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15 Years of Progress: Honoring the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act

The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division in collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia Law School, hosted an event commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Shepard-Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Several hundred attended the event in-person and online.

The Shepard-Byrd Act is a landmark federal statute passed in 2009 that allows federal criminal prosecution of hate crimes motivated by actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. The Nov. 19 event paid tribute to the lives of James Byrd Jr. and Matthew Shepard, uplifted the voices of hate crime survivors, recognized ongoing efforts to combat hate crimes and hate incidents and called for the continued expansion of victim services to address the needs of survivors and their communities.



Assistant Attorney General Clarke delivers remarks during a Nov. 19 event commemorating the landmark act against hate crimes. (USDOJ photo)

"Fifteen years ago, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act gave the Justice Department critical tools that have made us more effective as we work to counter hate," said Principal Deputy Associate Attorney General Benjamin C. Mizer. "We know that

there is more work to be done, and the Department will keep working tirelessly to ensure that every person feels safe in their communities."

In her opening remarks, Assistant

See DOJ, Page 6



Appraisals stealing Black wealth

- See Page 3



Expanding coverage for obesity

- See Page 4



Irving library hosts swap meet for artists

- See Page 7



CBC braces for the arrival of Trump

- See Page 8



Gladiator II will please action fans

- See Page 16



Sister Tarpley: Gratitude and Guidance

- See Page 14

Inside...

- People in the News 2
- Op/Ed 3
- Health 4
- Community 5
- Education 6
- Feature 7-8
- Entertainment 9-10
- Marketplace 12-13
- Religion 14-15
- Book Review 16



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People In The News ...



Shirley Chisolm



Jussie Smollett

NDG Quote of the Week: "My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."

- Desmond Tutu

Shirley Chisolm

As the 100th anniversary of Shirley Chisholm's birth approaches on November 30, a growing effort to honor her legacy is taking shape. Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress in 1968 and a trailblazer for equality and justice, remains a powerful symbol of courage and leadership. The Shirley Chisholm Congressional Gold Medal Act, spearheaded by Democratic Sen. Laphonza Butler, is moving closer to passage with bipartisan support.

Butler, the bill's primary sponsor, has garnered backing from key lawmakers, including Democratic



Sens. Cory Booker of New Jersey and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York. The legislation seeks to award Chisholm one of the nation's highest civilian honors, cementing her place as one of the most transformative figures in American

history.

Carlo Jerome Juntilla, Education and Labor Policy Advisor for Butler, acknowledged the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) for its critical role in advancing the bill.

The NNPA is the trade association of the more than 200 African American-owned newspapers and media companies that comprise the 197-year-old Black Press of America.

"Thanks to your efforts, we have secured the necessary number of co-sponsors to move the bill forward, and we are now in a strong position to pass it," Juntilla wrote in an email to the NNPA. "With the late

Shirley Chisholm's 100th birthday approaching on November 30, we are looking for ways to collaborate further in order to elevate her legacy."

Juntilla also emphasized the importance of continuing to amplify Chisholm's story through additional collaborations, including op-eds and media campaigns. Juntilla even noted the value of highlighting Butler and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), who is leading the effort in the House.

NNPA President & CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. and members of the NNPA's main office had organized a meeting with Butler where they discussed the honor for Chisholm. "The

legacy of the Honorable Shirley Chisholm lives radiantly today and for generations to come," Chavis remarked. "The NNPA stands resolutely in support of the leadership of The Honorable Laphonza Butler to bestow to Chisholm with the Congressional honors that she deserves."

Bobby Henry, Chairman of the NNPA, also expressed the organization's unwavering support for the bill and its significance.

"As Chairman of the NNPA, I am honored to stand in support of the Shirley Chisholm Congressional Gold Medal Act, a vital recognition of one of the most transformative figures in American

history," said Henry, who also publishes the Westside Gazette Newspaper in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. "Shirley Chisholm's legacy as the first African American woman elected to Congress and a fearless advocate for equality and justice continues to inspire generations.

"We commend Senator Laphonza Butler and Representative Barbara Lee for championing this historic legislation and for their commitment to ensuring Chisholm's contributions are celebrated and remembered. As we approach the centennial of her birth, the NNPA is proud to collaborate in elevating her enduring

See CHISOLM, Page 11

Jussie Smollett

The Illinois Supreme Court has overturned actor Jussie Smollett's conviction, ruling that his second prosecution for filing a false police report violated his constitutional rights. The court determined that Smollett was unjustly prosecuted after an earlier agreement with state prosecutors had resolved the charges.

In January 2019, Smollett reported being the victim of a racist and homophobic attack in downtown Chicago. He claimed two men physically assaulted him while shouting slurs and declaring, "This is MAGA country." The report initially drew national attention and widespread condemnation of hate crimes.

Authorities later accused Smollett of orchestrating the attack, alleging he recruited two brothers, Abimbola and Olatinjo Osundairo, to stage the incident. He was charged with felony disorderly con-



duct for filing a false police report. In a 2019 resolution, prosecutors dropped the charges after Smollett forfeited his \$10,000 bond and completed community service. However, public backlash led to appointing a special prosecutor who revived the case.

Smollett was convicted on five counts of felony disorderly conduct in 2021, based largely on testimony from the Osundairo brothers, who said Smollett planned and directed the staged assault. He was sentenced to five months in jail in 2022 but served just six days before being released pending appeal.

On Thursday, Nov. 21, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled 4-2 in Smollett's favor, citing violations of his due process rights. "We hold that a second prosecution under these circumstances is a due process violation, and we therefore reverse defendant's conviction," Justice Elizabeth M. Rochford wrote.

Nenye Uche, Smollett's attorney, welcomed the ruling. "We are thankful to the Illinois Supreme Court for restoring order to Illinois' criminal law jurisprudence," Uche stated. "This decision is a victory for justice and due process."

Smollett's acting career began in childhood, with early roles in films such as *The Mighty Ducks* (1992) and *North* (1994). In the mid-1990s, he co-starred with his siblings on the sitcom *On Our Own*. After a hiatus, Smollett returned to the spotlight as a musician, releasing the EP *Poisoned Hearts Club* in 2012, and

See SMOLLETT, Page 11



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Biased home appraisals steal \$150 billion from Black home wealth

Pilot training and education program brings potential to transform industry

By CHarlene Crowell

For most consumers, buying a home is the single-largest investment of their lifetimes. But for Black America, home equity – the increase in market value from the time of purchase – is often the dominant, if not sole source of wealth-building. Home equity represents 65 percent of all Black wealth, according to the nation's oldest minority professional trade association, National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB).

Yet the unfortunate reality for Black homeowners, according to NAREB is that systemic discrimination used in appraisals that determine home fair market values all too often perpetuate -- instead of narrow -- racial wealth gaps, for homeowners and buyers alike. These mandatory reports are a key factor used by lenders to reach decisions on loan applications to purchase, sell or improve homes.

Home Appraisals in Black and White, a new NAREB research report, examines disparities in the estimated value of homes by racial neighborhood composition. Analyzing housing data from 2021 and 2023, its two authors James H. Carr and his colleague, Michela Zonta, both housing finance and urban policy experts, reached a startling finding: Blacks have lost \$150 billion in home

equity due to biased home appraisals.

