



CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL



Vol. 42 No.45

# The Villager

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## Black Chambers Announce Black Business Day at the Capitol



**AUSTIN** – The Texas Association of African American Chambers of Commerce, a statewide network of nearly two-dozen Black chambers of commerce, recently announced plans to demonstrate the value of Black-owned businesses to the Texas economy.

“We have watched with alarm as state spending with Black-owned businesses continues to erode,” noted TAAACC Chairman Christopher Herring. “We also know that unless legislators are made aware of the situation, the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature will come and go without this critical concern being addressed.”

During the most recent Texas budget, Black-owned businesses were awarded contracts totaling 1.22% of nearly \$16 billion, a significant drop in spending from the embarrassingly low 1.63% recorded in 2012.

“On Tuesday, March 31, we are inviting all Black business owners from across the state to witness the signing of the 2015 Memorandum of Cooperation,” Herring continued. “The MOC commits the signing agencies to concentrated efforts to improve spending with Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs). It is simply unacceptable that Black-owned businesses were the only group among HUB businesses to experience a decline in the value of contracts since the 2012 budget. Black

**See TAAACC, page 2**

## Dallas Congresswoman leads Medal of Honor push for Pearl Harbor Hero

**WASHINGTON** — Doris “Dorie” Miller was an unlikely hero — a mess attendant, second class, from Waco whose race precluded him from serving in a combat assignment.

But when the Japanese hit the USS West Virginia at Pearl Harbor, he manned a machine gun he’d not been trained on and ended up pulling the ship’s captain and many others to shelter.

His acts of courage earned him the Navy Cross, the Navy’s second-

highest honor. But for decades, admirers have believed Miller deserved the top award: the Medal of Honor.

Now Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, a fellow Waco native, is mounting a fresh effort to rectify what she sees as a historical slight.

Johnson, D-Dallas, is building a national committee of 500 community leaders, elected officials and historians, and a smaller committee of about 30 that will work

**See HERO, page 7**

## AUSTIN URBAN MUSIC FESTIVAL 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Friday Schedule**  
Gates Open @ 3PM

4:00 Crucial Prophets Reggae Showcase  
5:15 Power of Soul, STC Young Band Project  
5:55 Jackie Venson  
6:35 Troy Noka  
7:15 Sebastian Mikael  
8:15 Robert Glasper Experiment Feat. Lala Hathaway & Musiq SoulChild

**Town Lake Auditorium Shores**  
908 W. Riverside Dr. Austin, Texas 78704

**Saturday Schedule**  
Gates Open @ 11:30AM

Noon – 1PM DjMix  
1:00 South Flavas Neo-Soul Showcase  
1:35 KAZI 88.7fm Untapped Showcase  
2:10 NYOB Soul Tree Collective Showcase  
2:40 MuzikHertz Soul Tree Collective Showcase  
3:15 Blues Boy Hubbard & the Eastside Kings  
4:00 Quentin Moore R&B Vocalist

4:35 Power of Soul STC Youth Band #9  
5:15 Teri Tobin R&B Vocalist  
5:50 Calvin Richardson  
6:40 DougieFresh  
7:55 Eric Benet  
9:15 Blackstreet

For More Information, Transportation Alternatives & Parking visit [www.austinurbanmusicfestival.com](http://www.austinurbanmusicfestival.com)



Doris “Dorie” Miller

## INSIDE

Heavyweight gospel vocalist celebrates Austin's iconic choir. See **JAMES** Page 3

Panelists discuss gentrification gaps. See **WOMEN** Page 6

Community leaders acknowledged for exceptional labors. See **AKA** Page 7

**Free Tax Preparation** available through April 15<sup>th</sup> across Williamson County

The Williamson County Financial Stability Coalition will continue to offer free tax preparation services in Williamson County until April 15 to households earning less than \$53,000 in 2014, and to senior citizens of all income levels. Tax sites are staffed by IRS certified volunteers to help individuals and families file their 2014 Federal Income Tax return. Sites are located in Cedar Park, Georgetown, Hutto, Jarrell, Leander, Liberty Hill, Round Rock and Taylor.

There are no hidden costs and no appointment is necessary to meet with a tax preparer. All returns are filed electronically.

Taxpayers will need to bring a Valid driver's license or photo ID, all W-2's and 1099 Forms, Social Security Cards for taxpayers and all dependents, Birthdates for all dependents, Day Care Receipts and Provider ID #, Education Receipts and other information may apply.

Bank Account # and Routing # for direct deposit (a voided check is best) is required.

For additional information on the free tax sites call 512-255-6799.

# THE COMMUNIQUE

## Texas Relays & Fan Fest Events Set for Saturday

Saturday, March 28, 2015

Fan Fest 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Live music, Food, Autograph sessions, Interactive games, Exclusive Texas Relays merchandise and more.

<b>Field Events:</b>	<b>Running Events:</b>
<b>Prelims and Finals</b> (Morning Session) @9 (Afternoon Session) @Noon	<b>Prelims and Finals</b> (Morning Session) @8:15 (Afternoon Session) @Noon

Follow TX Relays for Non-Stop Action  
Twitter #TXRelays15  
@UTexasTrack | @TexasSports

Mike A. Myers Stadium  
707 Clyde Littlefield Dr, Austin, TX 78705

## TAAACC Develops Strategies for Increased Spending with Black Businesses

continued from page 1

Business Day at the Capitol gives Black business owners the opportunity to demonstrate their value to the Texas economy."

TAAACC works closely with legislators and agency officials to develop strategies that result in increased spending. Over the past two years, the organization has hosted Professional Services Roundtables in venues across the state, bringing agency procurement staff, HUB coordinators and business owners together to learn about upcoming opportunities, certification and the bidding process.

"We have crisscrossed the state in an effort to increase spending," noted TAAACC past chairman Jim Wyatt. "From the Permian Basin in west Texas, to Tyler in east Texas, Fort Worth, Killeen, Houston, Dallas...we have delivered the message that increased utilization of Black-owned businesses is essential to the health of communities across the state. Without question, our efforts have resulted in increased awareness for state agencies and business owners."

"We are counting on Black business owners and concerned Texans to show up in strong numbers on March 31," said Herring. "We've all heard the saying that the squeaky wheel gets the grease...well, unless we show up in record numbers the wheels of Black-owned businesses will fall off completely!"

**WHAT:** Black Business Day at the Capitol

**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 31, 2015 – 10AM

**WHERE:** Texas State Capitol Auditorium – ROOM E1.004

## Mavis! Premieres During SXSW

by Naomi Richard  
The Austin Villager



Mavis Staples  
(Photo credit Naomi Richard)

The film **Mavis!** is the first documentary on gospel/soul music legend and civil rights icon Mavis Staples and her family group, The Staple Singers. Featuring powerful live performances and conversations with friends and contemporaries including Bob Dylan, Prince, Bonnie Raitt, Levon Helm, Jeff Tweedy, Chuck D, and more, **Mavis!** reveals the struggles, successes, and intimate stories of her journey. Through 60 years of performing, crossing musical genres and societal shifts, Mavis has transformed herself along the way but has never forgotten the importance of family. At 75, she's making the most vital music of her career, and her message of love and equality is needed now more than ever.

**REVIEW:** Set in Austin's quaint and very personal Paramount Theatre, SXSW Film music lovers filled the audience to see **Mavis!** To our surprise, in walks Mavis Staples to watch the film for the first time along with us. Not only did she watch the film, she and her guitarist Rick Holmstrom performed two songs at the end of the show.

