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New CDC Recommendations Shift Vaccine Decisions to Doctors, Creating New Barriers for People

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced this week it is recommending an individual-based vaccine schedule and a separate shot for chickenpox, normally combined with measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines. The advisory has some people and their doctors scratching their heads, as the burden of decision shifts to physicians. States have been creating their own advisory panels while vowing to stick with the science, said Dr. Maurizio Bonacini, clinical professor, University of California San Francisco (UCSF) at a September 26 American Community Media briefing.

Also at the briefing were Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, infectious disease specialist and professor of medicine at UCSF, Dr. Yvonne Bonnie Maldonado, professor of pediatrics and health research and policy at Stan-



The CDC's shift to individualized vaccine schedules and separate shots for diseases like chickenpox has sparked confusion and concern among doctors and the public, as misinformation, rising vaccine hesitancy, and policy changes threaten decades of progress in preventing serious infectious diseases. (Mathurin NAPOLY/ Unsplash)

ford University, and Dr. Benjamin Neuman, professor of biology at Texas A&M University.

Mumps cause painful swelling of the salivary glands, a headache and a fever. Chickenpox and measles

bring a rash and cold-like symptoms. Rubella's red, splotchy rash is accompanied by fever and a mild headache. Many are unfamiliar with

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Obama fills a void in a fading party

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Common drugs linked to seizures

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Former Dallas Police Chief in new role

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'The Choral' is music to the eyes

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People In The News ...



Torri Jarrett



Bernadette Morris

NDG Quote of the Week:

"I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality.... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word." - Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tori Jarrett

(Black PR Wire) Tori Jarrett is a junior at Spelman College, a UNCF-member institution, the founder of a STEM nonprofit that introduces young girls to science and engineering and a published children's book author.

She is a chemistry major also pursuing a minor in Spanish and a minor in management organization.

"I've really gained something from UNCF that's changed the course of my career trajectory and who I am as a person," shared Jarrett, a Gantt-McColl Scholarship recipient.

A Family of UNCF Scholars

The Gantt-McColl Scholarship is offered to high school seniors projected to graduate from eligible public high schools



in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina with at least a 2.5 grade point average (GPA). The scholarship may be renewed for up to four years.

"Getting the Gantt-McColl Scholarship took a lot of pressure off of me," she said. "Being a private college, there's not a lot of scholarships available. This was a lifeline for me. Now I get paid to go here and get a book voucher every semester

to pay for my books, so it doesn't have to come out of pocket."

"Being a UNCF scholar is in my family," Jarrett explained. Her dad also received a UNCF scholarship, while he attended Johnson C. Smith University, also a UNCF-member institution. The scholarship from UNCF "was how he was able to pay for school, coming from a one-income household." Jarrett's uncle also attended an HBCU, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania.

As a scholarship recipient, Jarrett was invited to attend this year's Mayor's Masked Ball in Charlotte.

She recounts it as one of her favorite experiences being a Gantt-McColl scholar. "Being able to stand up there on that stage and express my gratitude was something I enjoyed," she

said. "Being able to show the impact of donating to UNCF and for them to hear those stories."

Journey to Spelman

Originally, Jarrett wasn't interested in attending Spelman. "I didn't want to go to Spelman at all, but my parents were like 'just apply,'" she said.

She attended Spelman's scholar weekend in 2023 and remembers being disappointed that the school didn't have an engineering program. "But our student speaker was a chemistry major, and she talked about her internship at Estée Lauder," she shared. "After that, I thought 'Spelman is my place, this is where I

want to be.'"

Now, she is entering her final year at Spelman and serves as the president of Spelman Sisters of STEM. She has interned with Stryker, which makes medical devices, and conducted undergraduate research at Louisiana State University (LSU). "I really loved it, but it taught me I don't want to be in a lab for eight hours straight," she said. "I love talking to people and being active in my community."

While participating in research at LSU, Jarrett discovered that she enjoyed spending days with the project manager. "I'm a generalist, not a special-

ist," she explained. "I don't want to settle on one thing. He got to know marketing, sales, every aspect of the business. For me, I loved being in the lab, but [also] hearing different sides, being able to understand the story from the envisioning of the product."

Sharing Her Passion for STEM

In 2023, Jarrett founded Beauty & Brains, a nonprofit organization that introduces girls ages 7-12 to science and engineering. Through Beauty & Brains, she holds cosmetic chemistry workshops to foster the next generation of women in STEM.

Bernadette Morris

(Black PR Wire) Bernadette Morris is the President/CEO of Black PR Wire, Inc., a nationwide news distribution company serving the Black media throughout the U.S. and the Caribbean. Incorporated in 2000, Black PR Wire is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year and is the nation's first and largest online Black newswire distribution company.

With a comprehensive database and listing of over 1,500 Black (African American, Caribbean and Haitian) organizations and media, Black PR Wire posts and distributes print, audio, video, and creative news and information to Black media, influencers, faith-based groups and prominent community organizations throughout the U.S. and the Caribbean and is a



powerful leader in effective news delivery services.

A woman of many talents, Bernadette manages multiple companies. In addition to serving as president/CEO of Black PR Wire, she is also the president/CEO of Sonshine Communications, a full-service PR, marketing and advertising agency – one of the largest Black-owned PR agencies in Florida.

Sonshine offers comprehensive services ranging

from grassroots marketing and public relations to high tech marketing and analysis. The firm represents a cadre of clientele including federal and state government agencies, corporations and small businesses, nonprofits, ministries, etc.

Bernadette has over 30 years of professional experience in providing and delivering effective marketing, media, public and community outreach services. She has led key initiatives for the Florida Department of Transportation such as its Anti-Litter Campaign and Florida's Advanced Travel Information System (FL511 Mobile App) marketing campaign.

Under her leadership, Bernadette has led the Sonshine team to award-winning minority campaigns including the national and

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Obama Fills the Void in a Fading Democratic Party

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Former President Barack Obama has stepped back into the political arena, delivering some of his sharpest critiques yet of President Donald Trump as the Democratic Party struggles through one of its weakest moments in modern history. With the party's leadership approval at historic lows and its ties to Black-owned media nearly non-existent, Obama's renewed visibility has exposed both the vacuum and the disillusionment threatening to fracture the Democratic coalition.

In recent weeks, Obama has spoken out against Trump's authoritarian-style intimidation of universities and the administration's crackdown on the press, declaring that America must "resist being intimidated" and warning that protecting democratic values may require "sacrifice." At Hamilton College, he admonished Trump's White House for suspending security clearances and canceling contracts with law firms and schools tied to perceived political rivals. "That kind of behavior is contrary to the basic compact we have as Americans," Obama said. "Imagine if I had done any of this." Days later, he took to social media to denounce media companies for capitulating to Trump's

threats. "After years of complaining about cancel culture, the current administration has taken it to a new and dangerous level," Obama wrote, urging journalists and networks to "get a spine" and stand up for free speech.