According to Courtney Johnson Rose, NAREB president, "For decades, the undervaluing of property in African American neighborhoods has contributed to the expansive Black-White wealth gap in America, a spread so expansive that the 400 wealthiest Americans control the same wealth as all 48 million Blacks."

In Black neighborhoods with large shares of homeowners, homes were undervalued by 47 percent, compared to similar homes in White neighborhoods with no Black borrowers. These lower property values prevent Black families from building and earning comparable wealth via home equity than similarly-situated white neighborhood homeowners, and additionally suppresses the ability of Black homeowners to develop intergenerational wealth.

The report also pinpoints where these disparities are widest.

"The percentage difference or median Black appraisal undervaluation price gap (relative to homes in White communities) ranges from 10 percent in Houston to 48 percent in Los Angeles," states the report. "In Los Angeles, the median appraised value of homes in Black neighborhoods is \$618,532 compared to \$1,179,640 in white neighborhoods, after controlling for home and neighbor-

hood characteristics. This translates into an appraisal value underestimation gap of \$561,108 for homes in Black neighborhoods."

Other metro areas where median appraised home undervaluation gaps are larger than the national average include Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Memphis, Miami, Orlando, Richmond, St. Louis, and Tampa.

In theory home appraisals are supposed to be an objective assessment of a variety of factors like the number and size of rooms, quality of construction, types, and conditions of major home systems, presence of renovations or upgrades, property location, and community amenities and services.

But in reality, these reports are more likely to be developed by someone who lives in another area and is likely a different race or ethnicity. Today, the home appraisal sector in real estate remains nearly all white, despite long-standing federal laws like the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

"Appraisal bias is an issue that has economic implications on the generational wealth of minorities at all spectrums of the socio-economic scale," notes Brian Cox, president of the National Society of Real Estate Appraisers (NSREA), a NAREB affiliate. "In addition, the dis-

proportionate minority participation in the appraisal profession is estimated at 3% of a total population of approximately 70,000 appraisers and valuation professionals."

In direct response to these disturbing findings, a pilot program focused on transforming the appraisal market and its professionals was launched in July at Fayetteville State University, a North Carolina HBCU. Drawing upon students, faculty, staff, active military, veterans and local community members the program's goal is to develop "a pipeline of residential and commercial appraisers."

"We are thrilled to offer this opportunity providing a pathway for FSU students, faculty and staff, active-duty military and veterans and our local community to join a lucrative industry," said Marcus Cox, Ph.D., dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. "This partnership doesn't only bode well for FSU, it also enhances Fayetteville's local community and potentially our entire region."

NAREB's report also endorses the effort and its potential growth.

"The Black Appraisers program aims to increase the representation of Black professionals in the appraisal industry, advocate for fair appraisal practices, and enhance awareness of

See WEALTH, Page 13

Keep up with the news

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Biden-Harris administration moves to expand Medicare and Medicaid coverage for anti-obesity medications

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

As the incoming administration prepares to enact sweeping changes to health policy, including Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s controversial appointment to lead the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Biden-Harris Administration is addressing a critical health issue: obesity. A new proposal aims to expand Medicare and Medicaid coverage for anti-obesity medications (AOMs), potentially providing millions of Americans access to life-saving treatments.

Obesity, which affects an estimated 42 percent of the U.S. population, is a chronic disease linked



A new proposal aims to expand Medicare and Medicaid coverage for anti-obesity medications (AOMs), potentially providing millions of Americans access to life-saving treatments. (Photo via NNPA)

to increased mortality and serious conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. Despite recent advancements in obesity treatment, including medications that can reduce heart attack risk and Type 2 diabetes, these

drugs remain prohibitively expensive, often costing up to \$1,000 per month without insurance.

The Biden-Harris proposal seeks to broaden Medicare and Medicaid coverage for these medications, reducing out-of-

pocket costs by up to 95 percent for some enrollees. The expanded coverage could benefit an estimated 3.4 million Medicare beneficiaries and 4 million Medicaid enrollees. “This proposal ensures that Americans can access treatments they need to lead healthier lives without financial burden,” a senior administration official stated.

Kennedy's Controversial Appointment Raises Questions About the Future of Healthcare

The proposal comes as President-elect Donald Trump's decision to appoint Kennedy as HHS Secretary has drawn widespread criticism. Kennedy, known for his distrust of

pharmaceuticals and promotion of healthcare-related conspiracy theories, has repeatedly criticized the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for what he calls its “aggressive suppression of psychedelics.” On his podcast, Kennedy described the United States as “the sickest country in the world,” blaming a healthcare system focused on “pills and potions” rather than building immune systems and promoting holistic health.

Kennedy has also advanced the debunked theory that vaccines cause autism, a stance that has alarmed public health officials. Even the New York Post, which has previously praised Kennedy, warned that his confirmation could

be disastrous for public health. In a 2023 editorial, the Post highlighted Kennedy's claim that “all America's chronic health problems began in one year in the 1980s,” calling his views both unscientific and dangerous.

If confirmed, Kennedy would wield significant power to reshape the healthcare system, with much of his rhetoric on psychedelics and the pharmaceutical industry mirroring that of Elon Musk, who Trump has also tapped for a cabinet position.

Biden-Harris Administration Focuses on Affordable Healthcare

In contrast, the Biden-Harris Administration con-

See COVERAGE, Page 5

DOJ, from Page 1

Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division expressed immense gratitude to those whose years of advocacy and activism made the passage of the Shepard-Byrd Act possible 15 years ago. She underscored the work that still needs to be done in prosecuting and preventing hate crimes, as recent statistics from the FBI indicate that the incidence of hate crimes is rising. Racial bias remained the most significant motivator for hate crimes in 2023, and anti-Black hate crimes continued to represent the largest portion of race-motivated hate crimes.

“The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act is

one of our most powerful tools in efforts to combat violent bias-motivated hate crimes in America today,” said Assistant Attorney General Clarke. “We know that prosecutions alone will not eliminate hate, root and branch, and that public education, training and prevention efforts are just as necessary. Hate mongers fueled with racist, antisemitic, Islamophobic, anti-LGBTQI or xenophobic motivations have no place in America today. Rest assured, we will keep moving towards an inclusive and more peaceful America while holding accountable those responsible for senseless, vile, and hate-filled crimes.”

Dennis and Judy Shepard, the parents of Matthew

Shepard, joined Assistant Attorney General Clarke for a fireside chat, and Louvon Byrd Harris, sister of James Byrd Jr., provided recorded remarks. The Shepards spoke about their son's tragic death and his legacy—the work of the Matthew Shepard Foundation. Ms. Harris spoke of her brother's brutal murder and the family's continued work to promote healing through the Byrd Foundation.

Also on the program, U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves for the District of Columbia highlighted the district's hate crimes enforcement work and his office's longstanding commitment to working with local community organizations through the district's Hate/Bias Crime Task Force.

“The murders of James Byrd and Matthew Shepard rocked our collective conscience,” said U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves for the District of Columbia. “When victims are targeted because of their identities, it can put those with identities like the victims on edge, wondering if they will be next. As we mark the anniversary of the Shepard-Byrd Act, our Office reaffirms its commitment to hold accountable those who commit hate- and bias-related crimes.”

