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The Carolinian



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75¢



Dedicated to the Spirit
and Service of God

RALEIGH, N.C.

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In 2019 We Said Goodbye To



JESSEY NORMAN



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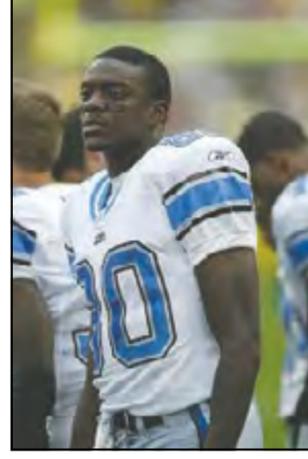
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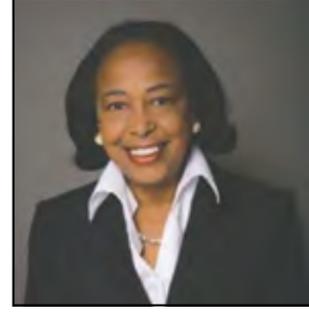
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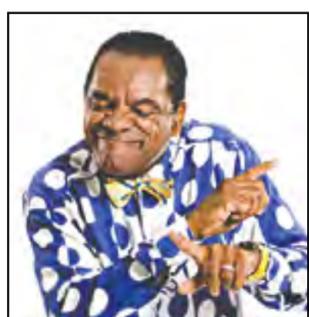


KRISTOFF ST. JOHN

2019 was a year where we lost significant Movers & Shakers, Bright & Shining Stars, and Trailblazers on so many fronts. May their legacies motivate us to aspire to ever greater heights in 2020!



HARRISON DILLARD



JOHN WITHERSPOON



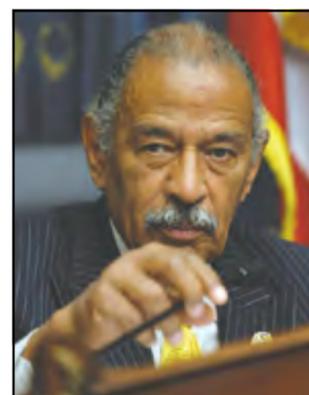
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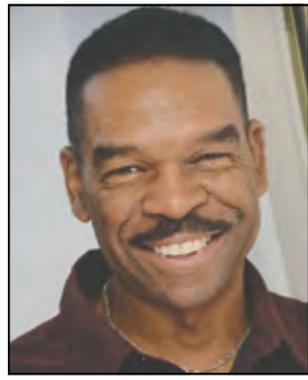
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BARBARA HILLARY



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LARRY "FLASH" JENKINS



ROSS PEROT



JUICE WRLD



War In Afghanistan Mirroring Vietnam

By Gordon Adams

American U. School of International Service

The *Washington Post* has, after more than two years of investigation, revealed that senior foreign policy officials in the White House, State and Defense departments have known for some time that the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan was failing.

Interview transcripts from the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, obtained by the *Post* after many lawsuits, show that for 18 years these same officials have told the public the intervention was succeeding.

In other words, government officials have been lying. Few people are shocked. That's a stark contrast to 1971, when the Pentagon Papers, a classified study of decision-making about Vietnam, were leaked and published. The explosive Pentagon Papers showed that the U.S. government had systematically lied about the reality that the U.S. was losing the Vietnam War.

The failure of the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan has been known for years. Virtually none of the U.S. goals have been met. These goals included a strong, democratic, uncorrupt central government; the defeat of the Taliban; eliminating the poppy fields that contribute to the world's heroin problem; an effective military and police and creating a healthy, diversified economy.

The Inspector General has repeatedly documented the reality in its widely available (and widely reported) audits. Despite this public record of failure, officials continued to trumpet political and military gains on the ground, even that the U.S. could prevail.

Privately, they have been wringing their hands. Shades of Vietnam.

The Pentagon Papers revealed that senior officials asserted in the

(See **AFGHANISTAN, VIETNAM**, P. 2)

Paradigm Shift In Black America

By Summer Sims

Special To The Carolinian

The late 1700s in America presented a history of oppressive actions to sustain a pattern of control over slaves. Anti-literacy laws were established to restrict slaves from securing an educational foundation.

Such laws served to limit the knowledge and understanding blacks would access—thereby maintaining control over the actions and growth of blacks in America. Over two hundred years hence—we continue to punt the literacy of marginalized people and communities.

Perhaps it was the technology boom, or maybe a values shift, that resulted in a seismic turn. The country's focus on the importance of education for all people appeared to represent much sound and theory, but, little commitment of requisite resources to realize a significant focus on education as a catalyst for change.

More importantly, the black community's goal, to ensure marginalized children and families could access quality resources and opportunities has proven to be an ongoing vision.

Yes, 60 years ago black parents in America viewed education as the great "equalizer" while many Black households were guided by small farmers, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, mill workers, textile workers, housekeepers..., low-wage jobs promising little hope for a brighter future.

However, many parents held a pressing desire. The Black American consensus was to raise the floor for the upcoming generation. The ability to secure an education promised hope and change across black communities, specifically in the southern region of the country.

What is the lesson parents, educators, administrators, public officials should learn? Maybe the takeaway we should grasp is the ongoing costs incurred to continue practices of oppression. Many generations pay a dear price dismantling the residuals of oppression, and we ask, "What might we do differently?"

Notably, more than 250 years since the enacting of laws forbidding slaves access to opportunities to learn reading and writing, North Carolina is caught in a legal case, a case highlighting inequities in educational access for rural and under-served communities.

This case, commonly identified as the "Leandro Case," carefully punctuates glaring disparities in the quality and availability of resources found in suburban and urban communities contrasted to the absence of such resources in rural and inner-city communities.

Largely, black and marginalized rural areas of the state fall victim to long held patterns of exclusion and access to infrastructure, technology, human capital and material resources. We have failed to strategically engage parents in a manner such that we "listen and hear" their thoughts, ideas, needs and desires.

The system battles to sustain vestiges of control and people who once valued education—people who desire to forge better opportunities for their children, appear to have shifted the paradigm.

Entertainment and sports appear to have become the priority goal. Engaging technology to soothe our immediate desires has transfixed generations of peoples such that reading comprehension, writing a complete sentence and simple math calculations require assistance from a technological device.

Try ordering a sandwich with special condiments through the drive-through window during your next fast-food restaurant visit and pay the cashier using cash. The gravity of the crisis affecting America's functional illiteracy might astound you.

Are you concerned enough to reach out to the newspaper to offer assistance toward eliminating this illiteracy stronghold? Please write or call *The Carolinian* Newspaper



BUSINESS I-40 EXIT NUMBERS TO CHANGE AFTER CHRISTMAS

WINSTON-SALEM (AP)—Rainy weather has delayed plans to change the exit numbers on the Business Interstate 40 Improvements Project, officials said.

The N.C. Department of Transportation had scheduled to begin making the changes on Tuesday and continue through Friday, but an update from the department said the weather forced the delay.

When weather permits, workers will close one lane in either direction of the highway so they can safely change the exit numbers to show those for U.S. 421. The name of the corridor will also change from Business Interstate 40 to Salem Parkway.

Drivers will not see double exit number signs, N.C. Department of Transportation Resident Engineer Larry Shaver said. Because the work won't take place in one night, drivers will likely see new U.S. 421 exit signs directly followed by the Business 40 exit signs being replaced. NCDOT wants to alert drivers that the change is a work in progress and to expect sudden exit sign changes, he also said.

POLICE: MAN IMPERSONATED OFFICER, PULLED GUN ON DRIVER

WAYNESVILLE (AP)—Authorities in North Carolina say a man impersonating a police officer pulled a woman over and told her to get out of her car at gunpoint. The man is still at large.

The Haywood County Sheriff's Office said in a statement that the incident happened Sunday.

The sheriff's office said the man was driving a silver Dodge Charger with dark tinted windows and white strobe lights. The woman thought it was a police vehicle and pulled over.

The sheriff's office said the man wore a black button up collared shirt, cargo pants and silver badge. He also had a gun on his belt.

Authorities said the man pulled out his gun and told the woman to "get out of the car." The woman drove off only for the man to briefly chase her in his car.

MAN ACCUSED OF EMBEZZLING FROM CHURCH, THEN SELLING IT

GREENVILLE (AP)—Authorities in North Carolina say a man embezzled more than \$100,000 from a church and then sold it even though he didn't have the legal rights to do so.

Armie Spencer Jr., 49, was arrested and charged with embezzlement following a three-month investigation, Pitt County Sgt. Lee Darnell said in a news release Friday.

Investigators received a report of suspicious financial activity regarding the Piney Grove Original Free Will Baptist Church in September, Darnell said. Detectives found an improper pattern of activity in which Spencer allegedly moved more than \$100,000 from church accounts into his personal accounts and the accounts of his defunct business, International Galleries, according to the release.

Detectives also discovered the church building and grounds had been sold. Oasis of Hope Pentecostal Church bought the property in May for \$425,000, WITN-TV reported citing records.

The new owners of the church were not involved in any criminal activity and were not aware that any such activity had occurred, Darnell said in the release.

In addition to embezzlement, Spencer is charged with felony obtaining property by false pretense and conspiracy to obtain property by false pretense. He was booked in the Pitt County Detention Center. It's unclear whether he had an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

DONORS HELP PAY NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT'S SCHOOL LUNCH DEBT

ASHEVILLE (AP)—Anonymous donors have contributed thousands of dollars to help chip away at one North Carolina school district's student lunch debt.

TV station WLOS reported Friday that Asheville City Schools announced two anonymous donors recently contributed nearly \$5,000. That will pay off lunch debt at seven campuses across the district.

Before the donations, the district said they had more than \$32,000 in lunch debt.

The district says if a student is unable to pay for a meal, they still receive it and accrue a balance.

The principal of one elementary school that had its debt repaid said the donations were greatly appreciated.

War In Afghanistan Mirroring—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

1960s that the Viet Cong were dying in record numbers, enemy leadership was decapitated and there was "light at the end of the tunnel." Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and his commanders, who knew the reality, continuously called for even more force from 1961 to 1969.

H.R. McMaster, in his classic study of Vietnam decision-making, excoriated the military for not bringing the truth to President Lyndon Johnson, for presenting Johnson with the "lies that led to Vietnam."

The U.S. was winning in Vietnam, until it was not. Right up to the moment diplomats in the U.S. embassy turned the lights off and were airlifted off the building's roof.

Are comparisons justified? Afghanistan is not Vietnam, it is said.

Former Afghanistan Ambassador Ryan Crocker argues that the U.S. must be in Afghanistan for America's security even if reconstruction fails. Brookings analyst Michael O'Hanlon asserts that there were no lies; officials were clear the policy was in trouble. He avoids discussing the voluminous true statements *The Washington Post* uncovered that were not made publicly.

The U.S. was ignorant about both countries. Serving in the Obama transition in 2008, for example, I learned that Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute, the Bush-Obama Afghanistan coordinator, was carrying out a policy review process that led to a military surge.

Now we learn, courtesy of *The Washington Post*, that, when interviewed in 2015 as part of Special Inspector General's "Lessons Learned" project, Lute said, "We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan... we didn't have the foggiest notion of what we were undertaking."

While Afghanistan is clearly not Vietnam, Washington is still Washington.

After more than 30 years of policy work, government experience, teaching and research, I see no mystery here. Concealment, deception and outright lies have characterized U.S. national security policy for decades—from the overthrow of democratically elected governments in Iran and Guatemala to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and more.

But Vietnam was the big lie, permanently exposing the gap between myth—the government knows everything better—and reality—that policy is failing.

Since Vietnam, the media and congressional, think-tank and scholarly investigators have suspected something with every intervention. To the public, the truth about Afghanistan has been clear; public opinion has been way ahead of what *The Washington Post* revealed.

Lies are an integral part of national security operations. They seek credibility for government policy. They mislead adversaries, cover up mistakes and failures.

Above all, they are intended to secure public support for policy and defeat opposition at home. Political scientist John Mearsheimer has noted that governments don't often lie to their allies and adversaries, "but instead seem more inclined to lie to their own people."

In particular, secrecy and deception convey power. As philosopher Sissela Bok says, "Deception can be coercive. When it succeeds, it can give power to the deceiver."

Secrecy allows policies to be tweaked outside public view. Insiders gain influence arguing for new approaches to the same goals. Even the goals can shift as interventions deteriorate. The political consequences of failure may be avoided.

It is rare for an official to acknowledge failure and reverse policy; personal, political and national credibility may be at stake. President Johnson insisted that he was not going to be the "first president to lose a war." Bush, Obama and even Trump did not want to "lose" Afghanistan.

An act of political courage—like the 1960-61 Algeria departure decision of French President Charles de Gaulle, who understood France had lost its fight, is rare.

Why has *The Washington Post* series not been explosive?

In part, the Pentagon Papers broke the code of secrecy; the bond of trust between the policy-makers and the American people

was severed forever.

In part, the lies about Afghanistan have been in plain sight for years, courtesy of the media and the Special Inspector General.

And in part, the public is less directly engaged. The warriors are now volunteer professionals, not conscripts drawn from the general public. Casualties are one-twentieth of what they were in Vietnam.