Late in September at London's O2 Arena, Obama expanded his message beyond immediate politics, telling a packed crowd that true leadership means constant vigilance and the courage to "show up and speak out even when it's uncomfortable." He cautioned against complacency, arguing that progressives had grown "smug" and unprepared for the rise of authoritarianism. "True democracy is a project much bigger than any one of us," he said. "It's a job for all of us." Obama's renewed activism comes at a time when his party's base has grown increasingly restless. A Pew Research survey found that 59 percent of Democrats disapprove of their party's leadership—the highest level of dissatisfaction since the question was first asked more than a decade ago. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's approval among Democrats has collapsed to 35 percent, while House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries remains little known to nearly four in ten Democratic voters.

That lack of visibility and engagement has been felt most acutely within the

Black community. At the Black Press of America's annual Leadership Awards, where Jeffries and Congressional Black Caucus Chair Yvette Clarke were to be honored, anticipation filled a packed ballroom. But neither showed up.

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump had just pledged \$50,000 to support the struggling Black Press, urging others to follow suit. "Typical of Democrats," one attendee said afterward. "They don't spend money with us. They don't show up. And then they expect us to deliver their message for free." The snub, just 18 months before the Black Press's bicentennial, struck a nerve among publishers who have covered every chapter of America's freedom struggle—from emancipation to civil rights—without the financial support they deserve. "Our ancestors built this press through every trial in this country," said one Black publisher after the event. "The least Hakeem Jeffries could do was show up."

Obama's reemergence has not gone unnoticed by voters—or by Trump. During a recent Navy celebration in Virginia, Trump attempted to incite the crowd to boo Obama, but the attempt backfired. As he invoked "Barack Hussein Obama," the crowd met him with dead silence. Meanwhile, polls show that

Obama remains the most admired living president. A Marquette Law School survey found Obama with a +17 net favorability, compared with Trump's -15 and Joe Biden's -24. Even so, Obama's return to the spotlight underscores a sobering truth: the Democratic Party, battered by infighting and a failure to connect with its own base, still lacks a clear, trusted voice. Obama's critiques of Trump's policies—whether over healthcare rollbacks or media suppression—stand in contrast to the muted response from current Democratic leaders, who have failed to mobilize voters around issues that once defined their moral compass.

Trump's efforts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act have revived Obama's signature policy as the centerpiece of a national political showdown. Democrats, scrambling to extend ACA subsidies that prevent premiums from skyrocketing, have tried to make healthcare their rallying cry again—but without strong, unified leadership, the message has struggled to resonate. For all his measured tone, Obama's message has sharpened into something closer to alarm. He warns that complacency, even within his own party, has opened the door to authoritarianism. "Progressives assumed our trajectory

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Keep up with the news

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Pain and Antidepressant Drug Combo Linked to Increased Seizure Risk

(Newswise) — MINNEAPOLIS — When older adults living in nursing homes are prescribed the pain medicine tramadol alongside certain antidepressants, their risk of seizures may go up, according to a study published October 8, 2025, in *Neurology®*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. While this study found a link between using the medications together and an increased risk of seizures, it does not prove one causes the other.

Tramadol is an opioid used to treat moderate to severe pain in adults. Some antidepressants that inhibit the CYP2D6 enzyme, called CYP2D6 inhibitors, can interfere with how the body metabolizes tramadol. When the CYP2D6 enzyme is blocked, tramadol is not metabolized properly and may build up in the body, potentially increasing the risk of side effects like seizures. Common CYP2D6-inhibiting antidepressants include fluoxetine, paroxetine and bupropion.

“We found a modest but measurable increase in the risk of seizures when tramadol was taken with antidepressants that inhibit the CYP2D6 enzyme,” said study author Yu-Jung Jenny Wei, PhD, of The Ohio State University in Columbus. “This risk was consistent whether the antidepressant or tramadol was started first.”

Researchers analyzed 10 years of Medicare data to identify 70,156 nursing home residents age 65 and older who had been prescribed both tramadol and an antidepressant.



DWG Studio

They divided participants into two groups based on which drugs they took first. Of participants, 11,162 people took tramadol first and then an antidepressant with it, while 58,994 people took an antidepressant first and then added tramadol.

Seizure rates for people who took tramadol first were 16 seizures per 100 person-years, and for people who took antidepressants first, the rate was 20 seizures per 100 person-years. This means for every 100 people who used both tramadol and an antidepressant followed for one year, about 16 or 20 received a seizure diagnosis.

In both groups, researchers then compared seizure rates between those who took tramadol with CYP2D6-inhibiting antidepressants and those who took tramadol with antidepressants that do not inhibit the enzyme. In those who took tramadol first and added an antidepressant, the rate was 18 seizures per 100 person-years for those taking CYP2D6-inhibiting antidepressants compared to 16 seizures per 100 person-years in people taking other antidepressants. In those

who took antidepressants first and added tramadol, the rate was 22 seizures per 100 person-years for those taking CYP2D6-inhibiting antidepressants compared to 20 seizures per 100 person-years in people taking other antidepressants.

To help ensure the differences were not due to other health issues, the researchers adjusted for factors such as pain levels, depression symptoms, physical function and cognitive ability.

After adjustments, for people who took tramadol first, seizure risk was 9% higher when taking it with a CYP2D6-inhibiting antidepressant compared to with an antidepressant that did not inhibit this enzyme. For those who took an antidepressant first and added tramadol, the risk was about 6% higher for people who took a CYP2D6-inhibiting antidepressant compared to people who took an antidepressant that did not inhibit the enzyme.

To test whether this interaction was specific to tramadol, the researchers repeated the analysis using hydrocodone, another opioid pain reliever that is unlikely to cause seizure risk when used with antidepres-

sants. No increased seizure risk was observed with hydrocodone and CYP2D6-inhibiting antidepressants.

“These findings underscore the need for careful prescribing practices, especially for older adults with complex health conditions,” said Wei. “Doctors should be aware of potential seizure risks when prescribing tramadol with antidepressants, particularly CYP2D6 inhibitors. Given how commonly both are prescribed to older adults, these interactions may be more important than previously thought.”

A limitation of the study was that medication data came from prescription records, which did not confirm whether patients took the drugs as directed.

This research was supported by the National Institute on Aging.

Discover more about brain health at BrainandLife.org, from the American Academy of Neurology. This resource also offers a magazine, podcast, and books that connect patients, caregivers and anyone interested in brain health with the most trusted information, straight from the world’s leading experts in brain health. Follow Brain & Life® on Facebook, X, and Instagram.

The American Academy of Neurology is the leading voice in brain health. As the world’s largest association of neurologists and neuroscience professionals with more than 40,000 members,

the AAN provides access to the latest news, science and research affecting neurology for patients, caregivers, physicians and professionals alike. The AAN’s mission is to enhance member career fulfillment and promote brain health for all. A neurologist is a doctor who specializes in the diagnosis, care and treatment of brain, spinal cord and nervous system diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, concussion, epilepsy, Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, headache and migraine.