The trial team that prosecuted U.S. v. Daqua Ritter explained how they secured the first guilty verdict in trial under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act for violence against a transgender person — the brutal murder of Dime

Doe, a Black transgender woman in South Carolina. Ritter was sentenced to life in prison.

Taylor Dumpson-Lippincott, an attorney and former student government body president at American University, shared her experience as the target of racially- and gender-motivated hate and cyber-harassment. She explained how her experience as a survivor fueled her passion to combat hate-based violence and threats, especially on school campuses.

The program also featured voices of survivors and their families. In 2017, 1st Lt. Richard W. Collins III was murdered in an unprovoked attack on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park, by a follower of a white

nationalist hate-group. Parents Dawn and Richard Collins described how in the years since their son's murder, they have led efforts at HBCUs and beyond to educate the public about the proliferation of hate groups targeting majority-white colleges and universities for recruitment.

On the panel with the Collins family, Daphne Felten-Green shared examples of her work with the Justice Department's Community Relations Service educating colleges and universities in conjunction with the Divided Communities Project at the Ohio State Moritz College of Law. Benny Del Castillo of Network for Victim Recovery DC spoke of local efforts at survivor-centered responses to hate crimes.

Kirkwood Temple CME Church celebrates 100th anniversary

Reaching its centennial mark is a milestone members and leaders at Kirkwood Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church do not take lightly. Members and leaders say they believe that surviving and triumphing for 100 uninterrupted years is a testament that God has approved their works and will be with them as they continue to strive and serve.

“We are excited...to be able to celebrate 100 years of continued service and worship to God,” said Kirk-



wood Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Jerry L. Christian Sr. “One hundred years represents a state of fullness, protection and perfection. We are grateful...to have existed the last one hundred years with continuous,

uninterrupted, and faithful service to the community.”

“We ask that you come share with us,” Dr. Christian said. The public is invited to join the service and celebration that will begin at 10:30 a.m. Sunday December 8,

2024 at Kirkwood, 1440 Sunny Glen Dr., Dallas, TX 75232 near Hwy. 67 and Loop 12 in Oak Cliff. All current and former clergy and members are invited to “pack the pews” for this joyous occasion. The service will feature guest preacher Bishop James B. Walker, Presiding Prelate of the 7th Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

The anniversary theme, “A Century of Continuous Faith and Ministry Built on a Solid Foundation,” is

based on the Biblical scripture of Luke 6:48 where a man built his home on bedrock, and floods and perils could not destroy its foundation. The fundraising goal is \$100,000, which equals \$1,000 for each 100 years.

Kirkwood Temple was established in early December 1924 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Kirkwood along with five charter members. Over the century, 23 presiding elders have assisted in leadership under 11 bishops. Our beloved

current senior pastor, Dr. Christian, Sr., is the longest serving – since 1994 with 30 years at the helm -- of the total 30 Kirkwood senior pastors.

Under Dr. Christian, Sr.’s visionary leadership and encouragement, Kirkwood is now known largely for its warm friendliness, superb music ministry, and more than 25 outstanding external and internal ministries – including domestic violence and grief/recovery. To learn more, visit <https://www.kirkwoodcme.org>.

Walmart ends diversity commitments as Trump policies stoke division

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

In 2020, following the global Black Lives Matter protests, Walmart pledged to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging. Its “Belonging” program promised associates they would “feel seen, supported, and connected” and highlighted that diversity would drive engagement and business

success. Four years later, Walmart is reversing course, dismantling many of those commitments as the incoming Trump administration advances policies critics argue will deepen racial divisions in America.

Once vocal about promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the retailer announced it would no longer consider race or gender when awarding supplier contracts or collecting de-

mographic data for financing eligibility and grants. Walmart will also review its financial support for “Pride” events and restrict the sale of products such as chest binders for minors, which were previously marketed as part of gender-affirming care.

In a statement, Walmart pointed to its corporate purpose: “Our purpose, to help people save money and live better, has been at

our core since our founding 62 years ago and continues to guide us today. We’ve been on a journey and know we aren’t perfect, but every decision comes from a place of wanting to foster a sense of belonging, to open doors to opportunities for all our associates, customers, and suppliers and to be a Walmart for everyone.”

The changes follow ef-

forts by conservative activists, including commentator Robby Starbuck, who has targeted major corporations for their diversity initiatives. Starbuck said his discussions with Walmart led to these changes and described the retailer’s decision as “the biggest win yet for our movement to end wokeness in corporate America.” Walmart has also

discontinued racial equity training, ended participation in the Human Rights Coalition’s Corporate Equality Index, and removed terms like “Latinx” and “DEI” from its corporate lexicon.

The reversals align with the broader push from the incoming Trump administration to dismantle diver-

See WALMART, Page 7

COVERAGE, from Page 4

continues to prioritize accessible healthcare. Since taking office, President Biden has strengthened Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act through measures like the American Rescue Plan Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. These efforts have already delivered significant savings for millions of Americans, including insulin price caps, free vaccines, and a \$2,000 annual out-of-pocket cap for prescription drugs starting in 2025.

The proposal to expand AOM coverage builds on

this record, aiming to address obesity comprehensively through prevention, treatment, and systemic change. The administration’s National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health has already integrated nutrition and obesity counseling into Medicare and Medicaid, targeting diet-related diseases such as obesity.

Looking Ahead

As the U.S. prepares for a dramatic shift in health policy under Trump’s administration, the Biden-Harris Administration’s

final actions emphasize reducing costs and expanding access to life-saving treatments. By broadening AOM coverage, millions of Americans could soon have the support they need to address obesity and its related health challenges. The Biden-Harris administration’s efforts starkly contrast to the incoming leadership at HHS, whose unorthodox views and conspiracy theories have sparked significant public concern.

“We can lower drug prices and improve health outcomes for Americans,” Biden stated.

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Paul Quinn College receives \$1.5 million grant from T.D. Jakes Foundation and Wells Fargo

Funds will be used for innovative campus housing and mixed-use community development model

Paul Quinn College, the originator of the Urban Work College model and the only minority-serving, federally recognized Work College in America, has received a \$1.5 million grant from T.D. Jakes Foundation (TDJF), in partnership with Wells Fargo (NYSE: WFC). This grant will support the creation of an innovative housing model and the planning of a companion mixed-use community on the Paul Quinn campus.

“This is so much more than a traditional real estate project or campus housing development—it’s a statement about what higher education can be for all of us – those who attend our schools and those who do not,” said Dr. Michael J. Sorrell, President of Paul Quinn College. “We are building a city within our campus walls. It will be a community that inspires, innovates, and invests in its people. This will only



(From left to right) Mercedes Fuller from T.D. Jakes Foundation, Kristy Fercho from Wells Fargo, President Dr. Michael J. Sorrell and Tanya Sanders from Wells Fargo join to celebrate a new \$1.5 million grant from T.D. Jakes Foundation and Wells Fargo, which will enable Paul Quinn College to bring a transformative housing and community vision to life. (Kelly Alexander / Paul Quinn College)

be possible due to the vision of our partners at T.D. Jakes Foundation and Wells Fargo. And for that, we are incredibly grateful.”

