



Nikki High – see page A-3



Rev. Dr. Mark Whitlock – see page B-3

SoCalGas Models Clean Energy with First-of-its-Kind [H2] Innovation Experience

BY KIMBERLY SHELBY
Contributing Writer

About a handful of rainstorms ago, on January 30, Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis joined with Southern California Gas Co. (SoCalGas) to unveil the future of what all that water can do, particularly vis-à-vis clean energy.

As part of their longstanding mission to find innovative ways to invest in energy even amid the formidable COVID-19 pandemic, SoCalGas envisioned an initiative in 2020 whereby hydrogen would be blended into the natural gas system in a model residential home. The goal was to demonstrate how end users can effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions by utilizing a blended fuel source.

Eighteen months later, with the help of L.A.-based modular homebuilder Connect Homes, North America welcomed its first clean, renewable microgrid and home, H2 Innovation Experience ([H2]IE), in the

city of Downey. It offers the potential to reliably power entire neighborhoods, day or night, rain or shine, throughout the year.

"Innovative projects like the [H2]IE demonstrate how California is leading the clean energy transition," said Kounalakis. "This first-of-its-kind project shows how clean renewable hydrogen and microgrids can help power homes, enhance grid reliability, and preserve and grow good-paying union jobs in our state."

The project employs simple scientific logic and remarkable ingenuity. [H2]IE's carport solar panel produces approximately 65 kilowatts of power. That electricity is fed into the battery energy storage system.

"Once those batteries are charged, the excess electricity that's being generated goes to turn on the electrolyzer," explained SoCalGas Project Manager Oscar Contreras, an oil, gas and hydrocarbon industry veteran.

"That's what we use to



[H2]IE Project Manager Oscar Contreras shows off the 2000 square foot hydrogen-powered home, the first-of-its-kind in North America. (KIMBERLY SHELBY/L.A. SENTINEL)

create hydrogen, and it's called electrolysis. We feed water into that system, and electricity, and it creates a reaction. We extract the

oxygen from the molecule, and basically, we have hydrogen."

Greener, cleaner and ultimately less costly, this

system can also afford end users unprecedented resiliency in the face of power outages. Electricity can only be stored for short

periods of time, whereas hydrogen can be stored for two or three years and used on demand.

{See [H2] A-10}

Heather Hutt Appointed to Represent District 10 on City Council

BY DANNY J. BAKEWELL
Executive Editor
and
CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Managing Editor

Cheers and applause filled the chambers on Tuesday, April 11, when the City Council voted 11-1 to appoint Heather Hutt as the voting representative for Council District 10.

Hutt, who was immediately sworn into office, will complete the remainder of the term of former Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas, who was convicted of federal corruption charges. She will serve until December 2024, when the term ends.

Responding with teary-eyed emotion to the crowd's

reaction, the councilwoman said, "It is an honor for me to serve the people of the 10th District. I just want to take a moment to thank my colleagues, council president and my friends and family, my staff, and the constituents of the 10th District."

Of the 10th District, she said, "It is not an easy place to be, but with all the support that we get here, I'll continue to do the work. I signed up to do the work and my mom raised us to work for our people. I just want to say thank you. And now I'm going to put my glasses on, and let's get to work!"

Mayor Karen Bass was also among the well-wishers extending congratulations to Hutt. In a statement,



Councilwoman Heather Hutt. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Bass said, "I look forward to continuing to work with Councilmember Hutt to confront the critical

issues facing Los Angeles like homelessness, public safety, and the overall livability of our city.

Councilmember Hutt has a track record of exemplary public service and I know the people of the 10th

City Council District will benefit from her continued leadership."

While some people verbally opposed the appointment and called for a special election, the majority of the council were apparently swayed by Council President Paul Krekorian's position that a special election was costly and ill-timed.

"A special election in the 10th would be multiple of millions of dollars, which is money that obviously could be much better spent on the urgent needs of the people of Los Angeles, rather than a special election," Krekorian told the Sentinel last week, adding that

{See HUTT A-10}

Dr. Elaine Batchlor Excels as CEO of MLK Community Healthcare

Dr. Batchlor will be one of the honorees at the Power, Leadership & Influence of the Black Woman Luncheon

BY KIMBERLY SHELBY
Contributing Writer

Dr. Elaine Batchlor, chief executive officer of MLK Community



Dr. Elaine Batchlor (FILE PHOTO)

Healthcare, will be honored at Bakewell Media's Power, Leadership & Influence of the Black Woman event on April 15, at the Beverly

Hilton Hotel.

Batchlor will be saluted alongside the newly-elected Mayor Karen Bass. {See BATCHLOR A-11}

Pat Prescott to Host Bakewell Media's Salute to Black Women Leaders

BY DR. VALERIE WARDLAW
Contributing Writer

Pat Prescott, the esteemed broadcaster, will serve as mistress of ceremonies for Bakewell Media's salute to Black women leaders and the 90th anniversary of the Sentinel on Saturday, April 15, at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

The celebration, "Power, Leadership, and Influence of the Black Woman," was conceived by Danny J. Bakewell, Sr., chairman of Bakewell Media, as a salute to the Black women whose tireless efforts have made the Los Angeles community stronger



Pat Prescott (COURTESY PHOTO)

through their leadership and advocacy.

"Black Women have played an instrumental part in the fabric of our community and certainly in

my life. Taking time out to honor these women is not only fitting but necessary," Bakewell said.

"Our honorees have {See PRESCOTT A-11}





Nia Rice & Jasmine Young

PHOTO BY ALAN BATTI

BY SHELBY STEPHENS
Contributing Writer

Getting out the box and into the media, Serene Agency is a Los Angeles based, women-founded, and women-led creative agency, specializing in public relations, brand management, and social media content.

Founder and professional media strategist Nia Rice, built her agency on purpose and with intention by executing brand campaigns without compromising the integrity of her clients. Working with emerging marginalized brands, influencers, and non-profits like The Blueprint and the Pico Youth & Family Center, Serene has a diverse company client list, including Emmy award-winning company, Issa Rae Productions and national organizations like the African Chamber of Commerce.

The agency also represents high profile individuals like L.A. native and singing sensation Elle Varner, 3x Grammy award-winning artist and producer Hit-Boy, P-Valley's Shannon Thornton, The Billionaire Chef Tolu Eors, and internet personality Yng Swag. Rice connects the dots between entertainment, lifestyle, technology, and hospitality.

Disrupting the traditional approach to media con-

tent and brand management, Serene is responsible for transforming multicultural owned businesses into globally respected entities. With more than 10 years in the industry, Rice is changing the narrative of how major corporations and studios cater to minority audiences and projects.

She is a professional because of her dedication to advancing her clients by connecting them with lead industry executives using multiple digital platforms. In a recent interview with the Los Angeles Sentinel, Rice and Account Executive Vice President Jasmine Young opened up about Serene's start, success, and next steps for the future.

After graduating college with a Hospitality Management degree, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore alumni, Nia Rice, aspired to be an event planner, but quickly found her passion in public relations while working with Priscilla Clarke of Clarke PR.

During her senior year until the age of 23, Rice worked in radio, sharpening her skills in advertising, public relations, events, making connections with established personalities, and building her reputation in the D.C. area.

When asked about her

Nia Rice & Jasmine Young Use Serene Agency to Execute National Brand Campaigns

start in the industry, Rice shared, "I knew in D.C. I was hitting a cap, so I moved to New York and when I started working at The Chamber Group and Hunter PR, that's when I truly saw my capabilities as a media strategist. I knew how to tell stories and I understood how to pair people based on their personality and who to best match them with to tell their stories correctly; I saw my talent for connecting individuals. I began to build my contacts and resources, then when I moved to Los Angeles everything hit."

The Huffington Post listed Serene as the top rising agency in the nation for securing their clients in top media outlets like People Magazine, Tonight Show Jimmy Fallon, AdWeek, CNN, and Good Morning America. They have created exposure for their clients by placing brands on carpets such as the Golden Globes, People's Choice, and the Grammys. The agency has also solidified brands with corporate awards and has been listed at the top of their respective industries with AdAge, Insider Intelligence, Forbes and others.

To keep operations organized and communication tight, the agency hosts weekly briefings to prioritize clients and their needs. The briefings determine the strategies for the week including brand development, event coordinating, and scheduling. Serene has a variety of clients, which promotes diversity in their representation and assists in expanding the brand.

Working with multicultural companies that deserve massive and high-level

media consumption, VP Jasmine Young explained, "Every day is different as we have a lot of different clients ranging from athletes to film directors. We start our day prioritizing and focusing to see if the day will be about outreach or if we have to do

mistakes are going to come as the experience happens."

In the next 10 years, Rice hopes to connect with high engagement production companies in the film industry to work on projects in television, advertisement, and documentaries.

D.C., and Atlanta. The team is working on opening workspaces in L.A. and New York to continue to expand their reach across the country.

Rice and Young encourage upcoming public relation agencies and individuals



Serene Agency at Members Sync Event hosted by D.C. Grammy Academy Chapter.

PHOTO BY JORDANA MYERS

in-house research for a client and we move from there."

As the agency continues to grow, Rice and Young have made it a point to be intentional with their work-life balance, reminding each other and their staff to work towards being better professionals each day. With increased success comes increased responsibility.

Rice embraces mistakes and understands the importance of learning as you move through industry challenges. "I tell my team, your

"To be the most highly sought agency, to flawlessly direct brands in the right direction for maximum reach and complete our offices in the states to become a global agency in Africa and London are the ultimate goals. Making sure my staff and my team are well taken care of, generational wealth is important internally for our employees and externally for our clients," she said.

Serene Agency is currently active in Los Angeles, New York, Washington

looking to break into the field to get started with their ideas, invest in themselves, and seek mentorship.

"Don't be scared, invest in yourself, go to workshops, take a class, you will get the money back. All my peers, including myself, have a mentor. Really get out there!"

Connect with Serene Agency online at Publicity | Serene Agency, or on Instagram at Serene Agency (@serenetheagency) • Instagram photos and videos.

Val Demings Headlines 17th Annual Tools For Transformation Conference

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Congresswoman Val Demings will deliver the keynote address for the 17th annual Tools for Transformation Conference at 8:30 a.m., on Saturday, April 22 at California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), located at 1000 E. Victoria St. in Carson.

The Tools for Transformation Conference, sponsored by civil rights attorney and child advocate Areva Martin and the Special Needs Network (SNN), is the largest and most comprehensive free autism/ADHD/learning disabilities conference in Los Angeles. The conference presents workshops by the country's most renowned experts in intervention strategies, education, healthcare, culturally competent services, advocacy, and social justice.

Hosted by Fox TV's media personality Elex Michaelson, the workshops will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the college campus. Plus, Carson Mayor Lula Davis Holmes, State Senator Steven Bradford (35th District) and Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson (D-65th Assembly District) are scheduled to appear. The opening session and keynote address are co-sponsored in partnership with CSUDH and its Mervyn M. Dymally African American Political and Economic Institute (MDAAPEI).

Demings will speak on the conference's theme of "In Pursuit of Equity." Demings, the first in her family to go to college, showed up with \$50 in her pocket, and worked at a fast-food restaurant to pay her way through college, earning a bachelor's in Criminology from Florida State University and later a master's in Public Administration.

She became a social worker, working to protect children in broken homes. Then, dismayed at a system that was leaving too many families behind, she signed up to become a police officer — that is, an officer with

a social worker's heart.

Although a tough path for an African American woman in a male-dominated profession, she graduated from the police academy of the Orlando Police Department as class president, receiving the Board of Trustees' Award for Overall Excellence, and earning the reputation of a bold, creative cop willing to take on conventional thinking and the toughest parts of the city. Serving 27 years on the force, she rose through the ranks of the Orlando Police Department, eventually becoming the city's first female chief of police.

From 2017 to 2023, Demings represented Florida's 10th District in Congress. While in Congress, she served on the House Committees on Judiciary, Intelligence, Homeland Security (chairing the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery) and Oversight and Government Reform. She was a member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Women's Caucus, and New Democratic Caucus, a member of the Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Review Board and the Elections Security Taskforce; and served as assistant and Regional Whip for the House Democratic Caucus, co-chair of Candidate Recruitment for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and vice chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

"We are excited to welcome Congresswoman Val Demings, who has been a lifelong public servant, working for the good of children and families in marginalized and BIPOC communities while breaking many glass ceilings along the way," said Martin, SNN founder and CEO.

"With such a diverse background and stellar career, she brings a unique perspective in addressing our theme of 'In Pursuit of Equity.'"

Martin is one of the leading voices for children with

autism and developmental disabilities. In 2005, she founded the nonprofit



COURTESY PHOTO

Val Demings

organization, Special Needs Network (SNN) after she was met with obstacles in accessing necessary services for her autistic son, Marty. Based in California, SNN is one of the nation's leading disability, children's health and social justice nonprofits in the country.

The free one-day conference includes book signings with notable guest authors, an advocates summit, a plenary session, a networking luncheon and an awards presentation for exemplary community figures. Plus, families will be treated to a comprehensive resource fair where they can meet with health service providers, disability rights attorneys, and other special needs professionals.

Sponsors of SNN's Tools for Transformation Conference include CSUDH, the Children's Institute, Just Two Dads Podcast, Molina Healthcare and Prominent One Realty. SNN also thanks the generous support and promotional giveaways from the following: The Butterfly Effect, Chick-fil-A, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Costco, Doordash, Dot & Dough Carson, Niagara Bottling, NORMS Restaurant, Pollo Campero, Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, Suja Organic and Superior Grocers.

To register, visit Evite at [TFT2023.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/ftt2023) or <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tools-4-transformation-17-tickets-559955109807>.

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Nikki High Operates First Black Female-owned Bookstore in Pasadena

By **RODD A. AMOS**
Contributing Writer

As part of its salute to Black-owned businesses during the month of April, the Los Angeles Sentinel spotlights Nikki High, owner of Octavia's Bookshelf — Pasadena's first independent bookstore showcasing BIPOC authors.

We begin with Nikki's reaction upon hearing she made Pasadena history as the first Black female bookstore owner ...

"It's so strange that in 2023 we're still the first at something. I'm really proud and happy the bookstore resonates with so many people. I've lived in Pasadena for 45 years and I used to travel to Eso Won Books for decades because it was the only one I had access to. I'm thankful to [owner James Fugate] and all their years of service, and the gift that they were to our community."

... And the response from community members.

"The day we opened, I got to the store early. People were wrapped around the block waiting to get in!

I just burst into tears. I later understood that they came up from San Diego, Long Beach, and L.A., and down from Santa Clarita. The

felt a sense of community and ownership and that's exactly what I wanted to create."

Nikki reflected on



Nikki High

COURTESY PHOTO

line was two-and-a-half hours long! I sold nearly every book by that following Sunday."

To help launch her business, Nikki started a GoFundMe page that generated nearly five million views and 10,000 retweets.

"I didn't want to take out any loans nor have any investors. I told my husband I needed to dip into our savings. He cringed, but consented. I started the GoFundMe to help offset those costs. We raised about \$22,000. Our donors

WonderCon, the annual comic book, science fiction and film convention held in March at the Anaheim Convention Center.

"It's about big ideas in fantasy and sci-fi. As the only Black person invited to sit on the panel, I felt that it was important to make clear that [science fiction writer] Octavia Butler laid a lot of that groundwork in the early 60's. And her writing gave space for authors like N.K. Jemisin, a Black woman who writes amazing sci-fi fantasy, and others."

BIPOC (bī-pāk) stands for Black, indigenous, and people of color.