If you want to know the rich history and amazing journey of what's been labeled "The Sound of The Civil Rights Movement," this is a must see film. The film documents Ms. Staples rise to fame as a solo artist, as well as her beginnings as a member of The Staple Singers. She and her family released the first Gospel Album to sell a million copies. Ultimately, their career would extend across many genres of music.

Clips are shown of concerts performed throughout her career. The time and effort made to locate these incredible bits of history was well worth it. There were also sound bites from those who experienced the climb to stardom like Bonnie Raitt, Chuck D, Bob Dylan, Marty Stuart and Civil Rights Activist Julian Bond. The end result is a compilation of music history that is now etched in our history.

## City of Austin and UT Austin to Host 2015 Texas Relays Reception and News Conference

News conference speakers include Steve Patterson, Texas men's athletics director; Chris Plonsky, Texas women's athletics director; Dr. Gregory Vincent, vice president for diversity and community engagement; Steve Adler, mayor, City of Austin; Marc Ott, city manager, City of Austin.

The reception will feature opening remarks by Anthony Snipes, assistant city manager, City of Austin; Mark Strama, head of Google Fiber's Austin operations; and Teddy McDaniel, affiliate chief executive officer of the Austin Area Urban League. Kevin Carr, founder and chief executive officer of PRO2CEO, will serve as



Dr. Vincent



Mayor Adler

**Event:** Reception and news conference for the 88th annual Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays. Sponsors include The University of Texas at Austin's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Texas Men's and Women's Athletics, and the City of Austin.

**When:** Reception, 5-8 p.m., Friday, March 27; news conference begins at 5:45 p.m.

**Where:** Google Fiber Community Facility, 201 Colorado St.

**Background:** The reception honors the commitment that the university, the City of Austin and community leaders make to promoting cultural diversity and engagement during the historic Texas Relays event.

**For more information, contact:** Jessica Sinn, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, 512-232-4471; City of Austin Communications & Public Information Office, 512-974-2220.

guest speaker.

Entertainment will be provided by Ballet Afrique Contemporary Dance Company and Austin radio personality/host DJ Kay Cali.

The City of Austin and the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement have been working with the community and local organizations to ex-

tend an enthusiastic welcome to athletes visiting for the Clyde Littlefield Texas Relays, an annual track and field meet at Mike A. Myers Stadium. The predominantly African American crowd draws an estimated \$8 million in tourism dollars to Austin. The 2015 relays are scheduled for March 25-28.

## Austin's First Large-Scale, Micro-Unit Community Planned for East Austin

**AUSTIN, Texas** – Micro-units are coming to Austin in a macro way. Spire, Austin's largest-scale, micro-unit project to date is scheduled to begin construction in early 2016 on more than 260 units at East Fifth and Waller streets.

The five-story Spire community will include below ground parking, approximately 6,500 square feet of street-level retail and live-work space along 5th Street, and four floors of income-qualifying and market-rate micro-units that will surround a central courtyard.

Developed by Spire East Fifth LP in partnership with Kelly Grossman Architects, Big Red Dog Engineering and dwg Land-

scape Architects the Spire multi-family community is designed and tailored specifically to the Plaza Saltillo Transit Oriented Development plan.

Approximately 25 percent of the micro-units will be reserved for those who earn 50 to 70 percent less than Austin's median family income (MFI). Spire's income-qualifying units are anticipated to range from less than \$400 a month to a little more than \$500 per month. Other unit rents will be determined after Spire's groundbreaking, which is slated for early 2016.

Spire also plans to make several street and sidewalk improvements, including additional street lighting, wider sidewalks and public art displays.

Units at Spire will feature a fully functional kitchen and open-concept living room, with tall ceilings and large windows — all within approximately 400 square feet.

"Spire is providing a critical component to housing for Austin," said Terry Mitchell, founder and President of Momark Development and a Capital Metro board member. "Locating needed residential communities such as Spire accomplishes two purposes: it offers reasonably-priced housing so needed in our urban core, and, by locating housing near jobs, it serves as a transportation improvement as residents can get to work without accessing overburdened freeways and major arterial roads."

## STEVIE WONDER

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# jeff watts

## "TAIN"

photo by Olivier Link

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AND THE UT JAZZ ORCHESTRA

jeff hellmer, director

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# CHURCH & TOWN BULLETIN

## Happy Birthday Ms. Alice!



It's that time again to help Ms. Alice Holland celebrate her birthday!!! On March 26th, she will be 105 years young. What a blessing it is for our family to have such a matriarch living amongst us and to share memories with. We are so proud that she is still living and in good health. We have plenty of memories growing up and will cherish all the memories that we create with her from this day forth. She is the mother of Bertha Holland Johnson & Bobbie Holland French (deceased). Ms. Alice resides with her youngest daughter Bertha here in Austin, TX.

### History of SXSW By: William Purcell

AUSTIN, TX - SXSW has always been one of the best things about living in Austin, Texas. It is a great place to hang out with friends and family, meet celebrities, attend your favorite music artist's concert, watch many movies, and observe the conventions. I attended this year and was able to go to my first movie world premiere where I saw the stars of the film.

In July 1986, the organizers of the New York City music festival New Music Seminar contacted Roland Swenson, a staffer at the alternative weekly The Austin Chronicle, about organizing an extension of that festival into Austin after having announced that they were going to hold a "New Music Seminar Southwest". The plans did not materialize, so Swenson decided to instead co-organize a local music festival, with the help of two other people at the Chronicle: editor and

co-founder Louis Black, and publisher Nick Barbaro. Black was the one to come up with the name, taking inspiration from the Alfred Hitchcock film, "North by Northwest".

The very first SXSW event took place in 1987, where the attendance number reached over 700, versus the expected 150. In 1993, the main festival was moved to the Austin Convention Center where it is still held today and in 1994 SXSW added a component for film and other media, named the "SXSW Film and Multimedia Conference" where musician Johnny Cash served as the keynote speaker. As of now, SXSW has been split into 3 sections; "SXSW Film", "SXSW Interactive", and "SXSW Music".

SXSW is one of the many highlights of Austin, Texas where people from all across the world come to participate and will remain a major staple in the Austin community.

## St. James MBC Set to Celebrate 57<sup>th</sup> Choir Annual

By Naomi Richard



**Vickie Winans** (Photo credit: Naomi Richard for J. Spivey Productions)

On Sunday March 29, 2015 at 5:07 p.m., St. James Missionary Baptist Church will celebrate its 57<sup>th</sup> Choir Annual under the leadership of **Pastor B.W. McClendon**, choir president **Billy Steen** and choir director **Claudia Williams**. In true St. James style, they're bringing one of the top heavyweights in Gospel music to raise the praise, Stellar Award Winner **Vickie Winans!**

The St. James Mass Choir has a legacy of being one of the best Gospel choirs in Central Texas backing up such Gospel legends as Donald Lawrence, Richard Smallwood, Alexis Speight, Chester D. T. Baldwin, Earnest Pugh, Kim McFarland, Albertina Walker, Le'Andria Johnson and The Clark Sisters. Additionally the choir has recorded 4 projects over the years and they have toured around the country. How appropriate this year to celebrate their 57<sup>th</sup> Choir Annual with the incredibly talented Vickie Winans who loves being surrounded by large choirs.