Explore the latest in neurological disease and brain health, from the minds at the AAN at AAN.com or find us on Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

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Former Dallas Police Chief Sworn in as the 48th President of NOBLE

(Black PR Wire) ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) has installed Chief Reneé Hall, former chief of police for the Dallas Police Department, as its 48th national president.

Hall, who previously served the organization as its first vice president, says she will continue to focus on the organization's mission, which includes equity in the administration of justice. Additionally, Hall's pillars will include restoring trust in law enforcement; strengthening leadership development;



Black PR Wire

advancing partnerships; reimagining justice through policy advocacy; reinforcing organization excellence and global influence; and wellness, resilience, and mental health for law officers.

"It is an incredible honor

to serve as President of NOBLE, an organization that has long stood at the forefront of equity, justice, and leadership in law enforcement," said Hall. "At this pivotal moment in our nation's history, I am committed to advancing in-

novative, community-centered strategies that build trust, promote accountability, and prepare the next generation of Black law enforcement leaders."

Hall is a nationally recognized thought leader in 21st century policing. She is the founder and CEO of TUU Enterprises, LLC, a consultancy focused on modernizing law enforcement practices and strengthening community-police relations. Hall also serves as executive director of the Community Solidarity and Safety Coalition, a nonpartisan alliance addressing public safety chal-

lenges and domestic threats through cross-sector partnerships.

Hall brings decades of law enforcement experience, most notably as Chief of Police for the Dallas Police Department, where she led a 4,000-member, \$500 million agency. She was the first woman to hold that role and became known for implementing innovative technology, data-driven strategies, officer wellness initiatives, and reforms aimed at transparency and community trust.

A Harvard University Advanced Leadership Initiative Fellow and Senior

Fellow with the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation, Hall is committed to social impact and community transformation. She holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Grambling State University and two master's degrees from the University of Detroit Mercy. Hall is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and holds leadership roles in several professional and civic organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the International Women's Forum, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

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State of Florida "truth" campaigns, and has been instrumental in the coordination of national projects for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and a host of others.

Bernadette also has a presence in the non-profit world as CEO of Women Grow Strong, Inc., a not-for-profit women and young adult support group that provides training, counseling, development and discipleship.

WINGS helps to sow seeds of mercy, grace, provision and love into the

hearts and souls of women seeking empowerment, self-esteem and confidence. WINGS helps develop, build and sustain women's contributions and goals in society through educational training, counseling and business development initiatives for both teens and adults. Topics ranging from health and fitness to image and business etiquette are addressed through workshops and intensive sessions.

The consummate professional, Bernadette holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Florida International University

and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Communications from Stetson University and the University of North Florida. Prior to starting Sonshine, she served as Associate Dean/Division Director of Public Affairs at Miami-Dade College.

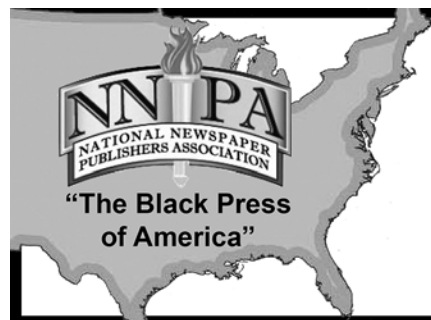
She has also enjoyed a successful career in broadcast journalism where she was a publicist for PBS/NPR and a producer of children's programs. Bernadette is committed to "Making the Difference of a Lifetime with Quality, Substance and Style" and delivering news to our communities through Black PR Wire, her "Online Source for Black News."

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Keep Up with the News Back Home!

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Friendship Baptist Church of the Colony to Host College and Career Expo

Friendship Baptist Church of the Colony Scholarship Ministry will host a free college and career expo for students, parents, and young adults.

More than 80 public and private colleges, universities, and technical and vocational schools from across the country have been invited to participate. The event is open to the public.



The event will be held at Friendship Baptist Church of the Colony (FBCTC) on Saturday, Oct. 11, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The church is located at 4396

Main Street in The Colony.

The expo will serve as an introduction to the college search and application process.

Students and families will learn about academic programs, campus life, and financial aid opportunities.

The FBCTC College and Career Expo expands the traditional “college fair” format by connecting future and current college

students with companies offering career resources, such as mentoring and internships.

A representative from Google will conduct a workshop focused on “Career trends to meet current job opportunities”.

For students interested in pursuing a trade or starting a business, the event offers networking oppor-

tunities with professionals from various occupations.

Organizations specializing in vocational training and workforce development will be present to showcase career options that students may not have considered, including public safety, healthcare, skilled trades (barbers, cosmetologists), and entrepreneurship.

Setting Sights High During National Dropout Prevention Month

By Dona Mitchell

October is recognized as National Dropout Prevention Month, during which schools intensify efforts to identify students at risk of dropping out. My name is Dona Mitchell, and I am a National Dropout Prevention Specialist, employing strategic and innovative methods to promote student retention.

Implementing effective prevention strategies and initiatives requires signifi-

cant effort and dedication. A collaborative approach is essential for creating a supportive environment that encourages students to stay in school and achieve academic success. Partnerships with stakeholders are established to provide necessary resources, address barriers to education, and support students in reaching their educational goals.

At the national level, I recommended that school districts establish effective Dropout Prevention

Departments focused on youth development. These departments should aim to restore and transform students’ lives by providing life skills training, fostering self-confidence, offering mentorship, and empowering youth to make positive decisions that reduce involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Establishing a Parent Center is also recommended to strengthen families by facilitating programs that enhance student-parent and

student-teacher relationships. Additional services, such as laundry facilities, job centers with resume writing assistance, on-the-job training, family therapy, and communication workshops, should be provided to address families’ needs. Strong Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs) should be developed on campuses, and parent conferences should be scheduled flexibly to accommodate working par-

ents.

It is further recommended to establish a robust community support team and task force to secure funding and integrate dropout prevention into campus improvement plans and attendance initiatives. School districts should collaborate with local Economic Development Departments to provide resources for students at risk of dropping out.

Being a national dropout prevention specialist al-

lows me to be a role model for others to follow, and my work is used as a tool for others to join forces for the same reason and that is to keep students in school.

In closing, I am honored to be part of the Dallas County Juvenile Transformation Team. This opportunity will help me grow and gain experience. It will better equip me to be a trailblazer—helping keep students in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

Dallas College Awarded \$2.5 Million Federal Grant to Support Nursing Students

The Dallas College School of Health Sciences has been awarded more than \$2.5 million from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to support nursing students and strengthen the local health care workforce.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for our stu-

dents and our community,” said Dr. Shawnda Floyd, provost and vice chancellor of workforce education at Dallas College. “The grant will provide critical support that helps nursing students thrive while ensuring our region has the skilled professionals it needs to meet urgent health care workforce de-

mands.”