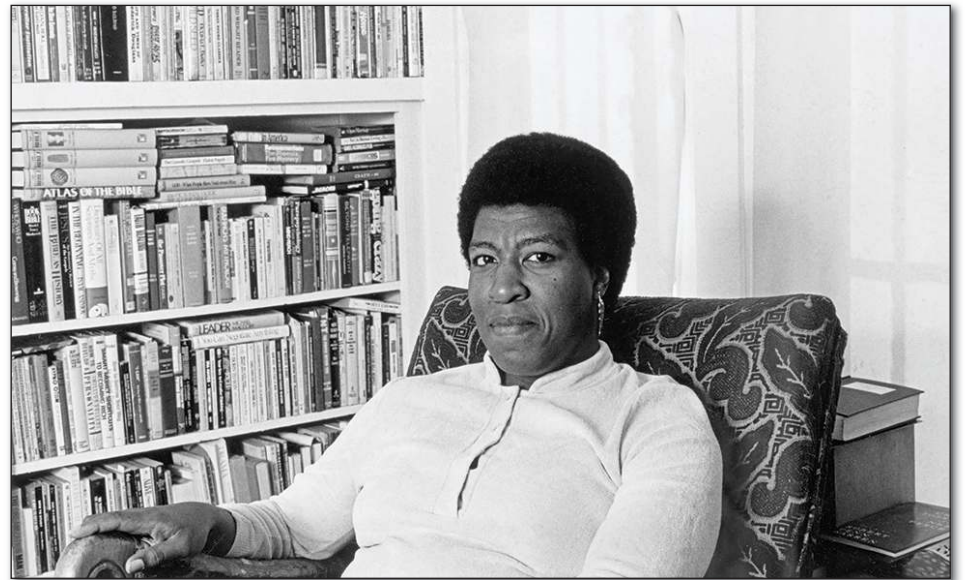
"It separates Black from 'people of color' because adjacency to Whiteness is something that Black people don't have, but others do. We need to be connected, so

MacArthur Fellowship. Nikki spoke fondly of Pasadena's native daughter.

"She lived on the north-west side of town, which is where I was raised. When I was 16, I read 'Kindred' for the first time. It's sci-fi, time travel and fantasy that

expect to see and do at Octavia's Bookshelf?

"You can find books across all genres, including sci-fi, poetry, short stories, fantasy, and a healthy rotation of new authors as well as old favorites. You'll also get to talk to booksellers who are true readers them-



Octavia E. Butler

PATTI PERRET

it's important for me to not only showcase Black authors, but also indigenous authors and people of color who are writing fantastic stories."

In 1995, Octavia Butler became the first science-fiction writer to receive a

So, what can visitors includes people who look like me! I also read 'Parable of The Sower,' one woman's desperate journey towards a better future in a world gone insane. When I opened my store, I wanted to honor the legacy of her life."

So, what can visitors

themselves. They can recommend titles for adults, teens and children!"

Octavia's Bookshelf is located at 1361 N Hill Ave in the East Washington Village neighborhood of Pasadena. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/434ChUh>.

Building a More Inclusive Health Care Culture, One Physician at a Time

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

For Dr. Angel M. Schaffer, both Minority Health Awareness Month, which occurs during April, and Black Maternal Health Week, which takes place from April 11-17, carry very special meanings.

A successful family practice physician at Kaiser Permanente South Bay, Dr. Schaffer still vividly recalls a childhood memory that helped shape her future and strong belief in the importance of diversity and equity in health care.

"When I showed an interest in health care as a child, my mom encouraged me to follow that dream all the way to becoming a doctor. She worked hard to help me succeed and attend college," recalled Dr. Schaffer, who's African American.

"While I was an undergrad, my mom gave birth to my baby sister but had trouble breathing a few days later," she continued. "My mom's heart was damaged and she was diagnosed with post-partum cardiomyopathy. She was evaluated for a heart transplant, which was denied by a committee — comprised exclusively of white, male doctors — who assumed her

home life was too unstable."

With her mom's frail health, Dr. Schaffer decid-



Dr. Angel M. Schaffer

COURTESY PHOTO

ed the right thing to do was to return home to care for her ailing mom. It was during that time that her mom made a wish that would help shape Dr. Schaffer's future.

"She told me, 'It's time for you to become a doctor to help right the wrong,' having learned firsthand about bias in health care, especially the lack of knowledge and empathy that was prevalent at that time, and to some extent, continues to exist in many areas today," she said.

Dr. Schaffer said her

mom talked to her a lot about the importance of good bedside manners, compassion and how she should show up for others. Although she died a few months after Dr. Schaffer started medical school, she noted her mom was so proud of her accomplishment.

"She hugged me in her last moments, saying, 'We did it!'" Dr. Schaffer recalled, smiling.

As a teen mom and a high school drop-out with mental health challenges from domestic violence, Dr. Schaffer's mom faced many challenges and was least expected to succeed. Yet, her dream lives on, Dr. Schaffer insisted.

"I have served my community as a doctor for 20-plus years, fighting for health care equality and advocating for minority communities," Dr. Schaffer said, noting both her daughters also want to become physicians to serve their communities.

"I'm so proud that Kaiser Permanente has programs like the Hippocrates Circle, which gets students from diverse communities interested in health care at an early age, and that equity, inclusion, and diversity are core tenets of the

Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine in Pasadena," Dr.

Schaffer said.


"It gives me hope that health care of the future will

be even more inclusive of all voices, in ways my mom never got to experience."



Dr. Angel M. Schaffer as a child with her mom and baby sister.

COURTESY PHOTO



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Kamlager-Dove Announces 2023 Congressional Art Competition

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove (CA-37) announced the opening of the 2023 Congressional Art Competition for students in California's 37th District. The Congressional Art Competition allows high school students to submit their original pieces for a chance to have their artwork displayed in the Capitol for a year.

Once the winner is selected, the Congresswoman will invite the winner to her Washington, D.C.

office. Congresswoman Kamlager-Dove will accept submissions from now through Monday, April 24, at 5 p.m. (PST).

"I am so excited to announce the start of the 37th District Congressional Art Competition," said Kamlager-Dove.

"Our district is home to exceptional talent in art and design, and I know that the submissions we receive will represent the immense creativity that exists in Los Angeles. Art is a powerful tool in our democracy and I



FILE PHOTO
Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove

cannot wait to see the winner's work admired in the United States Capitol for the

year ahead."

Artwork entered in the contest may be up to 28 inches by 28 inches, up to 4 inches in depth, and weigh no more than 15 pounds. If your artwork is selected as the winning piece, it must arrive framed and measure no larger than the above maximum dimensions.

All of the below types of artwork are acceptable:

- Paintings - including oil, acrylics, and watercolor
- Drawings - including pastels, colored pencil, pencil, charcoal, ink, and mark-

ers (It is recommended that charcoal and pastel drawings be fixed.)

- Collages - must be two dimensional
- Prints - including lithographs, silkscreen, and block prints
- Mixed Media - use of more than two mediums such as pencil, ink, watercolor, etc.
- Computer-generated art
- Photography

All entries must be original in concept, design and execution and may not violate any U.S. copyright

laws. Any entry that has been copied from an existing photo or image (including a painting, graphic, or advertisement) that was created by someone other than the student is a violation of the competition rules and will not be accepted. Work entered must be in the original medium (that is, not a scanned reproduction of a painting or drawing).

To learn more or to submit artwork, visit <https://kamlager-dove.house.gov/services/art-competition>.

LA County Invests \$38M to Modernize Public Workforce System

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

The Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) announced the release of the America's Job Centers of California (AJCC) Modernization Request for Proposals (RFP).

Guided by the Board of Supervisors, the LA County Workforce Development Board (WDB), stakeholders, and community members, the AJCC Modernization RFP aims to streamline and strengthen LA County's public workforce system, which meets the hiring and training needs of workers and employers. It currently serves more than 18K job seekers and 4k businesses per year through 18 AJCCs countywide.

This RFP is seeking non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, public agencies, social enterprises, public or private higher education institutions and/or similar organizations that will administer services as a one-stop AJCC operator and comprise the network of

LA County AJCCs that make up our public workforce system.



COURTESY PHOTO
LA County has issued an RFP to strengthen its system for job seekers and businesses.

The County's AJCC network provides a comprehensive range of no-cost programs, services, and resources for businesses and workers, including help with finding job openings, obtaining training and career counseling, accessing supportive services, and connecting a skilled workforce to quality jobs. DEO and the AJCCs work in close collaboration with the County's six other WDBs, business and industry, educational institutions, social service agencies and community-based organizations, other County departments, and directly with communities

across Los Angeles County.

"We're reimagining the LA County public workforce system to be more proactive and responsive in addressing the needs of our diverse communities, many who have lacked meaningful access or have been historically disinvested by the system through no fault of their own," said Kelly LoBianco, director of the newly created Department of Economic Opportunity.

"DEO recognizes the immense value and crucial role CBOs play in building trust and delivering effective programs and services to communities far and wide. Through our modernization efforts, we are uplifting opportunities for our large and small CBOs to play an even more active role by providing workforce services as contracted providers within our workforce system while driving impact among priority populations and high-growth industries. These changes speak to a new direction of celebrating diversity, innovation and equity, championed through

the leadership of our Board of Supervisors."

The AJCC Modernization RFP deploys the following modernization strategies to enhance the AJCC system in terms of quality of delivery and outcomes:

- Empowering and including small, hyper-local community-based organizations within the AJCC system as part of DEO's Equity in County Contracting initiative
- Growing place-based and virtual service delivery
- Increasing community outreach and engagement
- Prioritizing High Road Training Partnerships
- Ensuring effectively staffed AJCCs that serve as model high road employers
- Incentivizing quality outcomes and impact
- Establishing priority population and industry-specific Centers of Excellence

The Centers of Excellence (COE) strategy emerged through countywide community engagement and listening sessions. This new strategy will require each selected provider to hire teams and

develop expertise in high-growth industry sectors that offer living wage jobs for the communities served within the region, help build the capacity of the AJCC system to meet the hiring and training needs of that sector(s), and offer universal access to opportunities across all centers. Industry sectors include Aerospace and Defense, Biotech and Life Sciences, Construction and Infrastructure (with an emphasis on green jobs), Creative Sector (including Film and Digital Media), Early Care and Education, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology, and Trade, Transportation and Logistics.

The strategy also requires each selected provider to serve as a population-focused COE, reflective of both WIOA recognized priority populations and the communities within our region who have historically been underserved by workforce systems. Populations include English Language Learners, Foster and Opportunity Youth, Individuals

Experiencing or At Risk of Experiencing Homelessness, Justice System Impacted Individuals, LGBTQIA+, Persons with Disabilities and Older Workers, and Veterans.

Proposals for the AJCC operators will be evaluated on the required forms and attachments as detailed in the RFP and as listed in the RFP Submission Checklist. This RFP Submission Checklist is inclusive of the AJCC Modernization RFP Questions, Exhibit 11, which serves as a guide to support proposers in developing a comprehensive narrative on how they plan to deliver services and meet the expectations of the RFP in 35 pages or less.

Notice of intent to submit a proposal is due May 4, 2023, with final proposal submissions due June 22, 2023 by 12:00pm. Interested proposers must attend a mandatory Virtual Proposer's Conference on April 27, 2023. RSVPs must be submitted by April 20.

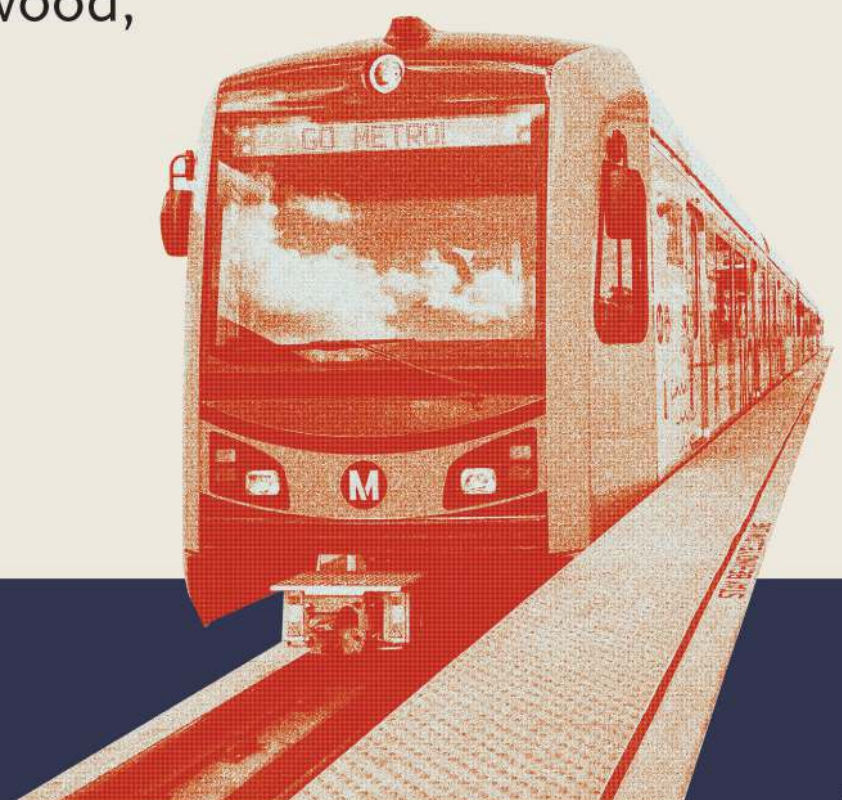
Additional information about the RFP can be found at ajcc.lacounty.gov.

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Learn more at metro.net/kline.



Metro

Councilwoman Hutt, Tabor Family and KJLH Host Spring Fest LA Event

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

To welcome this spring season, L.A. Councilwoman Heather Hutt, the Tabor family and KJLH Free Radio Station hosted the first annual Spring Fest LA - the ultimate event for health, wellness and family fun - at the Michelle and Barack Obama Rancho Cienega

“Our community can have a disinvestment when it comes to health, and today, I hope that everyone will stop by these booths, get some health screenings, take home any other resources you may need. Most of all, we are happy to be outside and share this event together,” shared the councilwoman.

This event was a beauti-

give back and collaborate that is the beauty of today.”

While the community could take care of their health needs, the kids had a number of fun activities to take part in; from face painting by Payasita Dulce to Traveling Tide Pools where they could interact with a number of aquatic animals to bounce houses where youth could enjoy



Councilwoman Heather Hutt with Spring Fest LA co-founder Krishna Tabor



Children enjoy Traveling Tide Pools.

Park in South Los Angeles on Saturday, April 8.

With attendance numbers in the hundreds, California weather did not disappoint while DJ AyJaye kept everyone on their feet! From health, wellness, and games to food, families enjoyed a wide range of activities from local vendors and health organizations.

Spring Fest LA featured free blood pressure checks from Cedars-Sinai, free HIV testing from AHF Health, as well as free Covid test kits for community members to take home. Hutt’s main goal was to bring the community together to give back, create a moment to focus on health and enrich the youth.



Face-painting from vendor Payasita Dulce.

ful intersection of health and fun, said a representative of the Tabor Family, who added, “This is a way for us to build our community,

themselves to viewing a performance from 13-year-old rap duo, the Imperial Twins, who took home the show.



Cedars-Sinai staff gave free blood pressure checks.



Councilwoman Hutt with a local girls volleyball team.

Explaining why she attended with her god-daughters and nieces, community member Vanetta Smith said, “We were at

the park for tee-ball and heard about this free event. I wanted to support the kids and they are having a ball!”

Follow Councilwoman Heather Hutt @cw_heather.hutt on Instagram for information on future events!



