I want to work with all-male organizations on campus to prioritize male mentorship. Through different events and my own initiative that will be revealed soon, I plan to use male mentoring to empower undergraduate male engagement."

Tolbert and Kirk were crowned on April 17, 2024, following the reigns of Nia McNeal (Miss PVAMU 2023-2024) and Hunter Waldon (Mr. PVAMU 2023-2024). Both are eager to leave lasting legacies at PVAMU, embodying the values and spirit of their beloved university.