The grant will launch a dynamic campus housing initiative that will eventually be accompanied by a larger mixed-use development that includes student and family housing, retail and restaurant spaces, parks, outdoor meeting areas, and

classroom facilities—all designed to serve both the campus and the surrounding community. This groundbreaking project will expand Paul Quinn’s student housing capacity by 300 percent as Paul Quinn seeks to meet the needs of a growing student body.

“We are proud to support Paul Quinn College in their mission to create a transformative and sustainable

campus environment that addresses critical needs like housing, transportation, and food security for students,” said Kelley Cornish, CEO and President, T.D. Jakes Foundation. “This \$1.5 million grant will lay the groundwork for an innovative mixed-use development that not only provides essential services and resources but also strengthens the college’s long-term vision for community impact. We believe this project will have a profound impact on student success and well-being, empowering them to focus on their education and future.”

The development will serve the immediate Paul Quinn College community, including students and their families, the students and families of KIPP Oak Cliff Academy and Dallas Independent School District’s Dr. Frederick D. Haynes III Global Preparatory Academy at Paul Quinn College,

and the surrounding Highland Hills and Southern Dallas community.

“Having access to reliable, quality housing is an essential element for students so they can earn a degree, certification or improve their income and options long-term,” said Kristy Fercho, head of Diverse Segments, Representation and Inclusion at Wells Fargo. “Our work with the T.D. Jakes Foundation and Paul Quinn College on the vision for a new mixed-use development supports our broader commitment to providing increased access to quality, affordable housing for individuals historically underserved in the market.”

Wells Fargo continues to build on its relationship with Paul Quinn College. The Wells Fargo Foundation donated \$100,000 to help create scholarships for the school’s Corporate Work Program, which provides workforce opportuni-

ties that allow students to develop the needed skills, habits, and experience to be competitive in the job market postgraduation while contributing toward the cost of their education. The program is part of Paul Quinn’s commitment to eradicate generational poverty. Additional philanthropic funding helped establish an emergency housing fund to support housing year-round for students who may not have access to housing when class is not in session.

In 2024, through a collaboration between Wells Fargo and T.D. Jakes Foundation, Paul Quinn College received another \$236,000 to fuel the Corporate Work Program and housing security funds. Wells Fargo has continued its relationship with the college and its students by partnering with the Corporate Work program to welcome a cohort of five in-

See PQC, Page 14

How babies’ brains develop, and how to best support them

By Katie Dukes, Director of Early Childhood Policy EdNC

When babies are born, their brains contain billions of neurons. But how those neurons interact — and what they can do as babies grow through childhood into adulthood — is largely shaped by their experiences in the first 1,000 days of life.

The architecture of the brain is built in those first three years, creating a foundation that enables thinking, learning, and adapting over time. More than 85% of adult brain volume is built during this critical period. Luckily, we know exactly what infants and toddlers need to develop healthy brains that will set them up for a lifetime of well-being.

How to support brain development

Decades of research have identified several building blocks that are essential to constructing strong foundations for the brain in the first 1,000 days. Researchers agree that the cornerstone of healthy brain development is the formation of secure attachments between babies and the trusted and caring

adults in their lives. Whether these caregivers are parents, kin (including friends and neighbors), or trained early childhood professionals, they should be “knowledgeable about how to support (babies’) development and learning and responsive to their progress,” says a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Note the connection between caring and learning. Caring adults are crucial to developing the capacity for learning in the brains of infants and toddlers. In early childhood, care and learning were inseparable.

To strengthen the brain’s capacity for learning in the first 1,000 days, the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University has

identified two key strategies that trusted adults can use — engaging in “serve and return” interactions and minimizing exposure to toxic stress. As researchers at the center explain, serve and return interactions occur when an infant or toddler “babbling, gestures, or cries, and an adult responds

See BABIES, Page 12



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South Irving Library hosts community art supply swap

A Fun, Sustainable Way to Refresh Art Supplies

Local artists and craft enthusiasts are invited to refresh their art supplies or find new inspiration at the South Irving Library Community Art Supply Swap on Saturday, Dec. 7. This community-driven event encourages the exchange of gently used or new art materials, promoting sustainability and creativity.

The Community Art Supply Swap provides an opportunity for artists of all ages and skill levels to discover fresh tools, rehome surplus supplies and connect with fellow creatives



from the Irving area. Participants are encouraged to bring a variety of art supplies, including paints, brushes, canvases, sketchbooks, fabric, yarn and

more.

How It Works

In preparation for the swap, throughout November participants can drop off art supplies at the South

Irving Library during normal business hours. Contributions will be organized for the main event, which takes place on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Attendees will have

the chance to browse a diverse selection of materials and find their next creative treasure.

The Community Art Supply Swap will be held Dec. 7, 3:30 to 5 p.m. Donations

will be accepted throughout November. The South Irving Library is located at 601 Schulze Dr. in Irving.

For more information, contact the South Irving Library at (972) 721-2606.

WALMART, from Page 5

sity programs nationwide.

Trump has promised to eliminate federal DEI programs, dismantle protections for LGBTQ+ individuals, and penalize companies that prioritize diversity in hiring and promotions. His administration plans to enforce stricter oversight of corporate diversity efforts through the Department of Justice, targeting practices that allegedly violate laws barring racial and gender-based discrimination.

A Trump spokesperson, Steven Cheung, said the incoming president has made it clear that ending DEI policies is a top priority and that Americans have voted to favor these changes. Vice President-elect JD Vance has also supported efforts to abolish federal DEI programs and repeal Biden-era protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Proponents of DEI argue that such initiatives help companies hire and retain

diverse talent and foster innovation. Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase and other business leaders have repeatedly emphasized that diversity benefits both the workplace and the bottom line. Despite this, corporations like Bud Light, Target, and Ford have scaled back or abandoned diversity efforts following boycotts and conservative pressure campaigns.

The rollback of diversity efforts comes as data reveals significant racial inequities in corporate leadership. USA Today reported that its investigation found that white men hold seven out of 10 executive officer positions at the nation's largest companies, with one in seven of those companies having all-white executive teams. The lack of representation underscores the stakes for employees of color and marginalized communities as diversity programs face increasing opposition.

Experts warn that the

rollback of corporate diversity efforts, combined with the Trump administration's aggressive stance, could deepen racial and social divides in the United States. Franklin Turner, a corporate attorney specializing in federal contracts, said that while companies dependent on federal funding may adjust their policies under pressure, most are unlikely to abandon diversity efforts entirely.

David Glasgow, executive director of the Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at NYU School of Law, told reporters that the work would continue. "It may need a rebranding, but there is no universe where even the most hostile presidency is going to be able to completely eliminate an entire field of work because there are too many people out there who care about creating organizations that are respectful, that are inclusive, and where people have equal opportunity," Glasgow remarked.

