

One year of Trump: What we’ve lost and what we’ve learned



Bass

COMMENTARY

By By Rep. Karen Bass
D-Calif.

The year leading up to his inauguration in 2017, as the Republican presidential nominee, Donald Trump espoused senseless, baseless and ultimately empty assertions about the state of black Americans and our communities.

“What the hell do you have to lose?” he screamed in front of a predominantly white crowd in a small, predominantly white suburb of Lansing, Michigan.

After Trump was inaugurated, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) found it prudent to answer his question. In March, the CBC Executive Committee, led by our Chairman Cedric L. Richmond (D-La.), presented Trump with a 130-page policy document entitled, “We Have A Lot To Lose: Solutions to Advance Black Families in the 21st Century.”

The document, which was compiled by the entire 49-member Caucus, outlined policy solutions down to the bill text for issues facing our communities. Voting rights, criminal justice reform, economic justice, education, health care, immigration – these were just some of the topics we presented to continue our progress.

Unfortunately, these are the issues that Trump and his administration have chosen to ignore. The president, who has not commented on the document since we presented it to him, obviously has had other ideas, almost as if he wanted to answer his own question in his first year, to show us what we can lose.

The truth is that in this first year, we’ve lost a lot.

Almost immediately after being elected, Trump established the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity and appointed a known vote suppressor to lead it. The commission was designed to intimidate voters and Trump – because of political and legal pressure – recently decided to dissolve it into the Department of Homeland Security.

Throughout the past year, Trump has stacked the federal courts with judges with nothing short of scandalous records when it comes to voting rights. Among his nominee group was Thomas Farr, who helped lawmakers draft and defend a 2013 law that the Fourth Circuit Court of North Carolina ruled targeted African-American voters “with almost surgical precision.”

On the criminal justice front, Trump has used the Department of Justice to embrace mass incarceration and shy away from transparent policing. One example of this is an FBI report published last August entitled, “Black Identity Extremists Likely Motivated to Target Law Enforcement Officers.” One problem with the report is that the term “Black Identity Extremists” is an invented group that does not exist. There are no black people organized to kill law enforcement officers. When I asked Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and FBI

Trump
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School Choice rally held as fate of bills remains unclear

By Jeff Amy
Associated Press

Mississippi’s elected leaders again Tuesday voiced support for giving parents the choice to pay for private schools using public money, but it’s unclear if such proposals will advance in this year’s Legislature.

Gov. Phil Bryant, Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves and House Speaker Philip Gunn, all Republicans, spoke Tuesday at a school choice rally attended by hundreds of students.

“It’s your civil right, your civil liberty, to take your child and enroll them in a school of your choice and not one that the federal or state government tells you to put your children in,” Bryant told attendees.

Conservative groups that organized the rally are pushing for movement on Senate Bill 2623

and House Bill 1339, which would expand Mississippi’s program that now sends some students who need special education services to private school. The bills would prioritize use of the money by students with disabilities, but also allow students without disabilities to attend, prioritizing those from lower- and middle-income families. In all cases, the aid would be offered to students including those who are just entering kindergarten and first grade who haven’t previously attended public school. The number of slots would start at about 2,400 next year, rise to 4,800 the year after that, and then rise by 1 percent of public school enrollment each year.

Some public school advocates oppose the bills, saying they would drain money away from

public schools and send children into private schools that wouldn’t be publicly rated on quality.

“They use words such as ‘choice,’” said Rep. Orlando Paden, a Clarksdale Democrat who watched Tuesday’s rally from the Capitol’s fourth floor. “You have a choice to make the public schools great.”

Gunn and Senate Education Committee Chairman Gray Tollison both say they’re waiting to see if there’s enough support to move forward with bills, which must pass out of their originating committees by Jan. 30.

“Like anything else, you’ve got to have the votes,” said Gunn, of Clinton.

Grant Callen is president of Empower Mississippi, a school choice group that helped organize Tuesday’s rally. He expressed

confidence that the bill would move forward, at least in the Senate.

“I feel good about where we are,” he said.

Speeches focused in part on some of the Legislature’s past achievements, such as allowing charter schools and creating the current, smaller special needs scholarship program. Reeves focused on the Legislature’s current effort to rewrite the public school funding formula. Many choice advocates support that change because it links money to each child, which could make it easier to carry to private schools.

“For me personally, it’s not about funding a school system,” Reeves said. “It’s not about even funding a school. It’s about funding every single child in Mississippi.”

CBC chair predicts Democratic victory because of Trump chaos

By Hazel Trice Edney
TriceEdneyWire.com

U. S. Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-La.), chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, has vowed to “bust our butts” to win back the House for a Democratic majority in the Nov. 6, 2018 election.

“I think it’s a real possibility. For the first time since I’ve been in Congress I think it’s a real possibility,” he said in a recent interview with the Trice Edney News Wire.

Richmond predicts a Democratic win mainly because of the chaos and reputed bigotry and racial insensitivity of the Trump administration.

He listed gains for black America that the Trump administration has attempted to turn back.

“Look at Jeff Sessions in the Attorney General’s office rolling back the war on drugs; rolling back the fight against voter suppression; maybe even enhancing voter suppression,” he said. “When you look at the president’s comments – that’s not a person who’s

trying to be a partner with the Black Caucus nor appreciate African-American issues.”

The CBC executive committee leaders met with President Trump March 22, but declined a second meeting saying their concerns fell on deaf ears.

“We presented a 130-page policy paper. And we never got a response; nor to the eight follow up letters we got talking about issues. So until there’s some substantive issues I can’t see it,” he said.

Trump has also asked to meet with the entire Caucus, but Richmond says that’s totally out of the question.

“We’re not here to drink wine, eat cheese and have a reception. We’re here to advance policies,” Richmond said. “The Caucus overwhelmingly; almost unanimously voted not to go. Only one or two people. ... We’ve gotten no real outreach from this president.”

Richmond told of how Democrats have had to fight back by making policy.

Richmond
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Richmond

Open letter to Hon. Phil Bryant, Governor of the State of Miss., Hon. Chokwe Antar Lumumba, Mayor, City of Jackson, Carey M. Wright, State Superintendent of Education, Freddrick Murray, Superintendent, Jackson Public Schools

Dear Sirs & Ma’am,

Greetings. I write this open letter with both mixed emotions and compassion as I come before you as a former student of Jackson Public Schools (Callaway High, 1992), a former resident of the City of Jackson, and an advocate for education for “All Children.”

My name is Walter Meir Collier and I currently reside in Houston, Texas. I just returned home January 23 after being in Jackson the last three days on personal business. After hearing family, friends, former classmates and the community talk about the current

water pipe situation, I left Jackson with mixed emotions because all I could do was think of how the current situation, whether due to Mother Nature, time or various other conditions, have now made a significant impact on the education, safety, health and well-being of the children enrolled in the Jackson Public School District.

Yes...I understand that it impacts all in the City of Jackson, however the purpose of this letter is to focus on the children that attend Jackson Public Schools and offer potential short-term solutions for the next four to five

months as the priority should also be the education, health, safety and well-being of these children.

High school seniors are doing everything that they can to ensure that they stay the course and graduate on time with the hopes of getting into colleges and universities. The current conditions from the water crisis could cause them to miss days at school and put them further and further behind. This puts them at a disadvantage with peers when they do enter college.

The same thing applies to our kindergarteners trying to move on

to first grade, and the ones trying to move from elementary to middle school as well as from middle to high school.

The point that I would like to get across to “all” is the pipe situation and water situation can’t be fixed in a day, weeks, months and probably not this year. What can be fixed or created is a “now” or short-term solution in a four to five-month contingency plan that would focus on allowing the children of JPS to finish out this school with the help of our neigh-

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JSU grad is the first from hometown high school to finish college

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Book Review: Libba: The Magnificent Musical Life of Elizabeth Cotton

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Lillian Mariah McLaurin-Stringer

April 1, 1933 - January 14, 2018

Lillian Mariah McLaurin-Stringer, fondly called "Baby," was a native of Rankin County, Mississippi. Born April 1, 1933, to Noah Womack McLaurin and Mary E. Walker McLaurin, she was the third child of nine siblings. She was preceded in death by the love of her life, husband, M.R. Stringer, her parents, and brothers Noah, Robert and Willie McLaurin.

Lillian grew up in the Taylorsville Community where she was nurtured by a loving family, community and church. She accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior at an early age and actively participated and served in her church and community from that time forward. A precocious child, Lillian had a love for reading, writing, public speaking and singing. She used all of these gifts to the glory of God.

After graduating with honors from Lanier High School in Jackson, Mississippi, Lillian enrolled in Jackson College (now Jackson State University) where she received a Bachelor of Science Degree in English Education. She later received certification in library science. Lillian's love for education led her to pursue a Master's Degree at Wayne State in Lansing, Michigan because at that time, African Americans were not allowed to pursue advanced degrees at any of the Mississippi state funded universities. However, Lillian returned home when Mississippi College opened its enrollment to African-American students. Lillian went on to receive a Master's Degree in counseling from Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi.

After completing her undergraduate degree, Lillian married the man of her dreams, Captain M. R. Stringer of



McLaurin-Stringer

Brandon, Mississippi. The couple relocated to Jackson and made their home in the Westside community where they reared their sons, Michael and Trent.

She united with the New Traveler's Rest Missionary Baptist Church under the pastorate of the late Rev. R. G. Bolden and served with great passion, commitment and dedication, giving of

herself, her gifts, talents, time and treasures until her health would no longer allow.

A master teacher, counselor and all around dedicated educator, Lillian was first employed as an English teacher at Carter High School in Brandon, Mississippi where she taught for ten years. After the birth of her youngest son,

Trent, Lillian began working for Jackson Public Schools and returned to her alma mater, Lanier Junior-Senior High School in Jackson, Mississippi where she taught English and served as faculty sponsor for numerous extracurricular auxiliaries. Lillian remained at Lanier until the integration of Jackson Public Schools, at which time she was transferred to Peoples Junior High School. At Peoples, Lillian's career blossomed as a teacher and guidance counselor until her retirement.

Although she retired from the school district, Lillian became even more active in her public speaking ministry, Christian missionary groups, Christian education groups and in music ministry at New Traveler's Rest. As a member of New Traveler's Rest Missionary Baptist Church, Lillian served in numerous capacities. She served as church treasurer, leader of the Missionary Society, a member on the Mother Board, a member of the choir and any other capacity in which she was needed.

Lillian was a prolific speaker and songstress. Lillian was honored to be asked to speak at many churches throughout the state as a guest speaker and soloist. Those who were blessed to hear her speak about the love of Christ would often hear her sing her signature song, "Without God."

A loving wife, mother, and career woman, Lillian's walk and talk were reflective of God's light and love, which flowed through her and from her. She was not perfect, but she succeeded in her quest to be as much like Jesus in her actions and her deeds. She epitomized the Proverbs 31 Woman.

On Sunday, January 14, 2018, surrounded by her loving and devoted sons

and their wives, Lillian made her transition from earth to eternity. Forever remembering her with love, respect and admiration are her sons, Michael Ray (Frances) Stringer of Jackson, Mississippi; Manual Trent (Edna) Stringer of Brandon, Mississippi; step-daughter Wanda Forman of Jackson, Mississippi; grandchildren Michael Ray (Shekiele) Stringer Jr. of Atlanta, Georgia; Mariah Christina Hazel Stringer, of Brandon, Mississippi, Andre' Jamari Stringer of Jackson, Mississippi, Cameron Trenese Bene' Stringer of Jackson, Mississippi, a special chosen grandson, Rev. Willie McCullum (Evelyn) of Jackson, Mississippi; one great grandchild Michael Reed Stringer of Atlanta, Georgia; three sisters, Emma Anderson of Madison, Mississippi, Shirley (Rueben) Taylor of Jackson, Mississippi; Barbara (James) Warren of Brandon, Mississippi; three brothers Oscar McLaurin of Jackson, Mississippi, Arthur (Mary Frances) McLaurin of Brandon, Mississippi; James Austin (Marilyn) McLaurin of Jackson, Mississippi.

There was no separation between Lillian and her husband's family; she never viewed them as in-laws, but as sisters and brothers she gained when she married M.R. Therefore, she also leaves to cherish her memory, Elbert (Annette) Stringer of Brandon, Mississippi, James (Mable) Stringer of Carson, California; Dorothy McLaurin of Jackson, Mississippi; Joan Stringer of Columbus, Georgia and Ruby Lee Stringer of Detroit, Michigan. To cherish her memory, Lillian leaves dozens of nieces and nephews, scores of cousins, many colleagues and hundreds of students and friends whose lives she touched in so many ways.