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Calif. Black Chamber of Commerce Helps to Expand Broadband Access

BY ANTONIO RAY HARVEY
California Black Media

The California Black Chamber of Commerce (CBCC) is joining hands with state government to help narrow the Golden State's Digital Divide for nearly two million houses without access to broadband.

In partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Department of Technology (CDT), the CBCC will help push the state's Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative – a \$3.25 billion effort to enhance internet connectivity – under the "Broadband Technology Small Business Initiative."

The initiative was created to provide a durable, open-access network that would bring high-speed broadband service to unserved and underserved communities, regardless of technology used, on equal economic and service terms.

"We are the lead agency working with Caltrans," said Jay King, the President and CEO of CBCC. "We're front of the line making sure small businesses are included, matchmaking is taking place, and that we meet the goal and the deadline of making sure that every Cali-

fornian has access to digital connections."

The initiative connects CBCC's statewide membership of 5, 500-plus small African American business firms and non-Black entities to the benefits of broadband technology, according to King.

The state also allows small businesses to bid as contractors for projects related to strengthening broadband connections to improve access to education, health services and employment opportunities throughout the state.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), in 2020, 10% of California residents reported not having a desktop, laptop, or other computing device at home.

In addition to a lack of functional units for computation, access was especially limited among low-income (23%), less-educated (16%), Black (15%), and Latino (15%) households, PPIC presented in its June 2022 fact sheet.

So far, California has invested \$6 billion through the legislation that created the Middle Mile Broadband Initiative, Senate Bill (SB) 156. The legislation, which Gov. Gavin Newsom signed in 2021, expands broadband

infrastructure, addresses affordability, and promotes digital literacy. California will receive approximately \$100 million more to



ANTONIO RAY HARVEY/CBM
Jay King, the President and the CEO of California Black Chamber of Commerce, says the non-profit is helping small businesses participate in the state's effort to close the digital divide and provide online access to underserved communities.

enhance its broadband infrastructure through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Middle-mile refers to the fiber optic infrastructure that makes internet connections possible by transmitting large amounts of data over long distances at high speeds through high-capacity cables. The complete design features a proposed system of 10,000 miles of infrastructure, covering the entire state.

Although federal dollars are involved in the project, King stated that state projects are "race neutral" to stay in compliance with Cal-



ANTONIO RAY HARVEY/CBM
Jay King, the President and the CEO of California Black Chamber of Commerce, says the non-profit is helping small businesses participate in the state's effort to close the digital divide and provide online access to underserved communities.

ifornia's Prop 209 law that prohibits "preferential treatment" based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin.

"We know the importance (of closing the gap) not just in the Black community but in all marginalized communities," King said. "The digital divide will only continue to hurt our country and state if we don't ensure that everybody has full access to the digital world."

CBCC's Director of Small Business Willard "Will" McClure said that the design and construction of the middle-mile network is monitored by the Middle-Mile Advisory Committee (MMAC). The MMAC monitors the development and construction.

According to McClure, the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF), an organization providing leadership in expanding broadband access statewide, offers "five strategies" to close the digital divide. These include Civic Leader Engagement, Venture Philanthropy Grantmaking, Public Policy Initiatives, Public Awareness and Education, and Strategic Partnerships.

CETF's network of more than 100 grantees have delivered digital literacy training to more than 800,000 residents and has assisted in providing internet connections to more than 250,000 low-income households in rural and remote areas, urban disadvantaged neighborhoods, and people with disabilities.

McClure said that the Middle-Mile project will be completely implemented by December 2026 but the work to close the gap really starts after the last fiber

optic is installed. All participants must be "logged on with confidence," he said.

"Once the access is available the problem is not over," McClure said. "There's confidence that comes with getting people to understand how to use it. Grandma doesn't know how to download ZOOM."

Last month, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel joined Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass to announce the campaign to increase enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program in Los Angeles at the Pio Pico-Koreatown Branch Library.

Qualifying households are eligible for a discount of up to \$30 a month for internet service and discounts on devices through the Affordable Connectivity Program. The households can also get a one-time discount of up to \$100 to buy a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from qualifying providers.

"For many households, the cost of groceries, gas and rent can eat up the monthly budget, putting internet access out of reach," Rosenworcel said. "We want to do more to get out the word about this powerful program and reach families that may not know about this benefit."

California Political News Briefs – Stories You Might Have Missed

BY TANU HENRY
California Black Media

California Legislative Black Caucus Chair Lori Wilson Is Receiving Medical Treatment for Cancer

On Friday, April 7, California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC) Chair Lori Wilson (D-Suisun) announced that she is

receiving treatment for Breast Cancer.

The lawmaker, who was elected last year, thanked supporters for all the love and support she has received and assured constituents that she will still be fighting for their interests.

"I remain steadfast in my dedication to serve the residents of the 11th Assem-



ANTONIO RAY HARVEY/CBM
CLBC Chair Assemblymember Lori Wilson in a committee hearing in June 2022.

bly District," Wilson said.

Assemblymember Akilah Weber to Run for State Senate

On April 6, Assemblymember Akilah Weber (D-La Mesa) announced she is entering the race to replace Senate President pro tempore Toni Atkins, who is termed out at the end of this year.

Weber, who is also a physician, represents the 79th Assembly District in the greater San Diego area.

"I have successfully fought to improve access to quality healthcare, strengthen our education system, protect our environment, and further economic prosperity," Weber said in a statement. "As State Senator for District 39, I will continue this fight."

Weber's announcement came roughly a week after County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher withdrew from the race citing his battle with alcohol abuse and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Fletcher is also facing allegations of sexual harassment and infidelity.

In 2021, Weber won a special election to replace her mother, Shirley N. Weber, in the Assembly after the elder Weber was appointed Secretary of State by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

California Leaders Condemn Expulsion of Black Lawmakers in Tennessee

The Republican Majority in the Tennessee House of Representatives took the unprecedented move last week to expel two Black Democratic lawmakers, former Rep. Justin Jones and former Rep. Justin Pearson, for protesting for gun control during session.

The decision, which was widely criticized – even by members of the GOP – was met with widespread condemnation across the country, including several prominent Black leaders in California.

The California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC) issued a statement.

"Our 12-member body of Black legislators representing Black Californians boldly stand with our Tennessee state legislative colleagues in the national fight to end the illegal use of guns and the devastating violence it brings onto our communi-



ANTONIO RAY HARVEY/CBM
Assemblywoman Dr. Akilah Weber speaks at an AB 2774 rally in front of the State Capitol in Sacramento before a hearing held on April 27, 2022.

ties and families," said CLBC Chair, Assemblymember Lori Wilson (D-Suisun).

CLBC Vice Chair, Sen. Steven Bradford (D-Inglewood) says he and his Black colleagues in the California State Legislature would take the same approach.

"We are in solidarity with the two courageous brothers exercising their first amendment right. We would have taken the same approach in representing the people's voices," Bradford added.

Dezie Woods-Jones, President and founding member of Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) said the expelled Tennessee lawmakers were exercising their constitutional rights and fulfilling their duties as elected officials.

"BWOPA-CA proudly stands in solidarity with Tennessee representatives Jones and Pearson and call for their immediate reinstatement," Woods Jones said.

California Releases Report on Gun Owner Tracking System

Last week, California Attorney General Rob Bonta released a program report on the state's Prohibited Persons System (APSS), the only resource of its kind in the United States created to track registered firearm owners whose rights to possess guns have been revoked by authorities.

Launched in 2006, the APSS database identifies gun owners who have fallen into prohibited status, including people convicted of felonies or violent misdemeanors and others under restraining orders for domestic violence or other offenses.

"I'm proud of the work our Special Agents do on behalf of the people of California," said Bonta. "These

brave agents are rarely in the spotlight, but they are working every day to prevent gun violence from ever happening by removing dangerous weapons from communities." According to the report, the California Department of Justice (DOJ) made significant progress over the course of 2022 identifying people who own guns illegally and recovering weapons in their possession.

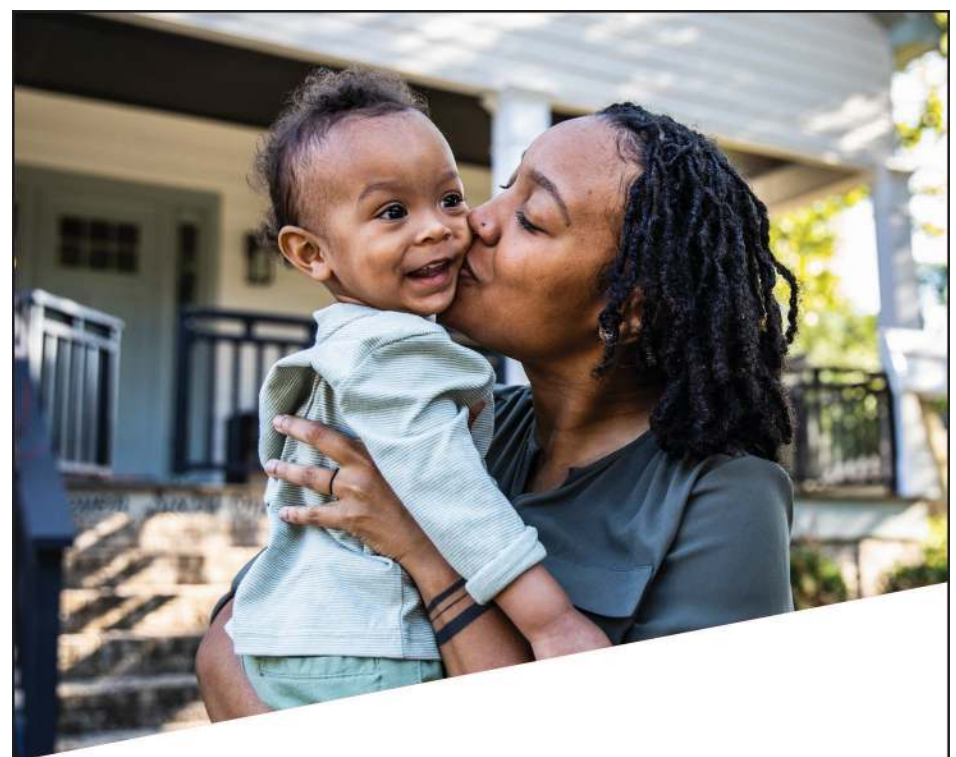
"DOJ recovered 1,437 firearms — including 712 handguns, 360 rifles, 194 shotguns, 80 assault weapons, 54 ghost guns, 43 receivers or frames, 3 short-barreled shotguns, and 1 machine gun," read a DOJ Press release. "Agents also seized 308 large-capacity magazines, 2,123 standard capacity magazines, and 281,299 rounds of ammunition through APSS enforcement actions. As of January 1, 2023, there were 3,347,221 known registered firearm owners in California of which 23,869 are prohibited from owning or possessing firearms, making up less than 1%."

California Democratic Party Convention Announces 2023 Theme

The California Democratic Party announced the theme for its 2023 convention, which will be held May 25 to May 28: "Don't Agonize, Organize."

During this year's conference, which will be held in Los Angeles, the California Democratic Party Black Caucus (CDPBC) will hold elections and U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (DCA-11) will be honored. Assemblymember Corey Jackson (D-Riverside) is currently chair of the CDPBC.

Register online at <https://cdpconvention.org/register>, and get a listing of events.



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As Nation Mourns, California Debates Concealed Firearm Laws

BY MAXIM ELRAMSISY
California Black Media

On March 28, one day after three children and three adults were shot at the Covenant School, a Christian elementary school in Nashville, Tenn., the California Senate Public Safety Committee heard arguments for and against Senate Bill (SB) 2, legislation proposing enhancements to California's existing concealed carry permit law.

"God bless the families of those little kids," said the bill's author, Senator Anthony Portantino (D-Burbank) at the hearing. "Gun violence inflicts a terrible toll on our communities. Last year, nearly 20,000 people were killed in gun related homicides in the United States. To put that in perspective, it's enough people to fill forty Boeing 747s, and sadly, the number keeps rising."

SB 2 would make 21 the required age to apply for a Concealed Carry Weapon (CCW), although existing state legislation restricts the sales of pistols to people under 21. A system of appeals would also be created for people initially denied the permit. The bill would also limit where people can carry firearms, creating locations called "sensitive sites" where guns would be prohibited. Property owners of sites where guns are off limits would have the authority to allow guns if they choose.

California's prior con-

cealed carry permit law, which required that applicants show reason for needing to carry a con-

individuals and out of certain sensitive places. With SB 2, California does just that. It provides objective,



Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna attends President Biden's speech addressing gun violence in Monterey Park, CA on March 14, 2023.

cealed firearm, was deemed unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court last year in the case of New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen.

In a 6-3 vote, the high court's conservative majority ruled that "may-issue" systems, like those used in New York, California and three other states using "arbitrary" evaluations of need, made by local authorities, are unconstitutional. States are, however, allowed to enforce "shall-issue" permitting, where applicants for concealed carry permits must satisfy certain objective criteria, such as passing a background check. "Bruen affirmed the ability of states to keep firearms out of the hands of dangerous

reasonable guidance that prevents CCW permits from being issued to dangerous individuals and provides a list of places where weapons may not be carried," said Portantino. "The presence of firearms in public increases the dangers of intentional or accidental gun violence—at the workplace, at the movies, or on the road. One study showed that states with permissive right-to-carry laws experience 29% more workplace homicides than states with more restrictive licensing requirements."

During the hearing, opposition came from handfuls of law enforcement groups, particularly from the southern part of the state, including the Los Angeles Police Officers

Association and the Orange County Sheriffs Association.

"Addressing Bruen in this way is unnecessarily complicated and overly burdensome," said California State Sheriffs' Association Legislative Director Cory Salzillo. "Given what we've seen in other states, it is likely to be challenged and probably overturned in whole or in part."

In the nation's most populous county, the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department (LASD) is responsible for taking applications and issuing CCWs. Though the Sheriff did not endorse the bill publicly, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors did, and in a written statement to California Black Media (CBM) the LASD appeared to tacitly support the bill.

"Recently, several of our California Government leaders have joined together to announce new gun legislation which would enhance gun safety laws in California. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has partnered with the Board of Supervisors on the added gun safety measures and how we can bring awareness to the communities we serve," the statement said.

Before the hearing, CBM asked Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna about the proposed bill.

"I believe we have to change the status quo when it comes to guns because there's way too much gun

violence," he said. "I don't want to take guns away from legal gun owners, but I always believe that there has to be a path to doing it right."

The threat of legal challenges is almost certain.

"Any law that we passed through the Legislature, someone can bring a challenge to. That's not a unique circumstance. This bill will probably be challenged," said Portantino. "But do we believe it's constitutional? Absolutely. We looked at the Bruen decision as a roadmap to create a constitutionally sound approach. The Supreme Court said you can't be arbitrary, so this bill is not arbitrary. It's creating concrete criteria of who should and shouldn't be eligible to get this responsibility of having a concealed carry permit, that's consistent with the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court said you can have prohibited places. This bill has prohib-

ited places that make sense."

The Bill was advanced through the committee after a 4-1 vote and will next be heard on April 10 by the Committee on Appropriations.

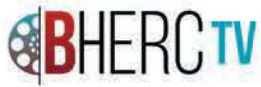
In 2022, California Gov. Gavin Newsom endorsed Senate Bill (SB) 918, also authored by Portantino with provisions similar to SB 2. That bill failed to pass in the Legislature.

In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill last week making the Sunshine State the 25th state to allow concealed carry with virtually no extra permitting or stipulations. Newsom, who spent time in Florida during the week, strongly criticized the action. "Don't be fooled by the GOP lies. Permit-less carry does not make you safer. States with open carry laws have higher gun violence rates," Newsom said on Twitter.