According to her website, Vickie Winans (born Vickie Bowman) was born October 18, 1953 and the 7th of 12 children. Who knew that a Billboard-charting Gospel icon would be found in Vickie Bowman. While singing her first solo in church at the age of 8, it's certain that Aaron and Mattie Bowman saw something special in their daughter.

Growing up in church in Detroit, MI, she honed her skills and belted out songs stunning audiences time and time again. Eventually, she connected with the Winans family who helped her get her start.

On the path to gospel superstardom, Winans released one hit after another. Decades later, Vickie Winans is not only known as an award-winning Gospel recording artist, but she's revered as a consummate business woman that heads up Viviane, Inc. where she manages herself and books hundreds of shows per year. She is also the President of her own record label, Destiny Joy Records. A producer, director, songwriter, actress and comedienne as well, Winans does everything in excellence.

Winans is one of the best-known artists in Gospel music with signature songs such as "How I Got Over," "Shake Yourself Loose," "As Long As I Got King Jesus" and "We Shall Behold Him" to her credit. Winans has been profiled in Ebony magazine, USA Today and the Associated Press. Her profile on BET's Sunday morning TV series "Lift Every Voice" remains the most watched episode in that program's history with over 800,000 viewers.

Don't miss this musical celebration happening March 29, 2015 at 5:07 p.m. at St. James Missionary Baptist Church located at 3417 E. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Austin, TX.

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Discipleship Training	10:00 A.M.
Worship Service	11:00 A.M.

**Wednesday**

Midweek Prayer Service	7:00 P.M.
Child Development Center	
Ages 0-5 years (Daily)	512-478-6709

### Mount Sinai Missionary Baptist Church

5900 Cameron Road Austin, Texas 78723-1843  
 (512) 451-0808 (512) 302-4575 Fax  
 Web Site - www.themount.net

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

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 Church School - 9:45 a.m.  
 Bible Studies - Mon, 6:30 p.m. & Wed., 12 noon  
 Wednesday Night Worship - 7 p.m.

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Sunday School	9:30 AM
Sunday Worship	11:00 AM
Mid-Week Service Thursday: Praise, Prayer and Bible Study	7:00 PM

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 Website www.agapebcaustintx.com

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 Office: 512-343-9300

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 Tuesday Bible Studies-- 7:30pm - 9:00 pm  
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 Tel: 512 302-1270

The Church of Pentecost, USA Inc. offers a wide variety of opportunities for children, youth, adults, and older adults to be involved in worship, spiritual growth, education, community outreach, and making a tangible difference to those in need in our community. You too, can make a positive difference in our community through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness.

### Olive Branch Fellowship of Austin / All Faith Chapel

4110 Guadalupe St Bldg #639 Austin, TX 78751

Sunday Morning Worship @ 11: am

This life, therefore, is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness; not health, but healing; not being, but becoming; not rest, but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it. The process is not yet finished, but it is going on. This is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.

--- Martin Luther  
 Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Kenneth Hill, Pastor

### St. Peter's United Methodist Church

4509 Springdale Road Austin, Tx 78723  
 Office 512- 926-1686 Fax 512-929-7281

Christian Web Site - stpetersaustintx.ning.com  
 stpetersaustintx@att.net

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Sunday School	8:45 a.m.
Praise and Worship	10:15 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	12:00 p.m.
and Praise /Bible Study	6:30 p.m.

(to include Children's Choir Rehearsal and Bible Study with age appropriate Activities)

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# YOUTH BRIGADE



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## Hope of Tomorrow



## Black Registry

## My First College Tour



**Wesley Dickerson**  
Cedar Ridge H. S.

Over this past spring break I was able to go on my first college visit while on vacation in New Orleans, Louisiana. The college campus that I visited was the campus of Tulane University. Tulane is located in the suburbs of New Orleans right across from beautiful Audubon Park, which is home to the New Orleans Zoo. Tulane is also located right next to Loyola, another major university in New Orleans. Tulane was very easy to get to via the trolley streetcar system, which allows you to see almost all of New Orleans in one ride for a low fee.

My visit to Tulane started at two o'clock in the afternoon and began at the front entrance of the school. From the start the campus looked very inviting and was very visually appealing. At the beginning of the campus tour we went into a room that was showing a video clip

that included aspects of campus life and also had interviews from students at the university. I found it interesting to see and hear the perspectives of multiple students from the school. After the video we were spoken to by a representative from the school who gave all the high school students present an in depth mini lecture about more aspects of the university including financial aid, scholarship opportunities, and personal experiences.

We left the classroom and selected our tour guides for our campus tour. When given this opportunity I suggest picking an energetic tour guide who is excited to be there, in my opinion I think it makes the experience much more enjoyable. As far as the campus goes it was beautiful. There were palm trees everywhere, multiple grass fields for student to be active upon as well as many impressive buildings that looked very inviting. My overall impression of the campus was that it was very comfortable. I felt at home and that I was in a great place where I could work, play, and enjoy doing both. Although I am only a sophomore I am strongly considering Tulane as a potential college for me to attend, and for those interested or still looking for schools I would strongly consider making Tulane an option.

## Peer Assistance and Leadership



**Kiara Myers**  
Vista Ridge H. S.

Peer Assistance and Leadership, also known as PALS, is a group located on most high school campuses. It is comprised of Juniors and Seniors who go out to sub campuses and mentor younger students. It's a fairly popular program and is very successful at building healthy relationships between older and younger students.

PALS are not only mentors, but they're friends. We strive to relate

to our mentees and approach them in a way where a good trust can be built. I remember when I was younger; there was nothing cooler than a high school kid actually wanting to talk me or showing that they cared. It gives the children confidence when they are able to handle mature relationships and communicate effectively.

Another important part of the PALS program is Leadership. A PAL must become a role model for the people around them and represent themselves well at all moments. Especially with the growth of social media, it's crucial to monitor the content of posts because you never know who can see your activity. It has been very rewarding being a part of the PALS program, and I think it has taught me so much about myself. Everybody could use another friend!

## Great News!



**SaNaya White**  
Cedars Int'l Academy

I received my acceptance letter into the Ann Richards School for young women leaders this week!! I heard nothing but good things about the school and I was happy to get my letter. A church family member used to be a supervisor at the Ann Richards School and they said they loved it

and could be there all day. I was cleaning my pet ferret's cage on Sunday when I received the letter. I just happened to check the mail and there it was, the letter that might change the school I went to I thought. I ran in the house to my mom saying "It's here, the letter from Ann Richards!"

Then we went to my grandparents' house so I could open the letter and when I did open it I was very excited because I had made it in! In the packet there were plastic confetti stars in the envelope to congratulate me and we glued them to the paper that printed "I am now an Ann Richards girl." Afterwards we put the paper in a frame and now when I walk by it I say I can't wait to start 6th grade next year! YAAYY!

## Spring Break



**Kevin Parish**  
Park Crest M.S.

I had a great Spring Break! When we got out of school I immediately asked my mom if I can spend the night at my friend's house,

she slowly said "yes". I was waiting all day just to go to his house. Also during Spring Break I played my PS3, slept, I hung out with my friends, and watched movies.

Another thing I did was go to Jump Street with two other friends; it wasn't anything special we went there just to have fun. Now since Spring Break is gone it is time to get extra serious about school. I am planning to pass every class and the STAAR test. I hope you can do the same at your school too. Go Pumas!