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Letter

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boring school districts and/or municipalities while the City of Jackson and state government officials collaborate to fix the overall emergency water/pipe issue.

Moving To Solutions

Now let’s discuss potential solutions. Again, this is short term only because we don’t want to disrupt the quality education of our children. These solutions will probably be considered non-traditional methods; however, we need to be inclusive and open-minded if we truly care about the well-being and education of our children. Should there be egos, pride or prejudices involved, let’s put that aside for the greater good of our children. Ephesians 4:2,3 says Be patient, Be Gentle, Be Humble, Be Loving and as leaders we should always demonstrate integrity, trust and respect while seeing and understanding others’ points of view.

Let me move to a term that we use in the business sector and try to tie it back into this current situation.

Have you ever heard the term: force majeure? Lawyers most certainly have but I will explain to those reading this and I’m only using force majeure as an example.

Force majeure is generally intended to include occurrences beyond the reasonable control of a party and therefore would not cover any result of the negligence or malfeasance of a party, which has a materially adverse effect on the ability of such party and therefore to perform its obligations or any result of the usual and natural consequences of external forces.

- To illuminate this distinction, take the example of an outdoor public event abruptly called off. If the cause for cancellation is ordinary predictable rain, this is most probably not force majeure. If the cause is a flash flood that damages the venue or makes the event hazardous to attend, then this almost certainly is force majeure.
- Some causes might be arguable borderline cases, for instance, if unusually heavy rain occurred, rendering the event significantly more difficult, but not impossible, to safely hold or attend, these must be assessed in light of the circumstances.
- Any circumstances that are specifically contemplated (included) in the contract, for example, if the contract for the outdoor event specifically permits or requires cancellation in the event of rain.

Here’s my point: The current water pressure and pipe conditions have interfered with the children of the Jackson Public School system going to school and therefore puts the students at risk of being behind (if doors remain closed). This not only is an emotional strain on the parents but more importantly it’s potentially a strain on these children mentally because they don’t know if they will be going to school or not, and if they do go, will something become hazardous to their health.

What about the teachers and staff of JPS; do we care about them equally as we care about the children? We should.

Mr. Mayor and Mr. Governor at some point you must draw a line in the sand and say that these schools are not healthy and safe for our children to attend. Using bottle water is not the short-term solution. As a result, I could easily make a compelling argument that this situation

has caused damage to the schools therefore this (water/pipe/) situation becomes “force majeure” in part because now the schools are hazardous to attend. Does this make sense now? The State of Mississippi and State Department of Education have an obligation to step in on the merit of this being a hazard to the health and well-being of our children, teachers and staff.

First Potential Solution

Reach out to the neighboring school district superintendents (Pearl, Brandon, Northwest Rankin, Clinton, Madison Central, Terry) and get them to assist with housing the students for the remainder of this school year until you can get better control of the water/pipe situation.

Student living in North Jackson may go to Madison or surrounding areas. Student living in South Jackson may go to Terry or surrounding areas. Students living in West Jackson may go to Clinton. Students living in East Jackson may go to Pearl and/or Brandon.

JPS Buses would transport these kids to and from these locatio. JPS teachers and administrators will assist in teaching at these schools short term to help with overflow.

JPS will continue to pay their own employees. State emergency funds should be allocated by the governor to those schools that help during the short term to assist with overtime, etc.

Second Potential Solution:

Consolidate schools in the short term. This should probably be the first option, however being that the entire city is affected by the situation, I’m not sure if this is the best option due to hazardous conditions across the board.

Third Potential Solution:

Has any one talked to the neighboring mayors about Jackson Public Schools possibly renting buildings in these towns on a temporary basis that are move-in ready to house the students of JPS? JPS would have to consolidate the kids in efforts to make this work.

Conclusion

I’m only one voice and I don’t pretend to know it all. What I’m offering as solutions should at least be discussed and debated as I believe these solutions could provide immediate impact. This open letter doesn’t focus on all the other issues going on in the city as that was not my intent. A lot of tough decisions will have to be made and that will take time and everybody should be clear on that; however, if you all don’t collaborate now and continue to have disagreements of who’s at fault then the perception comes across that you don’t care about the well-being, health, safety and education of these children.

How would you feel if your child had to use bottled water to flush a port-o-potty? How do our janitors clean our schools without functional water? Do we value the health of staff and administrators?

To the readers of this letter, I challenge you to look in the mirror and ask yourself, “What’s worthwhile?”

I’m here to offer solutions and should you feel the need to contact me directly I may be reached at 713-470-7419 or by email at wmeircollier@gmail.com

Respectfully Yours,
Walt M. Collier

Trump

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Director Christopher Wray about the origins of this report, none of them could tell me what the report was even based on or how the term was created.

Economically, Trump has gone after our consumer protections. Congress is working to repeal Dodd-Frank, a landmark piece of legislation designed to protect consumers from the wreck of the 2009 recession. Trump’s favoring of big banks will ultimately leave consumers in the same spot they were during the recession, or worse. The education of our children is also under attack. In 2014, for the first time ever, the majority of public school students in the United States were non-white. Secretary DeVos has been less than helpful to these institutions, ignoring grave disparities in how students of color are disciplined compared to white students, and supporting a budget that would further attack services that public schools provide.

Trump has also gone after our healthcare by actively sabotaging the Affordable Care Act, continually issuing statements citing death spirals and other doomsday prophesies in addition to cutting funding for advertisements and allowing health insurance companies to sell short-term plans with inadequate coverage. Trump and other Republican leaders have already openly discussed cuts to the social safety net, meaning Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, as justification for their deficit-exploding tax plan.

Trump has spent a considerable amount of time attacking black immigrants and their countries with both his racist words and policies. In addition to referring to Haiti and African countries as “shitholes,” he’s attacked recipients of the Diversity Visa Program, re-

scinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and scheduled the elimination of Temporary Protective Status for many countries like Haiti and El Salvador.

The entire reason we have this program is to help protect immigrants from ills in their home country, which can range from famine to civil war. To deport hundreds of thousands after opening our borders to them is unconscionable. When we look at the issue holistically and see that tens of thousands of DACA enrollees are black and that the plurality of diversity visa recipients are also black, it contextualizes the president’s assault on these programs.

Unfortunately, these assaults on our criminal justice system, our consumer protections, our education and our health, will continue through 2018.

What Trump’s first year showed is that hard-earned progress will never be safe so long as his bigotry, hatred and racism hold power. But what we showed this year in Alabama and Virginia, to not just our community, but to our country and the rest of the world, is that even in the face of opposition, our activism will continue and will prevail. We must be organized and we will be organized. This year, Trump has answered his own question about what black Americans have to lose. But it’s an answer we don’t plan to accept.

Congresswoman Karen Bass represents California’s 37th Congressional District. She is the 2nd Vice Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and she co-chairs the CBC’s Africa Taskforce. She is also Ranking Member on the House Subcommittee on Africa. Follow her on Twitter at @RepKarenBass.

Richmond

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“Trump zeroed out Trio (educational programs); he zeroed out Upward Bound; he zeroed out CDBG (Community Development Block Grants), all of that in this budget. What did we do? We passed a budget that increased Pell grants, we added summer Pell, we added more money to HBCUs, we added money to block grants,” Richmond said. “He got rid of the Minority Business Development Agency. We added money to them.”

All 435 House seats are up for votes in November. Currently the party break down is

239 Republicans, 193 Democrats and three vacancies. This makes it necessary for Democrats to win approximately 27 seats in order to dominate the House.

Meanwhile, Richmond said CBC and Democrats will continue to fight back where possible.

“And then we’re going to bust our butts to make sure we take back the house next year and then we’ll have some checks and balances.”

Hinds County School District Weekly Update

Jessica Sutton recognized as Bus Driver of the Month for December 2017!



Pictures L-R: Sharon Harris, HR director; Curtis Washington, general manager / Durham School Services; Jessica Sutton, bus driver of Bus DT26; and Tim Burnett, board member District - 1.

LaTrina McField recognized as Substitute Teacher of the Month for December 2017!



Pictured L-R: Sharon Harris, HR director; LaTrina McField, substitute teacher/THS; and Tim Burnett, board member District - 1.

BMS Employee Tomm Wilson recognized as Employee of the Month for December 2017!



Pictured L-R: Sharon Harris, HR director; Ben Lundy, principal; Tomm Wilson, Employee of the Month; and Tim Burnett, board member District - 1.

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MVSU's Michael Clark earns "Airman of the Year" award

Mississippi Link Newswire

ITTA BENA, Miss – Michael Clark is a man of service. His desire to work in a capacity that allows him to help people is evident in his everyday life as a residence hall director at Mississippi Valley State University, but perhaps even more so in his service to the United States of America in the Air Force Reserves.

On Jan. 7, Clark, a staff sergeant of the 307 Security Forces Squadron stationed in Bossier City, La. (Barksdale Air Force Base), received exciting news when U.S. Air Force Col. Robert VanHoy, 307th Bomb Wing commander, presented him with the Wing's "Airman of the Year" award during a commander's call.

The 32-year-old Tchula native will now represent the wing during the "Airman of the Year" competition at 10th Air Force from March 26-29 in St. Augustine, Fla.

Clark received the distinction from a pool of nine other airman. From the final three contenders, he was selected as the winner.

"Winning this award means a lot to me. It's a great accolade. I am very happy, and my unit is pleased. A lot of people have offered me congratulations," said Clark.

Clark, who is a 2010 and 2012 MVSU graduate with a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's degree in criminal justice respectively,



Clark

said his decision to join the Air Force was rooted in his desire for change.

"Coming from a small town the only thing I knew was basketball. Sometimes you have to make a turn in life and, after getting a master's degree, I decided to join the military," he said. Once I joined the military it was something I knew I would enjoy and something that gave me the opportunity to see the world. It also offered me a way to take care of my daughter, Jordan."

During his time at Valley, Clark was a member of the Delta Devils basketball team. Being a part of the

team and being a part of the military drew a lot of similarities.

"Playing basketball, you work together to accomplish a goal. If you are an athlete, the transition to military life is not that much different. Although I didn't know what I was getting into, I had enough courage to face the challenge that was ahead of me," he said.

With six years in the Air Force already, Clark's goal is to remain until he reaches 20 years of service and to retire.

Clark will graduate from Valley with his second masters in sports administration in May 2018.

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ZACK WALLACE
Hinds County Circuit Clerk

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Circuit Clerk's Office
P.O. BOX 327
Jackson, MS 39205
Phone: (601) 968-6628
Fax: (601) 973-5547

Jury Duty Recording:
First Judicial District
(601) 969-0052

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT
Circuit Clerk's Office
P.O. Box 999
Raymond, MS 39154
Phone: (601) 857-8038
Fax: (601) 857-0535

Jury Duty Recording:
Second Judicial District
(601) 857-8869

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(Except on legal holiday)



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- Marriage License
- Medical License
- Voter Registration/Absentee Voting

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- Verify and/or Update your Voter Registration Today

MARRIAGE INFORMATION

- Marriage License: \$22.00 CASH ONLY
 - o Both applicants must come to the Circuit Clerk's office together to apply
 - o Proof of age must be provided in the form of Driver's License, Birth Certificate or other legal document which contains name and date of birth.