Nonetheless, lying about military interventions carries a serious risk. The Pentagon Papers eroded public faith in the credibility of our democratic government. That erosion was later reinforced by the Watergate scandal. As Bok, the philosopher, wrote, "deception of this kind strikes at the very essence of democratic government."

British leader Winston Churchill said, "In war-time truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies." Deception aimed at the public and the Axis was an essential part of Churchill's war strategy.

The Afghanistan papers reveal yet again that statesmen still believe the truth should be concealed. But the credibility of statecraft and leadership itself were seriously eroded by the Vietnam lies, weakening the fabric of democracy.

The mild reaction to lying in plain sight about Afghanistan suggests the U.S. may be well down the road to unraveling government's credibility and our democracy altogether.

Coates Speaks To Congress On Reparations

Five years ago, journalist Tanehi Coates published "The Case for Reparations" in *The Atlantic*, a cover story that would reinvigorate national discussion over debts owed for slavery and discrimination against black Americans.

This year, on Juneteenth, he testified at a House hearing on H.R. 40, a bill that would establish a commission to study reparations. It's the first such hearing in more than a decade.

Below, the full text of his opening statement as delivered:

Yesterday, when asked about reparations, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell offered a familiar reply: America should not be held liable for something that happened 150 years ago, since none of us currently alive are responsible.

This rebuttal proffers a strange theory of governance, that American accounts are somehow bound by the lifetime of its generations. But well into this century, the United States was still paying out pensions to the heirs of Civil War soldiers.

We honor treaties that date back some 200 years, despite no one being alive who signed those treaties. Many of us would love to be taxed for the things we are solely and individually responsible for. But we are American citizens, and thus bound to a collective enterprise that extends beyond our individual and personal reach.

It would seem ridiculous to dispute invocations of the Founders, or the Greatest Generation, on the basis of a lack of membership in either group. We recognize our lineage as a generational trust, as inheritance, and the real dilemma posed by reparations is just that: a dilemma of inheritance. It is impossible to imagine America without the inheritance of slavery.

As historian Ed Baptist has written, enslavement "shaped every crucial aspect of the economy and politics" of America, so that by 1836 more than \$600 million, almost half of the economic activity in the United States, derived directly or indirectly from the cotton produced by the million-odd slaves. By the time the en-

slaved were emancipated, they comprised the largest single asset in America. Three billion in 1860 dollars, more than all the other assets in the country combined.

The method of cultivating this asset was neither gentle cajoling nor persuasion, but torture, rape, and child trafficking. Enslavement reigned for 250 years on these shores. When it ended, this country could have extended its hallowed principles—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—to all, regardless of color.

But America had other principles in mind. And so for a century after the Civil War, black people were subjected to a relentless campaign of terror, a campaign that extended well into the lifetime of Majority Leader McConnell.

It is tempting to divorce this modern campaign of terror, of plunder, from enslavement, but the logic of enslavement, of white supremacy, respects no such borders and the guard of bondage was lustful and begat many heirs. Coup d'états and convict leasing. Vagrancy laws and debt peonage.

Redlining and racist G.I. bills.

Poll taxes and state-sponsored terrorism. We grant that Mr. McConnell was not alive for Appomattox. But he was alive for the electrocution of George Stinney. He was alive for the blinding of Isaac Woodard. He was alive to witness kleptocracy in his native Alabama and a regime premised on electoral theft.

Majority Leader McConnell cited civil-rights legislation yesterday, as well he should, because he was alive to witness the harassment, jailing, and betrayal of those responsible for that legislation by a government sworn to protect them.

He was alive for the redlining of Chicago and the looting of black homeowners of some \$4 billion. Victims of that plunder are very much alive today. I am sure they'd love a word with the majority leader.

What they know, what this committee must know, is that while emancipation dead-bolted the door against the bandits of America, Jim Crow wedged the windows wide open.

When Blacks Leave Segregated Hometowns

THE CONVERSATION—Where someone grows up is profoundly important for their life chances. It influences things like the schools they attend, the jobs, parks and community resources they have access to and the peers they interact with.

Because of this comprehensive influence, one might conclude that where you grow up affects your ability to move up the residential ladder and into a better neighborhood than the one you grew up in.

In a new study, my co-authors and I show that for many children, where they grow up is profoundly important for where they end up as adults.

But for black Americans who move away from the cities of their youth, moving out often means moving up the residential ladder.

One important kind of residential disadvantage that social scientists like me are interested

in is racial segregation. This generally refers to the separation of black people from white people in the neighborhoods in which they live.

Considerable research shows that living in a more racially segregated area is connected with worse outcomes for black people in a variety of areas of life, influencing everything from the probability of graduating from high school to life expectancy.

Black people remain highly segregated from white people in many areas of the United States, including Chicago, Detroit and New York.

Indeed, a 2015 study found that over 50 percent of black people in the U.S. lived in highly segregated areas.

In other words, the majority of U.S. black people live in neighborhoods that are predominantly black and racially isolated.

These neighborhoods are often underfunded in terms of business and educational investment, distant from job opportunities and more likely to be targets for crime.

Children in these neighborhoods are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their health, education and future economic prospects.

Given these disadvantages, it would seem that growing up in a segregated area would have dramatic effects on a person's life chances going forward.

For children who stay in the same place where they grew up, this seems to be the case, as my co-authors and I found in a recent study.

We looked at data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a survey of 4,800 families and their descendants that began in 1968 and has continued surveying these individuals to this day.

First, we looked at those who grew up in segregated metropolitan areas and stayed in those same areas as adults.

They ended up living in more impoverished, racially isolated, lower-income neighborhoods in their adulthood, compared to children who grew up in less segregated metro areas.

However, when we turned our attention to individuals who moved out of the metro areas they grew up in, into new cities or states, we found a profoundly different set of relationships.

It didn't matter whether a person had grown up in an area that was highly segregated or not—they lived in less impoverished and racially isolated neighborhoods as well as higher-income neighborhoods after they moved to a new metro area.

This was true regardless of their own education, income and employment status, among other characteristics.

In other words, people who leave segregated neighborhoods for new metro areas tend to

move up the residential ladder, while something is keeping those who stay in the metro areas of their youth from doing so.

Why do some who grow up in segregated areas end up stuck in disadvantaged neighborhoods, while those who move often end up in areas that offer more opportunities?

We accounted for individuals' socioeconomic status in our analyses, as well as gender, marital status and characteristics of the metro area. So, this isn't about poor people not being able to move and wealthy people being able to move—something else must be going on.

A promising potential explanation is the role of information.

When people search for housing, they tend to look to places they know a lot about already, that they have heard about from family and friends and traveled to when they go to work, the doctor or the grocery store.

This means that those who grow up in advantaged neighborhoods are more likely to explore nearby advantaged neighborhoods when they search for housing in adulthood. Meanwhile, those who grow up in disadvantaged neighborhoods may perceive those to be the primary options available to them.

This suggests some encouraging policy options that could prevent people from becoming stuck in disadvantaged areas.

For example, cities might develop programs to help prospective renters and homeowners explore new neighborhoods they might have little knowledge of. That could be a helpful way of increasing the information individuals have about new and different types of neighborhoods to move to.

Many people have limited knowledge of even relatively nearby neighborhoods that differ from those they grew up in. Such programs might allow individuals to be tourists in their own backyard.

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Business & Finance

NY Life Acquires Cigna's Group Life Div

BUSINESS WIRE—New York Life, America's largest mutual life insurer, and Cigna, a leading global health service company, announced today that they have entered into a definitive agreement whereby New York Life will acquire Cigna's group life and disability insurance business for \$6.3 billion.

The acquisition is expected to close in the third quarter of 2020, subject to applicable regulatory approvals and other customary closing conditions.

"This transaction increases the value we can deliver to our policy owners, strengthens our well-defined business model, and adds millions of customers to the New York Life family," said New York Life Chairman and CEO Ted Mathas.

"Cigna's group life and disability business enhances our portfolio of strategic businesses and is led by an experienced management team and high-quality workforce, who we look forward to welcoming to our company. We are fully committed to making this transition as seamless as possible for employees and clients alike."

The group life and disability insurance business will operate within New York Life's portfolio of strategic businesses, which, like Cigna's Group Insurance



business, are industry leaders, highly profitable, and fully support New York Life's core retail life insurance franchise.

These businesses reinforce New York Life's overall financial strength by generating capital that can contribute to its surplus, dividends, and earnings, which directly benefits the company's policy owners.

In addition, the Cigna Group Insurance employees, as well as the employees who primarily support the acquired business, will transfer to New York Life.

"We are proud of what we have achieved in our life and disability business, and the world-class team that powers it. We are confident that clients and customers,

including the many who also receive health and related benefits through Cigna, will continue to enjoy the high-quality benefits solutions and service for which this business is known," said Matt Manders, Cigna's President of Strategy and Solutions.

"Our team is excited to become a part of New York Life and continue to focus on the mission of providing financial security and peace of mind to individuals, families, and businesses across the country while our unwavering commitment to focusing on productivity will continue," said William Smith, President of Cigna Group Insurance.

"We look forward to continuing

our relationships with our valued customers and clients. New York Life is a highly-respected brand in our industry and has the capital, commitment, and trust to help us grow and thrive going forward."

In a multi-year collaboration, following closing, the parties will continue to bring an integrated Health / Group offering to clients and prospects who desire it.

New York Life will pay Cigna cash consideration of \$6.3 billion. The transaction is not subject to a financing condition at closing. Cigna expects to realize approximately \$5.3 billion of net after-tax proceeds from this transaction.

Cigna expects to utilize proceeds of the transaction for share repurchase and repayment of debt in 2020. Cigna's Board of Directors has increased the company's share repurchase authority by \$3.0 billion to an aggregate amount of \$4.0 billion.

Cigna expects the impact of the transaction to be neutral to earnings per share in 2020 and modestly accretive to earnings per share in 2021. Cigna continues to expect to meet its deleveraging commitments made following the Express Scripts combination.

FUNdraising Good Times

By Mel & Pearl Shaw
Saad & Shaw



IS ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT A LUXURY OR A WASTE OF TIME?

Nonprofit people are some of the busiest people around. We are busy meeting needs, advocating, raising money, collaborating, and bringing people together to advance positive visions for who we can be individually and collectively. Our endeavors are meaningful, impactful, and often life-saving. Collectively we are transforming the world we know into the world we want our children to live in. And we seek to respect each other and feel good about doing good.

But how does this all happen? Is there a magic team builder who transforms everyday humans into nonprofit superstars? Our experience has shown that while the hearts of those in the nonprofit sector are full of love and hope, we aren't collectively blessed with any greater ability to work together than others.

We need to invest in our people, systems, culture, and understanding of each other. Unfortunately many nonprofits try to allocate "just about everything" to programs, services, and advocacy and overlook investing in our teams.

Organizational development can be seen as a luxury we can't afford, something we don't need because we've got it all together, or something we can do on our own. Sometimes we don't even know what our organizations need, or that there is help, processes, and new approaches to working that we can benefit from.

Take a moment to read and answer the following questions. Ask your team members, board members, and volunteers to do the same. Is there consensus? Your answers are at the heart of your organizational culture and effectiveness.

1. Who do we serve, support, or advocate for? Is this clearly defined?
2. Do we meet a "need" on an individual or community-wide basis?
3. Who are our partners and who are our competitors?
4. What are our organization's values? Does everyone know these?
5. Do we all buy into these?
6. How are management decisions made?
7. Where does the buck stop?
8. Who provides oversight?
9. Who sets goals, defines/refines the mission and values?
10. Where does our funding come from?
11. Who is responsible for the financial health of the organization?
12. Are we operating from a strategic plan, business plan, or other plan?
13. Is the budget a "make-do" budget, or does it provide the finances we need to fulfill our mission?
14. Are we in a position to go after funding to support your organization?
15. What checks and balances have we put in place to hold ourselves accountable? Who is part of these systems and what processes are in place to surface issues, concerns, harassment, embezzlement, fraud, misrepresentation?
16. Do we invest in the development of our employees, volunteers, and board members?
17. Do we have the capacity and infrastructure to sustain and grow our operations?
18. Do our employees, volunteers, and board members understand their roles and responsibilities?
19. Do we have the tools we need to monitor trends within our "sector"?

All of these impact and help create organizational culture. Take time to invest in your organization's health and development: you and your team are worth it.

Native Tribe Recognized

By Matthew Brown

Associated Press

An American Indian tribe whose members were scattered after being denied a homeland more than a century ago has been formally recognized by the U.S. government.

Recognition of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians was included in a defense spending bill signed into law Friday night by President Donald Trump. That ends a campaign for recognition as a sovereign nation that tribal leaders trace back to the 1860s. That's when Chief Little Shell and his band in North Dakota refused to sign what they considered an unfair treaty. They ended up landless, and most eventually settled in Montana, often living on other tribes' reservations or in poor areas of the state's urban centers.

Members of Montana's congressional delegation had sought the provision that was inserted into the defense bill. The Department of Interior had repeatedly delayed or denied the tribe's petitions for recognition over the course of decades, putting a spotlight on what many lawmakers and tribal officials said were flaws in the recognition process.