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Congressional Black Caucus reaches historic 62 members while preparing to challenge Trump policies

By Stacy M. Brown
 NNPA Senior National
 Correspondent

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) will enter the 119th session of Congress with a historic 62 members, marking the largest number of Black federal lawmakers in U.S. history. In total, 67 Black lawmakers will serve, with five Republican members declining to join the caucus. However, this historic milestone comes against the backdrop of a new Trump administra-



tion that has signaled sharp policy shifts, including an almost entirely white Cabinet and the implementation of the anti-minority Project 2025.

The CBC, established in 1971 to advocate for Black

and marginalized communities, now represents 120 million Americans, including 41% of Black Americans. Yet its leaders face a steep challenge under a Trump administration openly pursuing policies that could roll

back decades of progress in civil rights, healthcare access, and economic equity.

“We’ve always been the conscience of Congress, no matter who’s in charge,” said Rep. Gregory Meeks, D-N.Y., a senior CBC member and ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. “But now we have a larger choir of leaders ready to call truth to power, ensuring the voices of the voiceless are heard. This administration poses a danger, and we’re here to counter that.”

Project 2025 and the Challenge Ahead

President-elect Donald Trump’s administration is advancing Project 2025, a policy blueprint critics say is designed to dismantle protections for marginalized communities while consolidating power among white conservatives. The plan includes eliminating the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division, granting police broad immunity in cases involving unarmed citizens, and reversing diversity and inclusion initia-

tives across federal agencies.

In addition to these policy threats, Trump’s Cabinet appointments include figures like Dr. Mehmet Oz, tapped to oversee Medicaid and Medicare, and Linda McMahon, his pick for Secretary of Education, raising alarms about the administration’s priorities. The nearly all-white leadership team underscores a stark contrast to the growing diversity in Congress.

See CBC, Page 13

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Film Review: 'Gladiator II' will satisfy the action crowd

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(***) Back in the third century, Rome was the heart of the vast Roman Empire, and its Colosseum was the heart of the city.

That's where the rich, poor and otherwise gathered for events. Gladiator fights. Contests between man and beasts. Executions. Even nautical battles, when they'd flood the floor of the world's largest amphitheater with water. This iconic monument, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, provides the canvas for this gripping mixture of



Denzel Washington in *Gladiator II* (Photo via NNPA)

history and fabrication. The sequel to 2001's Oscar®-winning film *Gladiator*.

David Scarpa's (Napoleón) script, with a story by Peter Craig and some original characters by Da-

vid Franzoni, provides a strong foundation for the well-structured story:

A young warrior, Lucius (Paul Mescal, *Aftersun*), his mentor Jubartha (Peter Mensah, *Avatar*), wife Ar-

ishat (Yuval Gonen) and other soldiers in Numida, North Africa prepare for battle. As the Roman General Marcus Acacius' (Pedro Pascal, *Narcos*) army invades their homeland, they fight bravely. Few survive the carnage. Those who do are herded to Rome. Lucius is among the new slaves. He's bitter, seething with thoughts of revenge and despises the Romans: "They have no land except the land they stole."

At the Colosseum and its grounds, slaves turn into gladiators and gladiators into free men—that's the goal. The contenders'

stage is the sandy floor of Ancient Rome's massive arena, a killing field. Under the blazing sun, 50,000 blood-thirsty, raucous spectators witness fierce combat. Meanwhile, in the corridors of the arena and imperial palace, nobles and other conspirators meet and scheme.

The Roman Empire is run by co-emperors who are twins: Caracalla (Fred Hechinger, *Thelma*) and Geta (Joseph Quinn, *A Quiet Day: Day One*). They're young, dumb and mean. Tyrants who're way too susceptible to power grabs. Lucilla (Connie Nielsen,

Gladiator), wife of the deceased and legendary gladiator Maximus (Russell Crowe), longs for Rome to escape its tyranny and be returned to its people. There are other malcontents and agitators. A coup is brewing.

Macrinus (Denzel Washington), an African transplant, former slave and now an ambitious merchant deals gladiators like others deal weapons. Ever cunning, the powerbroker knows who to manipulate to get his way. To him, the young fighter Lucius


See FILM, Page 11

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Epic Love and Electrifying Music Collide in 'Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812' at Theatre Three

This holiday season, Theatre Three invites you to step into an exhilarating world of love, betrayal, and redemption with *Natasha, Pierre, & The Great Comet of 1812*. Created by composer Dave Malloy and inspired by a section of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, audiences teleport to 19th Century Russia. This production transforms the Norma Young Arena Stage into an opulent Russian salon featuring seating on the stage as well as in the mu-

sic loft.

The story follows Natasha, a young woman swept into the glittering yet treacherous society of 19th-century Moscow. While awaiting the return of her fiancé, Natasha's encounter with the charming Anatole sparks a whirlwind of passion, deceit, and heartbreak. Watching from the sidelines is Pierre, a troubled and introspective man whose journey intertwines with Natasha's in unexpected ways, culmi-

nating in a powerful story of forgiveness and renewal.

Director Ashley H White shares, "I've been drawn to *Great Comet* for years, and am thrilled to be getting to helm it in such a perfect venue as T3. In a very unique way, this piece captures our modern world and through whimsy connects it to 19th Century Moscow—where indulgence, overstimulation, and opulence abound. The narrative and wild style of storytelling examines a need for genu-

ine human connection. Something we very much still experience today. Its wildly electric and operatic rock score is intense, surprising, and haunting, and the show is nonstop and intensely immersive - providing a sensory experience that is unique and powerful. In *Great Comet*, this escapism is both a reflection of and response to how we can lose ourselves in seeking pleasure and spectacle,

See COMET, Page 11



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FILM, from Page 9

is an instrument. A means. Someone whose impressive hand-to-hand combat will dazzle the emperors, who may grant him favor. Conversely, Lucius recognizes Macrinus' Machiavellian behavior. The fast talker is pawn who could help him avenge his loved ones' deaths. Mutual exploitation propels both men forward.

At age 86, director/producer Ridley Scott is still on his game. There are many moving parts in this multilayered, sword and sandal parable. Yet except for a few lapses in judgment, Scott handles most elements masterfully: Elaborate war scenes with a mix of humans and computer wizardry. Intimate moments of palace intrigue when deceit flows like the

Tiber river. The various subplots are consistently discernable. Emotions—sorrow, love, happiness, anger—peak and dip accordingly. Extras, supporting actors and the leading cast never make a wrong move. Credit his skilled guidance. But blame his direction for some preposterous moments that jolt forward.

Scarpa's screenplay features stately, sometimes profound dialogue. Words said with fondness, threats, fear, affirmation and resolve. Always apropos. No flubs, no holes. Very impressive. Very Ben Hur. Also, his thoughtful blend of fact and fiction is so engrossing audiences will eagerly Google search his historical references. For the record: Lucilla, the ri-

valrous twin emperors and scheming Macrinus are based on real people. Acacius and Lucius are not. Also, the Colosseum was known for its brutal acts, but attacking baboons, trained rhinoceros and hungry sharks were never on the program. Hold the director and writer accountable for those silly over-the-top, CGI gimmicks. Credit Matthew Collinge, supervising sound editor and re-recording mixer, for mitigating those miscalculated scenes with sound effects so loud that they'll scare the hell out of audiences.