Black History Month February 1-28, 2018

Schedule of Activities



**Hanging Moss Road
Church of Christ
5225 Hanging Moss Road
Jackson, MS 39206
Phone: (601) 982-5219
Bro. Curtis W. Pittman
Minister**

February 4, 2018

*Super Sunday
Sunday Morning
9:40am – 9:50am*

"A Black History Moment"

Primary Bible Class – Sis. Jasper/Smith/Doss

Note: All members are asked to wear casual attire with their favorite NFL jersey

February 7, 2018

Wednesday Night – Way Back Wednesday

Food Served: 5:30pm – 6:20pm

Guided-Tour:

(Looking back at our pathway to voting rights on "Bloody Sunday")

Black History Program – 6:30pm

"A Black History Moment"

Adult Bible Classes – Bro. Pittman/Bro. Stripling

Guest Speaker: Ms. Pam Junior

Closing – Dismiss for bible classes

Note: All members are asked to wear attire from the 70's (Disco attire & afro)

February 11, 2018

Sunday – African Attire

*Sunday Morning
9:40am – 9:50am*

"A Black History Moment"

Toddlers Bible Class – Sis. Watts/Williams

Note: All members are asked to wear African attire

Best "African outfit" wins a prize

February 14, 2018

Wednesday Night

Food Served – 5:30pm – 6:20pm

Guided-Tour:

(Looking back at our pathway to voting rights on "Bloody Sunday")

Black History Program – 6:30pm

"A Black History Moment"

Marriage Class – Bro. Smith/Hervey

Guest Speaker – Judge James Graves

Closing – Dismiss for bible classes

February 18, 2018

Black Sunday & Black Hair Day

*Sunday Morning
9:40am – 9:50am*

"A Black History Moment"

High School Bible Class – Bros. Hall/Cain/Bart

Note: All members are asked to wear black & showoff your black hair styles

February 21, 2018

Wednesday Night

Food Served: 5:30pm – 6:20pm

Guided-Tour:

(Looking back at our pathway to voting rights on "Bloody Sunday")

Black History Program – 6:30pm

New Convert Class – Bros. Catchings

Speakers: – Dr. Timothy M. Quinn

Closing – Dismiss for bible classes

February 24, 2018

Saturday – Black History Banquet – 6:00pm

Tickets \$40 Adults/\$15 Children under 12

February 25, 2018

Sunday – Hat Sunday & Black Business Owners' Expo

9:40am – 9:50am

"A Black History Moment"

Intermediate Bible Class/Jefferon/Stripling

Note: All members are asked to wear "hats" – Best "hat" will win a prize

February 28, 2018

Wednesday Night – YOUTH NIGHT

Food Served – 5:30pm – 6:20pm

Black History Program – 6:30pm

Note: All Black History activities will take place in the All Purpose Building

Youth Trip to Tour The Magnams – February 17, 2018 – 10:00am

Tickets \$7

Door Decorating Contest

(Prize for best decorated door)

YOU COULD BE A WINNER!

If you attend Sunday Morning Bible Class and Wednesday Night Bible Class and arrive on time, your name will be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 bill. You may enter each Wednesday and Sunday beginning February 4-28, 2018. The winner will receive the prize on Sunday, March 4, 2018.

Note: You must arrive on time to be eligible for the drawing.

New bicentennial film series at the Mississippi Museum of Art



Mississippi Link Newswire

A new film series, Moving Images in Mississippi, will be shown this January through July during the Mississippi Museum of Art's bicentennial exhibition, Picturing Mississippi: 1817-2017. On the fourth Thursday and Friday of each month, the public is invited to attend the new film series to celebrate cinema and Miss. Curated and introduced by long-time Miss. film commissioner Ward Em-ling, the series will include panels and one-on-one filmmaker interviews to discuss the films in cinematic, cultural and historical context.

"We hope to do more than showcase films produced in Mississippi," said Em-ling. "We will highlight the opportunity of film in Mississippi today through the work of the Mississippi Film Office; the contributions of the film organizations and festivals; and the curriculum in programs at our high schools, colleges and universities."

Beginning in Natchez in 1914, storytellers have used the Mississippi backdrop to enhance and authenticate their vision. The imagination of writers and the drama of the state's history have been brought to life by directors of influence, insight and power. Cinema has explored, enhanced and explained Mississippi and continues to do so today. From works like This Property is Condemned on the Gulf Coast to LaLee's Kin in the Del-

ta, from a rascal named Huck to a dog named Skip, from the light touch of The Reivers to the heavy grasp of Mississippi Burning, the cinematic life of Mississippi plays an influential role in the growth of America's culture.

The bicentennial film series is free and open to the public. Each film begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Trustmark Grand Hall.

2018 Schedule

Jan. 25-26: Incarceration and Redemption

Oh Brother, Where Art Thou? with panelists Scott Barretta, John Read and Jimmy Wood

Thieves Like Us

Feb. 22-23: Once and Again

The Help

LaLee's Kin

Mar. 22-23: Rise and Response

Mississippi Burning

Freedom Song

Apr. 26-27: Home and Everywhere Else

The Reivers

TBD

May 24-25: Star-Crossed and Found

This Property is Condemned

Dixieland

June 28-29: Neighbors and Strangers

Cookie's Fortune

TBD

July 26-27: Life, as We Know it

My Dog Skip

Great Drives: Highway 61

*Film shown subject to change due to panelist availability.

For more information, visit www.ms-museumart.org

About the Mississippi Museum of Art

The MMA, in Jackson, is the largest art museum in the state. The Mississippi Art Association, established in 1911, was the precursor to the current Museum, founded in 1978 as a community-supported institution. The museum's permanent collection includes paintings, photography, multimedia works and sculpture by Mississippi, American, and international artists. The museum offers year-round educational programs for both children and adults. The museum has 31 affiliate museums across the state that benefit from the loan of artworks and traveling exhibitions organized by the museum, ensuring that those who cannot visit Jackson can still enjoy the state's rich cultural history. The MMA and its programs are sponsored in part by the City of Jackson and Visit Jackson. Support is also provided in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency and in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

The museum is located at 380 South Lamar St. in Jackson. Museum hours are Tues. through Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sun., noon to 5 p.m. The museum is closed Mon. www.msmuseumart.org.

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National Alumni Association presents \$10,000 gift to Lanier High

Mississippi Link Newswire

You won't find a more faithful group of alumni than the members of Lanier High School's National Alumni Association. Just days before Christmas, these generous donors contributed \$10,000 to Lanier for student supplies, materials and activities. With this donation, the organization will exceed \$50,000 in financial support to the school this year.

The Lanier High School National Alumni Association is a 501(c)3 community organization formed in 1998 with the mission of supporting the

academic, social and economic needs of the students at Lanier. Its persistent efforts are aimed at increasing academic success and the development of skills that will contribute to the participatory citizenship of all of the school's students.

Over the years, the organization's contributions to Lanier have included:

- Providing \$45,000 in scholarships for college-bound seniors.
- Sponsoring the first inner city school license plate in Mississippi to generate funds for student academics and scholar-

ships.

- Partnering with programs that support families and help them become involved in the education of their children, such as the PTSA.

- Providing volunteers for various school initiatives.

- Supporting school organizations such as the choir and athletic teams.

Additionally, the Lanier High School National Alumni Association focuses on strengthening the academic and economic standing of the school's faculty by providing the tools to meet subject area needs.



Lanier Principal Michael McDonald (far right) accepts a check for \$10,000 presented by the Lanier High School National Alumni Association, December 22, 2017.

Hardwood Hero of the Week for December 25



Williams

Mississippi Link Newswire

James Williams of Callaway is the Hardwood Hero of the Week for December 25. Williams is a 6-5 center for the Chargers. He had 21 points and 9 rebounds against Canton.

Circle B will donate \$120 in Williams' name to the WJMI Circle B Brand Foods JPS High School Basketball Fund. At the end of the season, one nominated player will be randomly selected to receive \$1,800 for their High School Basketball Program.

Hardwood hero of the week for January 1



Marshall

Mississippi Link Newswire

Ladarius Marshall of Forest Hill is the Hardwood Hero of the Week for Monday, January 1. Marshall is a 6-6 forward for the Forest Hill Patriots. He averaged 15 points, 10 rebounds and 3 blocked shots in four games during the Pepsi-JPS Basketball Tournament.

Circle B will donate \$120 in Marshall's name to the WJMI Circle B Brand Foods JPS High School Basketball Fund. At the end of the season, one nominated player will be randomly selected to receive \$1,800 for their High School Basketball Program.

Hardwood hero of the week for January 8



Luckett

Mississippi Link Newswire

Keshuna Luckett of Lanier High School is the Hardwood Hero of the Week for January 8. Luckett is a 5-10 junior guard for the Lady Bulldogs. She had 20 points, 9 rebounds, 8 assists and 2 steals in a game against Raymond.

Circle B will donate \$120 in Luckett's name to the WJMI Circle B Brand Foods JPS High School Basketball Fund. At the end of the season, one nominated player will be randomly selected to receive \$1,800 for their High School Basketball Program.

Water pressure improves slightly at JPS schools

Mississippi Link Newswire

Classes will continue in Jackson Public Schools Tuesday, January 23, at regular times.

With support from the City of Jackson, Jackson Fire Department and Hinds County, Jackson Public Schools was able to meet the challenges of inadequate water service in schools today.

The City of Jackson delivered approximately 264 cases totaling over 7,700 bottles of water to schools under

a boil water notice: Wilkins Elementary, Whitten Middle, Callaway High, and Forest Hill High. Hinds County dispatched four trucks, each containing 4,000 gallons of reserved water, to 27 schools identified as having low or no water pressure this morning.

"Thank you to the City of Jackson, Hinds County, JPS staff and the many citizens who have donated water and their resources to help us as we try to make the school day as normal as possible under these circumstances," said

JPS Interim Superintendent Fredrick Murray.

JPS arranged for 106 portable bathrooms to be delivered to the affected schools. The JPS Food Service Department provided nearly 200 cases of bottled water and set up water stations at all schools. JPS has also ensured that additional hand sanitizer has been made available to schools. Cafeterias will continue to serve sack lunches at all schools for the next few days.

The district is seeing a slight im-

provement in the water pressure. As of today, the number of schools with inadequate water pressure has decreased from 29 to 20.

The following schools are currently experiencing inadequate water pressure:




French Elementary
Isable Elementary
Johnson Elementary
John Hopkins Elementary
Key Elementary
Lester Elementary

Marshall Elementary
McLeod Elementary
Oak Forest Elementary
Raines Elementary
Smith Elementary
Timberlawn Elementary
Van Winkle Elementary
Walton Elementary
Wilkins Elementary
Whitten Middle
Forest Hill High
Wingfield High
Career Development Center

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MVSU's Goldman to present faculty recital

The Mississippi Link Newswire

ITTA BENA, Miss.— The Department of Fine Arts at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) will present pianist Lawrence Goldman in a faculty recital Thursday, January 25.

The performance will be given at 7:30 p.m. in the Walter Roberts Auditorium of the H.G. Carpenter Building. Featured on the program will be works by Bach, Dello Joio, Bonds, Schubert, and Moszkowski.

The event is free and open to the general public.

A native of Santa Rosa, Calif., Goldman serves as a professor of music and keyboard area coordinator and has been a faculty member at MVSU for the past 38 years. During that time, he has become well known for his many appearances both as a solo recitalist and collaborating artist.

Goldman has participated in over 400 concert performances on MVSU's campus and across the state, in addition to performances throughout the Southeast and in other regions of the United States.

He began piano studies at the age of eight and presented his first solo recital at the age of ten. He began winning regional competitions within the next few years, including his first appearance as soloist with orchestra.

Later, he attended the University of California, Santa Barbara, and pursued graduate studies at the University of Michigan, where his principal teacher was the noted Hungarian-American pianist György Sándor. He received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Southern California, where his distinctions included winning the concerto competition and the Department Award in Keyboard Studies.

Goldman has appeared as a solo recitalist, chamber musician and as soloist with orchestra in numerous areas of the United States. His performances in the South have included recitals in Tenn., Ky., Ala., and La., in addition to his Mississippi performances. He is much in demand as an adjudicator for festivals and competitions, and he is



Goldman

the founder and director of the MVSU Piano Festival, an annual spring event that brings in young musicians from throughout the state and region.

He has performed for the state conventions of the Mississippi Music Teachers Association and the Mississippi Federation of Music Clubs, and he has also performed for the Southern Chapter conference of the College Music Society. In addition, his performances have been a regular feature on the Mississippi Public Broadcasting

radio network.

Goldman was a 2006 recipient of the HEADWAE award, a recognition of academic excellence presented annually by the Mississippi State Legislature.

In 2009, he was honored as the first recipient of MVSU's James Herbert White Preeminence Award in the Arts, and in 2013 Goldman was also named the MVSU Humanities Teacher of the Year. He has been listed in both the Who's Who in America and Who's Who in American Education.

MVSU invites piano students to a day of recitals on campus

The Mississippi Link Newswire

ITTA BENA, Miss. – Mississippi Valley State University is inviting piano students of all levels to its campus for a day of recitals, award presentations, and the chance to earn music scholarships during its Twenty-Third Annual MVSU Piano Festival Saturday, April 21.

Organized by the Department of Fine Arts, the festival is designed to bring an increased awareness to the Mississippi Delta and surrounding areas of the value and importance of piano study throughout childhood and beyond. Events will be held for both elementary and advanced piano students.

"Students benefit greatly from having performance opportunities during the course of their music studies, and events like our festival give them such an outlet, as well as the ability to receive constructive comments and feedback from qualified adjudicators," said MVSU Professor of Fine Arts and Music, Lawrence Goldman, who serves as the festival director.