## Spring Break



**De'Ja Hill**  
Lamar Middle School

Hello Readers,  
This week was not too eventful, in fact there was only two things that I did that

were fun. The first fun thing I did was spend time with my dad, we got to spend a lot of time together. The other thing was spending time with my nieces and nephews. I found out that two of my nieces are enrolled in a hip-hop dance class so that caught my attention. I told my mom that I would like to be in the class too, so she is going to check into it for me.

The rest of my spring break I spent laying around, watching movies, and thinking about the dance routine we will be doing when school starts back.

## Hello



**Zyon Hill**  
Reagan High School

Hello Readers,  
I really do not have too

much to talk about this week because of spring break I did not do anything. My spring break was a good one to me because I got to relax. I played basketball, hung out with some friends, spent some time with my father, and my nieces and nephews.

The most important thing to me was the much needed relaxation. Now that spring break is over it is time to get back to the books.

## Insurgent Movie Review



**Ira "T.J." Williams**  
Ridgeview M. S.

On Friday, March 20, "Insurgent", the sequel to the world-wide phenomenon "Divergent", came to movie theaters everywhere. The cinema was full of teenagers waiting anxiously for the movie to start. When the film began, the whole auditorium went silent.

"Insurgent" was a decent movie but wasn't as

good as "Divergent". "Insurgent" was very entertaining and its action scenes kept me on the edge of my seat. It had an equal amount of drama but, unlike the first movie, the plot moved at a choppy pace. The actors also lacked the enthusiasm they had in "Divergent". "Insurgent" didn't show very much character development for anyone but the main character, Tris.

I recommend this movie to people who have already seen the first movie because they can follow the story's plot. Insurgent is meant to attract teenage audiences but adults may like it too. "Insurgent" is rated PG-13 and has some material that isn't suitable for children. I enjoyed Insurgent but I hope the director does a better job on the third movie.

## High Noon Showdown 2015!



**Latrice Lipscomb**  
Manor High School

W.A.M.M Nation Drumline has finally made it to the big all time competition of the year! March 28th, 2015 marks the Houston, Texas battle of Drumlines and you don't want to miss it. W.A.M.M Nation would like everyone

to come out and support us in our victory. For location information you can contact me by my email, [LatriceLipscomb29@edumanorisd.net](mailto:LatriceLipscomb29@edumanorisd.net). We will be going up against 11 high schools in the high school division and are not only ready to win 1st place but overall category as well!

I am so anxious to see what our competitors can bring to the table. We've been working really hard and with our loss to Victory Prep last competition, it's time to show that sometimes predators will let little fish go in order to catch the big fish. This Saturday, W.A.M.M Nation Drumline is going fishing and we're bringing back the every trophy there!

## Snake Farm



**Montrae Nelson**  
Riverplace Elementary

Hello everyone, this week I went to the Snake Farm in New Braunfels. I was so excited and so were my brothers. It took some time to get there but we made it there safely. Before we walked into the building there were chickens walking around digging and roosters walking and crowing loud! When we went inside there were so many snakes! They were in individual containers behind a wire screen. I saw rattlesnakes, a viper, boa con-

strictor, python, different colored milk snakes, some snakes were poisonous and on the ten most deadliest snake list!

There were other animals there too, lizards, zebras, parrots, otters, alligators, turtles, capybara which is one of the largest rodents and they were outside in their own sections. There was a petting zoo area where you could buy food to feed to the small pigs and goats that walked around. One of the employees brought out a white and yellow boa constrictor and we were able to touch it. We also saw a young capuchin monkey who was being trained so he could be in future shows.

There was so much to see and we looked at every animal and bought some souvenirs from the gift shop. I picked out some nice rocks with different designs, colors and shapes on them. I had a lot of fun at the Snake Farm



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# YOUTH BRIGADE

## Tennis Tournament



**Alon Rodgers**  
Hendrickson H. S.

Hendrickson's "Big Event" on Friday the 13th was coordinated by Assistant Principal Zack Kleypas. Over the course of the year he enlisted the support of students and staff to take part on the day before Spring Break. Over 1,500 participating students and their accompanying staff sponsor were bused into the community to various locations such as Lake Pflugerville, parks and trails, neighborhood com-

munity centers, and other designated locations. At those job sites students performed safe, student friendly community service such as; picking up trash, cleaning benches and plays capes, sweeping, shoveling, spreading mulch, etc. Any student not participating experienced a normal school day on campus.

Hendrickson varsity baseball is 14-15 on the year and 0-2 in District 13 competition. They will be playing at the Dell Diamond this week but by the time you read this it will be over. The softball team is 4-2 overall and in district 1-1. Boys soccer is 7-10-4 overall and 3-7-3 in district. Girls soccer is 9-4-2 overall and in district 6-2-2. Bi-district is Friday.

We are in the last 50 days of school. Events this week include: Friday: Baseball vs. Cedar Ridge; Softball vs. Rouse; Varsity Tennis Tournament.

## Getting My Teeth Pulled



**Hannah Robertson**  
Connally High School

This past week I had to go to the dentist, not your average spring break activity but it was necessary and therefore good. I've been needing my wisdom teeth taken out but because of school, track and volleyball,

I hadn't had the time. They had been hurting for a while so I was actually looking forward to having them taken out.

The good part of the whole experience was a lot of my friends and teammates came to my house and brought me snow cones and Ice-cream. They also watched movies with me. It showed me true friendship, those who care about you should come see about you when you're at your lowest. Because of the pain medicine I was taken, I actually fell asleep on them but they just took a nap with me. Although going to the dentist was not pleasant, having my friends come over really made my Spring Break, That's Friendship.

## South by Southwest



**Sarah Robertson**  
Athlos Leadership Acad.

South by Southwest (SXSW) is an annual event in Austin, featuring music, film and interactive conferences. Part of the event was held at the Austin Convention Center, and I was able to go with other reporters and a couple of friends.

Also, on Friday at the PromiseLand Church as part of the SXSW events there was a Christian concert featuring performers like Kirk Franklin, The Wall group, Da'Truth, 5ive, and some others.

The concert was really good and exciting. The event was designed for the generation of today about focusing on Christ. This experience was encouraging and inspiring to me. I attended SXSW Christian concert last year and was looking forward to this year's concert and this year did not disappoint. I hope that next year that more people be able to attend the SXSW especially the Christian concert and I can go more events.

## Spring Break is Over



**Zachariah Washington**  
Cedars Academy

I am highly disappointed that Spring Break is over but it's time to go back to school. Since I am in 8th grade this year I have to take my Reading STAAR test on April 1st. My teacher Mrs. Doyle has prepared us for this test and anything that comes our way.

After the Reading STAAR test my class and the rest of the school has

to prepare for the rest of the subject test like Social Studies, Science and Math. For the STAAR my teachers make the school review packets for each tek that we learn. The main STAAR test subject that I am ready and prepared for is Social Studies because that is my favorite subject and the one I excel the most in.

After the STAAR all my teachers say that things are going to go back to the way things used to be. They say after the STAAR we will go back to project based learning where we learn teks like Space Science, Life Science with projects like making models of cells and making models of the Universe and the different types of Galaxies. Wish me luck on the STAAR and I will do the same to all the readers that have to take the STAAR test.