The footage's grandeur is consistent and evocative. Cinematographer John Mathieson's (Gladiator) lighting and keen eye take great advantage of the sunlit landscapes and architecture of Malta and Ouarzazate,

Morocco, two locations that help give the film its ancient look. Scott's and his take on visions of cold black & white night skies are just gorgeous. Production designer Arthur Max (Gladiator) built interiors and exteriors that fit the period. Scenes mesh well because editors Claire Simpson and Sam Restivo nip and tuck expertly for 2h 28m. Some viewers will wish they'd also clipped the superfluous backstory scenes of Lucius as a child. Staying in the present is strong. Regurgitating the past is weak.

Costume designer Janty Yates (Gladiator) judiciously made robes worn

by Lucilla and Macrinus equally grand. The use of ominous choirs and strings underline the smart choices of composer Harry Gregson-Williams. While the rhino fight may seem gratuitous, all physical combat between the humans is consistently thrilling because stunt coordinator Nikki Berwick made it that way.

As the cast walks, talks and interacts in character, it's like they're on a Shakespearean stage, with only a few slips into modern times. Actor Derek Jacobi (Gladiator) as Senator Gracchus, who schemes with Lucilla, is a prime example. The very regal Nielsen well balances being motherly, calculating

and in love with Acacius. Pascal expertly renders the general as a complex man. Quinn and Hechinger are so bratty and creepy, you want to slip some hemlock into their chalices. Lots of it.

Moviegoers who love epic/adventure films will take seats in theaters like they're sitting in the front row of the Colosseum back in 211AD. They'll look down on the arena's dirt floor to see who'll be decapitated next. Unaware that the deadliest games are playing out up in the royal box.

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

CHISOLM, from Page 2

ing impact on our nation and the world."

Chisholm's groundbreaking career includes her historic 1972 presidential campaign, during which she became the first Black woman to seek the nomination of a major political party. Her slogan, "Unbought and Unbossed,"

embodied her commitment to justice and refusal to conform to traditional political norms.

Butler, who made history herself as the first Black lesbian to serve in the U.S. Senate, has made the bill a top priority. With growing bipartisan support and co-sponsors from across

the political spectrum, the legislation represents a unifying effort to honor Chisholm's legacy.

"Shirley Chisholm's legacy continues to inspire generations," Henry said. "As we approach the centennial of her birth, we must ensure her enduring impact is celebrated, remembered, and elevated for the nation and the world to see."

SMOLLETT, from Page 2

as an actor in the independent film *The Skinny*.

In 2015, Smollett achieved widespread recognition for portraying Jamal Lyon on the hit TV series *Empire*. Jamal, the openly gay son of music mogul Lucious Lyon, became a groundbreaking character for LGBTQ+ representation on television. Smollett also contributed original music to the

show's soundtrack, which became a commercial success. His performance earned him critical acclaim and a recording contract with Columbia Records.

Smollett described his role on *Empire* as one of the highlights of his career, noting the impact it had on fans. "I received a letter from a kid that said Jamal gave him the courage to come out to his parents. It

touched me deeply, and it's an honor to help people," he said in a 2015 interview.

While his legal troubles resulted in Jamal being written out of *Empire* during its final season, Smollett's contributions to the show remained significant. His attorneys hope he can now rekindle his career.

"This case has always been about protecting constitutional rights," Uche remarked. "Today, justice has prevailed."



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Robinhood launches first HBCU partnership with Howard University

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Robinhood, the popular financial app, has partnered with Howard University as its first historically Black college and university (HBCU) participant for its Money Drills program, extending comprehensive financial education to student-athletes. The partnership, announced earlier this month at Howard's campus, underscores the critical need to advance fi-

nancial inclusion and build generational wealth within historically underserved communities.

The initiative comes at a crucial time when college athletes are navigating new opportunities to profit from their name, image, and likeness (NIL) rights. Howard University becomes the ninth Division I institution to join the Money Drills program, which has already demonstrated success at

other universities nationwide.

"Technology serves as a powerful democratizing force in the financial system," said Mary Elizabeth Taylor, VP of Global Government and External Affairs at Robinhood Markets. "Money Drills is yet another way Robinhood is driving financial education in innovative ways, and we are thrilled to collaborate with our first HBCU."

The announcement event featured Howard Athletics Director Kery Davis, Howard School of Business Dean Anthony Wilbon, former NFL player Brandon Copeland, and Washington Wizards alumnus Etan Thomas. Students participated in financial education workshops led by Planned To a T, featuring guest lectures from Copeland.

The program's launch at Howard addresses a criti-

cal need in professional sports, where financial difficulties after retirement are common. Studies show that 16 percent of NFL players file for bankruptcy within 12 years of retiring, while 60 percent of NBA players face financial hardship after their careers end.

"This is long overdue as many students lack adequate education on financial and contract management," said Dr. Mariko

Carson, Howard University's Director of the Office of Graduate Affairs. "The Money Drills collaboration empowers us to jointly promote an inclusive and sustainable approach to economic growth in our communities and beyond."

Howard joins a distinguished list of institutions in the Money Drills program, including Florida State University, Duke University, and UC Berkeley.

BABIES, from Page 6

appropriately with eye contact, words, or a hug." Engaging in service and return with caregivers helps babies and very young children build and strengthen neural connections related to communication and social skills in their developing brains. The absence of consistent serve and return exchanges can release potentially harmful stress hormones into the brains of infants and toddlers. And prolonged exposure to such hormones can result in what is known as "toxic stress." Minimizing exposure to toxic stress in the first 1,000 days is crucial for healthy brain development.

According to the Center on the Developing Child, typical causes of toxic stress during this period include "physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship." However, the center also points out that trusting relationships with adult caregivers can act as a buffer against these hardships. That's why childcare providers — whether they are friends,

family, and neighbors, or licensed home-based or center-based caregivers and educators — can be so essential in the lives of families who may be experiencing economic hardships such as food or housing insecurity. As Dr. Dana Suskind, a pediatric specialist and expert in early childhood brain development, writes in her book Parent Nation, "Loving (adults) do not need a PhD or expensive gadgets to do an excellent job at supporting early brain development and building our future citizens. They need easily acquired, basic knowledge about how to best foster critical neural connections."

To that end, The Basics is an initiative that uses a public health approach to educate and empower caregivers about their role in healthy brain development. In addition to a wide array of online resources (some available in multiple languages), The Basics offers a printable one-pager that can be posted in homes, classrooms, pediatrician offices, or anywhere else caregivers may find themselves. Adults — including policymakers — who embrace

the basic building blocks of healthy brain development for infants and toddlers, are helping build a foundation that will yield benefits well beyond the first 1,000 days.

Why support brain development

Many people, especially educators who work with children in kindergarten through third grade, can point to early learning as crucial for "school readiness," but that term can be easily misunderstood. In EdNC's many conversations with elementary educators, the vast majority say school readiness means young children are being prepared to participate in group learning. This includes having skills such as developing relationships with trusted adults outside their homes, sitting in a circle or standing in a line with other children, communicating about their wants and needs, sharing objects with others, fine motor control and knowing a little bit about how to regulate emotions. While school readiness may also include some basic academic skills, elementary educators assure EdNC that teaching children how to count, write, and spell is only possible when young learners arrive at school with the social

and emotional skills that make them ready to learn. And it's the brain development that occurs in the first 1,000 days that makes this possible. In addition to helping young students be school-ready, numerous studies have shown that early learning leads to better performance in third-grade math and reading tests. But the benefits of early learning don't stop there — they last a lifetime.