Piano students ranging from kindergarten through junior high school will

start at 9 a.m. with a non-competitive festival. Older beginners may also participate. Students will perform selections from the classical piano repertoire and will be rated and given written evaluations.

Following this event will be an honors ceremony, which will include special recognition of students who received superior ratings for their performances. Parents, friends and fellow students will be invited to attend this event at approximately 10:30 a.m.

At 11 a.m., members of MVSU's music faculty will hold an open audition for piano students who would like to be considered for music scholarships for the 2018-2019 academic year. Students who are awarded full scholarships will receive tuition, fees and room and board at MVSU.

There will be a Young Artist Competition at 1 p.m. for students who are enrolled in grades ninth through junior college. Younger students with appropriate repertoire may also enter with the permission of the festival director. Students will perform at least two compositions from differing periods.

The first prize winner will receive a cash award of \$500, second prize winner will receive \$400, third prize will receive \$300 and the fourth prize winner will receive \$200. Honorable Mention awards of \$100 each will also be given at the discretion of the festival judge.

An awards ceremony will be held immediately following the judging. Awards, certificates and the cash prizes will be given out during that time. In addition to the cash awards, all winners of the Young Artist Competition will be eligible to receive full music scholarships to MVSU.

This year's festival is co-sponsored by Bank of Commerce, Charles Hall Studio, Cowan Music, Greenwood Matinee Musicale, Greenwood Rotary Club, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Planters Bank, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and Walmart.

For further information and an application, contact Goldman at (662) 254-3681 or by mail at 14000 Hwy. 82 West #7255, Itta Bena, MS, 38941. The application postmark deadline for participants is April 10.

Clinton Public School District Key Communicator

Perfect ACT



The Mississippi Board of Education this morning honored students who scored perfect on the ACT. Pictured are (from left) State Board member Rosemary Aultman, CHS seniors Tanner DeYoung and Michael Franks, CHS junior Clark Hensley, CHS Principal Brett Robinson, CPSD Superintendent Tim Martin, and State Superintendent of Education Carey Wright.

Virtual Field Trip



Team 5 at Lovett came back from a long snow break just in time for a Virtual Field Trip to The California Academy of Sciences. We were able to travel through video and with our own personal tour guide to learn more about the field of marine biology. Shoutout to Peterson-Li for preparing this awesome adventure for our students!

CJHS School Dance



CJHS Dance, Saturday, January 27, 7 - 10 p.m. Suggested dress is semi-formal (within CJHS dress code).

Dance tickets will be on sale Monday - Friday (Jan. 22 - 26) in the CJHS gym from 7:40 - 8:10 a.m. for \$5 each. Tickets will also be available at the door. Each student must purchase their own ticket and present their CJHS student ID at the time of purchase AND for entry to the dance. Refreshments will be available at the dance.

There are still a few slots left for volunteers/chaperones. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Rhonda Jones at 601-566-5008.

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JSU grad is the first from hometown high school to finish college

From cadets to 2nd lieutenants: Army ROTC salutes eight at commissioning ceremony

Lt. Col. Dexter M. Brookins, right, chair and professor of JSU's Military Science, assists with one of the sweetest parts of the ceremony. He's joined by Tashe'Wa N. Hill and Evans.

Hidden photo of Obama and Farrakhan released in new book

By Hazel Trice Edney
TriceEdneyWire.com

It was during a mid-2005 Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) meeting on Capitol Hill when award-winning journalist Askia Muhammad captured one of the most significant photos of his career.

Muhammad had doggedly covered then Chicago Sen. Barack Obama since he “first laid eyes on him” at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Now, here was the senator in a warm conversation with constituent and fellow Chicagoan Minister Louis Farrakhan. As leader of the Nation of Islam, Farrakhan is another star in black America, but one whose name is synonymous with controversy.

Wasting no time, Muhammad snapped the news photo. But moments later, he faced a dilemma.

Obama had already become the darling of national Democratic politics and the scent of a presidential run was strong.

Muhammad and others almost immediately realized that the public release of this photo could mean major trouble down the road. Mainly because of bigotry and fear-mongering, the public release of that photo could doom America’s chances of electing Obama as its first black president.

Muhammad had not even left the scene when he received a call and the photo was being summoned by a member of the Congressional Black Caucus. Muhammad ultimately surrendered the disk to Farrakhan’s chief of staff. And it remained one of America’s best hidden secrets for the next 12 years.

For the first time, more than a decade later, the glowing photograph of now former President Barack Obama and Farrakhan has been published in a book by Muhammad to be released Jan. 31 - “The Autobiography of Charles 67X.” Muhammad and some political observers still believe that if that photo had been released, it could have drawn enough fire – even from some of Obama’s supporters looking for excuses – to dent his chances of becoming president.

“I gave the picture up at the time and basically swore secrecy,” Muhammad said in an exclusive interview with the Trice Edney News Wire this week. “But after the nomination was secured and all the way up until the inauguration; then for eight years after he was president, it was kept under cover.”

As for any debate that the photo could have made a difference in the outcome of the Obama presidential election, Muhammad is



Pictured from left to right are: Minister Farrakhan’s son-in-law, Leonard Farrakhan Muhammad; his son and security chief, Mustapha Farrakhan; U. S. Sen. Barack Obama; Minister Farrakhan’s son Joshua Farrakhan; Minister Louis Farrakhan, and the Rev. Willie F. Wilson, pastor of D.C.’s Union Temple Baptist Church. PHOTO BY ASKIA MUHAMMAD

emphatic: “I insist. It absolutely would have made a difference.”

He has agreement in high places.

“I do believe that it would have had a very, very negative affect in that given moment as far as the candidacy of candidate Obama at that time,” says Shayla Nunnally, president of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. Her opinion was based largely on the “negative stereotypes about Muslim Americans about black people and about their allegiance to the United States,” which have often been twisted and used to fit bigoted agendas – especially after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

“On top of that,” Nunnally said, “People have always characterized Minister Farrakhan as being a combative figure in American politics. That adds another layer.”

Nunnally, a professor of political science who also teaches in the Africana Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut, specializes in public opinion, political behavior, race and politics. She questioned what the release of the photo will mean “even now because there’s so many conspiracy theories still floating.”

Obama, who is a Christian, has constantly been the target of bigoted attacks, Nunnally pointed out. When a woman called him an Arab during a public forum, even his re-election opponent Sen. John McCain retrieved the microphone and corrected her, saying, “No ma’am. He’s a decent family man.” Nunnally also recalled how former Secretary of State Colin Powell once weighed in against negative stereotyping of Muslims saying, “He’s a Christian...But the really right answer is, what if he is a Muslim?”

Nunnally concluded, “There are many, many, many layers of what that picture can represent to people in their various perceptions. So, I say this to mean that

I can see that the release of that photo in that given moment, it would have been highly controversial.”

Also, pictured in the photo are Minister Farrakhan’s son-in-law, Leonard Farrakhan Muhammad; His son and security chief, Mustapha Farrakhan; Minister Farrakhan’s son Joshua Farrakhan; and the Rev. Willie Wilson, executive producer of the program for Farrakhan’s Million Man March in 1995 and a chairman of the 20th anniversary.

In an interview, Wilson says he doesn’t recall the photo and didn’t know he was in it. But hearing the description, he also was certain it could have hurt Obama’s campaign.

“I’m sure it would,” Wilson said. “Given all of the furor related to the sermon that his pastor, Jeremiah Wright, did I’m sure that it would more than likely have had a tremendous effect on his candidacy.”

Wilson says Farrakhan is so controversial because, “He speaks truth and this is a country that has in so many ways attempted to cover up the realities of its wrong doings of which Farrakhan is quite vocal in bringing to light.”

The book tells of other notables who knew about the photograph and never divulged it. In addition to narratives of pivotal moments of his life, the autobiography is also a book of Muhammad’s poetry.

Columnist and political observer A. Peter Bailey, anticipating the book release, says he believes the photo would have created controversy for Obama, but could not have caused him to lose the election or his re-election because of the groundswell of black voter support for him.

“It could have done some damage,” Bailey said. “But nothing could have stopped the election because black support would have countered it.”

Blacks and politics: Either get engaged or get left behind

By effrey Boney
NNPA Member/Houston Forward Times



Okay, everyone, if you are reading this, welcome to 2018. You made it, and with that being said, I feel that this is the perfect opportunity for us to be honest about an important truth.

First of all, as I see it, it is extremely clear to me, and should be quite evident to anyone who would just simply open up their eyes to see it for themselves, that the black vote can either make or break an election.

If you don’t believe me, I would encourage you to take a look at previous elections where the black community was actively engaged and driven to get out and vote in a local, county, state or federal election, versus the times where they were not as excited or motivated to do so.

Take Alabama’s recent special U.S. Senate election race involving Republican Roy Moore and Democrat Doug Jones, where people were overwhelmingly surprised to see the exit polls that showed that black voters made up 29 percent of the overall voter turnout in the entire election – 18 percent of black women and 11 percent of black men. Exit polls also showed that 98 percent of black women cast their vote for Jones, while 93 percent of black men cast their vote for Jones.

These were phenomenal numbers, and definitely the type of numbers that Jones needed to pull off an unexpected victory in a historically and traditionally red state like Alabama.

It was exciting to see this type of political difference making by the black community, but that excitement was immediately quenched and short-lived, after reading reports that a letter was sent to Jones Dec. 19 from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and 16 other organizations practically begging him “to commit to hiring a staff that reflects his constituents’ racial diversity.”

Why wasn’t this letter sent before Jones won? Why not get this type of commitment from Jones before engaging the black community to come out and vote for him, and doing what the black community always does when it is expected to deliver the turnout and votes necessary to secure a victory for select candidates or select issues on the ballot? I believe it is, because the black community has grown accustomed to not being respected, especially within the Democratic Party where they are the most loyal. And before “loyal” Democrats come for my head, because they consider this an attack on the Democratic Party or as an opportunity to try and have us compare the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, I believe the black community needs to ask itself some really tough questions.

When it comes to the black community’s involvement in the Democratic Party, how are blacks truly viewed within the party? Despite the black community having such a strong and dedicated voting bloc across the nation, how many blacks actually hold key positions within the Democratic Party on a local,

COMMENTARY

statewide and/or national basis? How many black people are senior staff members in county, state or federal offices across the country?

According to a detailed report released by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies last year, the majority of white Democratic lawmakers in the U.S. Senate, who have millions of black constituents, have no black senior staff members at all. The report also found that while blacks make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, they only make up 0.9 percent of the top Senate staffers. Is this by design or just an unfortunate oversight?

See, it is one thing to look out at these local, county, state and federal Democratic meetings and conventions and see this sea of diversity, with black faces mixed in with faces from all other races and backgrounds, but it is an entirely different thing to know that blacks are not given opportunities to have a real impact in the Democratic Party from within, other than just voting.

Secondly, as I see it, it is abundantly clear to me that the black community is oftentimes ignored, disrespected and disregarded by both major political parties until they are needed in the midnight hour to deliver for those who only want their vote but nothing else.

This is important to highlight because, over the last several decades, black people have voted for Democratic candidates 94 percent of the time in critical federal and state elections.

Black voters turned out in record numbers in 2008 to elect Barack Obama as the first black president of the United States, with the primary belief that by letting their voices be heard, they would experience the “Hope and Change” he campaigned on. As a result of this record turnout, black voters helped elect President Obama to the highest office in the land and they helped elect Democrats to other key positions that helped Democrats gain control of both the House and the Senate. And what did the Democratic Party do as soon as they got control of the House, Senate and the White House? You guessed it. Respective groups within the Democratic Party began advocating for their own competing interests and could care less about black issues.

And how were black people rewarded for their 96 percent voting loyalty in 2008? Subsequently, the many issues impacting the black community were ignored and got pushed further and further to the back of the bus, and black people were pushed to the bottom of the totem pole.

During a time where black people should have been experiencing tremendous gains, we saw black unemployment at its highest point, increased poverty, property loss and home equity loss at record-numbers in the black community, and the wealth gap tripled between us and whites.

Sadly, as I see it, the role of blacks within the Democratic Party has been one that has relegated us to only being good for faithfully voting Democratic that is known for hitting the pavement to rally the voters in the hood and in

the church, while not having a true voice within the party. That has to change starting in this New Year of 2018. It’s extremely clear to me that we as black people need to wake up and get more actively involved with politics, because if we don’t do it, we will continue getting screwed over by people who don’t have our best interest at heart and who would rather see us “begging” them for scraps from the table, rather than demanding a seat at the table.