## Texas Workforce Commission Co-Sponsors 2015 Texas Science and Engineering Fair with ExxonMobil



**AUSTIN** – More than 1,100 Texas middle and high school students will display their outstanding projects at the 2015 Texas Science and Engineering Fair. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) continues its commitment to the success of tomorrow's workforce by co-sponsoring the event for the 14th consecutive year.

The fair, which is being hosted by The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), begins with early check-in on Thursday, March 26 and culminates with a junior division awards presentation on Saturday, March 28 and a senior division awards presentation on Sunday, March 29 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio. "The Texas Workforce Commission is proud to sponsor this event, which showcases the talent and hard work of Texas students," said TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar, who will address the students at the awards ceremony. "The students' participation in this competition will help them unlock their potential for future science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers."

"This event brings out the best and the brightest

students of all backgrounds," said TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Ronny Congleton. "Our hope is that these young people become inspired to continue to use those skills once they enter Texas' workforce."

The Texas Science and Engineering Fair is officially sanctioned by the Society for Science & the Public, the annual host of the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. Awards will be presented to students in 17 project categories in each of two divisions.

"We want to ignite a passion for discovery among young people across Texas," said TWC Commissioner Representing Employers Hope Andrade. "TWC is committed to providing a setting in which outstanding students can showcase their research projects in the STEM fields."

Winners from the science fair's senior division will qualify for the Intel ISEF competition in Pittsburgh in May and will also earn a spot at the Texas Governor's Science and Technology Champions Academy, a weeklong residential summer camp, also sponsored by TWC, which will be held this summer at Texas A&M University.



Presents

## An African American Diversity Forum

Join us on April 6, 2015 for a presentation led by our CEO George Miller that will highlight the programs and services CommUnityCare has to offer. Come learn about how we are serving the African American Community There will also be an opportunity to share your feedback with us on how we can better outreach to the community.

Dinner and refreshments will be served. Please RSVP for you and up to 1 guest by 4/1 at: [communityrelations@communitycaretx.org](mailto:communityrelations@communitycaretx.org)

When: April 6, 2015 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Where: 2115 Kramer Ln, Suite #100 Austin, Texas 78758

## Connected Youth at the Austin Public Library

The Connected Youth project is funded by a grant from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. Connected Youth Centers serve those ages 10 to 18. (Up to your 18th birthday, when you can get an Adult APL card.) These

computer centers are set aside for young people, and have special services available.

Each center is staffed with librarians and interns who can assist users with their technological and informational needs. Young people in the Connected Youth Centers are encouraged to read and discover library resources, get to know library staff, and find a place for themselves within the library.

You can do many things at a Connected Youth center. We offer ac-

## Become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar

### April Training Date Announced

Austin, TX – Register voters for the May 9, 2015 Joint General and Special Election now by becoming a Volunteer Deputy Registrar. To volunteer, you must be age 18 or older and attend a one-hour training session. Training takes place Tuesday, April 7, 2015 at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at the main Travis County Tax Office, 5501 Airport Blvd., Austin, TX 78751.

Volunteers help citizens register to vote, promote voter registration at community events and within social networks, distribute voter registration applications and confirm that applications are completed correctly, issue an official receipt as proof of registration, and deliver applications to the Voter Registrar within five days of completion.

The deadline to register to vote for the May 9, 2015 Joint General and Special Election is Thursday, April 9, 2015. For more information, please visit [www.traviscountytax.org](http://www.traviscountytax.org) or call (512) 854-9473.

activities, crafts, and assistance as you explore your interests. Printing is free at Connected Youth centers, making them a

### Programs, activities, and events encourage:

- \* Individual empowerment & leadership
- \* Collaboration & teamwork
- \* Role-modeling
- \* Diversity of interests & technologies

great place to do your homework as well as enjoy free time.

### Locations: Connected Youth Centers

Each of the locations below has a dedicated Connected Youth Center, where young people 10-18 can enjoy the services mentioned above.

- \*Faulk Central Library
- \*Carver Branch
- \*Manchaca Road Branch
- \*Ruiz Branch
- \*Southeast Austin Community Branch
- \*St. John Branch
- \*Terrazas Branch
- \*University Hills Branch
- \*Willie Mae Kirk Branch
- \*Windsor Park Branch

## APD, AUSTIN SPURS Invite Youth to Free Basketball Clinic

### "Creating Community Stars"

The clinic will take place Saturday,  
April 18, 2015.



The Austin Police Department, Police Activities League of Austin (PAL) and Austin Spurs Basketball team invite boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 18 years of age to register for a free basketball clinic on Saturday, April 18, 2015 at Kealing Middle School.

Youth are invited to come out for a fun day of improving their basketball skills and learning from APD officers, Kealing Men's Program, high school coaches,

players and college athletes. Breakfast, lunch and a snack will be provided.

Register by Saturday, April 4, 2015 by calling Dee Gonzales, Kealing Parent Support Specialist (512) 414-6700 or by emailing [dee.gonzales@austinsd.org](mailto:dee.gonzales@austinsd.org).

**Free Youth Basketball Clinic**  
**Saturday, April 18, 2015**  
**9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**  
**Kealing M. S., Gym**  
**1607 Pennsylvania Ave.,**  
**Austin, TX 78702**

## CITY ~ STATE ~ NATIONAL ~ WORLD

## Ending Women's Month



(Left to Right) Damon Miller Jr, Ibrahim, Ibrahim Checkron Azariah Tembe, Chantal Eldridge, Eloise Sepeda, Wendy Kalthoff, and Natasha Sharma. Photos by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon

As we close out the month of March, "Women's Month", the Annual Women's Forum was held on March 22. The Annual Women's Forum seeks to bring women and men of all races and ethnicities together in order to discuss and find solutions for women's issues. According to the United Nation, "No nation has been able to bridge the gender gap between women and men." Thus, it is relevant to discuss the issues that a woman may face in the various aspects of politics, education, immigration and gentrification.

The panelists came from various fields, such as: business, politics, community organizers, and the social services. For instance, Eloise Sepeda who has her own ministry spoke eloquently on both how gentrification affect women and the family along with a focus on education. In terms of politics, Chantal Eldridge who is running for 450th District Court introduced herself and also mentioned that, "I was the only woman running for this Criminal Court and can bring Defense Attorney perspectives to the bench." Finally, Cecilia the owner of Remi Roots focused on the various nuances of women in business.

According to the organizational committee of Diaspora, at least 35 people attended this event. Although the majority of the attendees were women, there were also a few men in attendance. For instance, Ibrahim Tembe who is a local poet and writer mentioned that, "It is important for men to support women issues." Furthermore, this event was free due to the fact several small business women entrepreneurs, like Alka Bhanot and Deborah Winegarten made it possible for this to happen

## U.S. Supreme Court Hears: CONFEDERATE LICENSE PLATE CASE

Texas NAACP Statement



Austin, TX – Today the United States Supreme Court heard arguments dealing with whether Texas should allow license plates with the Confederate Battle Flag be made. President Gary Bledsoe said, "The Battle Flag is a Fighting Flag that never flew over Texas. Choosing this flag over other less strident symbols not currently associated with the white supremacist movement exposes this proposal for what it is--an unabated attempt to antagonize African-Americans and exalt white Supremacy. It is not about Southern Heritage. Taking the SCV's argument to its natural consequence, the Government would be obligated to permit license plates idealizing ISIS or Boko Haram. This makes no sense and is essentially saying anarchy prevails."