Decades of studies have consistently shown that

children who receive high-quality early learning have better health, education, and earnings outcomes, and are less likely to be incarcerated or use government assistance programs throughout their lives. Nobel prize-winning economist James Heckman found that the highest rate of economic returns comes from the earliest investments in children. More specifically, investment in early care and learning yields a 13% annual return to society. As

Suskind puts it, "What happens in the first three years of a child's life has lifelong consequences, for better or for worse. Those years represent an opportunity that won't come again." Babies born today are expected to live for almost eight decades, meaning they'll likely see the 22nd century. But it's the care and learning they receive in the next 1,000 days that provide the foundation for what they'll build for themselves and our society.

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CBC, from Page 8

“It will be interesting to see how this administration interacts with a record number of Black lawmakers,” said Niccara Campbell Wallace, executive director of the Rolling Sea Action Fund. “The CBC’s growth means there are more voices to push back, to advocate for policies that reflect the reality of a diverse America.”

Historic Firsts in Representation

While the Trump administration doubles down on policies many see as anti-minority, the new Congress will also usher in a wave of historic firsts. Two Black women will serve simultaneously in the U.S. Senate for the first time. Delaware’s Lisa Blunt Rochester and Maryland’s Angela Alsobrooks join a small but

growing list of Black women elected to the Senate, doubling the total from two to four.

Blunt Rochester, the first woman and Black person to represent Delaware in the Senate, reflected on her groundbreaking victory. “This is a historic step forward for our state and our nation,” she said.

Alsobrooks, a former Prince George’s County executive, highlighted the broader significance of her win. “In over 2,000 people who have served in the U.S. Senate, only three have looked like me,” she said. “I stand here because of the sacrifices of those who came before me.”

Oregon’s Janelle Bynum also made history, flipping the state’s 5th Congress-

sional District to become its first Black member of Congress. Bynum, who unseated a Republican incumbent, noted, “It’s not lost on me that I’m one generation removed from segregation. We believed in a vision and didn’t stop until we accomplished our goals.”

Delaware voters made further history by electing Sarah McBride, the first openly transgender person to serve in Congress. These victories occurred even as the country faced deep divisions over affirmative action, LGBTQ rights, and racial equity.

The Role of the CBC

The CBC’s role as the conscience of Congress

will be tested as it confronts an administration bent on undoing civil rights gains. Meeks emphasized that the caucus would oppose policies that disproportionately harm Black and marginalized communities, from healthcare access to police reform.

“Instead of just a quartet, we now have a full choir,” Meeks said. “And we will be loud, clear, and consistent.”

With Republicans maintaining control of both chambers of Congress, the CBC’s ability to influence legislation will likely depend on its capacity to build coalitions and galvanize public support.

COMET, from Page 10

often at the cost of something great. In this frenzy, we discover truths about our desires, distractions, and our search for genuine connection.”

“There’s a war going on out there somewhere,” quotes White. “So step inside, escape into the opulence and grandeur, and maybe make a new connection or two through the invigorating power of Art.”

Don’t miss out – get your tickets for Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812 now at www.Theatre3Dallas.com. Subscribers can confirm their tickets at 214-871-3300 or e-mail at boxoffice@theatre3dallas.com. Theatre Three is located at 2688 Laclede St., Dallas, TX 75201. Complimentary parking is available in the adjacent AMLI Parking Garage.

WEALTH, from Page 3

appraisal bias,” states the report. “The initiative will form partnerships with and seek to attract participants from the military veterans’ community and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Appraisal mentorships and ap-

prenticeships will be a core aspect of recruitment and training for this initiative.”

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.



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It All Boils Down To One Thing

By Dr. James L. Snyder

Of all the things I have learned, one has made a difference in my life.

I hear stories about how married couples are unhappy. Today, something must be wrong with you if you haven't been divorced and remarried five times.

I always figure that the person who has been married five times hasn't learned anything from their first four marriages. They're going to repeat the same mistakes, over and over.

Somebody should pass a law forbidding people to be stupid. Why does stupidity seem to run our country? If we would forbid stupidity, we would have no politicians screwing up our country, but then, is that bad?

Being married has been a long journey for both The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and her fantastic husband. We celebrated 53 years of marriage.

There have been some stress points in our marriage, although at this point, I can't remember one. That's why it's important to forget things when you get older. But our marriage has been a wonderful ride in the

park—I just can't remember which park.

After 53 years of marriage, I have discovered that true happiness boils down to one thing. Discovering that one thing is a treasure of gold. Most people have never discovered this one thing, which is why their lives are not happy.

I know five marriage counselors, and each have been divorced and remarried at least three times. You would think they would understand what makes a marriage happy and pleasant. I wouldn't see those five marriage counselors for any advice.

This came to me about a month ago. I was talking to a young man who asked me about our marriage secret. I had to tell him that we had no secrets. Then it occurred to me what our marriage's driving point was. I had discovered one important secret.

It all boils down to one point: how many married couples are happy? If only one is happy, it is not a good marriage. If both are happy, well, you know the answer.

The explanation of what happy means will help us understand this whole scenario.

For some people, being happy means they are always right and always get what they want, when they want it.

My mother used to say when I would ask her if she was alright. "No, son," she would say with a smile, "I'm half left."

Then she would say, "If we were to be right all the time, why did God give us a left hand?"

So, to be happy, I don't necessarily have to be right all the time. I don't always have to have everything my way. Sometimes I do need that left hand for balance.

Looking back over my life, if I had everything my way, I would be in so much trouble today that I'm not sure I could get out of it. My way hasn't always the important way. It's hard to acknowledge that.

If the wife is happy, then I'm happy. If the wife is not happy, I'm in serious trouble.

The important aspect of marriage is discovering what makes the other person happy. Once I figured that out, everything was a ski-ride down the mountains.

When you first marry, you don't know what makes the

ness and entrepreneurship.

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other person happy or sad. It's a learning experience and you better get busy studying this subject before you get married.

The only rocky point in our marriage had to do with "broccoli." She has a fascinating love for broccoli, I have a deplorable hatred for broccoli and the twain shall never meet on the same dinner table.

When we were first married, I did not know this about her and broccoli. But it wasn't long after we were married that I discovered this. Up to that point, I had never tasted broccoli, and I wasn't about to start tasting it then; with deep respect to my tongue.

When we were married, she didn't know about my fascination with Apple Fritters. I grew up in Pennsylvania Dutch country where

Apple Fritters are king of the hill. We just love our Apple Fritters.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was happy when she was eating broccoli and I was happy when I was eating Apple Fritters. These two things cannot be done on the same table, if you know what I mean.

At that point, it all boiled down to one thing. Are we going to determine what the other person likes? Or, will we accept them as long as it makes them happy?

That's so critical that I don't know anything more important.

If I can master this one thing, then there will be nothing but happiness in our marriage. I don't demand that she like what I like, and she doesn't demand that I like what she likes. We just put up with certain things

and don't make an issue of them.