We can complain all day about how “white” and “not culturally diverse” the Republican Party is, but the one thing I can respect about them is when they choose to come together about the things that are collectively important to them – they come together.

Don’t get historical amnesia on me. Lest we forget that there was a time, not long ago, where the Republican Party once advocated for black people and black issues, while the Democratic Party served as the home of the Ku Klux Klan and advocated for segregationist policies that violated and went against the Civil Rights of black people.

As I see it, the Democratic Party is getting more and more fragmented, while the Republican Party remains consistent with their message and their actions, even if it costs them votes or support. They have conviction and stick to their guns for the whole of the party. At the end of the day, the Republican Party appears to be on one accord publicly, even when there may be discord internally. This has not been the case with the Democratic Party over the last several decades.

As I see it, blacks cannot be political squatters, sitting with our hands out, begging for scraps from the table and waiting to be given our next assignment and told our next move.

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick said it best at the last Democratic National Convention, when he told attendees that they needed to get some “backbone.”

All I know is this, black folks had better get some “backbone” and wake up before we find ourselves becoming comfortable with sitting at the back of the bus again, while the Hispanic community and Asian community figure out a way to work collectively together to advance their political and social position in this country.

If we find ourselves in the back of the bus, sadly, it won’t be the Republicans’ fault or the Democrats’ fault. This time, it will be no one’s fault, but our own.

Dear black people: We either get engaged or get left behind.

What’s it going to be for 2018 and beyond?

Jeffrey L. Boney serves as associate editor and is an award-winning journalist for the Houston Forward Times newspaper. Boney has been a frequent contributor on the Nancy Grace Show and Crime & Justice with Ashleigh Banfield and also hosts a national daily radio talk show called “Real Talk with Jeffrey L. Boney.” If you would like to request Boney as a speaker, you can reach him at jboney1@forward-times.com. Follow Jeffrey on Twitter @realtalkjunkies.

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STS selects USA International Ballet Competition in Jackson as an ‘STS Top 20 Event’



The Mississippi Link Newswire

Jackson, MS, “City with Soul”— Southeast Tourism Society has named USA International Ballet Competition (USA IBC) one of the STS Top 20 Events in the Southeast for June 2018.

This year’s USA IBC is June 10-23. The STS Top 20 Festival and Event Awards have highlighted programs around the Southeast since 1985.

Travel industry experts select 20 events per month, and STS publicizes them throughout the United States. The complete list is published on two websites: Southeast Tourism Society and Travel Media Press Room.

One of the world’s most prestigious dance events, the USA IBC, is a two-week “Olympic-style” competition where tomorrow’s ballet stars vie for gold, silver and bronze medals; cash awards; company contracts; and scholarships. This year the opening ceremony will honor Robert Joffrey, the dancer and choreographer who worked with USA IBC founder Thalia Mara to launch the Jackson competition in 1979. Joffrey chaired the first three USA IBC juries.

“The Southeast is home to unique and memorable events throughout the year. In spotlighting the Top 20 festivals and events each month, STS is not only giving these events the recognition they deserve but we’re also creating a quick reference guide to some of the best festivals in the Southeast,” said Bill Hardman, president and CEO of the Southeast Tourism Society. “These events are important to the economic vitality of our communities and this is a way for us to acknowledge the time and resources organizers have tirelessly spent to create memories for their attendees.”

Events considered for the STS Top 20 recognition must be at least three years old and have attendance of at least 1,000. The online nomination link and submission deadlines are available at SoutheastTourism.org or by calling 770-542-1523.

STS, founded in 1983 and headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting tourism to and within 12 states – Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

About USA IBC

One of the world’s most prestigious dance events, the USA IBC, is a two-week “Olympic-style” competition where tomorrow’s ballet stars vie for gold, silver and bronze

medals; cash awards; company contracts; and scholarships. Designated as the official USA competition by a Joint Resolution of Congress, the USA IBC is held every four years, in the tradition of sister competitions in Varna, Bulgaria, and Moscow, Russia.

The first International Ballet Competition premiered in Varna, Bulgaria, in 1964 and eventually grew into a cycle of ballet competitions that rotated among the three cities of Varna, Moscow and Tokyo.

In 1975, the Jackson Ballet Guild invited Thalia Mara, renowned ballet teacher and educator, to develop a professional ballet company and school for the state of Mississippi. As a part of her development plan, she introduced city leaders to the idea of ballet competitions and convinced them to secure the USA IBC for the city of Jackson.

Joffrey, renowned artistic director of the Joffrey Ballet, agreed to chair the first international panel of jurors. With the help of local, national and international endorsements, and the energy and commitment of the citizens of Jackson, the first USA International Ballet Competition was held in June 1979.

At the conclusion of the first competition, a sanction was received from the International Dance Committee of the International Theater Institute (ITI) of UNESCO for the USA IBC. Thus, Jackson joined other ITI-sanctioned competitions that rotated each year among Varna, Moscow and Tokyo (later, Helsinki, Finland). Today the USA IBC is also a member of the International Federation of Ballet Competitions and the International Council of Dance.

In 1982, the United States Congress passed a joint resolution designating Jackson as the official home of the International Ballet Competition. The second USA IBC was held the same summer and featured in a 90-minute ABC/PBS film, To Dance for Gold, which aired around the world. Subsequent competitions have continued to attract dancers from around the globe, making Jackson the center of the dance world every four years.

In 2010, founder Thalia Mara and the USA IBC were honored as “American Masterpieces” by the National Endowment of the Arts through the Mississippi Arts Commission.

Today, there are many more ballet competitions worldwide, yet the USA IBC remains one of the oldest and most respected dance competitions in the world.

The next USA IBC will be held June 10-23, 2018.

Bicentennial symposium to be held at the Mississippi Museum of Art

“Bringing Forward the Past: Art, Identity, and the American South” Feb. 16-17, 2018

The Mississippi Link Newswire

The Center for Art & Public Exchange (CAPE) at the Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) announces a symposium, Bringing Forward the Past: Art, Identity, and the American South, to take place Feb. 16-17, at the MMA. Using the bicentennial exhibition Picturing Mississippi, 1817-2017: Land of Plenty, Pain, and Promise as a lens through which to consider historical conceptions of Mississippi and the South, this gathering will bring together artists, curators, scholars and the public to explore issues related to identity, race, indigeneity, trauma and memory.

“The symposium is meant to build on many of the themes in the museum’s bicentennial exhibition, Picturing Mississippi, that recur throughout the history of Mississippi as well as the broader American South,” said Elizabeth Williams, director of Interpretation for the MMA. “Through the voices of artists and scholars whose work deals with these complex issues, our hope is to generate meaningful conversations and understandings related to the past and its relationship to both the present and the future.”

To unite these artists and scholars, a series of events will be held during the two-day symposium, including:

Fri, Feb 16, 2018
5:30-8:00 p.m. Keynote address: “Vision + Justice: Art and Activism in a Contested Democracy” by Dr. Sarah Lewis
Sat, Feb 17, 2018
9:00-10:15 a.m. Place in Contemporary Practice
10:30-11:45 a.m. Trauma and Memory
Noon-1:00 p.m. Lunch + Conversation

1:00-2:00 p.m. Art + Conversation in the Galleries
2:15-3:30 p.m. Race, Space, and Abstraction in the American South

3:30-4:30 p.m. Concluding Conversation + Reception
7:00 p.m. Rhiannon Giddens in Concert

The culminating event for the symposium will be the free public concert presented by Rhiannon Giddens. Giddens, a 2017 recipient of a MacArthur “Genius” Grant, is a genre-defying musician whose current and past projects – including the Carolina Chocolate Drops – blend American roots music, folk traditions, contemporary edge and her own history into renditions that speak to dynamic identity in the American South.

“This symposium embodies

Center for Art & Public Exchange

MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM OF ART

BRINGING FORWARD THE PAST: ART, IDENTITY, AND THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Friday, February 16, 2018 + Saturday, February 17, 2018

The Mississippi Museum of Art presents an interdisciplinary symposium that brings together artists, curators, scholars, and the public to explore issues related to identity, race, indigeneity, trauma, and memory. Using the bicentennial exhibition *Picturing Mississippi, 1817-2017: Land of Plenty, Pain, and Promise* as a lens through which to consider historical conceptions of Mississippi, as well as the larger South, this symposium engages artists and scholars who are translating this history into new, multi-dimensional narratives and who are helping to chart a new path forward.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2018
KEYNOTE ADDRESS: “Vision + Justice: Art and Activism in a Contested Democracy” by Dr. Sarah Lewis

● The symposium and concert are free and open to the public, but registration is required.

● Boxed lunches will be available for purchase.

● The symposium is sponsored in part by Ellen and Eason Leake and grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council and National Endowment for the Arts.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2018
PANEL I: Place in Contemporary Practice
Moderated by Museum Curator Elizabeth Abston.
Panelists include artists McArthur Binion and Noah Saterstrom.

PANEL II: Trauma and Memory
Moderated by art historian Dr. La Tanya Autry.
Panelists include artist Nona Faustine and scholars Dr. Dell Upton, UCLA, and Dr. Robert Luckett, JSU.

PANEL III: Race, Space, and Abstraction in the American South
Moderated by LeRon R. Brooks.
Panelists include artists ToriKwase Dyson, Felandus Thames, and Sheila Pree Bright.

CONCERT PERFORMANCE: Rhiannon Giddens

To learn more and to register, visit **MSMUSEUMART.ORG**

CAPE’s goal of using visual art and engagements with artists to increase understanding in contemporary society,” said Julian Rankin, managing director of the CAPE at the MMA. “The Museum has created this platform to empower panelists and members of the public to give voice to the diverse narratives that compose Mississippi’s tangled history and vibrant identity.”

The symposium and public concert are free. Registration is required. *To register, visit msmuseumart.org.*

Support

The symposium is sponsored in part by Ellen and Eason Leake and grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council and National Endowment for the Arts.

About The Center for Art & Public Exchange (CAPE)

CAPE is an initiative of the MMA, launched in Fall 2017 and supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. CAPE’s purpose is to use original artworks, exhibitions, programs and engagements with artists to increase understanding and inspire new narratives in contemporary Mississippi.

About The Mississippi Museum of Art

The MMA, in Jackson, is the largest art museum in the state. The Mississippi Art Association, established in 1911, was the precursor to the current museum, founded in 1978 as a community-supported institution. The museum’s permanent collection includes paintings, photography, multimedia works and sculpture by Mississippi, American and international artists. The museum offers year-round educational

programs for both children and adults. The museum has 31 affiliate museums across the state that benefit from the loan of artworks and traveling exhibitions organized by the museum, ensuring that those who cannot visit Jackson can still enjoy the state’s rich cultural history.

The MMA and its programs are sponsored in part by the City of Jackson and Visit Jackson. Support is also provided in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

The museum is located at 380 South Lamar St. in Jackson. Museum hours are Tues. through Sat., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sun., noon to 5 p.m. The Museum is closed Mon.

Visit www.msmuseumart.org.

Rev. Ricky James at Miss. senate



The Reverend Ricky James, pastor of St. Luke’s United Methodist Church in Jackson, delivered an opening prayer to the Mississippi senate January 18, at the invitation of Senator Robert L. Jackson, who led the Pledge of Allegiance before Lt. Governor Tate Reeves called lawmakers to order.

Assists at State Capitol

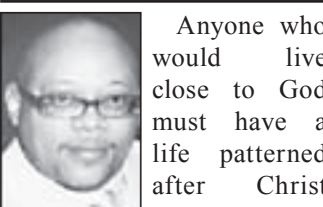


Ahmad Lee, of Jackson, recently served as a page for the Mississippi Senate. Pages generally run errands for officials and Senate staff. Ahmad is pictured with Lt. Governor Tate Reeves, who sponsored his visit. Ahmad is the son of Angelia Gooden and attends Hartfield Academy. When asked about the week, Ahmad said, “It was a fun and educational experience.”