In attendance at the arguments today repre-

senting the State Conference was Texas State Conference Legal Redress Chairperson Robert Notzon, himself a descendant of a Confederate Veteran. Notzon said, "the argument that the use of the confederate battle flag is just about heritage is an inten-



tional, if not willfully ignorant, ruse to hide the very real message of racial hatred fomented by the white supremacist groups that have used the confederate battle flag as their symbol of identity. In fact, it is that very "heritage" of these hate groups using the confederate battle flag that creates the problem for many members of our society. This is not just about honoring great, great, grandfather. If that were the case, then there are many other symbols that could be used, chief of which would be the actual flag of the confederacy, rather than the battle flag with its gen-

erations-long association with intimidation and oppression. Notzon added, "I, myself, am a descendant of a confederate army officer, but in honoring my great great grandfather, I have no desire to link him with the heritage created by the white supremacists using

the confederate battle flag as their banner while lynching and burning African Americans since the end of the civil war. There is no honor that should be acknowledged by the State of Texas associated with the confederate battle flag, when it is a symbol of hate and death for so many of our citizens."

The NAACP has long been opposed to the use of this flag, adopting many national resolutions against its use and even agreeing to boycott the State of South Carolina because of its intended meaning and violence necessarily associated with its use.

## Cedar Park Municipal Elections

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon

On May 19, 2015, the residents of Cedar Park, Texas will be going to the polls to vote for various members of their City Council. Cedar Park is located North-West of Austin, which covers both Williamson and Travis County. In the past decade, Cedar Park has seen dramatic population growth and increase. According to the 2013 United States census, there are about 59,000 people living in Cedar Park, Texas.

The growing city of Cedar Park, will be voting for three new City Council seats. For Place 1, Bob Lemon will be facing



Kim Collins Gilby, Melissa Cowart and John Bucy.

Stephen Thomas. For Place 3, Melissa Cowart will be facing Lymes Grimes; and finally for Place 5, Mario L Tamalo will be facing Jon Lux. Moreover Place 3 will be an interesting race to follow.

In Place 3, the incumbent Lyle Grimes will be facing the challenger Melissa Cowart. Although Lyle Grimes the incumbent, was appointed to the

position. In other words, he has never been on the ballot. Therefore, Melissa Cowart and her team believe that they are at, "an equal standing." Melissa a wife and mother is a longtime resident of Cedar Park. In addition, she is a business owner. Although it is a nonpartisan race, she has a background similar to John Bucy, who ran as a Democrat for the Texas House District 136.

## Hindu Charities Seek to Expand to Other Communities



Dr. Thakkar (Board Member), Harish Kotecha (Founder of Hindu Charities) and Dinesh Vakharia (Scholarship Program).

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon

In 2010, the Hindu Charities was founded in Austin, Texas. According to the founders, "It was conceived for the purpose of providing the Indian American communities across the United States an opportunity to give back to the communities who have embraced and given us the chance to prosper. It has launched various initiatives to help Indian communities in the USA to get involved in giving back to their local societies."

Although the Hindu Charities first launched in the growing Indian American Diaspora, it now seeks to get individuals of all races/ethnicity on its board. Not only does it seek to have a broad base board membership but, it also seeks to get a diverse group of individuals involved through volunteering or helping with it various activities and programs.

The goal of the Hindu Charities is to help with the, "Education of the homeless children in America." Since its foundation, they have donated numerous school supplies to Austin Community College and to various Independent School Districts in the Central Texas area. For instance, they have donated scholarships of \$500 dollars each to 15 ACC students; along with scholarship of \$500 dollars each to 15 Manor ISD students; and \$1,000 dollars each to 10 students of Capital Idea. Therefore, the Hindu Charities are making great efforts help with the education of students in many communities.

**Austin Habitat for Humanity Recognized with "Affiliate of Distinction" Award for its Innovation, Leadership and Community Impact**  
Local organization is one of only 14 out of 1,400 nationally to receive prestigious distinction

**Austin, Texas (March 24, 2015)** — Austin Habitat for Humanity has been named one of 14 "Affiliates of Distinction" by Habitat for Humanity International

for its achievements and innovation in serving the Austin community. This is the second year Austin Habitat has been selected as an award recipient; the organization is the largest non-profit provider of affordable homeownership opportunities in Central Texas.

Austin Habitat for Humanity is a second-time recipient of this distinction and also received the Austin Foundation for Architecture Excellence Award for the Built Environment in 2013, the Texas Habitat Neighborhood Builder Award in 2014, and the Aus-

tin Business Journal's Green Home Builder Award in February 2015.

This summer, Austin Habitat is moving into its new home, located at 500 W. Ben White Blvd., where it will consolidate its administrative offices and ReStore, a discount home improvement store. The ReStore generates revenue that is plugged directly back into Austin Habitat programs and services. In line with organization's green initiatives, the ReStore program has recycled more than 17-million tons of construction materials.

# CLASSIFIEDS ~ PUBLIC INFORMATION

## Cmdr. Hillenkoetter: Miller unquestionably saved the lives of a number of people who might otherwise have been lost continued from page 1

closely with her office as part of her most recent efforts to secure the nation's highest military award for Miller.

They will seek support for the effort, and, starting this summer, members will be asked to write letters to the White House requesting that President Barack Obama award the Medal of Honor to Miller. She's aiming for at least 5,000 letters.

Miller was killed in action in 1943, when the ship he was serving on in the South Pacific was struck by a torpedo.

The senior surviving officer, Cmdr. R.H. Hillenkoetter, noted in the West Virginia's action report on Dec. 11, 1941, that Miller and Lt. F.H. White had been instrumental in "hauling people along through oil and water to the quarterdeck, thereby unquestionably saving the lives of a number of people who might otherwise have been lost."

Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox issued an official commendation for Miller for his actions at Pearl Harbor but recommended against the Medal of Honor.

But Adm. Chester Nimitz saw value in giving Miller an award, not just a commendation, said Regina Akers, a historian at the Naval History and Heritage Command.

"President [Franklin D.] Roosevelt approved that, but it was intervention on [Nimitz's] part that that happened," Akers said.

In early May 1942, Roosevelt approved the Navy Cross for Miller, and Nimitz, commander of the Pacific Fleet, pinned the medal on him later that month, making Miller the first African-American awarded the Navy Cross.

But advocates say he deserves the Medal of Honor.

### 70 years later

Getting the Medal of Honor for someone after more than 70 years takes time, though.

"One of the provisions is that each branch of service that they served with has to clear them to be considered when you're going to get it congressionally. I have never been able to get that done. And it's not just me," Johnson said.

The father of recently retired Rep. John Dingell of Michigan attempted to get the Medal of Honor for Miller in 1942, and Reps. Jake Pickle, Barbara Jordan, Craig Washington and Mickey Leland, also of Texas, tried after him.

The Medal of Honor usually goes through a recommendation process in the military chain of command. But that has to happen within three years of the heroic act.

After that, getting the Medal of Honor requires several extra hurdles.

First, a member of Congress must ask the secretary of the Navy, or other appropriate military branch, to review the case. If the secretary finds a serviceman deserving, Congress can pass a bill

creating an exemption from the time limits. Then the secretary can ask the president to grant the Medal of Honor.