The grant, which will be distributed over the next four years, is designed to increase access and success for economically challenged nursing students while addressing the growing demand for qualified nurses in North Texas.

The grant will provide scholarships to nursing

students pursuing an Associate of Applied Instructor coaching three nursing students on phlebotomy Science degree or the RN-to-BSN bachelor’s degree based on credit hours with an additional \$350 per semester stipend to offset supply and living costs.

It will also cover fees for laptops, exam preparation

and licensure resources while funding faculty participation in professional conferences and a part-time evaluator to help identify opportunities for program improvement.

Nursing student checking a manikin with a stethoscope “This grant is a testament to the quality of our nursing program

and the commitment of our faculty, staff and students,” said Dr. Tetsuya Umabayashi, vice provost, School of Health Sciences at Dallas College.

“It will significantly enhance our ability to prepare the next generation of nurses while advancing equity and access to health care careers.”



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Trust in Mainstream Media at a New Low, But the Black Press Stands as the Trusted Voice

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Trust in America's mainstream media has fallen to its lowest level on record. Gallup reports that only 28 percent of adults say they have a great deal or fair amount of confidence in newspapers, television, and radio to report the news fully, accurately, and fairly. That is down from 31 percent last year and 40 percent five years ago. Seven in ten adults now say they have little or no confidence at all.

Republicans show the deepest distrust, with only 8 percent expressing con-



Image via NNPA

fidence in the media. Independents stand at 27 percent. Democrats, though still higher, have slipped to 51 percent, a figure that matches their previous low in 2016. Generational divides are also clear. Forty-three percent of adults aged 65 and older trust the media, but no younger age group rises above 28 percent.

For Black America, this collapse of trust in mainstream outlets is not a new story. The Black Press has been the institution that carried the truth when no one else would. It published Frederick Douglass when white newspapers tried to silence him. It carried Ida B. Wells' anti-lynching reports when others dismissed them. It printed the images

of Emmett Till when the mainstream turned away. It gave voice to Dr. King and Malcolm X when they were branded agitators. Now, as the mainstream loses credibility, the Black Press faces its own struggle to survive.

Two years before its bicentennial, more than 200 family-owned Black

newspapers remain, many led by women. They battle economic starvation while carrying the weight of history. Corporate America has cut advertising. Washington has withdrawn support. Even as white billionaires like Mark Cuban have reached into their pockets, many of the wealthiest

Black Americans have not stepped forward. Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan, Robert F. Smith, Jay-Z, Rihanna, LeBron James, Magic Johnson, Tyler Perry, and others together command nearly \$100 billion in wealth. Yet the

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"Several other specialists not pictured will also be on the forum"

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- Burial and Memorial Service Information
- Veterans Housing Assistance
- Military Service Opportunities
- Questions and Answers

For more information, please visit the Garland NAACP Unit Website.

Dallas Delivers on Offense but Defense Comes Up Empty

By Jamal Baker
NDG Contributing Writer

The Dallas Cowboys dominated the New York Jets in a 37-22 victory Sunday afternoon at MetLife stadium.

Quarterback Dak Prescott threw for 237 yards and four touchdowns, and has looked like an MVP candidate so far this season.

Another shining star on offense was running back Javonte Williams, who rushed for a career-high 135 yards with a rushing and receiving touchdown.

Dallas was without wide receiver CeeDee Lamb, left tackle Tyler Guyton, left guard Tyler Smith, right guard Tyler Booker, center Cooper Beebe and slot wide receiver KaVontae Turpin yet the offense still put on a dazzling performance.

"There's not many teams in the league that can put four guys who don't start into the game and feel confident about going and win-



ning a game, especially on the road against one of the most premier interior defensive linemen (Quinnen Williams) and some good rushers as well," Prescott said. "So, credit from the front office of getting these guys, but just as important, these guys don't see themselves as backups, as they shouldn't."

Head coach Brian Schottenheimer and his staff also deserve credit for developing a phenomenal game-plan and putting players in positions to succeed. The NFL has always been about the next man up, and the Cowboys have certainly

successfully adopted that culture.

Wide receiver Ryan Flournoy was a prime example of stepping up to the plate and taking advantage of your opportunity. The Southeast Missouri State product amassed 114 receiving yards on six catches.

"Man, all glory to God, first and foremost," said Flournoy. "Without Him, I wouldn't even be here and have this opportunity to go out and do what I love, man. It's special, you know? And the way I play, I play for Him. It's in Colossians 3:2, that in whatever

you do, work at it with all your heart, and that you are working for the Lord, not for men.

"And that's just how I go out and play every Sunday."

The phrase "Let your apology be as loud as your disrespect" is a phrase

that comes to mind when analyzing the performance of this Cowboys defense against the Jets.

The Dallas defensive unit finally showed signs of promise and hopefully they can build off their most recent outing.

The Cowboys allowed the least number of points they have all season and had a consistent pass rush that clearly affected quarterback Justin Fields.

"We've got a lot of

See COWBOYS, Page 12

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Film Review: 'The Choral' is music to the eyes of film-goers

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(**1/2) When they sang in harmony they thought it would be forever. World War I thought otherwise.

Audiences who love music, have been in a choir or want to know what it's like to be left behind when war rages will have a special affinity for this period drama. Others too, as they get to know the characters, join in their friendships, romances, jealousies and other social aspects/group dynamics choirs experience. The bonds of music pull them together. Human desires and frailties add certain peculiarities.

Oscar-nominated screenwriter Alan Bennett (*The Madness of King George*), who wrote the script at the tender age of 89, displays a nice affinity for lovelorn people in this ode to those whose lives are derailed by war. He and his touching 1916-set storyline give director Nicholas Hytner (*The Madness of King George*) the tools he needs to make a viable historical war/drama/romance set in a rural Yorkshire, England. That's where locals have made the town choir the heart of their village. A musical group that's being torn apart as its young men's destinies are leading to the front lines.



Photo via NNPA

When the resident choir-master leaves to join the fight, the board, headed by Alderman Duxbury (Roger Allam), the resident but aging tenor, hunts for a new one. Against their better judgement, they settle on the controversial conductor Dr. Guthrie (Ralph Fiennes, *Conclave*). Controversial? There's gossip. "He's been working in Germany!" "Treachery!" "He's an Atheist!" Hey, he's also difficult and has never been married—who would have him?

Though the group and their new musical director were set to present Bach's *St. Mathew Passion*, they decide to eschew the German composer's work. After all, they're fighting *Deutschland*, so why exalt them. Guthrie talks them into performing Edward Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. He's British, it's safer—though a difficult piece. That's the plan.

Though plans are what god laughs at.