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APRIL 15, 2023, 11AM-2PM

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HONORING BLACK WOMEN LEGENDS



BRENDA MARSH-MITCHELL

Brenda-Marsh Mitchell served as the loyal confidant and special assistant to Danny J. Bakewell, Sr. for over 45 years. Working closely with Bakewell Sr., Brenda served as the President of Mothers in Action and as the President of Taste of Soul. Brenda Marsh-Mitchell was a dedicated servant of her community organizing protests, as well as self-help and community action programs like "Back to School", "Get out our Vote" and "Friends Serving Friends" on Skid Row.



JOHNNIE TILLMON

Known as an advocate for welfare rights after being mistreated while on welfare in 1963. Tillmon organized mothers and welfare recipients in the Nickerson Garden projects, within months ANC (Aid to Needy Children) Mothers Anonymous was founded. One of the first grassroots' Welfare Rights Organizations to become apart of the National Welfare Rights Organization. Tillmon served as the first chairman, then executive director until it's demise of funds in 1974.



MARY B. HENRY

Known as "Mother Henry" Henry served the Los Angeles Community in social educational, religious, political and health fields. Mary was the head of Avalon Carver for over 30 years. She also served as a member and president of the Compton Unified School District Board of Trustees and the Charles Drew University of Medicine and the center was named in her honor.



VAINO HASSAN SPENCER

In 1980, Hassan Spencer began her 20-year career as the Presiding Judge of the Division One California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District. She was the first Black woman to be appointed in a judgeship in California. In 1979, Hassan Spencer and presiding justice Joan Dempsey Klein founded the National Association of Women's Judges. She is known for her groundbreaking law work and advocacy for women in the courtroom.



LILLIAN MOBLEY

Known as the "Community Mother", Mobley worked tirelessly to bring equality, justice, and resources to the South Central and Watts neighborhoods of Los Angeles. After the 1965 Watts riots, Mobley was a key member of a driven group of women who pushed to build a major hospital in South Los Angeles as well as a medical school, the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.



This is a sponsor driven event. Interested Sponsors should contact Nicolew@lasentinel.net. Individual tickets for the "Power, Leadership and Influence of the Black Woman" event are available for \$500. **INDIVIDUALS SHOULD EMAIL WOMENSEVENT@LASENTINEL.NET TO PURCHASE TICKETS.** For more information go to www.lasentinel.net **CLICK THE POWER, LEADERSHIP & INFLUENCE ICON AT THE TOP OF THE WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE.**



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SoCalGas Models Clean Energy with First-of-its-Kind [H2] Innovation Experience

{continued from Pg. A-1}

At the same time, with the on-site hydrogen fuel cell, hydrogen can be converted into electricity to power the home.

[H2]IE's 2000-square-foot prefab home features indoor and outdoor fireplaces, a barbecue grill and standard household appliances available at major retailers, all of which can be powered using this blended fuel source that cuts consumer costs and lowers greenhouse gas emissions. From the flame on the stove burners to the level of heat generated by the fireplaces, the overall efficacy isn't at all diminished with hydrogen power.

An interactive "smart" table calculating potential savings associated with the use of blended fuel sources adorns one of the second-floor bedrooms of the house that has been purposed as a conference room.

In addition to modeling this green initiative for builders and developers, SoCalGas is planning outreach programs that will bring in school-age children to experience [H2]IE for themselves and fortify their education about sustainable and green practices. User-



The [H2] IE is centered around a state-of-the-art microgrid producing clean, renewable hydrogen made from solar electricity on-site. (COURTESY PHOTO)

friendly touchscreen kiosks with headphones will be an added feature to these tours.

Contreras explained that innovative projects like [H2]IE often require out-of-the-box thinking. From the beginning, there were challenges.

"We had labor shortages because people couldn't go to the factories and build things, and supply chain issues," he explained, emphasizing that the project begun in the early days of COVID-19. "In order to stay on track, we used an electrolyzer we had already. It's an older model;

we actually repurposed it from a previous project."

Even the building of the system itself modeled sustainability. Sometimes "out-of-the-box" meant going out of the country. The hydrogen fuel cell had to be sourced from the UK. The overall concept was inspired by a similar project launched by a company in Australia.

Worth it in the end, [H2] IE brings the state agency closer to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) Net Zero Emissions Scenario 2021-2050. The IEA theorizes that hydrogen and hydrogen-based fuels could avoid up to 60 gigatonnes

of CO2 emissions by mid-century, which is equivalent to 6% of total cumulative emissions reductions.

Contreras noted, "The greenhouse gas emissions that you're saving without having to impact your home as far as your appliances go is a big, key driver that we want consumers to understand. Second, the technology of producing the hydrogen is rarely available, and the long-term storage is huge because we can save that energy for many years and use it during our really critical times that we need it."

"Resiliency. You're not dependent on the grid. You have a blackout, rest assured, with this type of infrastructure and technology, at least you have your lights on, your fridge, you're not going to spoil all your food. You'll have your Internet still going."

[H2]IE has been recognized by the Los Angeles chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council for its sustainable innovation, and it received a "World-Changing Ideas in North America Award" from Fast Company.



"The [H2] Innovation Experience showcases how California can achieve two of its top policy priorities—energy reliability and decarbonization – at the same time," said SoCalGas CEO Scott Drury. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Heather Hutt Appointed to Represent District 10 on City Council



Heather Hutt responds to the cheers of the crowd after being appointed CD 10 councilwoman on April 11. (CORA J. FOSSETT/LA. SENTINEL)

{continued from Pg. A-1}

October 2023 is the earliest that a special election could

be held and the runoff, if necessary, in December, with the regular election already set for March 2024. Hutt had been District 10's temporary

councilwoman until March 30, when Ridley-Thomas was convicted, and the seat became officially vacant. Krekorian immediately appointed Hutt as caretaker with the intention of asking the City Council on April 11 to appoint her to complete the term of Ridley-Thomas. At Tuesday's meeting,

he said, "Heather Hutt has capably represented the district as the temporary appointee, and I am confident she will continue to do so as the permanent appointee."

"In a matter of months," he added, "the people of the district will have the opportunity

to decide whether they prefer to elect her or a different representative in the regularly scheduled election."

Hutt has announced her intention to run for a full term in the 2024 election.

City News Service contributed to this report.

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Dr. Elaine Batchlor Excels as CEO of MLK Community Healthcare

Dr. Batchlor will be one of the honorees at the Power, Leadership & Influence of the Black Woman Luncheon

{continued from Pg. A-1}

Bass and other prominent women including LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority CEO Stephanie N. Wiggins and veteran broadcaster Pat Prescott.

"I feel honored to be in the company of the other women that are being honored at the same time," remarked Dr. Batchlor. "I'm deeply flattered by it."

What has powered Dr. Elaine Batchlor's ascent? Perhaps it's the waterproof Skechers she dons daily down the hospital halls?

"I've never been the buttoned-down, formal type of person; I'm a little bit rebellious," she says.

Maybe the years spent retreating to the library for hours of voracious reading as an outcast youngster in her hometown of Maryland?

"I became comfortable with being different. And thinking differently," she says.

Could it be the cache of poetry one of her beloved twin sons (a pre-med chip off the old block, incidentally) composed and

gifted her one Christmas? "He's a good kid, exactly the kind of person you would want to be a doctor, really disciplined and meticulous," she explains.

Whatever the fuel, Dr. Batchlor has been the motor that has transformed, not only a facility, but innumerable lives through an innovative health system that includes a state-of-the-art private safety net hospital, the MLK Community Medical Group, community and population health programs, and a fundraising foundation.

"My initial vision of what a doctor was actually shaped by my exposures before I even went to medical school," said Batchlor. "I could actually trace it back to a book I read about St. Luke, the way that a career in medicine was portrayed...it had three parts: one part scientific discovery; one part healing individuals; and one part healing communities and addressing social and political drivers of health. I always had this as a picture in my mind of what my career would encompass.



Dr. Elaine Batchlor (FILE PHOTO)

I really wanted to have a larger impact at a system level."

With MLK Community Healthcare, she's done just that. The hospital was previously dubbed "Killer King" because of its disturbing track record of seemingly avoidable medical tragedies some years back. Today, is it they are a Medicare five-star rated hospital, a private safety net hospital that serves a very low-income community with high-quality care.

MLK Community Healthcare is classified as what the industry calls "M7," which means they are at the highest level of use of health information technology in a hospital. Six-and-one-half percent of hospitals in the United States are at that level.

"I trained at a county hospital, and I saw firsthand the human cost of a system that was not optimal," said Batchlor. "It motivated me to want to do work on the system and not just on the individuals.

A graduate of Harvard, UCLA and Case Western Reserve Medical School, Dr. Batchlor began her medical career as a Rheumatologist.

"I loved the science behind rheumatology," she recalled. "It's an extremely complex, elegant biological system, so I was really intellectually fascinated by that. The patients are struggling with pain and disability from having musculoskeletal disease, and as a rheumatologist, you are able to significantly

improve their condition."

The drive to help people has been a theme, and a secret to fulfillment as well as success for Batchlor, who served as chief medical officer of L.A. Care Health Plan, the nation's largest public health plan providing care for a safety net population, prior to joining MLK.

Among Batchlor's recent accomplishments at the hospital is the establishment of a cardiac catheterization lab where tests can be performed to diagnose and treat cardiovascular disease.

MLK also opened a diabetic wound center last year, the first ever in South L.A. with two hyperbaric oxygen chambers and a program that prevents diabetics from having their limbs amputated.

Batchlor's focus remains sharply on expansion and effectiveness. "We want to expand the types of services that we are able to provide our community over time, and we want the capabilities of our hospital and health system to match the needs of the community," she said.

Pat Prescott to Host Bakewell Media's Salute to Black Women Leaders

{continued from Pg. A-1}

dedicated their lives towards making life better for Black people, both here, in Los Angeles, and throughout this nation." Each honoree is a "driving force," using their power, leadership, and professional skills for the "betterment of our people."

Prescott recognizes the specialness of the upcoming celebration: "Events like these are special for two reasons. First, they give well-deserved acknowledgment of the considerable contributions these women have made to our community. They also spotlight individuals who are excellent role models for young girls who look like them."

Pat Harvey, an anchor with CBS 2 and National Black Journalist Hall of Fame inductee, will moderate the conversation with distinguished honoree, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. Bass will share the spotlight with fellow honorees Dr. Elaine Batchlor, CEO of Martin Luther King Jr., Community Healthcare; Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, president of Ward Economic Development Corporation; Sandra Evers-Manly, president of the Black Hollywood Education and Resource Corporation (BHERC); and Stephanie N. Wiggins, CEO of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

The event will also celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Sentinel. Many print newspapers have come and gone; however, the Sentinel remains a trusted media resource, continuing the vision of current owner Danny J. Bakewell Sr. Before the advent of social platforms, Bakewell envisioned a media outlet that would always use its voice to cover stories that uplift and inform the Black community. The Sentinel, he intended, would showcase Black excellence and spotlight issues that other news outlets might not cover, issues relevant and



Pat Prescott (COURTESY PHOTO)

necessary to the culture.

It is a mission that preeminent journalist Pat Prescott understands.

"To survive and thrive for 90 years is an astonishing accomplishment. The Sentinel is the heartbeat of Black L.A., keeping our community informed, entertained, and inspired. Today, 90 years since its founding, it is more essential to our community's survival than ever. The Bakewell family and all the others who have contributed to the paper's success have much to be proud of," she said.

Prescott, the former morning host of KTWV-FM 94.7 "The Wave," is one of those instrumental pieces of the fabric of the Los Angeles community. Prescott's captivating voice

and warm personality endeared her to thousands that listened to her show on their morning drive. Prescott spent over 20 years at "The Wave" and proudly said she loved talking for a living.

A native of Hampton, Virginia, Prescott graduated from Northwestern University and began her professional career as a schoolteacher. Her path would take her to New Orleans, where she started her radio career at WYLD-FM and then WNOE, the legendary rock station. Soon the bright lights of New York would call, and Prescott landed at the former heritage jazz station WRVR. Prescott's voice would also grace the airways at WBLS, WLIB, The National Black News

Network, and CD 101.9.

In 2001, jazz saxophonist Dave Koz persuaded her to move to the City of Angels, and soon, Angelenos were in love with Prescott, and the rest is HERtory. After

retiring from "The Wave,"

Prescott returned to the New York airwaves as host of "My Favorite Things" on Newark Public Radio "Jazz 88" WBGO.

"To be asked to host this luncheon is especially

meaningful since I recently retired. It's an honor to contribute, and since I know all these women very well and have a great deal of respect for them, it feels even more special," Prescott said.

"I love that Inglewood is the future."

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A Q&A with a Wells Fargo Home Lending executive who Champions Homeownership, **Ewunike N. Brady**, Head of Home Lending African American Segment.



Women's History Month is an outstanding opportunity to celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of women leaders who are helping shape the future of housing. These extraordinary women stand ready to drive changes that will push the business forward and provide homeownership opportunities for more customers, particularly those in diverse communities. One notable Wells Fargo Home Lending executive, Ewunike N. Brady, is a perfect example to be highlighted this year.

Brady has 15 years of mortgage experience, with a focus on consulting with correspondent clients to increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income and multi-cultural homeowners. Through her experiences, she has built a strong understanding of the industry and how to help grow this segment of the business. She is also a certified Freddie Mac CreditSmart® Trainer and has been heavily involved in the mortgage industry, including time as a Maryland Mortgage Bankers and Brokers Association Board Member, Marketing Chair, and Future Leaders Co-chair. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

The following is a profile interview that was conducted with Ewunike N. Brady:



Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

My favorite part of the job is being part of the change. I have two quotes on my wall in my office as a reminder that I have critical work to do: "Be the change you wish to see" and "Create the things you wish existed." African American Homeownership rates are at our Nation's lowest since the 1968 Fair Housing Act was established. As an industry, we are at a place and a time where the work that we are doing is laying the foundation for the next era in the mortgage and finance industry, where equitable access to housing is a priority. Being able to have insight and contribute to increasing homeownership rates in the African-American community is an honor, and it is a privilege for me to do this work.

What are the values and behaviors that affect you as a professional?

My values are being authentic and connecting with people in a transparent way. I get to know the people I work with and accomplish incredible results for our community. Having personal connections makes the work take on a persona, it allows you to connect deeper and have a greater sense of accountability.

What does Women's History Month mean to you?

It is a good time to reflect and really think about the impacts of the work that women in all walks of life, in all industries are doing to make progress. There is a lot of work that still needs to be accomplished together and we need to keep celebrating these wins alongside continuing with highlighting opportunities to engage even further. Women's History Month is an opportunity to amplify the conversation around equity, celebrate achievements, and keep moving the needle forward.

Why is diversity and inclusion in the work place important for you?

There is no one size fits all for any of the work that we do in diversity, equity and inclusion, with equity being a key component in this conversation. When you intentionally insert DE&I work into the culture of an organization, it comes through in the products and the services that you produce, it comes through in the way that you message, it becomes part of the core values in the workplace. It is important that we support DE&I work - not just in soundbites but in our day-to-day actions.

Share with us your words of wisdom/advice for women of color in the workplace?

My advice would be to learn healthy habits early and exercise them often. At the forefront, I highly recommend building a circle of influence of dynamic individuals that can pour into your growth, learnings, and opportunities. Lean into help. We all need someone to assist us along our journey. Learn to ask for help and graciously accept it.

Who is your hero?