The recognition provision requires the Department of Interior to grant the Little Shell 200 acres in central Montana as a tribal land base, with more land acquisitions possible in the future.

Tribal leaders will now enter into talks with federal agencies about what kind of services will be provided to its members. The tribe claims more than 5,000 members. Most are in Montana but others live in Canada and the Dakotas.

Study: Commuting Hinders Small Biz

BUSINESS WIRE—8x8, Inc. (NYSE: EGHT), a leading Software-as-a-Service provider of voice, video, chat, contact center, and enterprise-class API solutions powered by one global cloud communications platform, today announced the findings of its Video Collaboration Impact Study, exploring the attitudes of modern employees towards the impact of video conferencing on the workplace experience.

The study, commissioned by 8x8 and conducted through Dynata, polled 500 United States knowledge workers at companies with 1-100 people and found they view video conferencing and collaboration as an important tool to increase remote productivity while minimizing traditional workplace headaches such as commuting.

As the lines between professional and personal lives blur, remote working has become the de facto solution for employees looking to take greater ownership of their productivity and to achieve work-life balance, on their terms.



In-person meetings and commute times, however, continue to eat into overall productivity. 8x8's research found that 58 percent of employees believe their company loses \$10-25K annually because employees spend time traveling to meetings and commuting to and from work, and 23

percent believe their company loses more than \$75K as a result.

With nearly 30 percent of respondents citing that meetings require them to come into the office every day or at least multiple times a week, an effective remote solution can give that critical time back to employees, without losing valuable face-to-face interaction.

The survey also looked at the benefits of different video collaboration features. Sixty percent of respondents said they use video or screen sharing when hosting a virtual meeting.

When asked what value video conferencing adds to meetings, 48 percent said it allowed them

to work from anywhere and 20 percent said it improves their connection with colleagues. Others noted that video conferencing allowed them to hold participants more accountable during meetings than equivalent audio-only conferences.

"As meeting technology has evolved from mass dial-ins and clunky screen sharing functionality, effortless business-ready HD video collaboration has created a powerful link between teams, without requiring them to be tethered to a single office location," said Dejan Deklich, Chief Product Officer at 8x8.

"Meetings are a vital part of the workplace fabric, yet businesses need to be able to support employees who cannot afford to sit through extended commutes due to personal responsibilities or remote physical locations.

"As most small businesses typically operate on thin profit margins, being able to salvage even 1 percent of revenue by giving employees time back in their day without sacrificing productivity or human connection is critical."

While video conferencing continues to grow in popularity among today's employees, businesses are still falling short in delivering a seamless, intuitive meeting experience. In fact, when asked what they like least about virtual meetings, 38 percent of respondents cited issues with the connection or technology.

Deal Advances For SE Rail

North Carolina has received good transportation news as an important agreement reached this week will advance plans to improve the Southeast's freight and passenger rail network.

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation announced a major deal with CSX Thursday. Part of the deal will enable the N.C. Department of Transportation to acquire a 10-mile portion of an inactive freight line in North Carolina so the line can be converted for use on the Southeast Rail Corridor.

The Southeast Rail Corridor is a network of passenger and freight rail from Washington D.C. to Jacksonville, Fla. The rail runs through North Carolina roughly parallel to Interstate 85 and U.S. 1. The 10-mile section to be acquired runs from Ridgeway in Warren County to the North Carolina-Virginia border.

"This is a key step as we work to improve our rail system so we can move people and goods more efficiently between North Carolina and communities along the East Coast," said Jason Orthner, director of the N.C. Department of Transportation's Rail Division. This week's deal will also enable the construction of a new Virginia-owned Long Bridge across the Potomac River, and acquisition of more than 350 miles of railroad right-of-way.

The deal comes as officials with North Carolina and Virginia work together on a strategy to acquire both in-service and out-of-service rail lines for enhanced freight and passenger services.

North Carolina Sen. Tom McInnis is chairman of the North Carolina delegation of the VA-NC Interstate High Speed Rail Compact and a chairman of state legislative transportation committees.

"This agreement takes us a big step forward in our efforts to better connect North Carolina communities," McInnis said. "And it will offer new connections between our state and our neighbors, providing lasting economic development opportunities for our state."

\$500M Approved For 540

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao recently announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau will provide up to a \$501.5 million Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan to the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) to help finance the Complete 540 Project in the greater Raleigh area.

"This \$501.5 million federal investment in transportation infrastructure in the Raleigh region will promote economic growth while enhancing mobility and reducing congestion for area residents and travelers," said Secretary Chao.

The Complete 540 Project extends the Triangle Expressway (Tri-Ex) an additional 17.1 miles, increasing capacity by adding six new tolled lanes (three in each direction), several interchanges with intersecting roads, 55 bridges, 25 box culverts, and two stream crossings.

The project was split into three segments, each with separate design-build contracts to provide participation opportunities to contractors of various sizes and resources.

The Tri-Ex is a six-lane, 18.8-mile limited access toll road with three through travel lanes per direction. Tri-Ex, which opened to tolled traffic in January 2013, also received a TIFIA loan of \$386.66 million in July 2009.

The project will improve mobility for trips within and traveling through the area during peak travel periods and will address increased transportation demands on the existing roadway network.

NCTA was established in 2002 to study, design, plan, construct, promote, own, finance, and operate a system of toll roads, bridges, and/or tunnels supplementing the traditional non-toll state transportation system. Effective in 2009, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation to transfer NCTA to the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The primary source of repayment for the TIFIA loan will be the toll revenues generated on the Tri-Ex System, which includes this project.

The Bureau, which administers the TIFIA credit program, was established as a "one-stop shop" to streamline credit opportunities, while also providing technical assistance and encouraging innovative best practices in project planning, financing, delivery, and monitoring. During Secretary Chao's tenure at DOT, the Department has closed nearly \$6.2 billion in TIFIA financings, supporting over \$21.2 billion in infrastructure projects across the country.

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Editorials

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials in this space are the opinion of the newspaper. All other opinion pieces, including those from regular columnists, are the opinion of the writers themselves. The Carolinian strives to provide provocative commentary that is likely to spur thoughtful debate, regardless of whether we agree with it.

Are Mini-Cities in Our Future?

By Dr. Mike Walden
Guest Editorial

When I moved to Raleigh in 1978 it was a sleepy state capital with little excitement and few downtown residents. Now, over forty years later, construction cranes dot the landscape of downtown. Raleigh is a magnet for young college graduates, tech and financial firms, and cutting-edge eateries.

What city leaders four decades ago hoped for has come true. Raleigh is a destination with a national reputation.

Yet this success has brought challenges, with two in particular attracting the most attention. First is housing costs. The popularity of downtown and nearby locations has caused financial values of those sites to soar.

But higher site costs require higher valued developments to make the investments work. Left out are moderate and lower priced dwellings and the households that can only afford them.

The second challenge is commuting. Households who are priced out of the downtown market locate in outlying areas where real estate costs are lower. The tradeoff is their commutes to downtown and central locations for work, school or shopping are now longer. Longer commutes create more congestion and higher levels of polluting emissions to the environment.

There are numerous policy suggestions to the housing and commuting issues prompted by the increased popularity of big cities. Limitations on new development, subsidized housing and mass transit have been tried or debated in many regions with revitalized inner cities.

There may be another approach that is now receiving attention. It's the idea of "mini-cities." Mini-cities, also known as live-work-play communities, combine residences, businesses, shopping, entertainment amenities and educational and medical facilities into one coordinated development.

Households can live in the development, work there, and do much of their shopping and leisure time activities in the same general location.

Depending on the size of the mini-city, routine commuting and travel are minimized and replaced by walking, riding shuttles or trams, or even using a light-rail system built as an integral part of the development. The reduction in daily traffic travel is also a big plus for the environment.

Developers of mini-cities can be motivated to construct residences with a range of

prices if doing so ensures a dedicated labor supply to businesses in the mini-city. Just like the general economy, mini-cities need a variety of skills and occupations paying different salaries.

If businesses in the mini-city know they will have access to an on-site, reliable labor force, they may be willing to subsidize both the construction and occupancy of dwellings marketed specifically to moderate and lower-income households.

In addition, regional residents who benefit from the improved environmental quality associated with the mini-city may support public subsidies for moderate and lower-income housing in the mini-city development.

The idea of mini-cities has already taken hold in North Carolina. Chatham Park near Pittsboro is a mini-city under construction. Others have been announced or planned for various regions in the state.

Are mini-cities only a concept for urban areas? Not at all. Mini-cities can also be adapted to small town and rural regions, especially if focused on a particular economic function.

Mini-cities developed primarily for retirees have been proposed or built in several states. They cater to the growing older population and usually offer significant medical facilities for the residences.

Mini-cities can also be developed around a large employer, such as an auto assembly plant or a technology complex. In fact, such developments would be similar to the numerous textile towns of North Carolina's past.

If current trends continue, North Carolina's population could increase by 30 percent, equivalent to 3 million new people, by 2050. Adding this growth to our already strained urban regions could lead to considerable new costs in those locations.

Mini-cities built in both urban and rural regions can moderate these costs and still allow for the benefits of growth to occur.

How and where we live are big components of our quality of life. You decide if mini-cities are a viable alternative to the kinds of development typically used to accommodate an increasing population.

Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University who teaches and writes on personal finance, economic outlook and public policy.



VANTAGE POINT

Articles and Essays by Ron Daniels



GENTRIFICATION: THE NEW "NEGRO REMOVAL" PROGRAM

Gentrification has emerged as a major threat to Black communities that have been centers for Black business/economic development, cultural and civic life for generations. Gentrification has become the watch-word for the displacement of Black people and culture. Gentrification is the "Negro Removal Program" of the 21st Century. There is an urgent need for people of African descent to mount a serious offensive to defend Black communities from this insidious onslaught.

During the Civil Rights, Black Power era, the term "Negro Removal" was virtually synonymous with "Urban Renewal," local, state and federal highway and development projects that often disconnected and destroyed stable Black communities. It was not unusual for a local highway project designed to benefit residents from the suburbs or a component of an Interstate Highway system to be routed through the center of a Black community, uprooting and displacing Black people or permanently weakening businesses, institutions, networks and relationships that bound folks together. As advocates for Black entrepreneurship correctly urge Black people to create and support Black business districts in our communities, it is useful to remember that Urban Renewal destroyed thriving business districts in Black communities across the country in the latter part of the 20th Century. In fact, there is a historical pattern of marginalizing, subverting or outright destroying Black communities to thwart our ability to achieve full political and economic empowerment and equity in this nation. Gentrification is the latest manifestation of this pattern.

There are a multiplicity of testimonies about this destructive phenomenon. The caption of a feature article in an edition of the *New York Times* captured the essence of the crisis confronting Black communities across the country:

"When Home No Longer Looks the Same: Rapid Change in Durham Has Left Many Black Residents Feeling Unwelcome."

The article details how the revitalization of Durham, N.C. has increasingly meant development/progress for middle and upper-income Whites, but displacement for large numbers of Black working-class and middle-class people who can no longer afford to live in certain sections of the city. An article in the October 21, 2018 Edition of the *Houston Chronicle* is also illustrative of the growing concern about gentrification in Black America:

"Historic black neighborhoods disappear all the time. But they don't have to."

(See **VANTAGE POINT**, P. 9)



To Be EQUAL

By Marc H. Morial
President, National Urban League

REMEMBERING GARY MAYOR RICHARD HATCHER: FIRST OF FIRSTS

"I thought that it was the greatest thing in the world that he was going to be our mayor. He was someone who looked like us and fought for the things we believed in and needed. But the thing that struck me the most about Hatcher was his accessibility. In his 20 years at City Hall, Hatcher was always accessible to everyone. He was a rock star then, but he made sure that he met everyone."

—Karen Freeman Wilson
current mayor of Gary, Indiana

"He literally opened the door to black political empowerment on the local level, state level and federal level. He sent a message across the country and he gave rise to other black mayors in small and big cities."

When Richard Hatcher was inaugurated as mayor of Gary, Indiana, in 1968 one of the nation's first black mayors of a big city, he insisted upon inviting a little-known "youth group" to perform alongside the major stars.

"Nobody wanted to hear the youth group," Rev. Jesse Jackson told radio station WBZE. "They wanted to see the stars."

The "youth group" was Gary's own Jackson 5, who went on that year to sign with Motown Records.

Richard Hatcher, who passed this week at the age of 86, was a visionary in more ways than one.

A graduate of Indiana University and Valparaiso University School of Law, he served as deputy county prosecutor in the early 1960s until his election to Gary City Council in 1963. In 1967, he defeated the incumbent mayor in a primary and overcame resistance from the local Democratic machine to win with the support of national political figures like Sen. Robert

Kennedy and Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

During his swearing in ceremony, Hatcher promised that, "together, we shall beat a way; together we shall turn darkness into light, despair into hope and promise into progress. For God's sake, for Gary's sake, let's get ourselves together."