The push and pull between the board and Guthrie almost never stop. One of the biggest bones of contention is that the elderly Duxbury wants to do the tenor solo. His will and his voice aren't matching up. In a script that judiciously delves into the gossip lives of choir members, watching them cavort is almost as much fun as watching them create their musical event.

One teenage stud, Mitch (Shaun Thomas), pursues a Salvation Army singer (Amara Okereke). Another one, Ellis (Taylor Uttley), flirts with a young woman, Bella (Emily Fairn), whose boyfriend Clyde (Jacob Dudman) went off to war and hasn't been heard of since. The task of another young man, Lofty (Oliver Briscoe), is to deliver death-notice telegrams from the king to war wives

who become widows. The three boys are too young to join the fight and are just now starting to feel their manhood.

In the forefront is that "let's put on a show" energy that sustains folks in the worst of times. Like that in *The Greatest Showman*. All involved are well directed by Hytner, who manages to mix the drama, comedy, romance and fear of failure into a nice cup of hot English tea. The period is set well by its smalltown feel. Like no one can sneeze without others crosstown hearing about it. Credit the production design (Peter Francis) for the homey cottages, the costume designer (Jenny Beavan) for the clothes that fit the characters. When the choir isn't singing in all its glory, the

musical score (George Fenton) fills in nicely.

All eyes are justly so on Fiennes, and he doesn't disappoint. His Guthrie is a stern, hard-to-get-to-know-him director who has the success of the mass and its performance on his shoulders. The script tiptoes around his sexuality, which is likely what happened back during WWI days. Okereke as the soprano who has to learn to trust herself has a winning spirit. Dudman as the soldier who comes home missing his arm and finding out that his lover is gone too has the most pivotal role. The way the character is written, he is less prone to showing his anger and disappointment yet blossoms as he throws himself into the choir. That's his refuge. A refuge

they all share.

The storyline is dotted with enough ups and downs to keep audiences guessing. Can they put on the show? Can they not? There is something so sacred and right about hearing voices in a church sing in exaltation that by films' end, viewers will be ready for the last chord. And audiences who like history, films like *Downton Abbey* and music will love the finale in a special way.

The *Choral* is a salve for these times, too. Or as Dr. Guthrie puts it, "Life is shit, so sing!"

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

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

OBAMA, from Page 3

would bend inevitably toward progress," he told the audience at the O2. "That complacency left us unprepared."

As Trump wields federal power to punish dissent, the

former president's words carry the weight of both warning and legacy. But even as Obama reasserts his influence, the party he once led remains uncertain and divided—still ignoring the

independent Black media that carried it through generations, and still searching for leadership that matches the gravity of this moment. Obama may have left office eight years ago, but in 2025, he appears to be the last Democrat still leading.


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The Hollywood Black Film Festival is Proud to Announce Keke Palmer and Bill Duke Will Serve as Festival Ambassadors

(Black PR Wire) Hollywood, CA – The Hollywood Black Film Festival (HBFF) has named Keke Palmer and Bill Duke to serve as Ambassadors for this year's festival. As Ambassadors, both Palmer and Duke will offer creators an array of experience and guidance to help further themselves as better storytellers in the industry. This year's festival will take place October 15-19, 2025.



The festival will make its home at the W Hotel in Hollywood, and screenings will be held at the Harmony



Gold Theater in Los Angeles.

Keke Palmer is an Emmy Award-winning actress,

Photos via Black PR Wire (2)

singer, producer, author, and television personality whose talent knows no bounds. A fearless trailblazer in entertainment, fashion, and beauty, she is the recipient of 2025 NAACP Entertainer of the Year Award and is the host of NBC's, revival of the iconic game show "Password," and co-hosted "GMA3: Strahan, Sara & Keke." She also made history as the first Black actress to

play Cinderella in Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella on Broadway. Palmer is also a powerhouse in music, releasing two successful EPs, under her own Big Boss Entertainment label. A true mogul, Palmer made waves in 2024, as Chief Brand Officer for Revlon's legacy haircare brand, Crème of Nature, becoming its first-ever ambassador in an executive role. "I'm beyond thrilled to be part

of the exciting relaunch of the Hollywood Black Film Festival! As Festival Ambassador, I fully embrace their mission to empower and celebrate bold creatives who push boundaries and create without limits—values that align perfectly with what we do at Big Boss Entertainment," explains Palmer. Join me in celebrating the return of HBFF and

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COWBOYS, from Page 8

rushers," defensive tackle Kenny Clark said. "Like I've been saying the previous weeks, our offense has been humming, if we can get some stops and get more teams to truly just drop back, you're going to

see more numbers like that. We've got to just keep doing that."

Clark's impact may not jump out on the stat sheet, but the former UCLA Bruin was disruptive all afternoon and had half a sack.

Dallas recorded a season-high five sacks, 14 quarterback hits and a forced fumble.

"It's just been a long road, and we've been continuously just getting better," Clark said. "It all starts with practice, with how we walk through and every-

thing. Just our process of what we're doing. We've just got to keep that going and keep holding each other accountable. We've got a lot of playmakers, and the more we do that, we can start making more plays on the field."

One of the playmakers

Clark was referencing is defensive end James Houston, who finished with 1.5 sacks Sunday and currently leads the team with 3.5.

The Cowboys did however give up 180 rushing yards, including 135 to Breece Hall. With it being their first game of the sea-

son allowing 100 or more yards to a single rusher, let's give them the benefit of the doubt—for now.

The Cowboys are scheduled to face the Carolina Panthers at noon Sunday at Bank of America Stadium as they look to continue their positive momentum.



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VACCINE, from Page 1

these viruses, as children have been quietly protected from them for decades, said Maldonado.

Yet, these four diseases can all be very serious. Before vaccines, measles caused about 500 deaths and 48,000 hospitalizations per year. Large outbreaks of rubella, last occurring in the 1960s, caused infertility, thousands of miscarriages and congenital rubella in over 20,000 infants, with potential deafness, blindness and heart defects. Finally, varicella, or chickenpox, can lead to shingles later in adulthood.

"Most people don't think these diseases exist anymore, but they do exist, said Maldonado. We are just protected by vaccines."

All of them spread very quickly in schools. Yet, the data behind the MMRV vaccine shows over 90% protection after two doses, mainly defending for life.

Some doctors have growing concerns over the billions of dollars it will cost to produce the new, separate vaccines, Dr. Sanjay Gupta suggesting it will likely be the public that ends up footing the bill, MSNBC reported.

The less stressful and equally effective combination vaccine had been the choice for many parents, while others chose separate shots in the first dose to minimize the risk of seizure. Yet, as Maldonado pointed out, febrile seizures resolve on their own and do not cause permanent damage, this after nearly 20 years of monitoring by the medical industry, she said.

Now, due to the spread of misinformation, we have lower vaccination rates af-

ter measles had been completely eliminated in the U.S. in 2000. Recently, they have started to reappear, said Maldonado, last year with 191 cases requiring hospitalization, and 99 of those in Texas.