At different phases of my life, I would have answered this question differently. I think of heroes as people who motivate you and inspire you. Unequivocally, my daughter is my hero. In her mighty five years of life, there is such a joy and innocence that you see through a child's perspective. She empowers me to be my best self. She is my motivation behind the work I lead in advancing homeownership. I want her experiences with purchasing a home to be an enhanced experience, and not one reminiscent of the experiences and inequities wrought in her parents' or grandparents' experiences.

How do you advance/propel fellow women colleagues?

By actively and authentically, supporting the work that fellow women colleagues are doing. I often find that having real heart-to-heart non-work related conversations letting other women know that you understand their story and you appreciate their efforts goes along way. I get to know my colleagues on a personal level, and not just in a working relationship. We all have things that we are dealing with, dreams, aspirations, and challenges. Finding a common ground that we can relate to one another goes much further and fosters positive relationships where you can then begin to do difficult work together. It's also important that you make space to be human, to be empathetic and then also to celebrate each other's victories.

How do you ensure your organization and its activities are aligned with your core values?

Occupy those roles in which you can be that decision maker and if you are not able to hold that leader title then you need to be a leader in how you influence the work that you manage. You align with your core values by leading by example. Your actions create a visual representation of those core values - they show up in how you conduct yourselves in meetings, how you present your work, the ways that you engage partners and partnerships, this even extends to how you conduct yourself outside of the walls of your office. Your core values are anchored in what is authentically you.



Five tax tips for older adults

By KATE ASHFORD
NerdWallet

More than half of older taxpayers (57%) are worried they'll have to pay more taxes this year because of the 5.9% Social Security cost-of-living adjustment in 2022, according to a January survey by The Senior Citizens League, a nonpartisan seniors group.

Taxes for the over-65 set can feel more complicated for a variety of reasons: There are often multiple streams of income, some retirees still work part time, and people may be managing required minimum distributions from retirement accounts.

"It can happen that people have more income in their later life than they did when they were working," says Barbara O'Neill, a certified financial planner in Ocala, Florida, and the author of "Flipping a Switch: Your Guide to Happiness and Financial Security in Later Life."

For older adults, here are some items to keep in mind this tax season:

1. MEDICARE THRESHOLDS MATTER

Your income can affect your Medicare Part B and Part D premiums in the future because of the income-related monthly adjustment

amount, or IRMAA. Medicare premiums are based on your tax return from two years prior, and you may have to pay more if your income exceeds certain thresholds.

These IRMAA surcharges can be difficult to manage "because they operate as a cliff, not a phase-in," says Edward Jastrem, a certified financial planner in Westwood, Massachusetts. "For example, if you are \$1 over an income tier, you are subject to the full surcharge."

In 2023, people filing individually with a modified adjusted gross income of more than \$97,000 in 2021 - or jointly with more than \$194,000 - will pay higher monthly amounts for Medicare. "Tax bracket management becomes crucial in later life," O'Neill says.

2. REQUIRED DISTRIBUTIONS CAN GO TO CHARITY

At age 73, you are required by the IRS to start taking required minimum distributions from tax-deferred retirement accounts. But once you hit age 70 1/2, you can have some or all of your required minimum distributions sent directly to a charity of your choice. This move will still count as a required mini-

mum distribution, but the amount isn't added to your taxable income. "If you take a regular RMD from your IRA, it gets added to your adjusted gross income for tax purposes," says Ian Weinberg, a certified financial planner in Woodbury, New York. "It usually throws you into a higher bracket."

3. SIDE BUSINESSES CHANGE THE TAX AP-

PROACH About 1 in 4 adults 50 and older say they're doing gig work or freelancing, according to a January survey from AARP.

If you're doing gig work, that counts as business income - which means you can deduct business expenses. This includes health insurance premiums if you're paying for your own insurance. "Self-employed older adults on Medicare can deduct Medicare premiums for themselves and their spouses against business income," O'Neill says.

Other deductible ex-

penses may include business supplies, home office costs and advertising expenses, which may include costs to run a website.

4. SOCIAL SECURITY MAY BE TAXABLE

Many people don't realize that Social Security benefits are taxable if your income meets certain thresholds. "That takes people by surprise," says Nadine Burns, a certified financial planner in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The taxable portion of your Social Security benefits is based on your combined income, which is the

total of your adjusted gross income, nontaxable interest and half of your Social Security benefits. If you're filing taxes as an individual and your combined income is over \$25,000 - or over \$32,000 if you're filing a joint return - you may pay income tax on up to 50% to 85% of your benefits.

5. STATE TAX BREAKS MAY BE AVAILABLE

Your state may offer tax deductions or credits for retirees, so do some research. In South Carolina, for instance, all military retirement pay and Social Security income is exempt from state taxes, says Stephen Maggard, a certified financial planner in Columbia, South Carolina. Plus, he says, there's a separate deduction for those over age 65.

In Ohio, retirees may be eligible for credits based on retirement income or their age - there's a senior citizen credit for taxpayers who were 65 or older during the tax year. Colorado offers an income tax credit of up to \$1,000 to residents 65 and up if they meet income requirements. Check with your state tax department to see what's possible.



More than half of older taxpayers are worried they'll have to pay more taxes this year because of the 5.9% Social Security cost-of-living adjustment in 2022. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Fenty Beauty - Two New Launches

By MAGRIRA
Contributing Writer

"Hella Thicc's formula gives my lashes that buildable, voluptuous volume with every swipe, and the brush is so precise that you can get into every little lash to create different looks. This formula was made to make any and every lash Thicc!" - Rihanna

I rarely brag about a mascara. To be frank, most of them are about the same

landmarks, with custom laser and velocity projections, which included Rihanna's eyes and hella thicc lashes that lit up the Brooklyn Bridge, Chrysler Building, The New York Public Library, Washington Square Park, Madison Square Garden, Atomic Clock Tower, Brooklyn Museum, and many more.

Hella Thicc Volumizing Mascara launched on March 28. And why should you care? Well, I

won't budge, transfer or fade, and is available in Rihanna's go-to black shade, 'Cuz I'm Black, to give lashes the ultimate matte black finish for ultimate drama.

Now to the second product launch, which is the Fenty Icon Lipsticks, which was designed to become a part of the Fenty Icon family. Their newest Velvet Liquid Lipstick follows in that tradition.

This is a matte liquid lipstick with an intense pigment. Now - a bit of warning - this does dry fast and can be a little messy. I would suggest using a lip pencil and lip brush to keep it neat.

This is a luxuriously creamy, whipped formula and rich velvet matte color that lasts, which is why the warning that it's a bit messy, but it will keep the fine lines

and dry lips at bay. There are five universal shades and features sleek, iconic packaging with a holographic logo on the cap and a translucent logo on the tube, so that you can see the true color of the shade from the start.

This is full coverage with a "precise doe-foot applicator" that can make a mess if you are not careful, so be careful because this rich full coverage lasts.



Fenty Beauty's Hella Thicc Volumizing Mascara (COURTESY PHOTO)

which is hit or miss; mostly - miss.

That was before the friendly team members from BOLD PR sent over Fenty Beauty's newest launch - the Hella Thicc Volumizing Mascara.

To bring awareness to the transformative product, the creative minds behind the iconic brand transformed the city skyline, along with some other

Simon Burris *Africana Diaspora Black History Month II Crossword

www.simonburris700.com

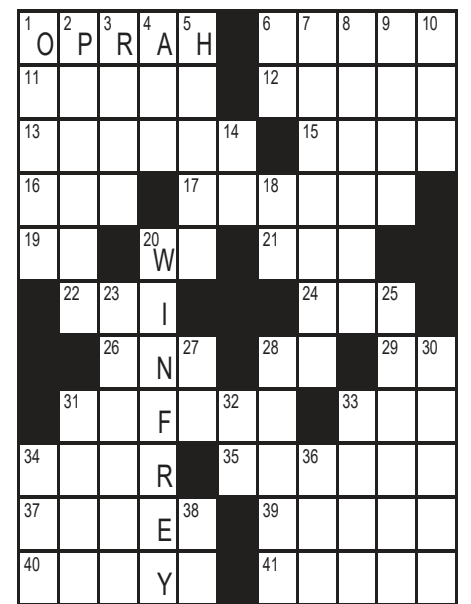
***"All About Oprah"

Across

- **Famed philanthropist Oprah
- **Oprah in a film
- ___ Park, California
- **Oprah's TV events
- **Her Sweater type, perhaps
- Pat ___ (clinic visitor)
- **Oprah's state of birth (___ sissippi)
- Concise summary
- * __ sop; ancient Black fable teller
- Walkover, briefly
- ** Month of birth (abbr.)
- Repetitive strain injury, briefly
- Golden Gate Bridge (abbr.)
- Complete
- Therefore
- "A harsh word stirs ___ anger" (Proverb 15:1)
- "Is the water ___ drink?" (2 wds.)
- Absorbed, as a cost
- Initials for territory
- She co-starred in film "The Color ___"
- "How ___ are your words..." (Psalm 119:103)
- A judge, often
- Remove color from
- Weed whackers

Down

- **President ___ awarded Oprah the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2013)
- Weaker
- Registers (abbr.)
- "I'll take that as ___" (2 wds.)
- **Her production company
- ___ night turns to day



- **Locale of Ms. Winfrey's studios (city)
- Angling in, as a nail
- **Anagram for her companies
- **Beyonce, for one: (supe ___ ar)
- Pine Bluff, ___
- **"At Last" singer James' monogram
- ** Entrepreneur Winfrey
- Charred
- **Oprah starred in 2013 film "The ___"
- *Bandleader Ellington's initials
- **Ms. Winfrey established an academy for girls in ___ Africa (2007)
- Jury members
- Tailor-made
- **Actor/filmmaker Perry's monogram
- Che ___ (inferior product)
- Oprah's alma mater: Tenn. State Univ.
- Bow and a ___ w
- Symbol for tellurian

(See ANSWERS A-6)

Anita Drummond-Sepolen Named Chief Appraiser

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang has promoted longtime Palmdale resident Anita Drummond-Sepolen to the executive position of chief appraiser over the region known as the North District, which stretches from Sylmar to Lancaster. "Mrs. Drummond-Sepolen is a highly motivated executive having had an extensive, successful career before joining our office," said Prang. "Since joining our office, her skill-set has been exemplary and she's now going to be responsible for operations at our Sylmar and Lancaster offices."

Drummond-Sepolen worked in the private sector for a major corporation and also operated a successful business before beginning her career at the Assessor's office in 2007 as an appraiser trainee. She is a subject-matter expert in both residential and commercial-industrial appraisal. Previously, she was assigned to the Assessor's Major Real Property Division, Appeals Unit as an assessor's representative and worked in the Ownership Services Division. "This is an exciting time in the Assessor's Office," said Drummond-Sepolen. "I am honored to be a member of the executive



Anita Drummond-Sepolen (COURTESY PHOTO)

team under the guidance of Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang." Drummond-Sepolen and her husband, Darrell Sepolen, have lived in the Antelope Valley for 29 years and are active members of the community. Her daughter is a graduate of Brown University in Rhode Island and her son is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. One of her favorite quotes is from Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the late associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, "Fight for the thing that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

Children's Bureau Hosts Online Orientation to Become a Foster or Foster-Adopt Parent

SENTINEL NEWS SERVICE

Children's Bureau is one of the largest private, non-profit adoption agencies in California and one of the few that is nationally accredited by the Child Welfare League of America. In Los Angeles County alone, the foster care population exceeds 33,000 children with 200 of those foster children waiting for an adoptive family. If you or someone you know may be interested in learning more about foster care and adoption, join us on April 20, from 4 p.m to 5 p.m., for an online virtual

orientation. For questions and/or to get started, call 800-730-3933, email Rfrecruitment@all4kids.org or visit <https://www.all4kids.org/foster-care-and-adoption-inquiry-form/> to complete a quick inquiry form. A link to the meeting will be emailed to you. Children's Bureau partners with over 200 foster-adoptive families annually to help at-risk youth by giving them a home that is nearby and inclusive to their foster siblings. Lisa and Michael began their foster-adoptive journey by providing a stable home to a sibling set

of three - two girls and a boy. They worked to keep the family together and have experienced a bond like no other. "If adoption is in your future, there is no need to look any further than our surrounding county. So many local children need a family. If you are wanting to 'make a difference' with your life, consider adopting from foster care. You could be saving generations," said Lisa. In the 1940's, Children's Bureau opened adoption services and found homes for refugee children orphans from World War

II. The agency continues to meet the needs by offering a wide array of programs in areas related to adoption such as foster care, prevention, and mental health. Children's Bureau has multiple locations operating throughout Southern California. "Right now, children who have experienced trauma and have been separated from their birth family need our help," said Leslie Oropeza, Children's Bureau director of Foster Care and Adoption. "We are looking for families who can open their homes and hearts to these

children. Families who have extra space and the willingness to keep them together. Statistics show siblings kept together in foster care and adoption do better later in life. They heal quicker from their trauma, have better attachments, and develop healthy self-images," she added. Children's Bureau welcomes all individuals regardless of race, age, religion, disability, marital status, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression to become a resource for children. Qualifying families receive training

and support throughout their journey. Foster Care and Adoption Programs are available in Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Ventura counties. For information about Children's Bureau and the other critical services the agency provides, visit www.all4kids.org. To stay connected with Family Foster Care and Adoption services, visit www.all4kids.org/foster.

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REV. ALVIN TUNSTILL, JR. ~ PASTOR

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B-3

Whitlock Returns to L.A. to Preach at Ward AME

By CORA JACKSON-FOSSETT
Religion Editor

The Rev. Dr. Mark E. Whitlock, Jr. returns to Los Angeles on Sunday, April 16, to preach at the 10 a.m. worship service at Ward AME Church, located at 1177 West 25th St. in L.A.

Whitlock, who accepted the invitation from Ward's new pastor, the Rev. Dr. Barry Settle, told the L.A. Sentinel that he's looking forward to reconnecting with west coast friends during his visit and sharing a sermon entitled, "Do You Remember?"

While Whitlock has served the past four years as pastor of Reid Temple in Glenn Dale, Maryland - one of the largest churches in the AME denomination - few people can forget the huge impact he made during his long career in Southern California.

For 20 years, he was the spiritual leader of Christ Our Redeemer AME Church in Irvine where he established multiple ministries and outreach ser-

vices, collaborated across ecumenical lines, and was an outspoken advocate of social justice and human rights. Also, he served as executive director of the USC Cecil Murray Center for Community Engagement and as director of Community Initiatives at the USC's Center for Religion and Civic Culture.

Considering the breath of his experience, most people assumed that he could easily helm Reid Temple, a megachurch with a membership exceeding 18,000. However, Whitlock said the transition to the east coast required significant adjustments that elevated his relationship with God.

Recalling his early days at Reid Temple, he said, "I was ministering to people who did not know me and didn't have any idea of my background or the things I accomplished in Los Angeles. Also, I followed a 'Cecil Murray-type' - Dr. Lee Washington, who was extremely gifted."

Whitlock was well-

aware of 'Cecil Murray-types' since the Rev. Dr. Murray is his father in the ministry and Whitlock worked closely with Murray for many years. A legendary theologian, Murray is heralded for his 27 years as pastor of the historic First AME Church of Los Angeles where he led thousands to Christ, implemented scores of outreach ministries, built affordable housing and guided Angelinos through the pain of the 1992 civil unrest.

Despite his expansive background, Whitlock encountered different types of challenges at his new church. Reid Temple operates 80+ ministries, an elementary school, a private college, a 266-unit apartment building and an edifice in Laurel, Maryland. The sanctuary on the main campus spans 140,000 square-feet.