Hatcher's election was the first in a historic string of victories for black mayors across the nation, and the beginning of

(See **TO BE EQUAL**, P. 9)



FROM THE INSIDE OUT

By Greg Fray

MY SECOND STEP

In October 2019, I wrote a column about my recent release from prison after spending three decades behind bars. I titled the article, "My First Step." The article really explained just how hard it is for ex-cons to begin their lives after prison because of unprofessional case managers who basically release inmates without finding them a place to go other than a shelter. I know because I too was released without one ounce of energy exerted towards finding me a residential housing facility to live.

My first step was to find a place to stay. So after Tabor City Corrections dropped me off at the bus station with \$42 and a small bag carrying essential cosmetics, I immediately invested my money by walking across the street to a thrift store in Lumberton and bought 4 outfits for less than \$10. I tried donating my slave clothing to the thrift store but they said those rags were well below their standards. Gladly I trashed them. Getting on the bus was the end of a long, drawn-out period of retribution which in fact ended my first step of reentry, and forced me to concentrate on my second step, housing.

I got off the bus in Raleigh on Sept. 28 around 6:30 p.m. I was met by my cousin Jay who knew I was homeless, jobless, penniless, and technologically ignorant, yet he still took me in which allowed me to avoid the hard obstacle of homelessness on the day I got out. With that foundation I was able to look for jobs, landing with a great opportunity to write columns, edit,

(See **FROM THE INSIDE OUT**, P. 9)

Child Watch

By Marian Wright Edelman



BOOKS ALL CHILDREN SHOULD READ

What's on your shopping list for the children you love this very special season? I encourage parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and adults everywhere to give children the gift of books. The right book can spark a lifelong love of reading and open up a whole new world for a child or teenager that will last far longer than a toy.

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) has a special list to share of books every black child and, in fact, every child should read. We want to share wonderful books about all the children who make up our beautiful rainbow human species and hear from you about books that transformed your life as a child.

The CDF Freedom Schools® program is built around a superb collection of diverse books that reflect a wide variety of cultures and experiences. For some children the Freedom Schools curriculum is the first time they've seen books with characters who look like them. For others the storylines draw them in, teach them about moments in history they may not have studied in school, and make them fall in love with reading in ways they've never experienced.

Children of color and children born with a rich diversity of special characteristics and needs must be able to see themselves in the books they read and be exposed to a wide range of books reflective of the nation and world we all share.

The reflection of the black experience through books on the list below represents just one of many paths towards ensuring all children read books reflecting the full rainbow of our children's faces, cultures, and needs, including the history that still shapes the present.

CDF Freedom Schools programs share stories by diverse authors and illustrators featuring Latino, Native American, Asian American and white characters, those from other countries and cultures and all mixes in between. Giving a book can give a child a chance to understand and step into the shoes of those who share our nation and world.

Theresa Venable, librarian at the Langston Hughes Library at CDF Haley Farm Servant Leadership Development School,

(See **CHILD WATCH**, P. 9)

Talk To Us

Stimulating a lively discussion of issues that concern the community is one of our main tasks at The Carolinian. We want to know what you think. This issue's topic:

What do you think? Are mini-cities the answer for large and small cities? And if so, are they coming in any kind of real time?

Health & Fitness

Was 'Dr. Seby's' Death Tied To Shooting Of Nipsey Hussle?

By Kathie Easter

Staff Writer

On August 6, 2016, the world lost a great healer, Dr. Sebi, also known as Alfredo D. Bowman, a Honduran herbalist and healer, practicing in the U.S. from the late 20th through the early 21st Centuries.

He was also known as a pathologist, biochemist, and as a naturalist, who studied herbs in Central and South America, the Caribbean, North America, and Africa. Dr. Sebi developed a unique approach to healing, which was grounded in over 30 years of experience.

Born November 26, 1933, in Spanish Honduras, Dr. Sebi asserted that was self-educated, and took his lessons on the progression of life from his beloved grandmother, "Mama Hay," as well as from his early days of recreation and observation in the forests of Honduras.

These experiences, in conjunction with the guidance provided by his grandmother, provided Sebi with the basis for his later life practices.

When he first came to U.S., he was diagnosed with diabetes, asthma, obesity and impotency. Following unsuccessful therapies by conventional doctors, he consulted a herbalist living in Mexico.

Inspired by the success he then experienced in regard to all of his various ailments, Sebi started to create his own natural vegetation-cell food compounds, which were designed to promote intercellular cleansing and revitalization throughout the entire body. This was the birth of Dr. Sebi's Cell Food.

Dr. Sebi has never claimed to be an "official" medical doctor, which is why his website states, "We are not medical doctors; therefore, we do not diagnose illness or prescribe pharmaceuticals." The website states emphatically that they are "nutritional consultants and make suggestions relating to nutrition."

In 1988, the State of New York Supreme Court declared Dr. Sebi's products to be "natural vegetation cell food, which is why, when they are con-

sumed, the cells are nourished, and this subsequently often decreases appetite. The verdict came after Sebi was accused of practicing medicine without a license. At the time, a series of newspaper ads claimed that Sebi's low alkaline foods cured patients of AIDS.

Dr. Sebi's therapeutic compounds, such as his African Bio-Mineral Therapy Program, go beyond simply treating disease symptoms, such as mucus accumulation. Rather, these remedies are designed to cleanse the body as a whole.

It is due to this feature that Dr. Sebi's products have often been successful in reversing pathologies as a whole. Typically, cleansing properties become evident around 14 days after the initiation of treatment. Nutritional changes are also recommended, such as drinking a gallon of natural spring water daily.

Dr. Sebi died in a Honduran jail cell in 2016, after he was ar-



rested for money laundering, as he was carrying a large amount of cash into his native country. The official cause of death was pneumonia, but some people feel that Sebi's death is connected to the shooting death of Nipsey Hussle, since he was the

subject of a documentary that Hussle was producing and his death is an attempt to silence Sebi's health message.

However, there is no direct evidence that this is true. Alfredo Bowman (Dr. Sebi) was 82 when he died.

Whatever the truth may be, shadowy forces appear to have been at work in regard to Sebi and his reputation. His main belief was that alkaline foods and herbs are necessary in order to control the amount of acid held within the body.

Therefore, Sebi maintained that an alkaline state protects people from mucus build-up, which he believed caused disease. Experts in human physiology say that Sebi's beliefs are in error, and the human blood stream cannot be significantly altered.

Blood contains molecules of carbonic acid and sodium bicarbonate, which keep the pH of the bloodstream between 7.35 and 7.45. If it varies beyond these parameters, an individual will sicken and eventually die.

African Bio-mineral Balance compounds are algae, herbs and seaweeds, which cost the consumer around \$30. This remedy also contains chemicals that are undisclosed.



Fact & Fitness

By Jeneea Jervay-Bush, M.S.

EXPLORE

The world is a small place and seems to be getting smaller every day. Our news and sports regularly covers other countries and reaches to other continents. We can't all travel to foreign lands, but we can explore the best of what different cultures have to offer from a nutrition perspective.

It's easy to get stuck in a food rut. It's even easier when you're focused on eating healthy. You find a few things that work and stick to them. Staying in the same culinary lane takes less effort when you're also pursuing physical activity goals. Hopefully, you're at least changing up your healthy dishes quarterly. If not and it's too overwhelming to think about building a rotation, consider building different versions of your go-to healthy meals.

One example is the different varieties of rice and rice substitutes. There are multiple different flavors or organic rice. Instead of using the same organic rice flavor every time, actively seek out, try, and use other flavors. Go a step further and make some of those flavors international. Also make the same dish with rice substitutes like the superfood quinoa. You may surprise yourself and find a new favorite. At minimum, you'll expose your taste-buds to some new textures and new experiences.

Culturally different food experiences exist all around us; it just takes being open to them. It can be scary to try foods you've never heard of, but with some respectful questions to an informed resource it can expand your healthy eating horizon. Ideally, you want to talk to the person cooking the food so you can understand the different ways it can be prepared and the different foods it can be paired with for the healthiest version of itself.

If it's not possible to talk to the cook or chef, write down the correct spelling of the food then look up healthy recipes first on YouTube, then on other internet sources such as recipe sites. After you have the visual, reading text only recipes are easier to digest (pun intended). To divide and conquer, recruit a friend who is also pursuing eating healthy or start a healthy eating group with an international food focus.

More types of food. More people. More fun!



Tanger Outlets Donates To LPH

MEBANE—Last Thursday, Tanger Outlets Mebane donated \$12,406.28 to Little Pink Houses of Hope (www.littlepink.org), which provides free week-long vacations for breast cancer patients and their families.

They believe a cancer diagnosis does not just affect the patient, but the entire family. Every retreat is designed to help families relax, reconnect and rejuvenate during the cancer journey.

Jeanine Patten-Coble, the Little Pink Houses of Hope Founder, said, "Once again, we'd like to thank your partners at Tanger Outlets, Mebane for their support over the last few years. They continue to provide a big difference in the lives of so many families with their fund-raising efforts."

The funds were raised throughout the month of October as part of the 24th annual Tanger PINK Campaign. PINK cards were sold which provided discounts at participating retailers and this year, they hosted their inaugural TangerFit 5K with over 300 participants.

Since 1994, Tanger has contributed more than \$18 million to breast cancer research through the PINK Campaign, 5K races, on-site events and other breast cancer-related fundraising initiatives across the U.S.

The check presentation occurred on Dec. 19 as part of Tanger Mebane's Random Acts of Kindness for shoppers and non-profits throughout the area.

For more information on any of the above, contact Jeff Johnson, General Manager of Tanger Outlets Mebane at (919) 304-1520; Jeffrey.johnson@tangeroutlets.com/.

Tanger Factory Outlet Centers, Inc., is a publicly-traded REIT headquartered in Greensboro that presently operates and owns, or has an ownership interest in, a portfolio of 41 upscale outlet shopping centers.

Tanger's operating properties are located in 22 states coast to coast and in Canada, totaling approximately 15.3 million square feet, leased to over 3,100 stores which are operated by more than 510 different brand name companies.

The company has more than 36 years of experience in the outlet industry.

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For more information on Tanger Outlet Centers, call 1-800-4TANGER or visit the company's website at www.tangeroutlets.com.

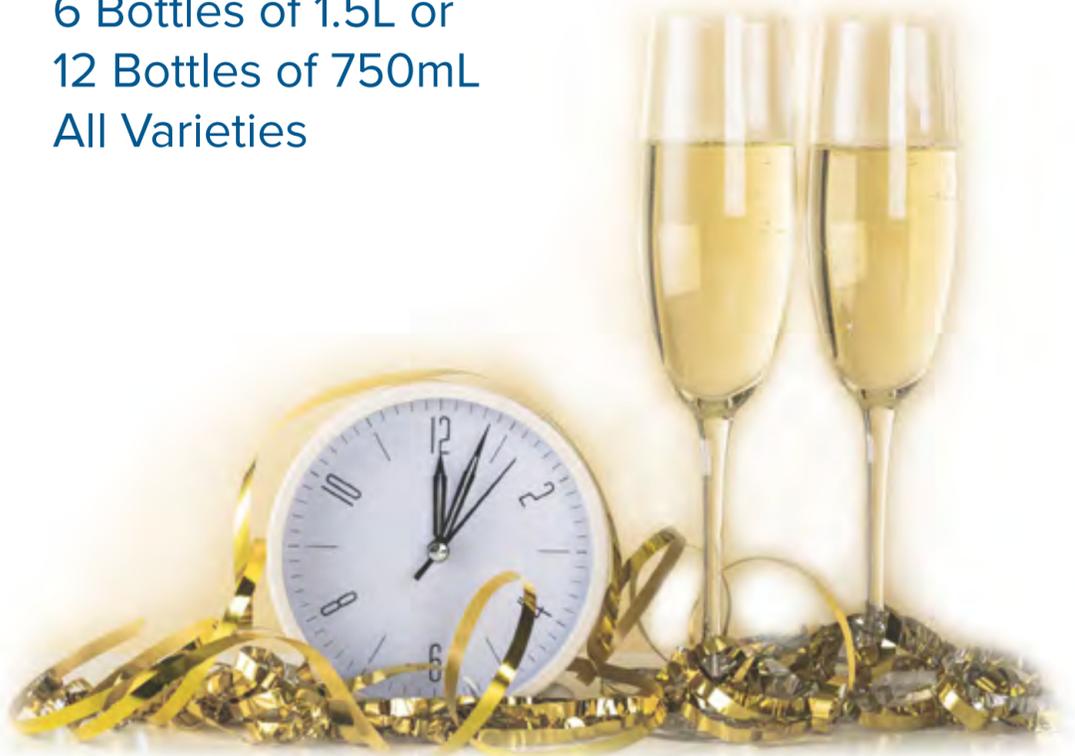
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FOOD  LION

Community

The Caring Place Is Changing Lives

By Chanté Russell

Staff Writer

Located in Cary, the Caring Place has been helping local families facing homelessness find stability for 26 years. Program participants are trained on valuable life skills such as budgeting and saving while being housed in Caring Place properties.

According to Executive Director Leslie Covington, the housing portion is only an added benefit to the invaluable skills taught throughout the program.

"We provide families with two very important things: life and budgeting skills and then the benefit is the four months of transitional housing," said Covington.