Live our life worthy of the Lord, be imitators of Christ

PART 3

By Pastor Simeon R. Green III
Special to The Mississippi Link



Anyone who would live close to God must have a life patterned after Christ Himself. His unswerving devotion to truth, His undeviating commitment to principle, His flawless morality, His unimpeachable goodness and His spotless innocence. For in Christ, “The Word became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14); and in Him, “The Whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Colossians 2:9). Christianity says that we were created for a purpose, and that purpose is eternal happiness living with a supremely, loving God. Jesus is not just an example of

how we ought to live – He is also an example of what salvation means. He lives in eternal glory, and says that we can join Him in that glory, if we trust Him. To live a life worthy of God, we must follow Christ in humble ways of Christian service. How many thousands of dedicated Christians have gone all out to make converts to the faith? Some have plunged into steaming jungles, crossed frozen mountains and burning deserts, faced deprivation and persecution, traversed continents and sailed the seven seas on behalf of Christ. They imitated God’s Son in their restless desire to take the Gospel to all the people. To be worthy of God, we must give ourselves to ac-

complishing the tasks begun on earth by Christ. Those tasks wait for completion by members of His body – by you and me. Years ago, an Englishman found the secret of a worthy life. He was a plain Methodist minister who fell in love with Christ’s goodness and mercy, and whose heart was touched like Christ’s with the needs of humanity. He went down into the poverty-stricken East-End of London and spent days with the unlovely and broken living there. At home, he said to his wife one evening, “Darling, I have given myself, you and the children, to the service of these sick souls.” Hand-in-hand they prayed, and in that humble act, a new world of service was opened to them. The man was William

Booth, and with this acceptance of his God-given responsibility, the Salvation Army was born. Some of us, although we have been Christians for many years, still hunger and thirst for that which is above and beyond anything we have yet attained in Christ. We yearn to know Christ better and to be more like Him. We have a choice. If we want a meaningful life, and a satisfying life, then we need to look to Jesus as our model and as the power that can change our life. Rev. Simeon R. Green III is pastor of Joynes Road Church of God, 31 Joynes Road, Hampton VA 23669. He is a member of the National Association of Evangelism Church of God, Anderson, Ind.

INSIDE OUT

By Shewanda Riley
Columnist



“I want to lose 46 pounds” is what I stated to my nutritionist on my first visit with her in July, 2017. As she nodded her head and continued taking notes, I was a little fearful of the goal I had just set for myself. I explained to her that since I was getting closer to a new decade of life, I wanted to go into it looking and feeling my best. A big grin spread across her face as she then gave me a healthy eating plan with dozens of foods I’d never heard of. She then explained how the plan was not a restrictive diet but that I should consider it a change in my lifestyle of poor eating habits. After I looked over the list, I thought I might not ever reach the weight goal that I had boldly proclaimed if all I could eat was quinoa, flaxseed crackers and lentil pasta.

One of the things she emphasized was that although my working out three days a week was good, since it had not led to any significant weight loss, there was probably something else going on. When she told me I probably had a leaky gut, I wasn’t sure if I should laugh or be insulted. She explained that for some people even if they have healthy eating habits and exercise, they still might not be able to lose weight if they have a leaky gut. Leaky gut or not, I bought my flaxseed crackers and started my journey. Throughout this journey, I had many days that I doubted I would meet the goal because I didn’t care about losing weight anymore; I just wanted a burger and fries. However, I stuck with it and

quickly started to see results. Within two weeks of starting the plan, I noticed that I’d lost a little weight but the biggest change was going on internally. My blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol levels had all significantly dropped. I was sleeping better and stopped taking my allergy pills. Six months later, I’m excited to share that despite my many complaints about how boring and difficult my new plant based eating plan was, through faithful persistence, I met my weight loss goal last week. I deliberately picked a goal that at first seemed impossible so that when it happened, I would have to declare it was because of the grace of God. The focus on taking care of the internal and not just focusing on what my body looked like from the outside reminds me of Matthew 23:26 where Jesus emphasizes that transformation starts from the inside out: “Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.” Sometimes, I think we get it wrong being so focused on what things look like on the outside; for example, having a form of godliness (quoting scriptures, going to church or wearing a big cross necklace) but not really allowing the power of God to transform us on the inside. Shewanda Riley is a Dallas, Texas based author of “Love Hangover: Moving From Pain to Purpose After a Relationship Ends” and “Writing to the Beat of God’s Heart: A Book of Prayers for Writers.” Email her at preservedbypurpose@gmail.com or follow her on Twitter @shewanda.



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60,000 Haitians to leave or be deported in 2019

By Marc H. Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League



"Since 1804 Haiti has maintained national independence. I fling these facts at the feet of the detractors of the Negro and of Haiti. They may help them to solve the problem of her future. They not only indicate the Negro's courage, but demonstrate his intelligence as well. No better test of the intelligence of people can be had than is furnished in their laws, their institutions and their great men. To produce these in any considerable degree of perfection, a high order of ability is always required. Haiti has no cause to shrink from this test or from any other." - Frederick Douglass, American Abolitionist, "Lecture on Haiti," January 2, 1893

President Donald Trump's timing could not have been more ironic-or revealing. On the eve of the eighth anniversary of the January 12 earthquake that devastated the island nation of Haiti (and the start of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend), President Trump sat in a bipartisan meeting on immigration reform and publicly questioned why the United States – a nation founded and built by immigrants-should continue to accept immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador and Africa. With a slur heard round the world, President Trump is quoted to have uttered an obscenity to describe those countries – and Haiti, in particular.

This would not be the first time Haiti has been on the receiving end of President Trump's ridicule and contempt. Only weeks before, it was reported that during an earlier cabinet meeting on immigration, the president allegedly complained that immigrants from Nigeria would "never go back to their huts," and that people coming from Haiti "all have AIDS." And despite then-candidate Trump's pledge at a Miami rally to be the "greatest champion" of Haitian people, the Trump administration has given 60,000 Haitians living in this country under temporary protected status – granted after Haiti's catastrophic 2010 earthquake – until July 2019 to leave or be deported.

The slur is reprehensible and deeply disappointing, but it is not surprising. It lives in a universe of targeted travel bans with discriminatory religious preferences, a candidacy kicked off slandering Mexicans, sympathizing with white supremacists, attacks on protesting black athletes, and so on. The reported obscenity is, quite frankly, in keeping with past and current sentiments the president has expressed publically and via proxy through his administration's policies.

The true obscenity is that our nation's president is shaping immigration policy, not based on purported American ideals of inclusiveness, but based on the demonization of countries that are primarily black or brown; not based on facts, but by stoking fear; and not based on knowledge, but influenced by a narrow-minded worldview.

Haiti is not a slur. It is the first black republic in the world. It is the second oldest independent nation in the Western hemisphere after the United States. Haiti achieved its independence by launching the only successful slave revolt in history. But Haiti's fight did not end on the battlefield. It moved to the global arena where external forces would punish and destabilize the young island nation for claiming its freedom, resulting in lasting economic and political turmoil. France forced Haiti to pay more than \$20 billion in today's dollars as reparations for losing a profitable slave colony – drowning Haiti in debt. The United States, which provided aid to the French to help stop the rebellion, subjected Haiti to a crippling economic embargo until it recognized its independence in 1862. Over the years the United States would go on to invade and occupy Haiti, as well as play an oversized role in its politics and elections.

Nonetheless, Haiti is deeply woven into the fabric of America's history and founding. Haitians fought in the Revolutionary War. The city of Chicago was founded by a Haitian immigrant from St. Marc. Haitian music, art and food transformed and shaped the city of New Orleans. And the Haitian slave rebellion was directly responsible for the Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the United States.

As a citizen who believes Trump's slander is inconsistent with who we should aspire to be, I abhor the president's misrepresentation of America. As a former mayor of New Orleans, a city richly cultivated by the presence of Haitians, I am distressed by the president's miseducation of the valuable contributions of Haitian immigrants. As the proud descendant of a family who emigrated from Haiti in 1805, I will always challenge the president's wrong-headed assumption that immigrants are the living embodiment of the flaws and failures or upheavals of their countries of origin and cannot contribute positively in their adopted homes.

When someone tells you who they are, believe them!

By Dr. Wilmer J. Leon, III
TriceEdneyWire.com



"Why are we having all these people from sh*thole countries come here?" Trump said, according to these people, referring to African countries and Haiti. He then suggested that the United States should instead bring more people from countries like Norway, whose prime minister he met Wednesday." – *Washington Post* January 11, 2018

When someone tells you who they are you should believe them. President Donald Trump has once again made it very clear; he is a racist. Before he decided to insult Haitians and immigrants from African countries he efficiently targeted Mexican's and African Americans in the same Tweet, "Sadly, the overwhelming amount of violent crime in our major cities is committed by blacks and Hispanics..." We can never forget one of Trump's most infamous forays into bigotry, "When Mexico sends it people, they're not sending their best...They're bringing drugs...They're rapists."

The late Dr. Francis Cress Welsing defined racism/white supremacy as, "The local and global power system structured and maintained by persons who classify themselves as white...This system consists of patterns of perception...thought, speech, action and emotional response..." Trump's historic patterns of thought expressed through his words, actions and policies fit this definition to a "t."

When someone tells you who they are you should believe them. Trump is also a sexual predator. Again, the well-publicized foray into misogyny, "You know, I'm automatically attracted to beautiful – I just start kissing them...I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything... Grab 'em by the p@%%y. You can do anything."

When someone tells you who they are you should believe them. Trump is a liar. According to *The*

New York Times, after admitting that the voice on the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape was his and making a feeble attempt to apologize for it, "Mr. Trump told a Republican senator that he wanted to investigate the recording that had him boasting about grabbing women's genitals. "We don't think that was my voice..."

This recent demonstration of Trump's racism has many people shocked but few are surprised. Most of us are just disgusted. It is interesting to watch those hacks at FOX News attempt to spin this into a them vs. us or partisan creation "...to distract Americans from Trump's accomplishments."

America, the international global hegemon, the waning empire – finds itself dealing with the reality that its president has once again inferred that he sees Europeans as superior and people of color as inferior, "...the United States should instead bring more people from countries like Norway." He sees people of color as "other." It is an "us vs. them" binary world. Racist rhetoric is the language of racists. When someone tells you who they are, believe them.

This "Trumpian" mindset is not new. During WWII President Roosevelt was asked why Italian Americans were not being interned like Japanese Americans, he replied, "I don't care about the Italians...They are a lot of opera singers..." The Japanese Americans were "other," Italian Americans being of European decent were like him. Even though Italian and German Americans did suffer indignities, they were never interned and mistreated like Japanese Americans.

As I have listened to the debate about Trump's latest comments, many pundits and analysts are outraged about his "shithole country" reference. However, few are asking the more fundamental question, "what made these countries "shitholes" (and not to say that they really are)?" The answer, American foreign policy and European settler colonialism. Haiti struggles to this day simply because after the Hai-

tian Revolution (1791-1804) it was the first black republic in the world to overthrow a European power. America and France never want Haiti to be the shining example of successful liberation and freedom that it should be. People should be asking the Clinton Foundation what happened to the \$13B in aid that went to Haiti after the earthquake.

Mineral and resource rich African countries such as Zimbabwe and Congo will never be allowed to organically develop. They will always be oppressed by America and European forces because these colonists and neo-colonialists will never allow the strategic minerals held in these countries to be controlled by Africans.

Another question to ask is where is the outrage from Republican leadership? When engaged in analysis historical context is very important. Trump and his base did not develop in a vacuum. Senators McConnell and Graham, et al's failure to condemn Trump's "shithole" comment is consistent. They were conspicuously silent in 2010 when Tea Party members spat on Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, called Rep. John Lewis a "nigger," and Rep. Barney Frank a "faggot." Their inability to condemn Trump is not necessarily because they agree with him (even though in my opinion they probably do) it's because they are afraid. They fear what Dr. King called "the white backlash" and what Dr. Walters called "the politics of resentment. They fear the well-financed echo chamber called The Tea Party and the Freedom Caucus.

The ethnic demographics of America are changing. This change is striking fear in the hearts of many white Americans. Looking back at the rhetoric it is even easier to see that when Trump discusses "protecting the American worker" and bringing in highly educated wealthier "English speakers" with "higher job skills" he's is speaking to white people about white people. Therefore, even though many Americans are appalled by Trump's latest racist display, the White House is de-

fending it. According to CNN, "The president's 'shithole' remark is being received much differently inside the White House than it is outside of it. Though this might enrage Washington, staffers predict the comment will resonate with his base, much like his attacks on NFL players who kneel during the National Anthem did not alienate it."

As we move closer to the 2018 mid-term elections the ideological lines are becoming clearer and clearer. Just when the good people of Alabama dispatched the alleged pedophile Roy Moore, Arizonians will now be faced with the anti-immigrant, racial profiler and birther Joe Arpaio and his bid for the US Senate.