"We have thousands and thousands of people. We have members that are

government employees working at the White House, Congress and the Senate. We also have many blue-collar and a senior population of over 1,000," Whitlock said.

"Our responsibility is to touch every person, so I

shut down every-

thing. "The pandemic closed the church, but it never closed ministry. It never

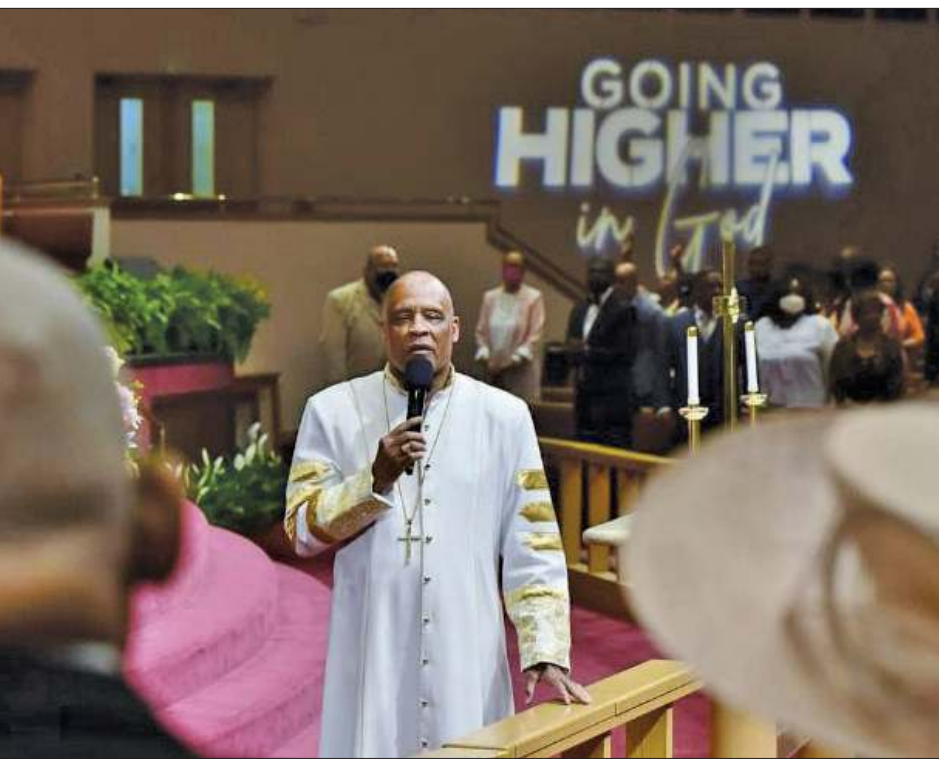
That move resulted in more than 13,000 online members that continued to tune in even after in-person worship resumed. Also, Reid Temple purchased 200 laptop computers so senior members could access online worship and the local school district donated 500 more, enabling the church to distribute 700 computers. In addition, the church operated a clinic where more than 35,000 people of all ethnicities received COVID-19 vaccinations.

God continues to bestow blessings upon Whitlock's ministry at Reid Temple, but he is not relaxing or taking anything for granted. In fact, he is committed to keep learning and adapting to meet the needs of the people of God, especially in three areas that he considers vitally important.

"The church must focus on social justice, spiritual development and economic prosperity for our community. As we move towards the presidential election [in 2024], we are duty bound to educate our members about voter education and challenge voter suppression," he said.

"We must develop jobs, support Black-owned businesses and teach the Word - in season and out of season," added Whitlock.

"We must be reminded that greater is He that is within me than he that is in the world."



Pastor Whitlock preaches at Reid Temple AME Church.



Pastor Mark E. Whitlock, Jr.

COURTESY PHOTO

had to really learn to minister on a different level to serve God's people," he noted. And then, seven months after he and his wife, the Rev. Dr. Mia Shegog Whitlock, arrived, the COVID-19 pandemic

mutated the message," insisted Whitlock, who explained, "God gave me a vision to have an online worship service everyday that airs on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and all platforms."

mutated the message," insisted Whitlock, who explained, "God gave me a vision to have an online worship service everyday that airs on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and all platforms."

Bailey Teaches, 'Trusting God is the Currency of the Kingdom'

By JANICE HAYES KYSER
Contributing Writer

With her real, riveting, and refreshing style Minister Mignonette Bailey energized and encouraged those gathered at Crenshaw Christian Center (CCC) on Sunday, April 2, to make an investment in God's economy.

The Los Angeles native who was born, baptized, and born again at CCC, spoke about God's economic system where the supply is unlimited. She challenged those gathered to trust God and strengthen their position in the spiritual stock market.

"Let's not get comfortable in the world system," said the dynamic daughter



COURTESY PHOTO

Minister Mignonette Bailey illustrates faith-filled action with a plant and its required care.

of the church. "Can we stretch our faith a little further," she asked those in attendance.

"The word of God says He is bringing forth water in the desert," said Minister Bailey. "It doesn't have to be logical; it doesn't have to add up. The economy of heaven is higher than this economy we live in," she said.

Minister Bailey brought home a heart-felt message punctuated by tears and applause. With her self-effacing demeanor and call and response style, she delivered a bible-based message that evoked shouts of praise and support for both the message and the messenger.

"This ministry birthed me, raised me and trained me," she said dabbing the tears streaming from her eyes, then shouting out her love for the late Apostle Price, the Price family, staff and



Minister Mignonette Bailey

COURTESY PHOTO

members of the church she grew up in.

"The way we pledge

our allegiance to God is that every time we give, we say 'God, I trust you,'" she continued, urging those listening to the service online and in the sanctuary to repeat her words.

"Through dry seasons, through rainy seasons you have to trust God. God knows how to get you what you need," she told churchgoers.

In her love-filled lesson on the economics of the Kingdom of God, Minister Bailey broke it down for believers.

"A supply zone in the stock market is a place where investors are waiting to take profit," she explained. "If the law of supply in the Kingdom of God is where we give and trust God, then the supply zone is also where we can tap into the fruit of our giving," she said.

"The only people who can take advantage of this zone are those who are in a po-

sition...those who have invested in that stock," she elaborated. "Are we building up our heavenly accounts?" she challenged the congregation. "For some of you, it is a skill you need to sharpen...the Lord is like 'go back and take a class,'" she laughed.

"You are going to have to do something with what God has already given you," the vivacious minister continued. "You are going to have to take this plant," she said holding up a small potted plant, "and feed, fertilize, and keep the bugs off of it."

Making an investment in God's economy requires work, faith and trust, Minister Bailey emphasized in her characteristic candid and caring manner.

"God will supply our needs not according to the American dollar, the stock market, but according to

His economy, His riches, His glory, by Christ Jesus," she said. "We tap into His supply by participating in the law of sowing and reaping. God is a giver."

"You wouldn't think of not paying your utility bill even though they will shut off your lights just like that. No loyalty. No remorse," she said. "But, when it comes to giving, we are like Lord, let's negotiate," she continued. "The question is when are you going to pass the test," she asked.

"When are you going to get to the place where God is your only supply?" said Minister Bailey. "I'm not telling you to quit your job or be reckless and foolish. What I am saying is to start trusting God."

View the message via faithdome.org or on the *Ever Increasing Faith* Ministry YouTube channel.



COURTESY PHOTO

Mignonette, Kingston, Karim and Christian Bailey.

The Critical Testing Ground of Tennessee: Resisting Racial Protocol and Plantation Politics

Once again, the country is compelled to come into consciousness of itself, this time on the critical testing ground of Tennessee where lessons, if taken seriously, can aid in overcoming the crisis in American society that virtually everyone concedes.

Clearly, it is a compelled consciousness of itself far from heaven and Fox News. Indeed, it is in glaring contradiction to U.S. society's self-medicating notions and illusion-inducing claims of "a more perfect union," "a city on a hill," and a real democracy defined by a "government of the people, by the people and for the people."

The reality U.S. society now faces in Tennessee is not only the repercussions from Republican racist expulsion of the two young Black Tennessee House Representatives, Justin Jones and Justin Pearson and giving a reprieve to their White ally, Rep. Gloria Johnson. It must also face and find a way to deal with the perversion of democracy and the poverty of moral principles and practice this crude performance reveals, exposed again to the world.

Indeed, the country, represented in Tennessee, is called into account for its "stop wokeness acts," not only in Florida, but also around the country. And here, it is important to note that these "stop wokeness acts" are not only directed against Black Studies and Black people and other similar studies and peoples of color. It is also against awareness and wokeness of White people themselves, especially young Whites, particularly against facing and correcting the terrible things done and continuing to be done against us and

others different and vulnerable in this country and in the world and to the earth and the world itself.

It is this unrepentant and corrupt mentality that is also committed to banning and burning books, outlawing learning, frightening and firing teachers, pretending a moral concern and intellectual competence it does not have and claiming a superiority its inferior conceptions and expressions of humanity clearly contradict.

And as we see in Tennessee and have seen elsewhere, such a mentality is against Black people, especially two young Black men, having the audacity to be the moral and social vanguard in matters of vital importance, speaking truth to the people and to power, and speaking, organizing, demonstrating and acting in the name and interest of all the people. Certainly, as seen by their retaliatory expulsion of Reps. Pearson and Jones, these guardians of a bygone era resent and retaliate against Black people who even dare to demand action to save the lives of children, even their own, and to protect people from the scourge and rage of gun violence.

And they demonstrate a special resentment and rage against these young Black men who have the audacity to demonstrate more humanity, intellectual insight and moral agency than the self-defined chosen and elect with its self-proclaimed manifest destiny and duty to conquer, convert, exploit and co-opt the world.

Tennessee's rulers, like the compatriots in other parts of the country, are committed to a historical and ongoing racial protocol and plantation politics



DR. MAULANA KARENGA

that resists reason, dismisses compelling moral concerns and is committed to dominance at all costs. It is a system of racist rules, requirements and practices for Black people, especially, and other peoples of color to follow in relation to White people under the pain and penalty of repression, injury and death.

Thus, the White and Republican dominated Tennessee legislature found it "disruptive and dishonoring" of their business as usual for Reps. Pearson and Rep. Jones to join their constituents, even in recess, in demanding gun reform after a mass shooter killed three children and three adults in Nashville and in light of

the continuing mass shootings and killings across the country using military grade guns.

More than the respect for the living or the dead, racial protocol demanded punishment for the two young Black men who dared to not be silenced. Indeed, after their mics were repeatedly cut off during the week, they improvised and brought a bullhorn to speak to the issue and to give voices to the people present and absent for whom the right to security of person and freedom from the terror of gun violence is a pressing and priority issue.

Clearly, it is good to see Black people and especially two young Black men at the forefront in the struggle for gun law reform and in defense of democracy. But, there are real challenges remaining going forward including: sustaining the current fervor, commitment and courage; remaining involved and active after the media tires and moves on; and avoiding collapsing racial justice and social justice instead of linking them in their distinctiveness. And we must resist the criminalization of dissent and defend democracy without

focusing on it as an abstract ideal principle rather than an inclusive practice that privileges and empowers all people, not just one people.

Also, critical and essential to this moment of rightful exposure, righteous anger, and the clarion and compelling call for action is the move from plantation politics born with the racial protocol in both its Southern and Northern forms. Haji Malcolm taught that "What (Black people) experience in this country is one huge plantation system" and the defining difference is not its geography but its various forms and functioning.

Indeed, it is a context which cultivates and compels an unhealthy dependence rather than interdependence of persons and people, a deference to Whites rather than a continuing demand and struggle for equal mutual respect and shared status, shared wealth and shared power even among allies. This is the meaning of our contention that our oppressor cannot be our teacher and our allies cannot be our tutor.

We must speak our own special cultural truth and make our own unique con-

tribution with others in how this country is reconceived and reconstructed. And to move beyond this moment and emerging movement, we must place it within the context of the overall struggle to radically reconceive and reconstruct U.S. society structurally.

This means practicing a freedom and a self-determination dedicated to a shared and inclusive dignity affirming, life-enhancing and world-preserving good for everyone and everywhere. It is these values and practices that the two young Black leaders, Justin Pearson and Justin Jones, rightly calls building on and advancing the legacy and struggle of our ancestors.

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of Kwanzaa; and author of Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture and Introduction to Black Studies, 4th Edition, www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.

•ALVA V. JOHNSON•

Public Schools Can Count on the California Lottery

More than 140 millionaires were minted through California Lottery game play in the past year, but they aren't the only ones celebrating their good fortune in the Golden State.

While big jackpot payouts always capture attention for their life-changing impacts, just as significant is the more than \$41 billion the California Lottery has delivered to the state's K-12 public schools, colleges and universities since the first lottery ticket was sold here in 1985.

True to its mission, the Lottery, a self-supporting state agency, has delivered at least \$1 billion to public schools annually over the last 22 consecutive years through drawings and Scratchers® ticket sales. This supplemental funding has risen to record levels – an estimated \$2 billion in the most recent year.

Local school officials have discretion to use the extra cash they receive quarterly to uplift education, from propping up teacher salaries and buying instructional materials, to sustaining arts and sciences programs. In communities across California, the money is making an important difference in enriching learning environments.

In Los Angeles County, Lottery money is being used in part to buy textbooks and classroom supplies. In Monterey County, the extra cash is financing new computer purchases for students. In Ventura County, it has revived a middle school music program.

At Long Beach City College, Lottery money funds an entire program to train medical assistants, opening the door not just to jobs, but careers.

This is why we do what we do.

A Lottery that reliably raises supplemental funding for public schools is what voters intended when they approved the California State Lottery Act in 1984. This mission is the founda-



ALVA V. JOHNSON

(COURTESY PHOTO) tion of every decision we make and every piece of our operation.

In that time, the California Lottery has grown into one of the top three lotteries in the United States with more than \$8.8 billion in sales in the most recent completed fiscal year. In all, more than 95% of revenue flows back into the community through prize payouts, public-school and college funding, and compensation for our 23,000 participating retailers which sell our lot-

tery tickets.

As an audited state agency, maintaining the integrity of our operations is fundamental. So, too, is our duty under state law to maximize supplemental funding contributions to public education. We do it by optimizing the entertainment appeal and prize payouts that increase participation, which in turn leads to improved sales that spin off this money.

For multi-state drawings like Powerball or Mega Millions, each ticket sold in the Golden State means about 80 cents to California public schools. The recent \$2.04 billion Powerball jackpot generated \$156 million alone for public schools in California.

The State Controller's Office divides up Lottery money that goes to public education. This funding is then distributed based on average daily attendance formulas for K-12 and community colleges and by full-time enrollment for higher education and other specialized institutions. Local and

higher education administrators, along with elected school boards, decide how the Lottery funds are distributed and spent within their school systems. People can see how many dollars have been distributed at the local level – by district or county – using this interactive map Who Benefits | California State Lottery (calottery.com) on the California Lottery website.

As we have for nearly 40 years, the Lottery will continue to mint new millionaires – sometimes instantly – changing lives for the better.

Yet the larger hope driving our mission is that the supplemental funding we generate, while just over 1% of the overall state education budget, can continue to make a difference in elevating public education and improving the prospects for students across California.

Alva V. Johnson is the director of the California State Lottery.

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WINDOW

Forgiving for Living

Spring Has Sprung and What Are You Doing?



There are certain words in the English language that generate a warm thought or feeling, words like home, happy, mother, and family. Another one of those magical words is the word spring. When I think of that word I get all kind of special feelings. It has special meanings to different members of my family as well.

My grandmother taught me to think of "spring training" when baseball teams go to Arizona and Florida to get ready for a new season. My children back in the day and my grandchildren today think of "spring break" as a time when they are out of school for a week and get a chance to go to a fun place for rest and recreation.