Given current vaccination rates, a 2025 Stanford University modeling study found measles will be a normal circulating virus within five years, and polio within 10, said Maldonado, this, though a 5% increase in vaccinations would drastically lower those numbers.

"I think part of the issue is people don't remember these diseases, or they never saw them," said Maldonado.

Anti-vax has been around even since Benjamin Franklin, she said, and he regretted it because smallpox killed his son. There is no credible study linking measles or any other vaccines to autism, she reassured, although studies were done in millions of children all over the world. Though studies questioned the use of Thimerosal as a preservative, no link was found, John Hopkins University reported, and autism rates have continued to rise since discontinuance of the preservative.

Last month, President Trump also advocated for the hepatitis B vaccine to be given at age 12 rather than infancy. Trump suggested that since the disease is transmitted sexually, babies do not need it. His statement, dangerously misleading, puts children at risk for a very serious disease, which can lead to cirrhoses, liver failure and cancer. Transmission is

most commonly mother-to-child, Bonacini explained, a mother being highly viremic, and a child having no immunity.

Hepatitis B vaccine protection is potent, especially in babies, said Bonacini, 97 percent developing titers after only two vaccines, a Chinese study showed. In the U.S., acute hepatitis B has decreased by 60% as people continue to get vaccinated at a young age. Evidence the vaccine prevents cancer is also very strong, given in the first few months of life, said Bonacini.

Similar concerns surround COVID vaccines, said Dr. Chin-Hong. Many insurance companies will continue to cover mRNA vaccines because they are cost effective. Yet, a growing number of barriers are preventing people from getting it. This includes the common notion that the average case of COVID will apply to everyone. Really, COVID has become two separate diseases, said Chin-Hong. Most people will have some discomfort, but it won't lead to a hospital visit. For others, "it's like it's 2020, and they are not doing well," he said.

There are four groups who should be concerned, he explained. The first is people 65 and older, regardless of health condition. With about 50,000 deaths from COVID in 2024, the typical patient was 75, with a lot of vaccines early on but failing to get updates in the last year or two.

The second group is pregnant people, he said. Because the immune system gets a little less reactive due to the presence of the baby, a pregnant per-

son is relatively immune compromised regardless of their health. This has resulted in a lot of bad outcomes, warned Chin-Hong, at just 25 or 30 years and with no health problems. We can't vaccinate under six months, he said. The antibodies must pass through the placenta to protect the unborn baby.

The third group is the very young, he added, with babies under two hospitalized at a similar rate to those 65 and older.

The fourth is people of any age with a comorbidity. These people have a very high risk of COVID, said Chin-Hong, and they need to be reminded every

year that their system needs to be reminded.

As Neuman pointed out, inactivity is considered a valid comorbidity. "I see a bunch of people sitting in chairs, he said, and I am also sitting on a chair."

Added Chin-Hong: "We have to move from a place of seeing that COVID vaccines are not prohibited to one where we actually do recommend it very, very strongly for some people."

Yet, amidst all the new questions and all the new voices, the new CDC guidelines make getting vaccinated more complicated. Having to talk to a doctor is much harder than just going to Walgreens,

said Chin-Hong. About 70% of people drop by the pharmacy to get their shots, while 30 to 40% don't even have access to a regular doctor. Variabilities in requirements and confusion surrounding vaccines create additional barriers, Chin-Hong said. Plus, the guidelines are vague—What is informed decision-making? he asked.

Alliances are forming across the country, vowing to stick with medical science. This includes a group of West Coast states and Hawaii, some East Coast states, and other states in between, like Illinois and

See DOCTORS, Page 13



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Daydreaming Can Lead to Epiphanies, Greater Career Purpose

Newswise — The legendary tale of the business leader who had an epiphany that fundamentally changed his or her professional journey — turning hobbies, small observations or frustrations into billion-dollar ideas — is well known. Julia Child writing her first cookbook at 50 and becoming a famous chef; Sara Blakely channeling frustration with

undergarments to develop Spanx; Jeff Bezos leaving a successful Wall Street investment career to get in on the booming growth of the internet ... the list goes on.

Epiphanies — sudden realizations that transform how people see themselves — have the potential to infuse people's personal and professional lives with a renewed sense of purpose. The clarity one experiences

from an epiphany often brings about conviction and newfound motivation.

Sometimes, a significant life event triggers an epiphany, such as a 9/11 survivor deciding to pursue her lifelong dream of going to nursing school. But other times, they arise unexpectedly and suddenly.

"For years, I was fascinated by the phenomenon of epiphanies, but I wasn't

sure how to study them, and I found the challenges that go with pursuing a new and uncharted line of research a bit daunting," said Erik Dane, a professor of organizational behavior at Olin Business School at Washington University in St. Louis.

"I'm very glad that I ultimately decided to take a leap into this unexplored territory. Epiphanies are

one of the most memorable and impactful psychological events that people experience in their lives — and my research has helped me understand when and why people experience epiphanies and how epiphanies shape the ways in which people navigate their careers, gain self-confidence, collaborate with colleagues, and serve as leaders in organizations."

In his most recent study, published in the Journal of Management, Dane and co-authors — Markus Baer at Olin; Hannes Leroy and Aleksandra Wrobel at Erasmus University in the Netherlands; and Richard Swartz at Rice University — set out to study how one could cultivate these transformational opportunities

See DREAM, Page 13

FESTIVAL, from Page 10

its incredible commitment to amplifying the rich, global influence of our culture, storytelling, and creativity!"

Bill Duke is an entertainment icon. He is an actor, director and producer in Hollywood with more than 40 years of experience on-screen and behind the camera. Throughout the course

of his career, he has been recognized by prestigious leaders and institutions for his work in television and film. Duke recently, he appeared in Showtime's hit limited series, "Gaslit" with Julia Roberts and Sean Penn, and on MAX, in "No Sudden Move" with Don Cheadle and Matt Damon.

Duke's directorial de-

but was in 1991 for "A Rage in Harlem," and was an official selection of the Cannes Film Festival. Other directing projects include, "Sister Act 2", "Deep Cover", "Hoodlum", "The Cemetery Club", "Not Easily Broken", and the documentaries "Dark Girls" and "Light Girls." He is also the published author of Bill Duke: My 40-Year Career on Screen

and Behind the Camera. Duke says, "It's an honor to return to the Hollywood Black Film Festival as both an Advisory Board member

and Festival Ambassador." This festival has long been a powerful champion for the Black creative community, uplifting both emerging and

established filmmakers. I'm excited to support its continued mission of celebration, empowerment, and excellence in storytelling."

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DREAM, from Page 12

to gain a heightened sense of purpose in one's career, rather than waiting for lightning to strike.