"Most people would think it would be the other way around where the transitional housing is most important but to be honest with you if we don't provide the budgeting and life skills a lot of these families will return very quickly to whatever situation they're in."

Each family's curriculum is developed based on their individual needs to ensure that they gain the skills that would most benefit them. Each family is also paired with support partners, many of which are TCP volunteers, to help them put their new skills into practice and set attainable goals.

Covington says volunteers play a major role in the organization, which only has four staff members. Volunteer positions, which can be found at TheCaringPlace.org, range from helping administratively in the office and sorting donations to helping participating families move into Caring Place properties as well as maintaining those properties.

Along the walls of TCP's office hang pictures of smiling volunteers doing their part. The community also supports TCP in fundraising efforts such as their annual Labor Day walkathon, their annual art auction and their Christmas breakfast which was held for the second time last week after a successful first attempt in 2018.

These events help the non-profit to provide their services to families in need with the hope that after graduating from the program, they'll be able to sustain a more comfortable lifestyle.

Covington says she considers their biggest successes to be the families that are able to maintain the skills they've learned and then come back to TCP to help others. According to their website, about 85 percent of the over 400 families they've served are living independently a year after graduation.

"Our program is about empowering families so that they can



stop whatever is happening in their lives that's keeping them from being housed and not fall into a cycle of homelessness for themselves as adults and for their children," said Covington. "We have to give them the stability they need."

Currently, TCP is hoping to broaden their impact. Covington says that their short-term goal is simply to increase their success rate while their long-term goals include reaching more families and acquiring additional partnerships.

She hopes that in the future they will be able to provide skills

training for participating families as well as families not in their housing program, a request she receives often.

Covington also wants to help people understand that homelessness has changed and it is easy to insensitively overlook.

"The idea and concept of homelessness has changed," said Covington. "We've got to be more sensitive to the people who are working hard every day but look up and because of some tragic event, cancer or a divorce, can't pay their rent. We've got to make sure we pay attention to those people."



Good As Gold: Fashioning Senegalese Women At NCMA

April 4-July 5, 2020 East Building, Level B
Meymandi Exhibition Gallery

Good as Gold: Fashioning Senegalese Women is the first major exhibition of Senegalese gold jewelry to focus on the history of Senegal's gold, from past to present, and the beauty and complexity of the way Senegalese women use ornament and fashion to present themselves.

A key theme is the Senegalese concept of sañse (a Wolof word for dressing up or looking and feeling good). Good as Gold explores how a woman in a city like Dakar might use a piece of gold jewelry to build a carefully tailored, elegant fashion ensemble.

The exhibition also looks at the interconnectedness of local and global expressions and understanding of fashion. In addition to presenting nearly 120 works, the exhibition unveils several haute couture ensembles inspired by the strength and savoir faire of Senegalese women.

Several key contemporary fashion designers are highlighted, including Oumou Sy—Senegal's "Queen of Couture" and its most celebrated fashion designer—as well as Rama Diaw, Khadidja Aisha Ba, and Selly Raby Kane.



N.C. State's Virtual MLK Event

On Feb. 15, 2020, N.C. State researchers, led by Dr. Victoria Gallagher, will immerse community members in one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s most iconic speeches.

King delivered this speech, originally titled "A Creative Protest" but later referred to by King and others as "Fill Up the Jails," on February 16, 1960 at White Rock Baptist Church in Durham. The Virtual MLK (vMLK) event will take audiences back in time by leveraging the James B. Hunt Jr. Library's 270-degree visualization capabilities, allowing them to virtually walk around the historic sanctuary, hear a recreation of King's speech, and virtually sit with congregation members.

Events at the Hunt Library will include a choral performance, family activities, guided tours, and a community discussion on advocacy.

Just as members of local churches, college students, and community leaders attended the 1960 event, the 2020 vMLK event invites the community to join these activities, tours, and discussions.

Participants can experience the speech as an audience member, reflect on King's words, and celebrate his legacy. The vMLK project will soon be available to K-12 classrooms, helping students understand Civil Rights history and current-day advocacy.

Dr. Michael V. Holland

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Omegas Giving Back For The Holidays

By Rahim Islam

Chapter Reporter

The Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. did their annual Christmas projects on Saturday, Dec. 21.

This is a special time of the year the chapter enjoys by giving back to the community, guided by their fourth cardinal principle, Uplift. It truly comes alive during the holiday season.

The first project of the Iota

Iota Chapter began with a mentee breakfast. The mentees of the O.M.E.G.A. Champs mentoring program have their annual breakfast at the Golden Corral on 3551 Grenelle St. in Raleigh. This allows for fellowship with the mentees but also the brothers.

After breakfast, the mentees and men of the Iota Iota Chapter headed to the Helping Hand Mission with the primary goal of giving.

This project is a joyous one. The men of Iota Iota and the O.M.E.G.A. Champs donate hats, socks, and gloves to the Helping Hand Mission on 623 Rock Quarry Road in Raleigh. Their efforts contribute to the Helping Hand Mission of supporting families in need as we approach the winter season.

After the Helping Hand Mission, the last project of the day found the men of Omega at Wal-Mart on 4500 Fayetteville

Road. The Christmas shopping project includes the O.M.E.G.A. Champs and kids from the Garner Road Community Center who are paired with brothers of Iota Iota as they shop for Christmas gifts.

This project brings the enthusiasm out the brothers of Iota Iota, as much as it does the children and teens. They are pleased to be of service to the community, and are equally enthusiastic about uplifting those in need.

State Approves Presidential Candidates

RALEIGH— The State Board of Elections on Friday signed off on the 2020 presidential primary candidates nominated by North Carolina's five recognized political parties – Constitution, Democratic, Green, Libertarian and Republican.

The State Board also voted unanimously to add Joe Walsh and Bill Weld to the ballot for the Republican presidential primary after requests were made by those campaigns.

In North Carolina, the State Board has the authority to place additional candidates on the ballot if at least three Board members find that the individual is "generally advocated and recognized in the news media throughout the United States or in North Carolina as candidates for the nomination by that party."

The 2020 primary election is March 3.

The following are candidates from the five recognized political parties that will appear on primary ballots:

Constitution Party of North Carolina

Don Blankenship
Charles Kraut
NC Democratic Party
Michael Bennet

Joseph F. Biden
Michael R. Bloomberg
Cory Booker
Pete Buttigieg
Julian Castro
John K. Delaney
Tulsi Gabbard
Amy Klobuchar
Deval Patrick
Bernie Sanders
Tom Steyer
Elizabeth Warren
Marianne Williamson
Andrew Yang
Green Party of North Carolina
Howie Hawkins
Libertarian Party of NC
Max Abramson
Ken Armstrong
Dan Berhman
Kenneth Blevins
Souraya Faas
Erik Gerhardt
Jedidiah Hill
Jacob Hornberger
Jo Jorgenson
Adam Kokesh
John McAfee
James Orlando Ogle
Steve Richey
Kim Ruff
Vermin Supreme
Arvin Vohra
Republican Party of NC
Donald J. Trump
Joe Walsh
Bill Weld

Pursuant to G.S. § 163-213.5, presidential candidates may also be nominated by petition. Any person seeking the endorsement by a national political party

may submit a petition signed by 10,000 qualified voters who are affiliated with the same political party as the person for whom the petition is filed.

Residents Asked To Share Thoughts On The Future Of Wake County

Wake County is kicking off the final round of public engagement for PLANWake, the process to develop a comprehensive plan that will guide the county's future for the next decade.

"This is about the future of Wake County," said Wake County Planning Director Tim Maloney. "For a comprehensive plan to be successful, it must have public input. This is another opportunity to make your voice heard on some of the top issues facing our community."

Residents of both unincorporated Wake and the county's 12 cities and towns are invited to:

- Provide feedback on growth scenarios.
- Explore strategies to apply to rural areas, existing and future neighborhoods, and walkable centers.
- Rate policy ideas for accommodating new growth.

When complete, the plan will guide community action and decision-making over the next decade. The new plan is expected to be revealed in early 2020.

For the past year, Wake County staff have been engaging with residents to find out what they think our top priorities should be and how they think the county should grow.

In addition to having the opportunity to talk to staff at events throughout the county, approximately 8,800 residents participated in the first two PLANWake surveys.

You can learn more about PLANWake at planwake.org. In addition to the survey, the site includes project documents and reports that resulted from the first two rounds of public engagement.

For more information about the planning process, email planwake@wakegov.com.

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Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association

RWCA

Michael A. Leach, President

Mary Perry, Vice-President

Marianna Pohe-Stewart, Treasurer

Sonia M. Barnes, M-PAC Chair

Sports

2019's Most Memorable Sports Moments



Cori "Coco" Gauff at 15 became the youngest player in nearly a decade to become a tour title winner. Not since the Williams sisters has an African American female garnered as much attention and excitement from the crowds she draws to watch her compete. One defining moment for her was during the Wimbledon tournament where she faced a longtime idol, Venus Williams and defeated her. It appears the torch is being passed down to good hands.



Simone Biles is becoming her own synonym. Creating new flips in floor routines and dismounts from the balance beam, these moves aren't only signature, but she's the only one who can actually perform them. Many hail her as the greatest gymnast ever, her name is surfacing in the conversation as the most dominant athlete ever. Six titles and 25 gold medals proves it. At 22 years old, she has taken the athletic world by storm.



Presidents Cup—Since 1998, there has been a marquee match between Tiger Woods and Ernie Els. One of the greatest playoffs in the history of the Presidents Cup took place in 2003 between Woods and Els, neither conceded, neither choking, but rising to the challenge. This was not 2003, it's 2019. Tiger Woods not only led the American team to victory, but cemented the win with the most iconic walk off putt we may ever witness in our lifetime.



World Cup—To say the USA women's soccer team is better than the men's is like saying January 1st is the New Year. The woman's soccer team has become the standard of excellence of team sport play in our country by capturing the World Cup in 2019. Their achievements not only transcended the sport but their open advocacy opened up the national conversation for gender equity in the work place.



NBA Champions—Since the team's inception, the Toronto Raptors have managed to obtain 6 division titles, spanning from 2007–2019. Whether you believe in luck or destiny, Canada finally won it's first NBA championship in 2019. Led by Kawhi Leonard, the Toronto Raptors fought their way to a win against the fabled Golden State Warriors, and could potentially have ended that team's reign as an NBA dynasty.



World Series Champs—Whether you refer to them as the Senators or Nationals, D.C. has a Major League World Series champ for the first time since 1948. Back then it wasn't the The Nationals that filled the seats in the stadium, but the Negro Leagues Homestead Grays. The Grays dominated from 1937–1945, winning 9 pennants in a row. The Grays also won the Negro World Series in the league's final season and had a young Willie Mays on its roster.



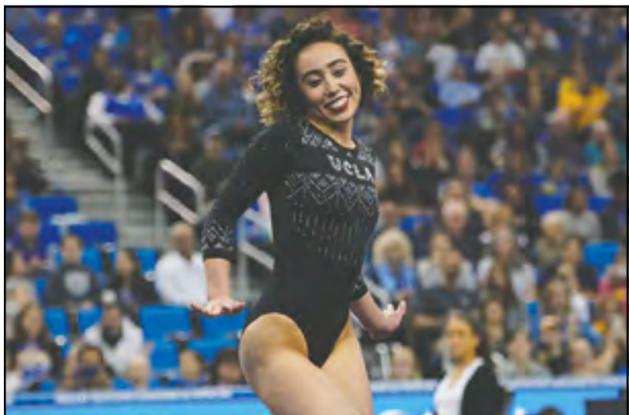
Zion Williams' shoe blowout against Duke's staunchest rival, Carolina, is one of the most bizarre events in all of sports. In one quick pivot, his NBA aspirations all but evaporated and a favorite barbershop topic became mainstream chatter. Should college athletes be paid or be able to receive endorsement compensation? Regardless, the damage control by NIKE was more swift than that swoosh on the side of their shoe, as they signed Zion before he took one shot as a pro.



Big Papi shot—Dominican American David Ortiz is beloved by Bostonian baseball fans, and baseball fans in general. When you reach a certain level of fame, the last thing you would expect is to be shot in the back, especially in your home town or city. Though he was seriously injured, he recovered fully. Once well enough, Ortiz returned to Fenway park to throw out the first pitch. He continues his humanitarian efforts by helping children with congenital heart failure.



The Magic Is Gone—It is impossible to think of the Lakers without thinking of Ervin "Magic" Johnson. After using his star power to sell LeBron James on becoming the next big name to wear gold and purple, you would think now is a great time to be affiliated with the franchise. Instead we witnessed Lakers implode and the Hall of Fame icon removed himself from his seat, saying, "I'm out." Johnson still consults and will always be considered one of the greatest Laker of All time.



Katlyn Ohashi—Electrifying is barely close enough to describe Katlyn Ohashi's floor performances. How about a perfect 10? In the realm of collegiate gymnasts floor routines, Ohashi has become the standard of what a great routine is. From choreography execution to sticking those tricky landings, Ohashi is fun to watch. Hopefully the next time we see her compete it will be on the world stage as she completes her tenure as a collegiate gymnast in 2019.