According to a statement from Navy spokesman Lt. David Bennett, Miller's Navy Cross citation has been reviewed multiple times.

During 1988 and 1989, the Navy conducted a review of awards to African-Americans during World War II to determine whether racial discrimination had played a part in the level of awards approved.

"The 1988-1989 study concluded there was no evidence of racial discrimination in the Miller case and the heroic acts of Petty Officer Doris Miller did not rise above the line between the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross. In 1996, a second study came to the same conclusion," Bennett said.

### In Miller's wake

W. Marvin Dulaney, a professor at the University of Texas in Austin, is leading a committee of historians as part of Johnson's efforts. He said Miller was instrumental in changing the way African-Americans serve in the Navy.

"Prior to World War II, most African-Americans were required to be cooks and messmen. They couldn't join the Navy and become a seaman," Dulaney said. Miller showed that they could do more.

After Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Office of War Information published a

poster featuring Miller to encourage African-Americans to join the war effort.

"His valor and his heroism sort of set the tone for the new approach the United States Navy was going to start taking after that point," Dulaney said.

The West Virginia's captain, Mervyn S. Bennion, was awarded the Medal of Honor after he was killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor. His Medal of Honor citation said, "As commanding officer of the USS West Virginia, after being mortally wounded, Captain Bennion evidenced apparent concern only in fighting and saving his ship, and strongly protested against being carried from the bridge."

Bennion was one of 17 people who received the Medal of Honor for actions during Pearl Harbor. Of those, 11 were awarded posthumously.

No African-Americans received the Medal of Honor for actions during World War II until 1997 after a review of African-Americans who had received the Distinguished Service Cross. At that time, seven — only one of whom was still living — were upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Retired Army Colonel Fred L. Borch, president of the Orders and Medals Society of America, said the Medal of Honor is for extraordinary heroism in combat.

"The actual words are 'conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond

the call of duty,'" Borch said. "You just have to be unbelievably heroic."

The citation for Miller's Navy Cross said it was for "distinguished devotion to duty, extraordinary courage and disregard for his own personal safety."

Miller wasn't forgotten. Rep. Bill Flores, R-

Bryan, got legislation passed last year to rename the Waco VA Medical Center for Miller. The Navy named a ship for Miller in 1973. The USS Miller, a Knox-class frigate, was decommissioned in 1991. And in 2001, Cuba Gooding Jr. portrayed Miller in the movie *Pearl Harbor*.

## EMPLOYMENT / PROPOSALS PUBLIC INFORMATION FOR SALE / FOR RENT / BIDS MISCELLANEOUS

**Position:** District Clerk Civil Division Director  
**Location:** Travis County Courthouse

Manages and coordinates all functions of a District Clerk division, including, but not limited to, management of 35+ division employees, supervision of programs and operations of the division, and representation of the District Clerk in an official capacity. Manages operations in accordance with State, Federal and Local laws and guidelines, policies and procedures. For additional information see [www.traviscountytx.gov](http://www.traviscountytx.gov).



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### City of Austin Featured Job Opportunities

The City of Austin is currently seeking qualified applicants for the following positions:

- 911 Call Taker Trainee- Multiple Positions
- Parking Enforcement Officer (2 Openings)
- Video Production Specialist (Part-Time Temporary)
- Distribution Electrician
- Street & Bridge Operations Technician
- Water Meter Technician Assistant
- Dispatcher Technician- Temporary
- Inclusion and Adaptive Programs Activity Specialist I, II, III
- Engineer A
- Administrative Specialist

Please visit the City of Austin employment website at [www.austincityjobs.org](http://www.austincityjobs.org) to view requirements and apply for these and other job opportunities. We encourage you to check the employment website often as new job opportunities are posted daily.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please call 512-974-3210 or email us at [employment.services@austintexas.gov](mailto:employment.services@austintexas.gov).

The City of Austin is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



### City of Austin Purchasing Office

The City of Austin Purchasing Office invites you to view current bid solicitations at [https://www.ci.austin.tx.us/financeonline/vendor\\_connection/solicitation/solicitations.cfm](https://www.ci.austin.tx.us/financeonline/vendor_connection/solicitation/solicitations.cfm). Vendors are encouraged to register on-line in the City's Vendor Self Service System. Once your company is registered, you will receive notifications about new bid opportunities. For additional information regarding current bid opportunities or Vendor Registration, please call the Purchasing Office at 512-974-2500.

For information on the City of Austin's Minority Owned and Women-Owned Procurement Program and the certification process, please contact the Small & Minority Business Resources Department at 512-974-7600 or visit their website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/snbr>.

## AKAs Host Public Luncheon

### to Honor Outstanding Service to the Community



Mayor Taylor



Richard Overton



Dr. Loston



Navarro Williams

The city of San Antonio will be flooded with the illustrious women of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority, Inc. fulfilling their Sorority's mission of being a service to all mankind this Easter Weekend, April 2-5, 2015. Members of the South Central Region, made up of members from Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and New Mexico are proud to host its 83<sup>rd</sup> South Central Regional Conference in San Antonio and are expecting more than 3,000 members and their families to be in attendance. There will be several programs and initiatives that members will partake in that will help them to transform their communities for the better in education, health, the environment, the family, and in the development of youth. One of the conference's highlights includes a public luncheon that will focus on programs and initiatives that will specifically impact the San Antonio/Austin communities while also acknowledging the works of individuals and corporations who work to make a difference in San Antonio and neighboring communities. San Antonio's Mayor, Ivy Taylor, Richard Overton of Austin (thought to be the oldest living veteran in the United States), Dr. Adena Willams Loston (14<sup>th</sup> President of St. Philips College), Navarro Williams (SAMMS Ministries); USAA, Mr. Gordan Hartman (Morgan's Wonderland), and the Warrior and Family Support Center are a few among those who will be honored at this highly anticipated

event. KENS 5 Reporter Marvin Hurst will be the Master of Ceremony. Tickets are \$60. For more information, or to purchase a ticket, please contact Mrs. Pamela Ray at (210) 724-0189.

Another highlight for this year's conference focuses on the opportunity for local vendors to purchase booths and participate in what has traditionally been available to only AKA approved vendors. Interested vendors can contact Ms. Monica Robinson at (210) 601-6124 for more information.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA) is an international service sorority founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington D.C. on January 15, 1908. Today, the sorority has more than 265,000 members; consisting of 972 chapters in 42 states, the US Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Germany, South Korea, Japan, Liberia, and Canada, and is composed of ten regions.

The South Central Region of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority Inc. which is comprised of members from Arkansas, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Texas is under the leadership of Mrs. Chelle Luper Wilson, Regional Director. Austin's own Beta Psi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. is one of several host chapters that is hard at work preparing to host over 3,000 participants.

## PROGRAMS ~ AWARENESS

## What Black TV Looks Like Today

by Shirley Hammond  
Villager Columnist

Whatever your race, color or creed; when Forbes notices you, it means something. In 2013, they noticed how African-American writer, producer and director Shonda Rhimes has created and run two successful shows on ABC. First there was the medical show "Grey's Anatomy" and more recently, "Scandal." According to the Forbes article, those two shows bring in \$13,000,000 weekly in advertising revenue. Nielsen Ratings reports that "Scandal," a political thriller of the first order, is viewed by 10.1% of black households each week, making it the highest rated scripted television drama among African-Americans. The particular distinction of this show is that it is the first network drama written and produced by an African American woman which has an African-American woman playing

the lead character. That lead actress would be none other than Kerry Washington. Not to take away anything from these two shows, nor the actors or the writer/director; there are more than a few shows that have African-American leads. There are more than a few that are getting some serious viewing time.