Their findings indicate that people can increase their potential for experiencing especially strong work-related epiphanies — epiphanies that substantially transform how people view themselves vis-à-vis their work or career — by engaging in a playful type of mind wandering known as “problem-solving daydreaming.”

Through an initial study of 155 master's in business administration (MBA) students and alumni — and two follow-up studies of business school students who were aspiring leaders — the researchers found that people who engage

in problem-solving daydreaming are more likely to experience work-related epiphanies of greater strength. This is especially true for people who have a compulsion to solve problems that defy easy, convenient solutions. People who possess these particular psychological characteristics are naturally curious and feel compelled to gain new knowledge. When their mind wanders, they tend to reflect upon and seek solutions for problems in their lives.

It's the combination of these two processes — problem-solving daydreaming and feeling compelled to solve problems — that makes people apt to experience especially strong epiphanies, the re-

searchers found.

“Mind wandering is a particularly useful way to solve problems because it redirects attention away from existing solutions and helps people engage in imaginative thinking, entertaining brand new possibilities,” said Baer, vice dean of executive education at Olin and a professor of organizational behavior. “Compared to working on problems in a more deliberate, formal manner, problem-solving daydreaming can be especially freewheeling and playful — qualities useful for solving problems.”

“When you daydream, you're more likely to let go of assumptions — including unhelpful or outdated beliefs about yourself — and to think in flexible and innovative ways. And this

opens the door to experiencing strong epiphanies,” Dane said.

Cultivating epiphanies

This line of research has practical applications for us all, Dane explained.

“By giving ourselves permission to reflect imaginatively on the current state of our career or life — and by prioritizing the importance of working through whatever tensions or confusions we might be experiencing in this regard — we can experience especially strong epiphanies and attain a heightened sense of career purpose,” he said.

Professional workshops and individual coaching sessions can help. In one of the studies reported in the article, the researchers conducted a “legacy workshop” with nearly 150 MBA students.

DOCTORS, from Page 11

Missouri.

Though so many voices may be confusing, said Chin-Hong, these voices may mitigate what's coming from others, like the CDC.

The divide is getting bigger because there's a lot of misinformation out there,

added Neuman.

“I think that a lot of what's going on here is myth-making. There's a spinning of wonderful stories, or terrible stories, and honestly, a lot of people are gonna get hurt because of it,” he said.

When the Department of

Health and Human Services pulled about \$500 million awarded for mRNA research, it stopped the work that would have helped treat diseases that are likely only curable by mRNA technology, Neuman said.

Lastly, a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll may offer hope, finding Americans trust their per-

sonal doctors more than the CDC and federal officials, said Chin-Hung. While 80% believe in school vaccine mandates, over 90% still believe in vaccines, he said. Despite changing staff and shifting government policy, it seems most Americans are still looking to science for their answers.

MEDIA, from Page 7

institution that once defended its very humanity now fights to keep its doors open, as they've remained on the sidelines.

“Right now in America, we're under attack like we've never been in our lifetime,” Ben Crump said at the Black Press' Annual National Leadership Awards in Washington. “So now more than ever, we have to make sure that we have institutions that are disseminating information to our people, being

the clarion call for us to be ready to stand up for our children and our communities. And nobody carries the Black narrative and the Black information to Black communities more passionately than the Black Press.” Crump pledged \$50,000 to support the Black Press, structured as \$10,000 a year over five years. “Everybody got to give a little more when they can. If you've been blessed, you got to pass the blessing on. You just can't keep it to

yourself,” Crump stated. “Because right now the Black Press is needed more than ever before.”

The institution he spoke of has never been an abstraction. In Tulsa in 1921, white mobs torched Black-owned newspapers to silence the truth. During Jim Crow, the Black Press guided families through terror and carried the voices of leaders who would shape the nation.

Today, in a quieter but no less dangerous way, the Black Press is again under assault. It is being starved

of the resources needed to survive, while Black women publishers carry the dual burden of keeping their papers alive under policies that have driven their unemployment to historic highs.

The Gallup survey shows how far the nation has fallen. “Confidence in the mass media is historically low,” the authors wrote. “With fewer than three in ten Americans now placing trust in newspapers, television, and radio to report the news fully, fairly, and accurately.”



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If She Cannot Fix It, It's Not Broken

By Dr. James L. Snyder

Life has its many ups and downs. There are some weeks when there are more downs than ups. But if I didn't have a down, I probably wouldn't appreciate an up.

This past week was one of those down weeks. One day, we lost our electricity for maybe six hours, my printer died on me and some scammer tried to get money out of me by telling me my daughter was in jail and needed bail money.

I'm not sure if it can get any worse, but I'm going to keep my eyes open. Fortunately, the electricity came back, and the scammer, well, let's say he didn't get my money.

The printer was the worst thing that happened. I've had my printer for about six years, and I use it just about every day. I never anticipated that it would just completely die on me one day. But, it did.

I ordered a new printer, and it came on Thursday. My whole day was committed to that printer. It was a new printer with all of the latest upgraded gadgets. Personally, I don't like new things with all the confusing gadgets they have. However, I needed to get a new printer, and so I did.

I set up the printer with Wi-Fi, and it worked very well. The next step was to connect it with my computer. The printer isn't worth anything unless it's con-

nected to my computer, so I can print out the work I'm doing. At the time, I thought the worst job would be to set up the Wi-Fi for the printer. I was in for a surprise.

For several hours, I worked trying to connect my printer to my computer. I went through everything I could possibly think of to connect the two. If I can't connect the printer to my computer, what good is it really?

After several hours of unproductive work, I was at the point of giving up.

Just then, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came into my office and asked how my printer was working.

"Well," I stammered, "I can't connect it to my computer. I've tried all morning and it's not working at all. I don't know what to do."

She looked at me and said something I wasn't really expecting to hear, "Let me see, maybe I can fix it for you."

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has many identities, and one of them is Miss-Fixer-Upper. Everybody knows that there is not a problem she cannot fix.

I recall about five years ago, the bumper on my truck was loose, and I couldn't fix it. I was about to take it to the garage and have the mechanic fix it. I really didn't want to spend a couple hundred dollars but I didn't have much of a choice.

As I was pondering this, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came out and said, "What's the problem?"

So I explained my problem to her and told her I was about to take it to the garage.

She said, "Let me look at it and see if I can help."

She looked at it for a few moments and then said, "I believe I can fix this, let me go and get something from my craft room."

In a few minutes, she came out with a large paper clip and put it under the bumper, hooking it to the truck. Then she said, "There, I fixed it so you don't have to take it to the garage." That was five years ago, and the paperclip is still working.

I did not think she could fix anything with my printer. But, being the veteran husband that I am, I allowed her to at least look at it. She sat down at my computer, and I walked out to the kitchen to get a cup of coffee, knowing that there was no way she could fix it.

Walking back in with my coffee, she said, "There, it's fixed. Try and see if it prints."