These mid-terms will be a true litmus test. Will the bigotry and hatred of Trump's base continue to carry the day, wreak havoc on our system of justice and control the Republican Party? Or, will people of good conscience and goodwill come to the polls in record numbers to reject Trump's politics of racism and hate in an effort to truly Make America Great Again instead of making America white again?

People have been apologizing for Trump since he announced his candidacy, saying, "he's not a politician" and "it will just take time for him to grow into being presidential." This is the same guy who was sued by the DOJ in 1973 for housing discrimination. He had his employees secretly mark the applications of minorities with codes, such as "No. 9" and "C" for "colored," according to government accounts filed in federal court.

I have always known, when someone tells you who they are, believe them. The key is to act on what they tell you.

Dr. Wilmer Leon is the producer/host of the nationally broadcast call-in talk radio program "Inside the Issues with Leon," on SiriusXM Satellite radio channel 126. Go to www.wilmerleon.com or email: wj-13us@yahoo.com. www.twitter.com/drleon and Dr. Leon's Prescription at Facebook.com

Shutdown allowed Trump to play poisonous political game

By Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr.
Founder and President of
Rainbow PUSH Coalition



Donald Trump had the government shutdown that he wanted. No one should be confused about this.

The shutdown allowed Trump and Republicans to ply their poisonous politics of division. And the shutdown provided occasion for a shakedown of Democrats, with Trump willing to shut the government down until he got billions for the wall that he had preposterously promised the Mexicans would pay for.

The record here is quite clear. Long before the deadline, Trump tweeted that a "good shutdown" might be necessary to "fix the mess!" His White House and the Republican Congress have utter scorn for federal employees, so treating these public servants shabbily is, to them, a feature, not a bug. When Americans find public services less available, Social Security claims delayed, water systems fouled, that's a benefit too – because it just provides fuel for Trump's attack on government.

The blowup was utterly unne-

cessary. Trump postured publicly as a supporter of the Dreamers, the hundreds of thousands of innocents, brought here as infants, who now – because of Trump's executive order – face deportation to countries that they have never known. Trump claimed he was ready to support a bipartisan agreement.

Democrat Dick Durbin and Republican Lindsay Graham, representing a bipartisan group, brought him that agreement. That's when Trump purposefully blew up the process, scorning immigrants from "s-hole countries."

Even when Democratic Senate leader Chuck Schumer agreed with Trump's demand for billions for the wall, there was still no deal. He "couldn't take yes for an answer," Schumer concluded.

Why would Trump and Republicans force the shutdown? The Trump campaign made that clear, rolling out a vicious television ad calling Democrats "complicit" for slayings committed by undocumented immigrants. The White House and Republican legislators repeated endlessly scurrilous talking points that they knew were lies: Democrats favor protecting illegal immigrants over funding our soldiers, supporting our veterans and

providing services for Americans.

This is ugly, race-based politics at its worst. Republicans reveled in it, claiming they had the upper hand.

It's worth remembering that many recent mass murders in America – in Newtown, Orlando, Las Vegas, Charleston and Sutherland Springs – involved U.S.-born assailants. Are Republicans, who in league with the National Rifle Association block any reform of our ridiculous gun laws, responsible for all of those murders? That's the logic of the Trump campaign ad slurring Democrats on immigration.

Now a deal has been reached to reopen the government, at least until Feb. 8. In theory, Democrats will gain relief for the Dreamers that is favored by some 85 percent of Americans. Trump will probably shake out billions to waste on his wall. Government will reopen, with the same distorted priorities.

Whether the government will finally get a real budget for the remainder of this fiscal year (which ends on the last day of September) remains to be seen. Will Trump finally take yes for an answer?

Trump and his campaign aides clearly see the political gain from parading as tough on immigration over and over again. He said in a

public meeting that he'd be willing to "take the heat" of a bipartisan immigration deal. But he has preferred constantly to sow division rather than solve problems.

The second obstacle is the House leadership and caucus. There's a majority in the House for good immigration reform, but the Republican leadership refuses to take up a measure that would pass unless a majority of Republicans alone support it. That makes the leadership hostage to the most right-wing faction in the party. And a large number of them don't want any deal, period.

Trump's aides say he is the great dealmaker. There's no question if he wants a deal, there is one available. The question remains is he prepared to make a deal. Now, he'll have until Feb. 8 to make up his mind.

The sad product of all this is that America's politics will grow uglier and more divisive. The White House and Republicans see themselves as having profited by appealing to our fears, by playing race-bait politics, by peddling hate. They will surely keep doing what they think works.

Trump will continue to drive Americans apart – until we come together to call him and the Republicans who echo him to account.

Rep. Danny Davis (D-III.) introduces bail reform bill

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor



During a recent press conference on Capitol Hill, Rep. Danny Davis (D-III.) said that at any given time there are roughly 500,000 people sitting in local jails waiting for their day in court. “These are people who have been charged with a crime, but are not convicted,” said Davis. “Many of the people waiting in jail are forced to wait simply, because they cannot afford to post bail.”

On January 18, Davis introduced the Bail Fairness Act of 2018 to alleviate some of the burdens associated with the cash bail system.

The Chicago congressman was joined on Capitol Hill by Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) and Dwight Evans (D-Pa.) and Chicago businessman and philanthropist Willie Wilson. The four of them were flanked by two large posters; one poster read: “Taxpayers Spend \$17 billion on Pretrial Detentions;” the other poster simply said, “Bail Fail” in large letters. Wilson said that he has paid the bails of non-violent Cook County Corrections inmates who were too poor to bail themselves out.

Davis’ legislation would require states to release individuals charged with a non-violent misdemeanor on non-monetary conditions prior to their court date.

Civil rights groups and lawmakers are increasingly putting pressure on businesses operating



Rep. Danny Davis introduced “Bail Fairness Act of 2018” on Capitol Hill. FREDDIE ALLEN/AMG/NNPA

in the cash bail system and becoming more vocal about problems in the industry.

As more cities begin to do away with the cash bail practice, some federal legislators are taking notice. Senators Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) have voiced similar concerns regarding the problems of money bail in the Senate. In September 2017, Harris joined with Republican Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) on the Pretrial Integrity and Safety Act. The bill would overhaul America’s bail system just as Davis’ legislation hopes to do.

A May 2017 report by Color of Change and the ACLU entitled, “Selling Off Our Freedom: How Insurance Corporations Have Taken Over Our Bail System,” outlined the for-profit incentives behind the bail system in America.

The report revealed that there are fewer than 10 companies in-

involved in the administration of over \$14 billion in bonds posted by for-profit bail each year. The bail industry collects approximately \$2 billion in profit, annually.

“The result of bail corporations’ control is that millions of people are no longer free: people stuck in jail and families stuck in debt to create profit for these corporations,” the report read. The study also pointed out that, “the national median for bail for a felony arrest is now \$10,000, while the Federal Reserve has found that nearly half of Americans would be unable to pay for an unexpected expense of \$400.”

The United States remains number one in the world in the rate of incarceration, with over two million people behind bars, in large part, because poor people are unable to pay their way out of incarceration. The money bail system disproportionately im-

pacts the poor. There are currently over 43 million Americans living under the poverty line; nearly 30 percent of African Americans live in poverty.

“The original purpose of bail was to serve as an incentive to return to court when a person is arrested, released and their case proceeds. However, the current money bail system has little to do with this original intent...people with money can almost always buy their way to freedom, regardless of the charges against them,” wrote ACLU Deputy National Political Director Udi Ofer, December 11, 2017.

Davis has continued to focus on justice reform issues during his 20 years in Congress. Davis’ “Second Chance Act” was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2007. The legislation assisted formerly incarcerated individuals to successfully re-enter society.

In November 2016, after his 15-year-old grandson was murdered in Chicago, Davis pushed for more funding for neighborhoods struggling with poverty. His focus was on the “10-20-30” policy proposed by South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn. The “10-20-30” plan would focus cash on 10 percent of all government funding to be allocated to areas where 20 percent of the residents have lived in poverty for over 30 years.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist, political analyst and contributor to the NNPA Newswire and BlackPressUSA.com. She can be reached by email at LBurke007@gmail.com and on Twitter at @LVBurke.

CBC members plan State of the Union protest



By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

During a lengthy, members-only meeting on Capitol Hill January 19, members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) discussed various options to protest the current President of the United States. Their protest plans centered around the annual State of the

Union address.

President Donald Trump’s second State of the Union address is scheduled for January 30.

The meeting the CBC held to talk over State of the Union protest plans occurred only hours after 66 members of the House voted to act on impeaching the president. That effort was led once again by Black Caucus member Rep. Al Green (D-Texas). Rep. Green’s second impeachment try failed 355-66. Three Democrats voted “present.”

Weeks after Donald Trump reportedly called Haiti, El Salvador and the continent of Africa “shithole countries” during a meeting on immigration with members of Congress in the Oval Office, many members have had it.

CBC members who attended the discussion confirmed that several options of protesting President Trump were discussed including walking out, wearing African themed garb and even not showing up to the State of the Union at all. The more vocal members included Reps. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.), Greg Meeks (D-N.Y.) and Frederica Wilson (D-Fla.).

During an interview with Buzzfeed January 17, days before the meeting, Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-La.) mentioned the CBC might hold its own State of the Union.

“We will...discuss how we want to respond to the president’s State of the Union. We could go, we could go and walk out, we could go and hold up fists...or we could not go, or we could hold our own ‘State of the Union,’” Richmond said.

A few Black Caucus members have already stated that they will not attend the president’s State of the Union address. They include Reps. John Lewis (D-Ga.), Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) and Frederica Wilson (D-Fla.).

Some CBC members are concerned about Congress’ largest caucus not being unified in protest, whatever form the protest may take. Other members wanted to make sure serious issues are highlighted and expressed concerns about the protest taking attention away from serious policy discussion. But in the age of former reality TV star turned President Donald Trump, others say that the best response is to fight fire with fire.

With protests in the air and in the streets around the first anniversary of the start of the Trump presidency, the timing of any protest the CBC may undertake on the night of the State of the Union is likely to receive serious media attention.

Regarding Green’s impeachment attempts, which House leadership is in opposition of, Green pointed out that Trump, “has by his statements brought the high office of president of the United States in contempt, ridicule, disgrace and disrepute; has sown discord among the people of the United States; has demonstrated that he is unfit to be president; and has betrayed his trust as president of the United States to the manifest injury of the people of the United States and has committed a high misdemeanor in office.”

Green’s form of protest was a legislative one. On the night of the State of the Union, we are likely to see a more theatrical display.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist, political analyst and contributor to the NNPA Newswire and BlackPressUSA.com. She can be reached by email at LBurke007@gmail.com and on Twitter at @LVBurke.

Chicago public schools working to close achievement gap

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Students in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) system are learning faster than just about any other school district in the nation, according to new research.

Research provided by Stanford Professor Sean Reardon shows that students in the Windy City have gained six years of learning in just five years.

Reardon based his analysis on 300 million elementary school test scores covering more than 11,000 school districts.

“I don’t think CPS is doing anything extraordinary or special for parent engagement, but it may be worth pointing out that we’re suddenly leading the nation in student growth and our kids of color are outperforming comparable kids of color across the state,” said Marilyn Rhames, the founder of the nonprofit Teachers Who Pray and a veteran teacher in Chicago.

Still, Rhames, author of the upcoming book, “The Master Teacher: 18 Spiritual Lessons that can Transform Schools and Revolutionize Public Education,” cautioned that there’s another side to the success story that shouldn’t be overlooked.

“There’s a huge race-based disparity of performance on the SAT, which all 11th graders in the state of Illinois has to take,” Rhames said. “Some CPS high schools did the worst in the state. So, how effective is our growth, if it’s not translating into better preparation for college?”

But, it’s not just about test scores; student attendance is up, Chicago high schools are offering more rigorous courses and high school graduation and college



Research has also revealed that Chicago students, on average, repeatedly outperform their peers outside the city. CREATIVE COMMONS/PIXABAY

enrollment rates continue to rise, said Elaine Allensworth of the Chicago Consortium on School Research.

The consortium has provided a descriptive examination of two- and four-year college enrollment patterns among CPS graduates over the last 10 years.

They found that CPS graduates’ immediate college enrollment rates increased over the last decade, with 63 percent of 2015 graduates enrolling in either a two- or four-year college immediately after high school, compared to 50 percent of graduates in 2006.

In 2015, CPS graduates’ rate of enrollment in four-year colleges was equal to the national rate at 44 percent, and higher than some urban districts, including New York and Los Angeles, which were 38 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

In June 2017, WBEZ in Chicago reported that even as CPS – the state’s largest school district – reeled from an ongoing budget crisis, an academic turnaround has occurred.