Consider for example, a family friendly show, also offered by ABC. The show, "Black-ish," features Tracee Ellis Ross playing opposite Anthony Anderson as parents to four adorable children. Ross, daughter of songstress Diana Ross, has been outspoken and supportive of the cultural identity and realistic elements of the show. Subject matters such as subtle black signals (The Nod), pranking protocol (The Prank) and entitled children (The Gift of Hunger) have been tackled in episodes.

ABC also provides the controversial drama, "How



To Get Away With Murder," with Viola Davis playing an attorney professor whose home and life demands that she stay one step ahead of anyone who might oppose her. She is depicted as constantly outsmarting and out thinking others. She gets client cases where she offers her legal expertise and courtroom savvy, all while dealing with an ugly personal secret that keeps sighing louder and louder with each cliff-hanging episode.

While that show is done for the season, a new show featuring Regina

King is taking its ABC time slot on Thursdays. In "American Crime," King portrays a devout Muslim who is brother to a drug addict and murder suspect. This crime drama is written and produced by John Ridley, who wrote "12 Years a Slave."

Fox TV has definitely threw their names in the fray with the scintillating musical drama, "Empire." Taraj P. Henson, who has channeled a diverse array of female roles, plays the matriarch of a music empire on this show. As an ex-con, who took one for the family, she is released

in the first episode and returns to her broken and talented family to stir up some heat, bring out some skeletons and get what she feels is her just desert. Terrence Howard plays the family patriarch, but it's clear that he has to jockey for power and solid footing from his business savvy, street smart ex-wife.

On BET, which used to seem like the main go-to place for black television where people could see images of themselves; there is "Being Mary Jane." On this show, Gabrielle Union plays a news anchor/reporter who tackles some controversial stories in the course of her very public career. The show is a creation of Mara Brock Akil, who also brought "Girlfriends" into prominence. Other projects such as "South Central," and "Moesha" are to her credit.

Soon BET will feature their BLACK GIRLS ROCK (BGR) Award show, which is a collaboration between

them and Bondvision Media Production. BGR promotes the arts for young women of color. The award show will air on April 5 on BET, with Regina King and Tracee Ellis Rock serving as co-hosts.

This brings the story back to Shonda Rhimes, who was noticed by ABC before Forbes got her story. ABC Entertainment Group president, Paul Lee, was credited with saying, "What Shonda Rhimes possesses is this extraordinary instinct and compass for what our audience needs."

Rhimes, who recently received the Ally for Equality Award, stated that she believes in making television look like the real world. She gave a Human Rights Campaign speech which was quoted in numerous sound bites.

In an Entertainment Weekly interview, she explained, "The goal is that everyone should get to turn on the TV and see someone who looks like them and loves them."

## Realizing the Freelancer's Dream



by Shirley Hammond  
Villager Newspaper

Some people have this idea or notion that if they could freelance or consult and be their own boss, they would be on easy street. They could set their own hours and not have to answer to a boss. It ends up that this may still be a dream and an ideal for life; but it will also come with some new responsibilities, including becoming one's own boss and even working longer hours than most jobs demand. Those who think that consulting or free-lancing would help them fulfill their highest ideals have a chance to hear from some panelists who've done it. The Exploring Entrepreneurship:

Freelancing and Consulting workshop will take place on March 31 at the IBC Bank Community Room from 11:30am-1:00pm. The bank is located at 2817 East Cesar Chavez.

The term free-lance is broadly applied to work that one does as a form of self-employment. This can include the fields of music, copy editing, journalism, writing, photography, programming, web design, event planning and more.

Consulting is the work which involves

offering expert advice in a particular field. Those fields can be technical or in some professional area like education.

Included in the discussion will be insights about juggling the responsibilities that come with freelancing or consulting. This includes sales, production/service, customer service and billing. Additional information about networking savvy, time management and making the transition from being under the authority of a boss to being

one's own boss will be presented.

Three featured entrepreneurs will serve as panelists. They include Jim Comer, with Comer Communications, Ilene Haddad with Ilene Haddad Graphic Design and Kandi Cook with KC Couture Styles.

According to his website and other information, Jim Comer is known as a presentation guru. His company offers presentation/speech writing coaching, speech workshops and training in public

speaking across several industries.

According to her LinkedIn profile, Ilene Haddad is a graphic designer, cartoonist and occasional blogger. She is also listed as founder of BlogathonATX, where every year one day is dedicated to discussions about blogging, technology, social media and collaboration.

Per her website, Kandi Cook has a boutique consulting firm that helps both genders and businesses learn how to cultivate a

unique signature style of dress.

The moderator for the panel discussion will be Ron Oliveira with Oliveira Public Communications.

The workshop is one of several presentations presented by The City of Austin Small Business Development.

While lunch is provided and registration is free, there is a 425 no-show fee.

For more information, visit <http://www.austinsmallbiz.com/WebCOE/new-sbdp-calendar.htm>.

**Texas  
Community  
Futures Forum  
set for April 13  
in Austin will  
focus on  
grass-roots  
consensus  
building**

AUSTIN – The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Travis County Extension Leadership Advisory Board will hold the Texas Community Futures Forum on April 13, 2015 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM, on the first floor of the Travis County Hall of Government, 700 Lavaca St, in Austin.

Daphne Richards, the Interim County Extension

Director, says that the Forum is being held in Travis County to assist local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Agents and the Leadership Advisory Board identify the most critical issues affecting local citizens. "Extension has a rich history of providing educational programs that address the most critical issues in the county, specifically in pro-

gram areas related to agriculture and natural resources, families and health, youth development, and community development." In order to make sure that Extension programs being planned for the future are on target, Travis County residents are invited to participate in this grass-roots, consensus building forum. "We need input from the local community members

to shape our focus for the next five years. We want to make sure that we're meeting the needs of Travis County residents," Richards said.

The meeting should last less than two hours, and refreshments will be served. For more information, or to RSVP, please contact the Extension office at 512.854.9600, or email Richards at [drichards@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:drichards@ag.tamu.edu).

Join us, have fun and celebrate a great man at the 5th annual

**B.L. JOYCE PARADE**

**Friday March 27, 2015 6pm-9pm**

**Grand Marshals: Helen Miller and Vera Givens**

**Starts at Huston Tillotson University and  
Ends at the George Washington Carver Museum**



### OPEN GOVERNMENT SYMPOSIUM

The City of Austin's Open Government Symposium will be held Thursday, April 9, 2015 at City Hall (301 W. 2nd Street). This free, one-day community event will feature speakers on a range of open government issues including legislation, litigation, transparency innovation, and fostering an ethical environment.

**2015 Agenda 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

Panel 1, Plenary: Why Acting Legally & Ethically Matters  
Panel 2A: Open Government - Litigation Developments  
Panel 2B: Open Government - Legislative Developments  
Lunch on the Plaza (Registered Attendees)  
Panel 3, Plenary: Views From A County Attorney's Office  
Panel 4A: Open Government - Innovations  
Panel 4B: Open Government - Beyond the City  
Panel 5, Plenary: Why Municipal Open Government Matter

<http://austintexas.gov/opengov2015>