I chuckled; knowing that there was no way she could fix that. I had my computer pull up a document and sent it to the printer.

Wouldn't you know, that document started printing.

"I don't think you will have any trouble with your printer now. But if you do just let me know."

Every time I print something on that printer, I think about The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage who made it possible.

This past year, we celebrated our 54th wedding anniversary. In all those years, I can't think of one problem she hasn't been able to fix. If she can't fix it, then it's not broken. If it's broken, she can fix it. How she does that is above my pay scale.

Pondering this, I came to one conclusion. The only thing she hasn't been able to fix is me. Maybe one day she'll fix me, but then people may not recognize me.

As I was printing a few things, I thought of a verse of scripture.

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3).

There is no problem or

difficulty in my life that

God cannot fix, if I let him.

That's the problem. I need to turn everything over to God and allow Him to do in my life what He is great in doing.

Everything God fixes in my life reveals His amazing

grace.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamessnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamessnyderministries.com.

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The Way of the Cross



Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
Editor

"...come down from the cross and save yourself!"
Mark 15:30.

God calls each of us to the cross in order for all the things that are alive in our flesh to die. Daily we are invited by the enemy of our souls to love ourselves and come away from the cross.

What are the signs that you have come off the cross? When you are overly concerned with appearance, you have come off the cross. When the words of others cause you to react and defend, you have come off the cross.

The way of the cross means letting go and letting God have His way in every matter, every relationship, every outcome.

When God starts to deal with the old nature He heads straight for the center of all that you hold most dear. Allow Him to bring you to the cross in the very center of who you are.

Don't grumble and become agitated when the process starts. Silence and peace will help you much more than being upset. To bear the cross simply, without letting your self-love add all sorts of dilemmas to it, will make your life easier.

The apostle Paul sums up the way of the cross: "For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live

as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame."

Philippians 3:18-21.

When you let the cross have its way in you, you will become an overcomer. "How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?"

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?"

Psalm 13:1-2.

Have you ever heard someone jokingly say, "It's not easy being me?" This expression is poking fun at their unique personality or challenges they face in life. Well, it wasn't easy being King David.

His life was a life of extreme highs and extreme lows. He was a shepherd, a political leader, a builder, a prophet, a businessman, a warrior, a lover, a giver, a murderer and a worshiper.

He must have been criticized by others as being hypocritical in his early career. In each of these roles he achieved things for God but he also failed God on many occasions. He had a creative-type personality, which is often very passionate with many mood swings.

We see this side of him when he unabashedly danced before the Lord in front of his subjects almost naked. **2 Samuel 6:14.**

When David wrote his psalms he was honest about what he was feeling. When he feared his enemies, he expressed it. When he could not understand why God was silent, he expressed it as in the psalm above.

However, David never stayed in the place of despair. He often ended his psalms like this one. "But I trust in Your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me." **Psalm 13:5-6.**

David chooses to focus on what God has done for him, not what He has not done. If you are waiting for a breakthrough with God,

be honest with Him about your hopes and dreams.

However, also affirm your faith and trust in Him to accomplish His purposes through your life. Be an overcomer.

Because it is, "In the Valleys I Grow." Sometimes life seems hard to bear, full of trouble, sorrow and woe. It's then I have to remember that it's "In the Valleys I Grow."

If I always stayed on the mountaintop and never experienced pain, I would never appreciate God's love and would be living in vain.

I do not always under-

See TARPLEY, Page 16

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NDG Bookshelf: 'A Thousand Ways to Die' is an eye-opener

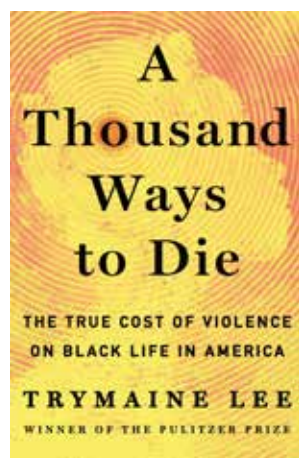
By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Face it: some scores can never truly be settled.

You can try tit-for-tat, you can scheme and plan, but making things even? Not a chance; the other guy is probably scheming, too, so full pay-back ain't happenin'. And besides, why let revenge live in your head? Life's too short, you just can't do it – and especially, as in the new book "A Thousand Ways to Die" by Trymaine Lee, you can't do it with a gun.

Eight years ago, Trymaine Lee almost died.

Fortunately, the blood clot in his body, the "wid-



ow-maker," was caught in time but the whole episode affected his then-young daughter, who continued for some time to beg for stories about it, and to ask about life and death.

Lee didn't always know what to say.

"I struggle," he says, "to answer why things are the way that they are, especially when it comes to Black folks like us."

Death by violence happened in his own family: in 1923, a young great-uncle left on horseback to run an errand and was never seen alive again, which "ripped a hole in the family" that resonated for generations. Lynchings were common then, as was Jim Crow and so "Black folks... began leaving the South en masse..."

Guns, he says, were "central to the violence"

then, on both sides.

Violence followed Black soldiers to Vietnam, and home again. It went to prison with some people, most often, men. Lee himself almost got in trouble once for a "twelve-dollar toy gun from Walmart" that looked realistic.

Black funeral directors learned how to hold open-casket funerals, as death stalked Black Americans for not learning to swim because Jim Crow kept them from it. Cancer caught others in unequal numbers. Some were wrapped up in "the deadly grind of the drug trade," while "innocent victims [are] caught in

the cross fire."

"We still bleed," he says. "... yet salvation from America's violence has remained out of our grasp, like trying to put shape to the wind."

On the surface, you may think there's not much new to say about violence, when talking about Black life in general. In many ways, it's been a part of American life for so long, it's almost some sort of wrong-headed new normal. And yet, read "A Thousand Ways to Die" and your thinking is going to twist, and twist again in a whole new direction.

While author Trymaine Lee's main focus is on gun

violence in the past century or so, he diverts readers' attention sometimes. Don't forget this. Remember that. Here's a story for you, here's something else and as Lee totes them up, one by one, each point shows hidden costs attached to violent acts.

Readers will be hit hard by the fact that it's a long list.

This is the kind of book that your mind will carry with you for days, and it begs to be shared and discussed. You owe it to your community, in fact, to talk about "A Thousand Ways to Die" because this powerful book scores.

TARPLEY, from Page 15

stand why things happen as they do, but I'm very sure of one thing, the Lord will

see me through. My valleys are nothing when I picture Christ on the cross;

He went through the valley of death, His victory is Satan's loss.

Forgive me Lord for complaining when I'm

feeling so very low. Just give me a gentle reminder that's it's "In The Valleys I Grow."

Continue to strengthen

me Lord and use my life each day to share Your love with others and help them find their way.

(Editor's Note: This col-

umn originally ran in October 2014. Though we lost Sister Tarpley in May 2024, we share her words every week in our print edition.)



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