Eldrick Tont "Tiger" Woods masterfully completed one of the greatest comebacks in sports history! Since his personal life became public back in 2009, his personal and professional golf career spiraled to near oblivion. Many wrote off his chances to ever win a golf tournament again due to the myriad of injuries and surgeries that he has done on his back. This year, not only did he win the Masters and march closer to Jack Nicklaus's majors record, He also tied Sam Snead for the most wins in golf history with 82 PGA tour wins.



Unstoppable And Exceptional—The faces of motorsports today are void of melanin for the most part. However, no racer draws more attention in Motorsport than Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton. He has been the golden boy for the Mercedes AMG F1 team, and the ambassador for the sport of Formula 1 as a whole. This season, "King" Lewis reigned supreme again winning a record 6th championship. He cruised to his season's end by taking 1st place podium in the final race of 2019 in Abu Dhabi.

Remembering NCCU Hall Of Famer Herman "Ike" Boone



DURHAM—Herman "Ike" Boone, a double-graduate of North Carolina Central University and NCCU Athletics Hall of Famer, passed away Wednesday at the age of 84.

Boone, a native of Rocky Mount and graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, is best-known as the high school football coach whose story inspired the hit movie *Remember the Titans*, starring Academy Award-winner Denzel

Washington as Boone.

After earning his bachelor of arts and master's degrees from NCCU, Boone decided to be a teacher and coach so he could motivate youngsters.

Boone's journey landed him in a racially-divided Alexandria, Va., as the head football coach at T.C. Williams High School in 1971. Boone was able to unite a diverse team and coaching staff into the most powerful football team in

the state of Virginia.

The Titans posted an unblemished 13-0 record, winning the state championship title and earning a No. 2 ranking by the national polls.

In December 1971, President Richard M. Nixon was quoted as saying, "the team saved the city of Alexandria."

Boone was inducted into the Alex M. Rivera NCCU Athletics Hall of Fame in 2004 for meritori-

ous service.

On March 1, 2018, the new basketball media room in McDougald-McLendon Arena was named in Boone's honor thanks to an endowed scholarship established by former NCCU Board of Trustees member Charles Baron.

During the naming ceremony, NCCU Director of Athletics Dr. Ingrid Wicker McCree talked about the significance of the room being named after Boone.

"The Herman 'Ike' Boone Media Room will serve as a reminder to our current and future student-athletes that success is the culmination of hard work, perseverance, taking risks and believing," McCree added.

"I am proud to have had the honor of working with Coach Boone over the years. He is a truly inspirational leader and role model for us all."

Church

Just How Long Is The Sermon In Most Christian Churches?

By David Crary

AP National Writer

NEW YORK, N.Y. (AP)—How long should a sermon be?

The major branches of Christianity in the U.S. have sharply different traditions, with sermons at historically black Protestant churches lasting—on average—nearly four times as long as Roman Catholic sermons.

That's among the findings of an analysis by the Pew Research Center—billed as the first of its kind—of 49,719 sermons delivered in April and May that were shared online by 6,431 churches.

Pew described its research as “the most exhaustive attempt to date to catalogue and analyze American religious sermons.”

According to Pew, the median length of the sermons was 37 minutes. Catholic sermons were the shortest, at a median of just 14 minutes, compared with 25 minutes for sermons in mainline Protestant congregations and 39 minutes in evangelical Protestant congregations. Historically black Protestant churches had by far the longest sermons, at a median of 54 minutes.

Pew said sermons at the black



churches lasted longer than mainline Protestant sermons even though, on average, they had roughly the same number of words. A possible explanation, Pew said, is that the preachers at black churches allow more time during their sermons for musical interludes, responses from worshippers in the pews and dramatic pauses in their oratory.

Numerous prominent pastors have pondered the question of a sermon's length.

“I've asked and been asked that question a hundred times,” the Rev. Hershael York, a pro-

fessor of Christian preaching at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote in 2016. “Today, after 35 years in ministry, I have a definitive answer: You can preach as long as you hold their attention.”

The question came up in a 2018 episode of “Ask Pastor John,” a Q-and-A forum hosted by the Rev. John Piper, chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary in Minneapolis. He said he generally needs at least 40 minutes, sometimes more than 50, to deeply explore his themes.

“If I look around the nation,

there are many hundreds, maybe thousands, of growing churches where pastors preach rich, Christ-exalting, God-centered, Bible-saturated, textually rooted, intellectually challenging, emotionally moving, life-altering sermons for 50 or more minutes, and very few people get frustrated that they are too long,” Piper said.

Missouri-based researcher/writer Chris Colvin, who helps pastors with sermon preparation, notes that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount—containing some of the most powerful passages in the Scriptures—can be read aloud in less than 15 minutes.

In addition to sermon length, the new Pew analysis delved into an examination of words and phrases most commonly used by preachers from the different Christian traditions.

It found that the word “hallelujah” appeared in sermons from about 22 percent of the historically black Protestant churches, and those congregations were eight times more likely than others to hear that word.

Sermons from evangelical churches were three times more likely than those from other

traditions to include the phrase “eternal hell.”

Pew said the sermons it examined came from 2,156 evangelical congregations, 1,367 mainline Protestant congregations, 422 Catholic parishes and 278 histori-

cally black Protestant congregations, while other congregations could not be reliably classified.

The research did not analyze sermons delivered in synagogues, mosques or other non-Christian congregations.

Mexico's President Backs Separation



By Peter Orsi

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP)—President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Wednesday he does not support a proposal to further relax Mexico's strict legal separation of church and state, throwing cold water on a bill that would upend longstanding political doctrine in the country.

López Obrador said the initiative, presented last week by a senator from his leftist Morena party, is something that “should not be touched” and “was resolved over a century and a half ago.”

The proposal would modify the Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship to eliminate historic language enshrining the “separation of the State and churches.”

Among specific measures, it would reportedly allow religious groups greater access to all manner of media, including TV, radio and newspapers, relax regulations on church ownership of property, provide for cooperation between church and state on cultural and social development and allow “conscientious objections” to law on religious grounds.

It would let ecclesiastical authorities do spiritual work in government facilities such as hospitals, rehab centers and even military installations.

López Obrador's party and allies control both houses of Mexico's Congress, and without the president's support, it's hard to imagine the bill winning approval.

The Mexican state long had an antagonistic relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Nineteenth-century reforms championed by López Obrador's hero Benito Juárez reined in religious domination of much of the nation's life and the state actively persecuted the Roman Catholic church in the early part of the 20th century, prompting a civil war known as the “Cristiada.”

Many of the tougher anti-clerical laws have been eased in modern times, particularly around the 1979 visit of Pope John Paul II, but separation of church and state remains firmly entrenched as a core political concept.

“I do not think that modifying this principle helps—on the contrary,” López Obrador said. “... I think everyone, the majority of Mexicans, agrees that the lay state should prevail, which the constitution establishes.”

The president said the lay state is not anti-religious, but rather guarantees the rights of believers and non-believers alike.

“Render unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's” López Obrador said.

The office of Sen. Soledad Luévano Cantú, who proposed the initiative, did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

On Tuesday she said via Twitter that the initiative was hers alone and not authored by the president or their party, and that she believes in the rule of law and the lay state.

“With respect, tolerance and without taboos, we can work together so that thousands of religious associations in our country can help Mexico become a country where we all live better-off,” Luévano wrote.

She described her faith as “Guadalupana”—that is, as a devotee of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who is the Roman Catholic patroness of Mexico but also resonates with millions of non-Catholics in the country.

Andrew Chesnut, professor of religious studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, said Luévano's initiative would appear to benefit mostly evangelicals and other minority religious groups in a country where 81 percent are Roman Catholic and the church enjoys more influence than probably anywhere else in the hemisphere, despite the legal separations between church and state.

López Obrador, who has described himself as a Christian “in the broad sense,” allied during the 2018 presidential campaign with a small political party heavily influenced by evangelical churches, and observers say his discourse often tends toward the quasi-religious or even messianic. Chesnut said evangelicals likely see an opportunity to win more space in Mexican society under the administration of a “fellow traveler.”

But López Obrador's comments Monday reflect the political invariability of the proposal after criticism came from across the political and religious spectrum, including both Catholics and the non-religious, Chesnut added: “The lay state in Mexico almost has a kind of sacred status.”

Jewish, Immigration Activists Arrested

GRAHAM—Nine Jewish and immigration activists were arrested while peacefully calling for Alamance County and Sheriff Terry Johnson to end the \$2.3 million contract with ICE at #NeverAgainAlamance.

“As a Jewish person, I am taking a stand now because I grew up hearing stories about the Holocaust and I know the danger of apathy,” said Meredith Blumberg of Burlington.

“I have seen what happens when a government is allowed to target, dehumanize, and strip an entire group of people of all their civil and human rights.”

Over 300 protesters with Never Again, Siembra NC, Southerners On New Ground, and multiple immigrant justice organizations sang protest songs, held murals painted with butterflies, and attempted to march to the Alamance County Detention Center with six coffins to represent those who have lost their lives in ICE's concentration camps, those who have lost their livelihoods and families due to being locked up in cages, those who have been forced to leave their homelands due to U.S. foreign policy and extractivist practices by transnational corporations, as well as those who have perished along the route on their way north.

Protesters marched roughly 30 yards before approximately 50 Alamance County sheriffs and surrounding area police officers dressed in riot gear blocked them by closing South Maple Street.

Protesters placed six coffins in the street and led the group in a traditional Jewish mourning service called a shiva, which includes the Mourner's Kaddish, a Jewish prayer for the dead. Protesters chanted a version of El Malei Rachamim—a prayer said at Jewish funerals—written specifically for those who have lost their lives.

Police wearing riot gear told protesters to disperse and threatened them with a sound cannon and tear gas. Protesters responded by collectively singing songs in Hebrew, English, and Spanish.

Police arrested nine protesters at approximately 4:30 p.m. as protesters held pictures of immigrants who have died in ICE and Border Patrol custody and chanted, “Not one more!” After the arrests, hundreds of remaining protesters lined up on private property and continued to sing while police stood in the street.

“Demonstrating against ICE is not a crime, but police in riot gear arrested our siblings today. They threatened us all with tear gas and sound cannons,” said Roshan Panjwani of Durham. “Sheriff Johnson should not hold peaceful protesters, and he should release the nine people his officers arrested immediately.”

“As someone who has witnessed first-hand the injustices happening inside immigration detention centers, I believe ICE has no place in any community,” said Mani Lopez of Burlington. “We have lost too many loved

ones at their hands. It is important to demand ICE to leave Alamance and to hold Sheriff Terry Johnson accountable for his actions.”

“Alamance is one of ICE's last strongholds in North Carolina. Migrants from across the state are taken to this detention center, where they have been detained for months at a time,” said Madeline Reyes of Durham.

“As Jewish person, I know where this kind of dehumanization, detention, and family separation leads. As a Latina, I know how important it is to show solidarity with this community Alamance County must end its contract with ICE, and we won't stop until they do.”

A small number of white nationalists in hate groups Alamance County Taking Back Alamance County and the League of the South counter-protested the event.

“White nationalists are not welcome here,” said Beth Bruch. “ACTBAC is not ‘taking back’ Alamance County from anyone. This is occupied land of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation. The Latinx people migrating here are the descendants of other indigenous nations of this continent. As a Jew, I recognize that we all need to be in solidarity for our safety.”

Never Again Action is a mass mobilization of Jews who are organizing to shut down ICE and hold the political establishment accountable for enabling the deportation machine that has sepa-

rated immigrant families across the U.S. for decades and for the current crisis at the border.

Siembra NC is a grassroots group of Latinx and immigrant people in Greensboro, Burlington and other parts of the Triad.

Church Briefs

CHURCH NAME CHANGE INVITES ALL TO BELONG RATHER THAN BELIEVE

North Raleigh Community Church has changed its name to Common Thread Church. Common Thread calls to people disillusioned with traditional religion, yet desiring spiritual community. Less concerned with “beliefs,” Common Thread invites all, wherever they are on their spiritual journey, to belong.

“Traditional Christianity is stuck in a worldview that is rapidly unraveling. We no longer live in a linear, Newtonian world. Ours has become a quantum worldview—no longer organized around solid, absolute truths. Our religion must adapt or die. Once we realize that everyone is intrinsically connected, religion can no longer be organized around fixed, absolute doctrines that exclude anyone who disagrees.”

—Dr. Doug Hammack

For 20 years, North Raleigh Community Church was connected to a traditional denomination. They spent those years deconstructing and then re-weaving ancient, core principles of healthy spiritual community into a Quantum tapestry. Their work culminated in a book, Rethinking our Story, written by the minister, Dr. Doug Hammack.

When the book was published, they were asked to leave their denomination, and hence their building, due to incompatible world views. Temple Baptist Church in downtown Raleigh invited them to share space. Common Thread occupies the Temple Baptist's original chapel and classrooms at the back of the campus on Clifton Street.

For more information, visit <https://northraleighcommunity-church.org/>.