My secret is, if she passes before me, I'll make sure there is broccoli in her casket that she can take with her.

The key to marriage is agreement. I like what it says in Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

If you walk down a path going to in certain destination, although, you both are going in the same direction but one can look to the left and the other to the right. It is the destination that is important.

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PQC, from Page 6

terns to Wells Fargo's Auto Lending business.

Paul Quinn has partnered with the Jakes Divinity School since 2023 to offer a T.D. Jakes Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree, the first graduate program in Paul Quinn's history. The T.D. Jakes MBA program, a distinctive faith-based initiative, is the only accredited MBA program of its kind offered by

an HBCU in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The program provides another pipeline of economic mobility for Paul Quinn students by providing access to corporate mentors and unique professional development opportunities. By integrating the expertise and resources of both institutions, the program is designed to cultivate the next generation of visionary leaders in busi-

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Thanksgiving



Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
Editor

This is the time of year that is set aside to be thankful for the blessings of God; a time to give generously to others so that they may enjoy some of your blessings from God. This Holiday Season is not only a good time to share food with others, but the Word of God as well, because of the stresses that people may face. What better way to help a fellowman than to give him/her hope and inspiration.

Being Thankful to God: When emergencies arise, we are usually thankful for phone numbers that we can



call for immediate help. The following numbers are more effective than 911!

- We can truly be thankful when we are sad because we can call – John 14.
- When we have sinned, we can call – Psalm 51.
- When people have failed you, call – Psalm 27.
- This time of the year

when you feel like an out-cast, call – Roman 8:31 – 39.

- If you are seeking God's peace, call – Matthew 11:25 – 30.
- If you require courage for a task, call – Joshua 1.
- Feeling depressed, call – Psalm 27.
- If your bank account is empty, call – Psalm 37.

- If you lose faith in mankind, call – 1 Corinthians 13.
- When you are losing hope, call – Psalm 126.
- When you need to know Paul's secret for happiness, call – Colossian 3:12-17.
- This stressful time of the year, if you want you how to get along with other people, call – Romans 12.

Alternate Numbers That You Can Call:

- For dealing with fear, call – Psalm 3:47.
 - For security, call – Psalm 121:3.
 - For assurance, call – Mark 8:35.
 - For reassurance, call – Psalm 145:18.
- The good news is that all of these numbers may be

phoned directly, no busy signal and no operator assistance is necessary!

A good statement, "Feed your faith and you will starve your doubt to death." Entwined They Stand.

One of the wonders of the world is the Redwood Forest in California. Some of the trees are the oldest,

largest, and tallest living things in the world. Some of the trees are more than three hundred feet tall and more than 25-years old. Thank of that! They have weathered the ravages of time, holding up against all the combative elements.

See TARPLEY, Page 16

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Parkland's Smoking Cessation Clinic is here to help. For more information visit parklandhealth.org/smoking-cessation

DOING THE RIGHT THING

"The time is always right to do what is right." — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dallas CASA needs more Black volunteers to serve our community's abused and neglected children living in foster care.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN ONLINE INFORMATION SESSION:

Friday, Nov 15 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Friday, Dec 6 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Thursday, Nov 21 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Thursday, Dec 12 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

For more information or to register for this event, please visit dallascasa.org

Christmas Romance Books and More

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Dear Santa....

You've asked for love every way you can imagine, so why not try a letter to the North Pole? That's what you want for the holidays: love, intrigue, family, and you'll find them inside these great Christmas romance books and other novels...

When city girl Tia Solanke is faced with a boyfriendless Christmas, she's understandably sad. In **"Only for the Holidays"** by Abiola Bello (Soho Teen, \$19.99), Tia's mother thinks a change of atmosphere will help, so she plans a Christmas vacation on a nearby farm where the handsome "country boy" who helps run the place also happens to be single. He's also looking for a date to the farm's Winter Ball. Hmmm. Mistletoe Rating: Five out of Five.

Here's something different: set in Norway, **"Christmas at Glitter Peak Lodge"** by Kjersti Herland Johnsen (HarperVia, \$17.99) is part mystery, part winter tale, and part romance, written in bite-sized chapters for one-a-day reading. When Ingrid Berg assumes management of



Terri Schlichenmeyer

the lodge her grandmother owns, she wonders how she's ever going to keep the place running. So. Many. Problems. Can she overcome them, or will it be a ho-ho-horrible holiday?

For the romance fan who wants something more classic, try **"The Christmas Cookie Wars"** by Eliza Evans (G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$19). Melody Monroe has been trying to keep the Christmas spirit alive for her nine-year-old twins, but the boys aren't feeling very Christmassy. So when Melody has a chance to seize some holiday spirit, she joins their school's cookie-baking committee, despite that the school's principal is a horrible man who soon starts an argument. Who wins? Nobody but Santa – and love, of course.

You know who'd come to your

rescue if your fiance dumped you? Your bestie, of course, and in **"The Holiday Honeymoon Switch"** by Julia McKay (G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$19), Holly's man has jilted her and her bestie, Ivy, steps in with a plan. They'll switch places: Ivy will go on the ex-honeymoon alone, while Holly will take Ivy's cabin-vacation. But when Mr. Ex checks into the hotel, and the cabin host turns out to be a cabin hottie, these single belles might hear romantic Jingle Bells.

And, okay, you can't have enough romance for the holidays, but you need something else, too... like maybe a thriller to chill ya? In **"You Better Watch Out"** by James S. Murray and Darren Wearmouth (St. Martin's Press, \$28), it takes a minute to realize that she's not home. What's even scarier is that five other people have had the same experience, and they're all trapped in an otherwise empty town.

Not enough for your holiday enjoyment? Then pick up some new books by asking your favorite bookseller or librarian for more holiday romance. Or you can always ask Santa.

TARPLEY, from Page 14

They stand tall in spite of opposing forces.

People that don't know will immediately jump to the conclusion that the Redwoods have a deep root system. To the contrary, their roots are shallow. What holds them? What supports them? Their root system entwines and locks each tree to the tree around it. They Stand Together. That is the secret to their Herculean (extra ordinary) strength.

When the wind and hail and upheaval threaten, no tree stands alone but rather is strengthened and supported by the others. Each is needed for the support of the whole grove of trees. The

Redwoods can truly say, "United we stand, divided we fall."

How true this is for all Christians, especially now. We need the help of others. One of the blessings of the church is its fellowship in which we have the entwining of each Christian and of the Lord. Locked together Christians with their faith can withstand the storms and stresses of life. Unquestionably, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." Ecclesiastes 4:9 & 10. (KJV)

This Holiday Season, be a winner. A Winner is always part of the answer; a loser is always part of the problem. A Winner always has a program; a Loser always has an excuse. A Winner says, "Let me do it for you;" a Loser says, "That's not my job." A Winner sees an answer for every problem; a Loser sees a problem for every answer. A Winner says, "It may be difficult but it's possible;" a Loser says, "It may be possible, but it's too difficult."

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in November 2011. Sister Tarpley has passed on to a better place, and we are forever grateful to have her words and faith remain with us for reflection and continued wisdom.)

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