"spring cleaning" a time to shake off the effects of winter and a time to think of opportunity and transformation. My grandmother shared with me that spring cleaning was an age-old tradition that dated back to the days when homes were heated by wood and lit by lanterns that left layers of soot on every surface.

When spring arrived, it was time to open up the windows and doors, pull out the rugs and bedding to beat away the dust, and scrub the floors and windows until they shined. Spring cleaning gives us a chance to transform our living spaces but it also gives us an opportunity to transform our mind spaces.

Sometimes we have an idea of what we want in life, but we feel stuck and not sure where or how to get the ball rolling. It is always good to start with a good old fashion cleaning. As we sort through the thoughts in our mind, the stuff in our homes, and the clutter in our offices, things can begin to become clearer and cleaner.

Many of us have heard the saying that it is difficult to see the forest for the trees. This can be true in our day-to-day lives as well. For me, when I stop and think about what I need and what is necessary for me to do to go to the

next level or season, I often realize that it becomes necessary for me to let go of what once was, to take hold and appreciate what is to become. We can change our life by changing how we think.

If you spring into action and begin to change the way you are living or change the way you are thinking, you can begin to focus on the specific tasks you want for your home or for your life. Whether cleaning your home or your thoughts, it reduces stress and clutter in your life and puts you in a better mindset and mood.

Clutter in your house has a way of creating mental images that are not always healthy. Physical cleaning can remove allergens such as dust, pollen, and mildew, it can also rid your home of pollutants, too, which can impact your immune health. Mental cleaning can remove anxiety, doubt,

despair, discomfort, and uncertainty.

Once you have done a little cleaning, you should be able to think a little clearer on what you need to do. Do you have anyone holding you accountable or helping you reach your goals? If you need assistance do not be afraid to seek the necessary and right kind of assistance you need to reach your goals.

Spring is all about new beginnings. Take it upon yourself to use the changing of seasons to create change in yourself. You will feel a weight lifted.

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"The Boy Child"

Luke opens his Gospel writings about 6 BC with the scene where Mary was taking care of the duties that women did in Nazareth, Galilee when something unusual and unheard of happens to her! She is visited by Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God and had been sent by God!

Mary was a virgin betrothed to Joseph for marriage. In those ancient days, to be betrothed was like be-

ing married. This angelic visitor greeted her with words she didn't understand and were troubling to her. But being an innocent, obedient young girl, she listened attentively to Gabriel's wondrous announcement.

He said, "Fear not, Mary. You have found favor with God! And you are going to conceive a son named Jesus even though you have not had relations with a

man." What a dramatic and unforgettable message and promise! Through all of that, she yielded obediently and just said, "I am a handmaid of the Lord and as you have said, so shall it be according to your word."

This passage has always struck me. Her attitude is remarkable. It is a state of mind to be modeled in our lives. She had heard the dramatic event which was to take place. She accepted

the heavenly word. She did not talk back.

She did ask the question, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" She didn't belabor the question or her lack of understanding. She moved forward with Gabriel's announcement and exclamation. In simpler words - Mary believed.

That's what we're talking about when we hear the Gospel - respond in faith by believing. Respond in obedience. No wavering. No doubt.

Jesus told His disciples in advance that He was going away and that He would return. They did not understand. One of the disciples said, "Show us the Father." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time and now you say to me, show us the Father." Jesus strongly replied, "The Father and I are one. You have seen me and therefore you have seen the

Father."

In another place, He said, "If you don't believe me...believe the miracles which I have performed." "The Boy Child" is very important and critical to the going forth of Elohim's creation of Man. He carries the seed. The woman receives the seed. God nurtures that seed in the womb and as we have read in Psalm 139, Elohim (The Creator) knows each of us before we are born.

In the beginning in Genesis, the serpent did not accept Elohim's decision to create "the Boy Child." The serpent was furious!! He decided he wanted to be God and went about disrupting God's program with the intent to destroy Elohim's creation and all therein. He convinced one third of the angels to follow him in His rebellious revolt.

He did not win then, and he will not win now.

Satan can only do what God allows him to do. The Lord makes it clear that He is the only one true God and beside Him there is no other God!

As Jesus moves into His ministry, John baptizes Jesus. As soon as His ministry begins, Satan comes to discourage Him and destroy the mission by trying to distract Jesus or tempt Him to disobey His Father and accept a tradeoff by receiving possessions and other egregious, greedy substitutions instead of completing His mission to bring salvation to the lost.

Jesus says, "For I have come to seek and to save that which was lost." He came to offer salvation to all who accept Him as the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus the Christ who died for the sins of all mankind. That includes, male, female and all others who

{See PARKER C-4}

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On Gun Violence, the New Generation Will Not Be Silenced

By STEVE DUNWOODY

On April 7th, the two youngest Black state representatives serving in the Tennessee legislature, Justin Jones, 27, and Justin Pearson, 28, were expelled from the body. Their “crime”? Breaking a house rule disrupting regular proceedings to stage a protest with a third colleague Gloria Johnson - who was spared expulsion against gun violence. This move was a blatant attempt to silence their voices and intimidate others from speaking out. Let alone an unprecedented attack that exceeded the mark for any disciplinary action in modern times. It spoke volumes for the inaction of the GOP-controlled legislature to do anything about gun violence that the only step they could take was to remove the voices of those who dared to point out that same inaction.

This follows protests

by multitudes of people at the legislature since the recent school shooting in Nashville by a shooter who killed three children, a teacher, and two staff at Covenant School. According to the Gun Violence Archive, there have been 123 shootings that took place across the country - more than the days that have passed so far in the year alone. The U.S. is the only industrialized country with this problem. The proliferation of guns, lack of background checks, and the latest proposals passed by Republicans would no longer require a permit. These policies risk leading to the deaths of more innocent people and turning our country into the Wild West.

There is no doubt that public safety is essential. Last year, the Los Angeles Police Department recorded 2,780 robberies involving a gun. That is an increase of nearly 400 from 2021. I



Steve Dunwoody (COURTESY PHOTO)

was a victim of a mugging at gunpoint last year. I was fortunately unharmed but my biggest shock was that it was young teenagers who should have been in school. Even as a Veteran who served in Iraq, I never had anyone try to use their weapon on me, so one can imagine the irony of having someone using one on me

on the very block where I live in Hollywood. And as we look across the nation and see mass shooting after mass shooting of innocent, unarmed people being killed just for showing up at work or school or during simple traffic stops - enough is enough. We have the right to be safe.

That means reimagining

public safety to get at the roots of what contributes to crime (this includes joblessness), banning assault weapons, including expanded background checks, and ensuring we hold those who provide public safety accountable. Since the ban on assault weapons was lifted, we have seen an exponential increase in mass shootings with those weapons. We need to reinstate it immediately. We also need to decrease the footprint of law enforcement for routine traffic stops and mental health emergencies. Those encounters that lead to a loss of life need to be investigated by a third party and, as necessary, held accountable.

Ending gun violence. That is what Justin Jones and Justin Pearson and so many advocates nationwide were fighting for. Speaking with prophetic fire, these bold leaders represent a new generation that will not

accept business as usual. The anti-democratic designs of the GOP-controlled Tennessee legislature have back-fired. Mr. Jones and Pearson are now national leaders with a bigger platform to advocate for a new vision for America that the new generation will lead us from the neighborhoods in which we live to the Halls of Congress. To paraphrase President John F. Kennedy, “Let the word go forth from this time and place to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans” And the new generation, despite whatever those on the wrong side of history and against democracy will not be silenced.

A millennial, based in Los Angeles, Steve Dunwoody is a veteran, college educator, and community advocate.

Tips for Black Parents to Start Discussions about Sex and Healthy Practices

By BRITTINAE PHILLIPS
Contributing Writer

Discussing sex can be difficult between most parents and their emerging adults. If your family is part of a Black community, openly discussing sexual health is nearly impossible. More now than ever, this needs to change.

April is Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity to raise awareness about sexually transmitted infections and their impact on our lives while ensuring everyone has the tools and knowledge for prevention, testing, and treatment.

Transgenerational racial trauma, hyper-sexualized portrayals of Black people, and the devaluation of Black bodies as commodities have led to deep-rooted anxiety for Black parents when discussing sex. Most of our sex talks revolve around warnings “Don’t have (or think about) sex until marriage!” “Don’t come home pregnant!” or “Don’t get anyone pregnant!” Sex is part of life, and not talking about it doesn’t make it suddenly disappear. We do a disservice to youth in Black communities by

not providing a safe space for sincere discussions related to sex and sexuality.

In Los Angeles County, data from the Public Health Department for December 2021 to November 2022 shows that those aged 18-29 comprise 30% of reported syphilis cases, 45% of gonorrhea cases, and 33% of HIV cases. Although comprising only 8% of Los Angeles County’s population, Blacks have been disproportionately affected by STIs, including 20% of syphilis cases, 19% of gonorrhea cases, and 17% of HIV cases as of November 2022. Keep in mind that STIs could be transmitted during sex or from skin-to-skin contact.

More Black youth are getting tested and receiving education, which are great ways to prevent the spread of STIs in our communities. The Black Health Initiative of Planned Parenthood Los Angeles (PPLA) believes in fostering strong family dynamics through fact-based health education programs and classes, reaching nearly 50,000 women, men, and young adults each year. However, as a PPLA educator, I recommend that Black families normalize



Brittainae Phillips

conversations about sex and sexual health so that our young people know how to protect themselves.

Here are five tips for parents to start these conversations with their families about sex and healthy practices:

Talk early: Setting the groundwork early to discuss sexual attraction, gender identity, and

personal boundaries helps young adults become more open about sex and sexual

relationships.

Talk often: Breaking this topic down into small, frequent discussions can make this conversation easier to facilitate conversations about sex and sexual relationships.

Keep it together: Don’t be shocked by anything asked or discussed. Empowering young people to talk openly and honestly about sex shouldn’t be taboo.

Educate yourself. You don’t have to know the answer to every question but use honesty and transparency as guidelines to become their “go-to” to find the correct answers together.

Listen & validate. Listening without judgment will help youth feel more comfortable coming to their parents with questions. Before offering insights or advice, thank them for sharing with you.

STI Awareness Month

is a prime opportunity for all parents to use these tips with the young adults in their lives; not only could it help them delay sex, but it also increases the likelihood of using condoms which decreases STIs.

To learn more about removing the stigma from sexual health conversation by fostering an informed family dynamic and Planned Parenthood Los Angeles's educational programs, please visit <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-los-angeles/local-education-training>.

Brittainae Phillips is the community education manager for Planned Parenthood Los Angeles's Black Health Initiative, managing community outreach and education for parents, college students, and youth.

Firm Restarting Oil Pipeline Involved in California Spill

ASSOCIATED PRESS

An offshore pipeline involved in a 2021 oil spill that fouled Southern California beaches is being put back in service, the operator said.

Amplify Energy Corp. said Monday, April 10 that it received approval from federal regulatory agencies to restart operations and last weekend began the process of filling the pipeline, which is expected to take about two weeks.

"Following the line fill process, the pipeline will be operated in accordance with the restart procedures that were reviewed and approved by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration," the Houston-based company



This aerial image taken with a drone, shows the closed beach after oil washed up in Newport Beach, Calif., on Oct. 7, 2021. (AP PHOTO/RINGO H.W. CHIU, FILE)

said in a press release.

The pipeline carries oil to shore from platforms in San Pedro Bay, near the Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors.

Amplify Energy recently announced a settlement with companies

associated with two ships it accused of dragging anchors and striking the pipeline during a January 2021 storm, leading to the spill of 25,000 gallons (94,600 liters) of crude oil months later.

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Billy Porter's Coming To Los Angeles - Get Ready!

BY MAGRIRA
Contributing Writer

There's something very, very special about Billy Porter. Let's not forget that Mr. Porter is a Grammy®, Emmy®, and twice Tony® award winner; he's a hyphenate — singer/composer/director/author/actor and playwright.

He's about to bring all of this skill and experience to his newest venture, Black Mona Lisa Tour: Volume One.

For six weeks this spring, Porter will hit 25 U.S. cities, kicking off on April 29 in Seattle, Washington and stopping in Los Angeles, as well as his hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and concluding in Mashantucket, CT at Foxwoods Resort Casino on June 3.

The Black Mona Lisa Tour: Volume One will be fronted by Billy telling his

life story through song and backed by a full band and a video installation. This 90-minute powerhouse event will feature his chart-topping hits "Love Is on the Way" and "Love Yourself," a tinge of Broadway, a nod to Pose, and stunning performances of future pop classics from his forthcoming new album, Black Mona Lisa. This is an experience not to be missed.

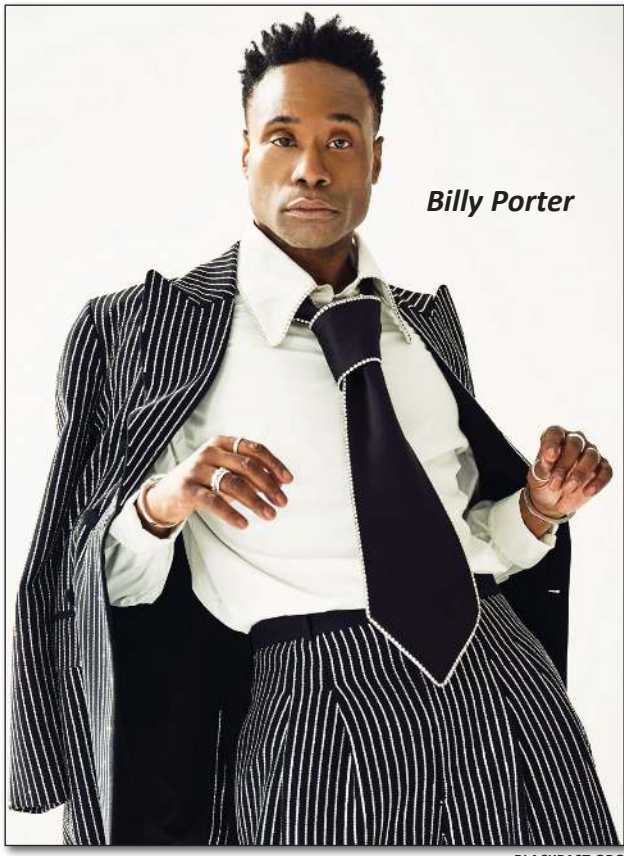
Here is what Billy Porter had to share about his upcoming tour.

L.A. Sentinel: Excited that you are coming to Los Angeles. When is that, Billy?

Billy Porter: May 6.

LAS: In a sentence. Why did you create this tour? There must be an emotional reason behind making such a big move across the country.

BP: It's really the first time that I've been able to fully express myself and



Billy Porter

BLACKPAST.ORG

who I am through my music. Through my mainstream pop music space.

It's like my magnum opus. It's everything to me. You'll really get a glimpse into

who I am even deeper with this music.

LAS: You started your career in 1997 with the release of his self-titled (aka "Untitled") debut album which spawned the Top 10 "Bubbling Under" single, "Show Me," and the monster ballad, "Love Is On The Way," which also appeared at the pivotal moment in the film, "First Wives Club."

BP: Facts. I released "At the Corner of Broadway + Soul" (2005), "Billy's Back on Broadway" (2014), and "The Soul of Richard Rodgers" (2017) featuring Pentatonix, India.Arie, Leslie Odom Jr., and Cynthia Erivo, among others.

LAS: Your biography is crazy long. Let's talk about Black Mona Lisa Tour: Volume One. A lot of people don't realize that you are such a strong singer. Am I right?