ZEBULON—On Sunday NayKel Ministries youth group, dressed as Joseph and the shepherds, performed at the Kingdom Center at Zebulon Middle School. The performance was entitled “Are You Serious?” [Contributed Photo]



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Other Viewpoints

KUDOS TO TRUMP FOR CRACKING DOWN ON H-1B VISA ABUSE

By Ryan Girdusky

Guest Commentary

President Trump's administration is delivering for American workers. During his time as President, the number of H-1B guestworker visa denials is at a decade high.

For years, employers have used the H-1B program to displace qualified Americans and import cheaper foreign labor. Tightening this program's requirements could save millions of Americans from layoffs and lower wages.

Congress created the H-1B program in 1990. Lawmakers wanted to give companies a way to recruit highly skilled foreigners when they couldn't find any qualified Americans. Unfortunately, when the law was written it allowed employers to exploit the program to use guest workers to displace qualified Americans.

Today, big companies, especially tech firms, use it to hire entry-level workers from abroad—mainly from India—who are willing to work for less money than their American counterparts. Currently, almost half a million H-1B visas holders work in the United States. And 85,000 more join their ranks each year.

Most of these foreigners possess no extraordinary skills or abilities. Over 50 percent of H-1B guest workers toil away in entry-level positions, according to the Government Accountability Office. About one in four H-1B applications—which are filed by companies, not the foreigners themselves—are for jobs that don't even require a bachelor's degree.

It's not as if Americans are unwilling or unable to perform these jobs. Today, Americans graduate college at unprecedented rates. Roughly one in five graduates earns a degree in science, technology, math, or engineering—the so-called STEM fields that undergird much of the 21st-century economy.

Yet more than half of all STEM graduates can't find jobs in their fields upon graduation.

In other words, H-1B guest workers aren't simply filling gaps in the labor market; they're taking jobs that could otherwise go to qualified Americans.

Many foreign workers willingly accept lower salaries than Americans working the same positions. Four in five H-1B holders earn less than the U.S. average wage for their jobs, according to Labor Department data.

In some cases, employers actually terminate Americans to free up jobs for guest workers.

In 2014, Disney infamously laid off 250 U.S. tech professionals—but not before forcing these workers to train their H-1B replacements. The "happiest company on Earth" threatened to withhold laid-off employees' severance if they refused to cooperate. Just last year, Verizon announced it would outsource as many as 5,000 jobs to Infosys—an Indian offshoring giant that applied for over 11,000 H-1B visas this year alone.

Even American tech workers who keep their jobs still suffer from the H-1B program. "Wages for U.S. computer scientists would have been 2.6 percent to 5.1 percent higher and employment in computer science for U.S. workers would have been 6.1 percent to 10.8 percent higher in 2001" had the H-1B program not existed in the 1990s, according to a research paper from economists at the University of Michigan and University of California, San Diego.

Thankfully, President Trump and his aides are working to reform the system and protect American jobs. The president directed the Department of Homeland Security to issue H-1B visas to only the most-skilled applicants under his "Buy American, Hire American" executive order. He's also considering capping visas issued to Indian applicants.

On the campaign trail, Donald Trump pledged to put American workers first. He's keeping that promise when it comes to H-1B reform.

Ryan Girdusky is a writer based out of New York City.

THE DEMOCRATS' SCARLET LETTER STRATEGY

By Mel Gurtov

Guest Commentary

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has evidently decided not to turn over the articles of impeachment to the Senate until Congress resumes its work January 7. Some observers think that's a mistake that will cost Democrats on Election Day. Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell seems to think so too, believing the longer the Democrats hold out, the more vindictive, uncooperative, even "unconstitutional" they will appear to voters.

McConnell says he's "fine" about Pelosi's strategy, since it gives him a pass on having to make difficult decisions on the rules of trial procedure and which, if any, witnesses may appear at trial.

But I think Pelosi has the better strategy. She understands Trump's psychology, and she's targeting his ego. The thought of not being quickly cleared by the Senate—of not being "exonerated"—and having to wear the scarlet letter "I" for an indefinite time is probably driving Trump crazy.

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Variety of lettuce

5 "Eurocat"

8 Book of prophesies

12 LOL on adjective

13 Chips

14 Toothpaste container

15 Angry

16 Conventional

18 One up?

20 Western occurrence

21 Leopold's codfather

23 Four qts

24 One of Monopoly's light blue avenues

28 Speech impediment

31 Great nose

32 Tirobe

34 Female due

35 Bird of peace

37 Decorator

38 Fish

41 Ireland

42 Secular

45 Service

49 Farm union

51 Top

52 Is it well

53 Calendar abor

54 Prologed sleep

55 Run away

56 Automator for short

57 Slaughter of livestock

DOWN

1 Finger

2 Pelvic bones

3 Not partner

4 Piv Bailey

5 Cherub in art

6 The girl

7 Picnic misadventurers

8 Musically key-luss

9 Flood aftermath, perhaps

10 Reed instrument

11 Send a rough-ty message

17 Embrace

19 Bling's oil years

22 Wilkes- Pa

24 Peculiar

25 Braz an tourist mixcoatl

26 Lure

28 Junjur

30 Teacher's - hirl at mind

32 Put in a box

38 Threaten

40 Novelist

42 Browned - bread

43 Seed coat

44 Owl's perch

46 PG picture

47 Magazine container

48 Madcow

50 Managerie

"He's mad as hell" that he's not getting his acquittal, says Lindsey Graham. Trump isn't used to being on the defensive and forced to give ground, least of all to a woman. He will rant and rave daily, but nothing he says or does can erase that "I." So Pelosi may be counting on McConnell, Trump's Senate fixer, to give something to the Democrats, such as calling witnesses, to get a trial underway—and out of the way.

Trump knows that so long as he wears that letter, the chances increase of Republican defections—by those up for election and by traditional conservative groups. Guilt by association can produce interesting reactions. Let's see who wins this test of wills and leverage.

Gurtov, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Portland State University and blogs at In the Human Interest.

VANTAGE POINT

Continued from page 4

In Atlanta, the "Black Mecca" of the South, Vine City, the neighborhood where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and civil rights and political leader Julian Bond lived, no longer exists. It was wiped-out by sports stadium projects. Public housing development after public housing development has been felled by an advancing wave of "progress." The "Sweet Auburn" District, which was once the home of major Black businesses, is now stagnant. In the face of this onslaught, a youthful group of community advocates called the Community Movement Builders have recently launched an Anti-Gentrification Campaign to mobilize community residents and their allies to address the massive displacement of Black working class and poor people from their neighborhoods. One of their slogans is: "Stop Gentrification: Keep Residents in Place."

"Development" in Washington, D.C., the original "Chocolate City," has displaced thousands of Black people, forcing them to move to surrounding suburban areas; the prosperous central city neighborhood and Black business district in Seattle, Washington has vanished as Blacks have been forced to flee to Tacoma and other outlying cities where housing is more affordable; in Los Angeles, the Crenshaw Subway Coalition is vigorously resisting a subway extension that would spur gentrification in one of the most storied communities in Black America; in neighborhood after neighborhood in New York City, from Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx to Harlem, gentrification is rapidly displacing hundreds of thousands of Black people. In a few years, Harlem, the cultural-political Capital of Black America, will hardly be recognizable. A Whole Foods Store now stands where Malcolm X once held his legendary rallies!

Chocolate Cities, once the domain of Black political and economic power are vanishing as increasing numbers of Whites who in previous generations abandoned urban centers for the suburbs are now returning to establish more comfortable and convenient spaces in closer proximity to their work places. "Development" to accommodate the newcomers is driving up the cost of housing, especially rental properties in a manner that is unaffordable for large numbers of Black residents. Property taxes are also skyrocketing, putting enormous pressure on Black homeowners as well. As Blacks are displaced and replaced by newcomers, this is inevitably leading to dramatic shifts in political power from neighborhood advisory boards, to city councils and the office of Mayors. Black power is diminishing.

What is equally egregious are the attitudes of some of the newcomers whom residents of Black communities sometimes characterize as "invaders" or "neo-colonialists." This is because some newcomers are not content to become a part of the community; they arrogantly attempt to change the rhythms, culture and character of the community.

For decades it has been a well-established and accepted custom that scores of drummers gather on a designated date at a regular time in Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem to play African music. But, once a large number of "invaders" became occupants of a nearby apartment building, they began to complain to the police and petitioned local elected officials, seeking to ban this longstanding weekly ritual.

In Detroit, three White women, who are newcomers to a predominantly Black neighborhood, falsely accused a Black man of being a pedophile and demanded that the police file charges against him. The brother in question was starting a community garden on a vacant lot in the neighborhood and the women protested this activity taking place in "their neighborhood." Fortunately, the Judge dismissed the charges in a case of "gardening while Black!" Reports of these kinds of attitudes and behavior across the country are breeding resentment and hostility towards the "invaders."

Let me be clear, as a civil right, any person in the United States has the freedom to live wherever they choose. People of African descent have waged a relentless struggle to achieve this precious right. People also have the right to live amongst their own nationality, ethnicity of ethnic group if they choose, hence there are Irish, Italian, Polish, German and Jewish communities in this country. And, occasionally these communities change in composition. "Little Italy" in lower Manhattan in New York is now mostly shops and stores as people of Italian descent have largely chosen to migrate to other neighborhoods. Voluntary migration is one thing, forced displacement is another matter. Time and time again, Black people have faced schemes, targeted policies and outright violence, e.g., Tulsa, Rosewood, to force their removal from neighborhoods and communities they worked and invested in to "develop" as their home.

Black people believe in "development" and no reasonable person would be opposed to improvements or progress that would better their community. The crucial issue for people of African descent is not development, it is "development" that is displacing Black people and culture. Therefore, the order and challenge of the day is to achieve "development without displacement." The question is, can development strategies be devised that prioritize improving the lives of the current residents and preserving the culture and character of their communities?

The answer to that question is yes. The collective brainpower, skill, experience and will exists within Black America to mount an offensive to defend Black communities against gentrification, the "Negro Removal" program of the 21st Century. Therefore, we must gather our brightest and best, the conscious and committed in our brain trust to devise plans and a policy agenda to rescue, preserve Black communities. We possess the collective genius to develop just, safe, viable, vibrant and sustainable Black communities.

To that end, the Institute of the Black World 21st Century (IBW) is issuing an urgent call for a National Emergency Summit on Gentrification to be convened in Newark, N.J., April 4-6, 2019 in conjunction with the annual commemoration of the martyrdom of our beloved Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Newark has been selected because the City's ambitious development plans incorporate community-based strategies designed to mitigate gentrification.

IBW has requested that Ras J. Baraka, the Mayor of Newark, host the Emergency Summit. This gathering is viewed as an extension of the milestone Urban Marshal Plan and Black Economic Development Symposium convened by IBW in Newark in April of this year. We envision anti-gentrification advocates, community economic development practitioners, Mayors, urban planners, faith, civil rights, labor, business and professional leaders attending the Emergency Summit on Gentrification. The Urban Strategies Program of Faith In Action, National Urban League, Democracy Collaborative and Freedom Caucus of the Center for Community Change have already signaled a willingness to partner with IBW on this crucial undertaking.

Now is the time to act boldly and courageously to defend Black communities from the destructive forces of gentrification. "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." We must muster the collective resolve to stop gentrification from devastating Black communities, from displacing Black people and culture... and we will!

TO BE EQUAL

Continued from page 4

a trend that would put Gary at the center of black political power. Four years later, Hatcher would bring the historic National Black Political Convention to Gary. More than 10,000 delegates and attendees gathered to formulate a political strategy for Black America, including Rev. Jackson, Coretta Scott King, Shirley Chisholm, Amiri Baraka, Louis Farrakhan, Bobby Seale, and Betty Shabazz.

In his speech at the convention, Hatcher warned that if the two major political parties continued to neglect their concerns, Black Americans would create a third party, and "we shall take with us the best of White America... many a white youth nauseated by the corrupt values rotting the innards of this society... many of the white poor... many a white G.I. ...and many of the white working class, too."

Hatcher was instrumental in founding Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity) with Rev. Jackson, and later served as chairman of Jackson's presidential campaign in 1984.

He served as the Vice-Chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 1981 to 1985 and as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

In 1978, he co-founded TransAfrica, an advocacy group aimed at changing U.S. policy toward Africa and the Caribbean.

Hatcher paved the way for the many black mayors who would follow, including my own father, Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial, who was elected the first black mayor of New Orleans in 1977—and for the later generation mayors that I joined when I was elected in 1994.

I was proud that the National Urban League was able to honor Hatcher, on the 50th anniversary of his election, during our 2017 Conference in St. Louis. As I noted at the time, Hatcher aspired to political office at a time that was not so far removed from lynchings, segregated schools, and anti-miscegenation laws. Every step, every vote and every position attained was marred and marked by transparently racial barriers, and every victory was made all the more sweet by overcoming them.

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Continued from page 4

research, and advertise for The Carolinian.

I was given permission to write columns about the injustices as well as the positive things happening in our criminal justice system. My columns are titled FROM THE INSIDE OUT. With this platform I've had the privilege of interviewing Presidential candidates, attend city council meetings, and take pictures with our new mayor. I've also had the opportunity to expose incorrect stereotypes created by the department's campaign of public misinformation.