For decades, the district report-

edly shouldered a reputation of being perennially challenged by poverty and chronically low-performing schools.

In 1987, the U.S. Secretary of Education declared CPS the worst in the nation.

“That’s not Chicago anymore,” said Paul Zavitkovsky, a researcher with the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Center for Urban Education Leadership.

Research has also revealed that Chicago students on average repeatedly out-perform their peers outside the city.

Reardon, a leading expert on education equality in the United States, presented an analysis in November that revealed Chicago’s students learn and grow at a faster rate than 96 percent of school districts in the country – including wealthy districts.

Reardon’s findings also noted that, among the 100 largest school districts in the country, Chicago has the highest growth rate between third and eighth grade; and each successive CPS class is outperforming the class that came before and improving at a rate far

above the national average, according to Reardon’s report.

“This report is a testament to the hard work, progress and success of Chicago’s remarkable students, teachers, principals and families,” Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel said in a statement. “CPS students make Chicago proud every day. They not only lead in the classroom, they lead the country in academic growth, and their achievements are earning national recognition and respect.”

Kate Phillippo, an associate professor of cultural and educational policy studies at the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, said she’s excited to see increased learning growth in CPS. “It’s important to note what Chicago accomplished specifically. For example, its third grade test scores are still below the national average, but its growth is unusually high,” Phillippo said.

While there’s no one secret to success, initiatives at the school level have clearly promoted growth, she said.

“I think the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has the potential to support student achievement, giving districts greater flexibility about how they approach curriculum, and what learning supports they provide to their students,” Phillippo said. “ESSA’s provision for less standardized testing will also free educators up from a sense of pressure to prepare students for high-stakes tests. Finally, it is critical that ESSA has kept in place protections for economically disadvantaged students; that’s one of the hallmarks of ESSA.”

Learn more about the Every Student Succeeds Act at nnpa.org/essa.

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All interested public and private transit and paratransit operators within Hinds, County, are hereby advised that the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation is applying to the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Jackson, Mississippi, for a grant under Section 5310 of the Federal Public Transportation Act, as amended, to provide transportation services to elderly and disabled persons. These services will be beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Service is being provided within Hinds, County. This program consists of existing services with no environmental impact, and no relocation resulting from the project.

The purpose of this notice is to advise all interested parties, including transit and paratransit operators, of the service being planned for providing transportation services for persons with disabilities within the area as described above, and to ensure that such a program would not represent a duplication of current or of proposed services provided by existing transit or paratransit operators in the area.

Comments either for or against this service will be received at any time within 15 days from the date of this notice. All comments should be addressed to The Jackson Medical Mall Foundation at 601-982-8467.

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The City of Jackson is accepting proposals from certified Lead Inspectors and Lead Risk Assessors for all City of Jackson funded Housing Rehabilitation and Lead Hazard Control Programs. Due to closures caused by inclement weather, the submittal deadline has been extended until 5:00 PM, CDT on Wednesday, January 31, 2018. Please submit proposal to the Office of Housing and Community Development, 218 South President Street, 2nd Floor, Jackson, MS, 39201.

Applications are available in the Office of Housing and Community Development, located at 218 S. President Street, Second Floor, Jackson, MS 39201, and on the City's website at www.jacksonms.gov. The application must be filled out in its entirety and all required documentation must be attached at the time of application submission. The City of Jackson reserves the right to approve and terminate contractors for all Housing Rehabilitation and Lead Hazard Control Programs at any time.

Questions should be directed to:
Valerie Tucker, 601-960-4238 or email vtucker@city.jackson.ms.us
John Avery, 601-960-1438 or email javery@city.jackson.ms.us

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1/11/2018 1/18/2018 1/25/2018

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Calvin R. Sibley, Bureau Director
Bureau of Building, Grounds and Real Property Management

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THE “12 STRONG” INTERVIEW

TREVANTE RHODES

A SPIRITED TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH THE TALENTED ATHLETE-TURNED-THESPIAN

By Kam Williams
Columnist

Trevante Nemour Rhodes was born in Ponchatoula, Louisiana February 10, 1990, but raised in Little Elm, Texas from the age of 10. After excelling in sports in high school, he earned a scholarship to the University of Texas where he was an All-American sprinter as well as a running back on the Longhorns’ football team.

After graduating, Trevante moved to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career, making his big screen debut in Open Windows opposite Elijah Wood and Sasha Grey. A couple of years ago, he landed a breakout role as Black in Moonlight, the gay-themed, coming of age drama which won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

Here, Trevante talks about his latest outing as Sergeant Ben Milo in 12 Strong, a docudrama about the top secret mission of a Special Forces unit deployed to Afghanistan a few days after 9/11.

Kam Williams: Hi Trevante, thanks for the interview.

Trevante Rhodes: Thank you, Kam.

KW: What interested you in 12 Strong? Had you read the book before you got the script?

TR: I read the book after I got the script. Although I was obviously very aware of 9/11, I was

fascinated by this story which I had never heard about. I thought that these first responders and the way in which they prevailed was not only unique but pretty important. So, I felt that it was awesome to have an opportunity to be a part of turning this little-known story into a movie. Of course, I also jumped at the chance to work with [producer] Jerry Bruckheimer and the terrific cast attached to the project.

KW: Yeah, I had no idea we had guys fighting on horseback over in Afghanistan. And they were outnumbered and outgunned by the Taliban equipped with tanks, RPGs and heavy artillery.

TR: It was amazing. Those soldiers are heroes, Kam.

KW: Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier asks: How did you prepare to play Sergeant First Class Ben Milo?

TR: My preparation included speaking to quite a few veterans. They were very open and honest about both their downtime and battle experiences. They shared the good, the bad, and everything in between. We also had Army Ranger training for three or for weeks which was not only educational but very valuable in terms of our bonding as a unit.

KW: I assume you didn’t work with live ammo.

TR: Definitely not. We had

a couple guys who didn’t know what they were doing, so that would’ve been scary.

KW: Have you had an opportunity to meet the soldier your character’s based on?

TR: Yeah, just last night at the premiere. He’s amazing.

KW: Patricia would like to know what you want the audience to learn from the movie.

TR: I’d like them to come away with an accurate perspective of what it was like in Afghanistan after 9/11. For instance, I was 11 years-old at the time, and I believed all the people over there were bad. But that’s obviously not the case, since the only reason why this mission succeeded was because of a lot of help from some locals. Another message is how valuable connectivity, love, honesty and being there for one another are.

KW: She was also wondering whether there’s a genre out of your comfort zone that you would like to try?

TR: To be quite honest, nothing I’ve encountered thus far is outside of my comfort zone. I hope that every film I do is very different from the previous one. What I’m always looking for as an actor is to be challenged in a new way. That way I can be educated and grow. It also enables you to appreciate different

points-of-view through your own eyes. But I might not be ready to do a comedy yet, unless I could find one with a cool message.

KW: Lastly, Patricia asks, what is your opinion of color-blind casting?

TR: I always hope that Hollywood casts the best person for a role regardless of what they look like, regardless of their skin color, gender or sexual orientation. And that’s been the case in my own experience. I’m very appreciative of where things are at compared to twenty years ago, and I hope they continue to improve in a rapid manner, because we have all kinds of people putting out incredible material and doing phenomenal work.

KW: You seem to have gone straight from athlete to acting very quickly and very successfully. Did you study acting in college?

TR: No, I just took one theater class during my senior year to fulfill a degree requirement, Kam. A professor did suggest that I pursue it further. Then a casting director spotted me on my campus, and I got bitten by the acting bug. And I saw that if you put in the effort, you’d get a certain reward out of it. Because of that, I love acting.

KW: What was it like to be in the Oscar-winning Best Picture, Moonlight?



TR: I was really happy that we won because of all the work everybody put into the film. Barry [director Barry Jenkins] puts an incredible amount of love into everything he does. I also like the fact that a great work of art could win, regardless of who you are or what you look like. I hope winning will help Barry get more opportunities.

KW: Well, his previous film, Medicine for Melancholy, was phenomenal, too.

TR: Yeah. That’s what I’m saying, Kam. Even his first college project was amazing. He’s great, and I’m very happy for him.

KW: What I found incredible about Moonlight was how I barely noticed that the two main characters were each played by three different people. He somehow made the transitions, as they grew older, seamless.

TR: I think that’s a testament to not only Barry’s brilliant writing and directing, but to the great casting and acting and the

beautiful cinematography. Normally, people think it’s crazy to have different people play the same person. But here, all the elements combined to create a masterpiece.

KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles asks: With so many classic films being redone, is there a remake you’d like to star in?

TR: I’m not sure. More than anything, I’m interested in working with the best directors, the best scriptwriters, the best casts and the best crews willing to work with me, because I believe that great experiences translate to great films.

KW: Finally, Samuel L. Jackson asks: What’s in your wallet?

TR: [LOL] A bank card and a Chipotle celebrity card. That gets me all the good food. Honestly, it’s the thing in my wallet I’m the most proud of.

KW: I didn’t even know such a thing existed. Thanks again for the time, Trevante, and best of luck with the film.

TR: My pleasure, Kam.

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BOOK REVIEW: “LIBBA: THE MAGNIFICENT MUSICAL LIFE OF ELIZABETH COTTON”

BY LAURA VEIRS,
ILLUSTRATED BY TATYANA FAXZLALIZADEH
C.2018, SEAL PRESS
\$17.99 / \$24.99 CANADA • 48 PAGES

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
Columnist

Oopsy-daisy. That’s what Grandma might say when you’re tumbling around and your head holds your feet up. The world sure looks different when you’re toes are on top and you’re looking at things from upside down, and in the new book “Libba” by Laura Veirs, illustrated by Tatyana Fazlzaladeh, that’s not the only thing that’s all out of order. Music was everywhere, for Libba Cotton. When she fetched water for her mother and brother, she

heard river music. The axe she used to chop wood sang to her. There was a clickety-clack of music in the trains as they sped by on two tracks. Libba “heard music everywhere” and she longed to make it herself but her brother didn’t like anyone touching his guitar. Even so, whenever he wasn’t home, Libba went to his room, took up the instrument, and played – even though she was left-handed, and had to do it upside down and backwards. To anybody else, that would have been weird but to Libba, “it was the way that felt right...”

Her brother, Claude, hated that Libba borrowed his guitar but “DANG!” she was good. She could play well, and she even wrote songs. That’s how it was, until Claude moved away and took his guitar with him. Libba did chores and saved money until she was able to have a guitar of her own. And she played. Upside down and backward, until time passed and she stopped. Years later, when Libba was much older, she met a woman from a “musical family” who hired her to work as a housekeeper at a home that was filled

with music. There were “banjos in the bedrooms, pianos in the parlor and bass drums in the basement.” All day and all night, musicians drifted in and out, men with names like Muddy Waters and Woody Guthrie, and Libba started hearing music again. Then one day, when nobody was paying any attention and nobody would care about how she strummed, Libba borrowed a guitar. And she played music. Upside down. And backwards. Before you snuggle up with your child for an inaugural

round of “Libba,” take a few minutes to read the book yourself, so you’re fully prepared for what you’ll see. Oh, that artwork. Through Fazlzaladeh’s charcoal drawings, musician Elizabeth Cotton’s story is told so exquisitely that it may render you almost speechless. Chances are, your child might not notice but you will. Be prepared. What your child will find here is a story of keeping a dream alive, even when it’s

been shelved for a long time. In telling this tale, Laura Veirs’s words dance like fingers on frets as she lends lightness to the story, despite its Depression-era theme. Be sure to read her Author’s Note, which explains much more about Cotton and her work. If yours is a musical family or if your child does things a little different, then this is a story you’ll want to read again and again. For you, for sure, “Libba” is a book that holds up.



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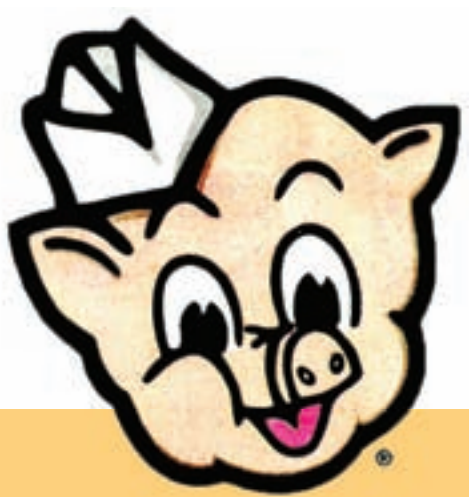
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