BP: Well ... they are people who are late to the game. Growing up I started to sing in the church at the age of five. The gift was sent down with me from on high. My singing voice gave me the courage to branch out to do other things. I studied to be an actor.

LAS: Billy, you're a wonderful actor. I saw you before you received your Tony Award for "Kinky Boots" and I knew what I saw — amazing!

BP: Thank you. [Black Mona Lisa Tour: Volume One] is the first time, musically, that I am expressing what I want to say. You know, because I have lived a life. I'm 53 years old, and I have a lot to say. I've been through a lot and I want it to be a celebration of life.

LAS: Say it again.
BP: [Black Mona Lisa Tour: Volume One] is a celebration of life.

Shamier Anderson Savors Career Rise, Role in New 'John Wick'

BY GARY GERARD
HAMILTON
Associated Press

Shamier Anderson is well aware that his Hollywood profile is rising, and he isn't taking the moment for granted.

"I've been on the grind for a very long time, and I'm still grinding. And it's not lost on me that I'm pretty ubiquitous in the marketplace right now. However, my work ethic hasn't changed," says the 31-year-old Canadian actor. "I'm lucky, and that's something that's not lost on me ... I also recognize that this moment will pass, right? And that's something that humbles me."

Most wouldn't blame Anderson for indulging in the moment, as his latest film, the Keanu Reeves-led "John Wick: Chapter 4," debuted last week at No. 1 with a franchise-best \$73.5 million domestically at the box office. Anderson plays the Tracker, a bounty hunter, who's stalked Wick around the world in hopes of collecting a huge payday.

"I get to share the screen with people that I used to look up to, that I still look up to, Keanu Reeves, Donnie Yen, Laurence Fishburne," said the



AP PHOTO/CHRIS PIZZELLO

Shamier Anderson, a cast member in "John Wick: Chapter 4," poses at the premiere of the film, Monday, March 20, 2023, at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles.

Wing Chun kung fu student. "Those are the moments that make me go, 'Wow, things are changing.'"

Things are indeed changing, but it's been a slow and steady journey. He's starred in the film "Bruiser," a February release, with Trevante Rhodes, and appeared in

movies such as 2020's "Bruised" with Halle Berry and 2018's "Destroyer" alongside Nicole Kidman. His first film credit came in 2010's "Nostrum." Each role has served as a building block to form a budding, substantial career.

"These are my colleagues. These are my sparring partners. How are we going to get to the truth and do a great job and kill it? And when they call cut, I go, 'Can I get a picture?'" he said with a laugh, stating working with Reeves was a "pinch me" moment. "I've done some incredible films with some incredible A-list actresses and actors and I still get butterflies ... I'm always learning, and I'm learning with a smile on my face."

Anderson grew up in Toronto, raised by a single mother alongside his two brothers, one of which is Stephan James who starred in 2018's Oscar-nominated "If Beale Street Could Talk," as well as Ava DuVernay's "Selma." Hollywood was always in sight

for Anderson, who studied musical theater at Wexford Collegiate School for the Arts, but not for James.

"I always make a joke saying Stephan has never been to an acting class in his life and I've trained all my life," said the older brother. "He's Golden Globe nominated, Emmy nominated, NAACP nominated ... he's more decorated than a Christmas tree at this point. But, it just kind of speaks to just how this business works. There's no blueprint."

However, the siblings are creating their own layout, and it's now a family business.

Following protests after the murder of George Floyd during 2020's coronavirus pandemic, the brothers formed the Black Academy (Building a Legacy in Acting, Cinema and Knowledge) to battle systemic racism. They also created the Bay Mill Studios production company to amplify Black Canadian creatives. Anderson says the company recently sold a project centered around famed painter Jean-Michel Basquiat to a major streaming service. Though Black music from Canadian

artists like Drake, The Weeknd and PartyNextDoor has reached global heights, the film industry hasn't made similar strides.

"There are actually a lot of iconic Canadians in the film business: Jim Carrey, Mike Myers, James Cameron, Ryan Reynolds. I mean, it's a long list ... Sandra Oh — a bunch of cool folks," he said.

"Black filmmakers — Black actors and actresses — that's where it's a bit scarce," said Anderson, who intentionally straddles the line between actor and activist. "There's not enough Black individuals in the arts at the highest level ... there's no shortage of talent. It's just opportunity."

To highlight Canada's wealth of talent, the Black Academy created the Legacy Awards. It's the country's first Black awards show, described as a mashup of the NAACP Image Awards, Grammys and BET Awards. Deborah Cox was among the performers for the inaugural show, which earned four nominations, including best host, from the Canadian Screen Awards. Honoring a wide range of Black Canadians including athletes, musicians, actors and philanthropists, the show has a multiyear commitment to air on Canadian Broadcasting Corp.

And while his social and creative accomplishments are a source of pride, Anderson's widest smile appears when discussing DJ Shamgod — his musical alias.

"I've been deejaying for 15 years. I used it as a way to pay for bills, to make money when I wasn't getting acting work ... just recently this past year, I said I'm going to go public with it," explained the multi-format DJ who performed a set at the John Wick afterparty in New York following the premiere. "This isn't another actor trying to be a musician. I've been doing music. I really am on the turntables and I really throw down."

Anderson will return to "Invasion" on Apple TV+ and has roles in the films "A Lot of Nothing," now streaming, and Brad Furman's "Tin Soldier." He is light years away from his Scarborough neighborhood watching his mother struggle to make ends meet. But he says his path is a reminder that the tortoise won the race — not the hare.

"It's looking at the little boy in me and going, 'I told you so. It's all working out,'" said Anderson. "It's incredible to see the work pay off."

Kidjo, Blackwell, Pärt awarded Sweden's Polar Music Prize

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Five-time Grammy Award winner Angélique Kidjo, Island Records founder Chris Blackwell and Estonian composer Arvo Pärt have won the 2023 Polar Music Prize, a Swedish music award.

The three "all made such a global impact with their music," Marie Ledin, managing director of the annual prize, said in announcing the winners on Tuesday.

Blackwell, 85, whose independent label started in Jamaica and signed artists such as Bob Marley, Cat Stevens, Roxy Music, Tom Waits, Grace Jones and Marianne Faithfull, made Island one "of the most successful labels in music history," Ledin said in a statement.

The award committee



AP PHOTO/AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES

Angélique Kidjôngelique Kidjo arrives at the presentation of the Gershwin Prize, which honors a musician's lifetime contribution to popular music, hosted at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington on Wednesday, March 1, 2023.

said that Kidjo's "striking voice, stage presence and fluency in multiple cultures

and languages has won respect from her peers." The 62-year-old singer-songwriter has mixed the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, funk and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America.

Ledin described Pärt who is 87, as "one of the most incredible composers the world has ever seen, and his beautiful music has touched audiences around the globe." She noted that his tintinnabuli, a composition style that Pärt invented in 1976, "has deeply affected the course of music over several decades."

"His works have reached a vast number of listeners, not only via concerts and recordings, but also through films and theatrical productions," she said.

The Polar Music Prize is awarded annually to individuals, groups and institutions in recognition of exceptional music achievements. It includes a cash award of 600,000 kronor (\$57,700) each. An awards ceremony is scheduled for May 23 in Stockholm.

Stig Anderson, the late Swedish music producer, lyricist and ABBA manager, established the award in 1989. The prize shares a name with the record label Anderson started. Polar Music.

Previous recipients include Icelandic singer Björk, Paul McCartney, Peter Gabriel, Mick Berry, Ennio Morricone, Led Zepplin, Stevie Wonder, Paul Simon, Joni Mitchell, Elton John, Iggy Pop, Ravi Shankar, Renée Fleming and Miriam Makeba.

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AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL
TCU senior safety Mark Perry is a sociology major.

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

Rancho Cucamonga native Mark Perry helped bring Texas Christian University (TCU) to national prominence during the 2022 season. He helped the Horned Frogs secure a 13-2

Student Athlete of the Week: Mark Perry

overall record and earn a trip to the 2023 CFP National Championship.

Perry noted how communication and how they respond to challenges brought them success this year.

"Everybody really talks to each other, offensive linemen talk to defensive backs and different things like that," Perry said. "I think that's been really big and obviously just the way we respond to adversity has been big too."

Perry played in all 15 games at the safety position, making 59 solo tackles and 84 total stops. He also made 6.5 tackles for a total loss of 12 yards and deflect-

ed two passes. During the National Championship, Perry made six total hits.

While he competed hard on the field, he worked ardently in the classroom and earned a spot on the 2022 All-Big 12 Academic First Team. Perry noted how he takes pride in the honor.

"I wasn't the best student in high school but once I got to college, I really started to figure things out," he said. "It's been big for me, especially not being the best student in high school and seeing the things I've been able to do."

Balancing academics with athletics was something that he mastered with

time, noting how the most important thing is being organized.

"When I first got to college, I was so tired because you're just up from sunup to sundown, like just always moving," Perry said. "Now that I'm on year four, going into year five, it's not as a shock to me."

Perry is majoring in sociology with a minor in psychology. His favorite class was a psychology in counseling class he took in the fall of 2022.

"It was really interesting just talking about the different ways of how to help people, different strategies," Perry said. "Being a student athlete,

knowing the challenges that come along with mental health, and being a student athlete, I just want to be able to advertise for that."

Perry spent three seasons with the Colorado Buffs before transferring to TCU. During his junior year, he paced the team with three interceptions. His 72 tackles would be the third-best of the team.

During his time at Colorado, Perry endured mental health issues. He noted how athletes will occasionally base their self-worth on their athletic performance.

"We weren't the greatest football team," Perry said about the Buffs. "It was hard to wake up every

day and tell yourself you got to keep going forward, you got to keep working."

Prior to college, Perry attended Etiwanta and Rancho Cucamonga high schools. As a senior, he helped the Rancho Cucamonga Cougars win a League Championship. His high school years taught him the importance of patience.

"Everything is not gonna come right away, how you want it to and obviously everything's not always gonna go as planned," Perry said. "I wasn't the starter right away and I didn't have all the offers out of high school right away."

Chargers Host College Flag Football Showcase

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

The Los Angeles Chargers partnered with the L.A. Legends sports organization to host their inaugural girls flag football college show-

showing that there's higher levels, professional play."

Young flag football players got a chance to show off their skills and learn from different college flag football coaches.

The National Associa-

tion of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) sanctioned Womens' Flag Football as a sport in 2020, allowing young female athletes the opportunity to compete beyond high school.

"We have a lot of NAIA coaches out here kind of scouting, recruiting, seeing the talent ... and possibly giving scholarships," said Kansas Wesleyan Women's Flag Football head coach

Melinda Nguyen. "I think there's a lot of athletes out here, there's some people with raw talent, there's some people with years of talent ... it's nice that they're getting the exposure now."

and do what they love in the future," Bixon said. "Some people didn't get this opportunity, so I'm sure everybody here is so thankful."

Hesston College women's flag football head



AMANDA SCURLOCK/L.A. SENTINEL
Quarterbacks practiced throwing to wide receivers.



L.A. Legends players, college coaches and flag football players pose at the conclusion of the showcase.

case at Serra high school. Members of the L.A. Legends helped facilitate drills and exercises.

"We're big supporters of the L.A. Legends professional tackle team," said Chargers director of football development Zac Emde. "Them being able to have their players out to help run this camp, it's another good way to highlight women in football and

tion of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) sanctioned Womens' Flag Football as a sport in 2020, allowing young female athletes the opportunity to compete beyond high school.

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The youth participated in running, catching, flag-pulling, and throwing drills, they also played 7-on-7's and one-on-ones. Although she could not participate, Serra senior running back Kyli Bixon was excited to cheer her teammates on and talk to college coaches.

"I'm happy for myself and my other teammates and other people out here being able to get this oppor-

coach Max Switzer recalled times when women were not allowed to compete in football in the past. Now he is brimmed with excitement to hand out scholarships.

"We have probably about 60-70 girls out here that are having a lot of fun and they're balling out," Switzer said. "I think the women are soaking everything up, they want to learn ... the quarterbacks been

throwing routes to each other and to other receivers."

Agion Quinney plays for the Legends and coaches the Serra girls' flag football team. The Cavaliers are the reigning champs of the League of Champions.

"Being able to teach other young ladies and even adults about football and the possibilities, it's just a great opportunity," Quinney said. "Being able to show the girls that it's a possibility for them to play at a higher level, it's a great look."

The fervor for girls flag football is palpable among the youth in Southern California, senior Destiny Okoli is a prime example of such.

"Before [Serra] got the team, I was gonna start my own team," Okoli said.

"Then I became the captain of the team and I recruited some girls ... they went to the championships, proud of them."

The CIF Southern Section voted to sanction girls flag-football as a sport in February. Southern Section Executive Committee president-elect Dr. Paula Hart-Rodas noted how the meeting when the sanction was decided was "almost surreal," recalling the cheers while the votes were counted.

"We had a unanimous 146 to zero vote yes," Hart-Rodas said. "It was just an amazing feeling ... to know what this means for the girls of California, for these girls that we've been working with for the last couple of years."

King/Drew Boys Basketball Dominates Coliseum League

BY AMANDA SCURLOCK
Sports Editor

The efforts of the King/Drew boys' basketball team would get them Coliseum League and City Sec-

tion honors. The Golden Eagles had a 16-17 overall record and became Coliseum League champions with their 9-1 League record.

"We had to realize we had to come as a team and

not let each other down and not pout and not cry," said freshman Josahn Webster who earned All-City honors for his efforts. "And just really stick to each other."

The Golden Eagles reach the second round of the CIF Division II State playoffs. King/Drew knocked off the top-seeded Canyon 73-69 in the first round.

"It was pretty fun," said senior Jacob LaCount. "We got to experience another successful, winning season."

Success did not come easy as King/Drew endured losses by Sierra Canyon, Damien, and Village Christian. Playing in tournaments helped them learn their plays and fix mistakes.

"It's always a fun experience with a new group of guys," said sophomore Donald Thompson. "It makes it more challenging to try to get the chemistry with everybody."

The offensive play of the guards was an asset, but the Golden Eagles struggled on defense with their frontcourt players. As the season continued, their frontcourt players found ways to undermine opponents.

"We started focusing on defense and then our defense just started connecting," said senior Joshua

game.

"The most favorite feeling for me was when we beat Washington and Cren-

Although he was initially nervous about playing varsity ball, freshman Jayshawn Kibble was able



The King/Drew boys basketball team.

Rivas. "And then our offense, we started going on a roll, everybody was hitting their shots."

Last season, King/Drew qualified for the City Section Open Division playoffs and lost to Fairfax 64-76 during the championship game. Players like senior Danny Price were elated to continue the winning momentum throughout this past season.

"I got to enjoy it with people I love," Price said. "And then express my feelings with them through basketball."

Many of the players relished in their final in-season game where they defeated Crenshaw 53-50 in an away

shaw at their home when we won League Champions," said senior Dume Akametu. "That was probably the most memorable moment for me."

Junior Kameron Gates has been playing for the Golden Eagles Boys basketball team since he was a freshman; he also plays for the football team. He noticed how defense changed throughout the seasons.

"Every year, we've always hung our hats on defense," Gates said. "As we migrated to having smaller bigs, we migrated into perimeter defense, and pressing and quickness is our advantage."

to readjust his game and became comfortable with the team.

"My mid-range game and my defense, they got better over the season," Kibble said.

Chemistry was a key quality of the Golden Eagles squad this season. The players would hang out with one another during the time they were off-court. Being around the seniors taught sophomore Harper Whitman the importance of being poised.

"Sometimes I would do things either too fast or too slow," Whitman said. "Learning a lot from the seniors has helped me and it's gonna help me when I become a senior."

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