So in the two and a half months I've been home I've moved out of my cousin's apartment to rent my own off Poole Road. The place was nice and comfortable with one exception; the neighborhood is infested with black men auditioning for bed space inside a prison institution. They are consistently shooting up their own neighborhood. So I looked and found a better environment to live in.

Today, I'm renting a very nice house in Garner situated in a quiet neighborhood. There's nothing like having your own place especially when it's affordable. I spent the weekend leveling the grass for the winter hibernation period. Life is good right now; I'm looking for another job to take up some of the free time I have at night. Idle time doesn't include dollar signs.

In closing, the harsh realities of prison often start on the day inmates are released. My foundation gave me opportunities most people just don't have. My dreams are transforming into reality slowly but surely. I haven't finished my bucket list, but I've put a huge dent in it. To all my brothers and sisters serving time, Merry Xmas and a Happy New year. Rest, we have work to do. I'm only on my second step.

CHILD WATCH

Continued from page 4

assembled this list with the help of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, past chair of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Jury and Professor Emerita of The Ohio State University; Dr. Cynthia Tyson, Professor of Education at The Ohio State University; and Dr. Jonda C. McNair, Professor of Education at Clemson University, who believe these books:

- Exemplify literary excellence
- Give children a sense of 'self'
- Encourage children to develop positive attitudes about themselves and others
- Reinforce a sense of black heritage and black history
- Provide a platform by which children can learn about and fall in love with characters that look like themselves
- Inspire children to be the best they can be
- Assist children in seeing the beauty, humor, and strength in their families and in others around them
- Inspire children to seek new ways of problem solving
- Encourage pride in African Heritage.

The list is divided into suggestions for Primary (Grades K-3); Intermediate (Grades 4-6); and Young Adult (Grades 7-12) readers and CDF offers many of these books for purchase through the CDF Bookstore. Choose titles today to give as gifts for the holidays or celebrate a birthday or the birth of a new child at any time of year by giving and sharing a wonderful book from this list.

PRIMARY FICTION

- Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)* by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard
- Mirandy and Brother Wind* by Patricia C. McKissack
- Uncle Jed's Barbershop* by Margaree King Mitchell
- Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold
- Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe
- I Love My Hair!* by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley

PRIMARY NONFICTION

- Duke Ellington* by Andrea Davis Pinkney

PRIMARY POETRY

- Meet Danitra Brown* by Nikki Grimes
- In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall* illustrated by Javaka Steptoe

PRIMARY SING-A-LONG

- Let It Shine* by Ashley Bryan

INTERMEDIATE FICTION

- The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- Zeely* by Virginia Hamilton
- M.C. Higgins, the Great* by Virginia Hamilton
- Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor
- Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World* by Mildred Pitts Walter

- One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia
- P.S. Be Eleven* by Rita Williams-Garcia
- Gone Crazy in Alabama* by Rita Williams-Garcia

INTERMEDIATE NONFICTION

- We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* by Kadir Nelson
- Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans* by Kadir Nelson
- Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters* by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* by Carole Boston Weatherford

INTERMEDIATE POETRY

- Honey, I Love* by Eloise Greenfield

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

- The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander
- Like Sisters on the Homefront* by Rita Williams-Garcia
- Toning the Sweep* by Angela Johnson

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

- March: Book One* by John Lewis
- March: Book Two* by John Lewis
- March: Book Three* by John Lewis
- Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

ALL AGES

- Many Thousand Gone: African Americans from Slavery to Freedom* by Virginia Hamilton
- The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* told by Virginia Hamilton.

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House Vote Locks In Impeachment As '20 Campaign Issue

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP)—The day after nearly every House Democrat voted to impeach President Donald Trump, the chief of the House Republican campaign committee said the political fall-out was clear.

"Last night their obsession with impeachment finally came to a head, and they basically ended their majority," Minnesota Rep. Tom Emmer said Thursday. "Max Rose is done," he continued, listing him among freshmen Democrats from districts Trump captured in 2016 who he said won't survive next November's elections.

The feisty Rose, a Brooklyn native and Afghanistan combat veteran with an advanced degree from the London School of Economics, sees things differently.

"Mark my words, okay?" said Rose, whose Staten Island-centered district was the only one Trump won in New York City. "We are going to beat them by such a wide margin that next time around, they won't even talk like this again, okay?"

It's too early to say who will be proven correct as Republicans wage a challenging struggle to regain the House majority they lost last year. But less than 11 months from presidential and congressional elections, the near party-line House vote impeaching Trump locked in lawmakers' positions on the subject. Many moderate lawmakers from swing districts had spent months saying they were on the fence.

Now, voters will decide whether to reward or punish incumbents for their choices. And while



Republicans and Democrats acknowledge that other issues like the economy and health care costs could overwhelm impeachment by next November, both sides—but especially the GOP—are already using the bitter impeachment fight as weapons.

"This is an attack on Democracy," blared one Trump campaign fundraising email that included a thank you from "Donald J. Trump, President of the United States."

It added, "An attack on freedom. An attack on everything we hold dear in this country. And it's

an attack on YOU."

Freshman Rep. Harley Rouda, who ousted a 30-year House GOP veteran from what was once a Republican stronghold in Southern California, was among Democrats issuing their own pleas for cash.

"Last night I cast my vote to defend our Constitution and impeach the President of the United States. A vote bigger than party, polling, and politics, & we've faced an onslaught of attacks since," Rouda beseeched supporters.

Republican organizations and conservative outside groups have

outspent their Democratic rivals, \$11 million to \$5 million, on television ads mentioning impeachment in congressional races. The figures from Advertising Analytics, a firm in Alexandria, Va., that tracks advertising, exclude spending by candidates' campaigns.

So far, both sides have combined to spend at least \$500,000 in each of 15 House races from South Carolina to Nevada on impeachment spots, the data shows. Republican groups have spent that amount without any Democratic expenditures in three other

districts in Utah, Minnesota and New York.

Underscoring how the GOP is using impeachment for offense while Democrats are in a more defensive crouch, all but one of the 18 districts that's seen that much money spent on the issue are held by Democrats. The lone Republican is Rep. John Katko, a three-term lawmaker whose upstate New York district is one of just three held by the GOP that were won by Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Of the remaining 17 districts, all were carried by Trump and all but one are represented by Democratic freshmen, who are often less secure than congressional veterans.

"If you're a truth seeker or care about where the country is going, I think we cast the right vote," said Rep. Cheri Bustos, D-Ill., who heads House Democrats' campaign organization.

"We have to just keep focused on what matters to people. Health care is No. 1. Making Washington more functional is very important. That's a very hard thing to do, but we've got to keep working on it," Bustos said.

That's a formula that Rose, whose working-class district Trump carried by 10 percentage points, is following.

Asked how he would overcome GOP attacks over his vote to impeach Trump, Rose cited measures including one financing a sea wall for Staten Island's east-shore and another buttressing a compensation fund for survivors of the 9/11 attacks.

"We are delivering for the dis-

trict, plain and simple," he said. "Over and over and over again, we're putting government back on the side of people who've been working their hearts out and been ignored."

Democrats led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., control the House 232-198, plus one independent and four vacancies. That includes Thursday's party switch by New Jersey Rep. Jeff Van Drew, who joined the GOP after being one of only two Democrats who opposed impeachment.

Impeachment will reverberate as well in Senate races, where the GOP will be fighting to retain its 53-47 majority. That chamber is expected to begin its trial next month on whether to oust Trump from office and seems certain to acquit him.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has made clear he is cooperating with the White House and wants a swift trial with no witnesses.

That could limit the risks for GOP senators like Cory Gardner of Colorado, Martha McSally of Arizona and Susan Collins of Maine. They face competitive reelection races in swing states where Republicans adore Trump but independents are divided, and these senators could also be damaged by a trial that seems to veer out of control.

Democratic Sen. Doug Jones of Alabama faces risks of his own. His state overwhelmingly backed Trump in 2016, so Jones must chose between voting to remove Trump and infuriating most voters or acquitting him and angering loyal Democrats.

Classifieds

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LEGAL NOTICE

State of North Carolina
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The Deadline for submitting Electronic Bids on the following projects as well as the public reading will be **January 21, 2020, at 2:00 pm**. The public reading will be held in Contract Standards and Development Unit Conference Room (Room 156 A/B), Building B, North Carolina Department of Transportation, Century Center Complex, 1020 Birch Ridge Dr., Raleigh, NC 27610. Please enter door B-2.

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By Matt Keegan

Staff Writer

Crossover utility vehicles are the family vehicle of choice and the Toyota Highlander is a strong example of what we're buying. Offering three rows of seating, the Highlander holds up to eight passengers and is the first model in the segment to offer a hybrid version. For 2020, the Highlander is fully redesigned, with upgraded technologies and more efficient powertrains available.

Toyota invited journalists to San Antonio, Texas, to test-drive various gas and hybrid versions of its new fourth-generation Highlander, with the gas model already in showrooms. This spring, the Highlander Hybrid debuts; for the first time customers will choose between standard front-wheel drive or available all-wheel drive, just like the gas model.

Highlander Highlights

Toyota offers the gas Highlander in L, LE, XLE, Limited, and Platinum trims. The hybrid has four trims, beginning with the LE. The 2020 Highlander costs between \$36,000 to just over \$50,000 well equipped. The hybrid versions have a \$1,400 price premium over the corresponding gas trim.

The 2020 Highlander is based on a new platform, sharing its architecture with such models as the Camry and Avalon sedans. It's about two inches longer than the outgoing model, with the extra space added to the cargo compartment. The latest model has a bold front fascia and a chiseled body for a look that is at once sporty and upscale.

Inside, buyers have a choice of seven- or eight-row seating. The first choice is our preference as the middle-row captain's chairs offer nearly the same level of comfort and support as the first-row seats. They also allow a bit more maneuverability for third-row passengers as space is tight for adults and trails the Volkswagen Atlas in usability.

Tech & Safety

The Highlander's cabin has a wide-open vibe, but the focal point is the stylish center stack with its 8-inch touch-screen display. The top-trim models have a 12.3-inch display, the largest in the segment.

The screen is clear and easy to read, although glare and a preponderance of fingerprints may hinder viewability. The audio packages are solid and we applaud Toyota with finally offering both Apple CarPlay and

Android Auto smartphone compatibility.

Toyota's safety package is also laudable as it has features to keep this SUV centered and a safe distance behind the vehicle in front. The best news is that this equipment comes standard.

Performance Versus Efficiency

Highlander shoppers face one important dilemma when shopping: choosing between models powered by a 3.5-liter V6 gas engine or a highly-efficient hybrid powertrain. We tested both and found each has benefits that'll interest buyers.

The gas engine makes 295 horsepower and 263 pound-feet of torque and works with an 8-speed automatic transmission. It delivers ample step-off acceleration and passing power, attributes that ensure confidence when carrying a full load of passengers. This model also boasts a 5,000-pound towing capacity, matching the Buick Enclave.

While the standard model boasts a 1 mpg increase in fuel efficiency, it is the hybrid that sees the greatest improvement. Performance is up, with 243 net horsepower at your disposal or 82 percent of the power of the V6. The most significant improvement is in efficiency as the hybrid now delivers 36 mpg, a 24-percent improvement over last year. This model also tows, boasting a 3,500-pound towing capacity, which matches the gas-only Honda Pilot.

We found the Highlander provides smooth steering, average handling, and a comfortable ride. Torque vectoring all-wheel drive is optional and improves control. The new multi-terrain controller enhances wheel management on a variety of surfaces. Braking is firm for both versions, a welcome improvement with the hybrid.

Highlander Considerations

Toyota fans should be pleased with the changes this year, especially with the heightened efficiency of the hybrid. Our pick is the V6 XLE as it supplies the best combination of performance, amenities, and towing power for about \$40,000.



Auto Group Awards Durham Tech Community Coll \$75K

DURHAM—Westgate Auto Group has granted the Durham Technical Community College Foundation \$75,000 to establish the Westgate Auto Group Scholarship.

The award will annually benefit at least seven students in the Automotive Systems Technology program.

"We are pleased to recognize the Westgate Auto Group's support of our students," said Melissa Chappell, Executive Director of the Durham Tech Foundation. "This is a significant investment by an industry partner for one of our most in-demand programs, and we are very grateful."

The scholarship will cover each student's tuition and fees for two semesters. Before entering their final semester, scholarship recipients will receive additional funds for any tools needed for work-based learning and their future careers.

"I would like to thank Larry Moll, of Westgate Auto, for his persistence and initiative and Westgate's gift to Durham Tech and to our automotive students," said Nate Smith, Director of the Automotive Systems Technology program. "This scholarship will enable us to give hope to people who otherwise may not have been able to afford the training necessary to excel in an automotive career."

To be eligible, a student must be enrolled in the Automotive Systems Technology program.

The scholarship program was established to help fill the local need for skilled automotive technicians.

"Westgate Auto Group is aware of the shortage of trained technicians within our industry," Moll said. "Durham Tech has stepped up and allowed us to create a program that benefits students and fulfills our need for staffing for the future. Smith has been a joy to work with and has been instrumental in helping us develop our program."

Students can earn their associate's degree, diploma, and/or industry-recognized certificates through the Automotive Systems Technology program. Durham Tech also offers automotive continuing education courses.

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 AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

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