

“Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.” ~ Abraham Lincoln



ISSN # 0746-7303

The Dallas Post Tribune

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VOLUME 78 NUMBER 42

SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

July 16 - 22, 2026

Ted Cruz warns Talarico has “real chance” to flip Texas’ U.S. Senate seat

By Renzo Downey, The Texas Tribune

Calling in to Sean Hannity’s radio show Wednesday, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz offered a blunt warning cry to his party: Democratic state Rep. James Talarico has a legitimate shot at flipping Texas this year.

“Unfortunately, I do think he has a real chance,” Cruz told Gov. Greg Abbott, who guest hosted the three-hour talk radio program. “I think this is a real race. I think it’s going to be

close. I think we’re going to win, I think we’re going to keep Texas red, but the polling right now shows this is a 1- or 2-point race.”

Cruz went on to call the Austin Democrat “radical” and “extreme” for labeling God nonbinary, saying there are six recognized sexes and previously running a “non-meat” reelection campaign, all part of the trove of attacks Republicans have unfurled against the

Democratic Senate nominee.

Cruz, Texas’ future senior senator, speaks from some experience. At 2.6 points, his 2018 reelection margin marked Texas’ closest statewide race this millennium. Recent public polling has shown Talarico running neck and neck with the GOP nominee, Attorney General Ken Paxton — well ahead of where the polls had Cruz’s opponent, Beto

O’Rourke, at the same point six years ago.

As in 2018, the national environment looks ripe for Democrats given voter backlash to President Donald Trump, whose approval rating has settled just under 40% since late April. And once again, Texas Democrats are running a candidate who hopes to appeal to middle-of-the-road voters.

Continue **Senate** Page 3

Dallas Mayoral Candidate Michael ‘Doc’ Hinojosa Announces Endorsements

Former Dallas ISD Superintendent Michael ‘Doc’ Hinojosa Announces First Round of Endorsements in...

DALLAS, Texas — Michael “Doc” Hinojosa, award winning Dallas Independent School District Superintendent, longtime public education leader and proud Dallas ISD graduate, today announced the first endorsements in the race for Dallas Mayor.

“I’m honored to have the support of leaders who have devoted their careers to serving Dallas and strengthening our communities,” said Michael “Doc” Hinojosa. “Their endorsements reflect a shared belief that our city is strongest when we bring people together across neighborhoods, backgrounds and generations. As mayor, I will build broad coalitions, focus on practical solutions and ensure every Dallas resident has the opportunity to thrive.”

• Dr. Lew Blackburn, Former DISD Trustee member

• Bernadette Nutall, Former DISD Board of Trustee member

• Joyce Foreman, Current DISD Board of Trustee member

• John Proctor, Chairman of the Regional Black Contractors Association

• Adam Medrano Former Dallas City Councilman

• Roberto Alonzo, Former Texas State House Representative

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Hinojosa

How People Are Fighting Back from Unexpected Expenses

By Arin Barry

Source: Black Press USA Wire



Photo Credit: NNPA Files

Building Financial Resilience When One Bad Month Threatens to Become Many

In a piece first published by Black Press USA, contributing writer Arin Barry breaks down how people are fighting back against unexpected expenses that derail household budgets. Barry covers building emergency fund buffers through small, automatic

transfers, tackling high-interest debt first, reviewing insurance coverage against real risk, and recognizing "doom spending" as an emotional trigger, while noting that Black Americans face added structural barriers, including lower wealth and credit access, that make financial stability harder to build.

People are fighting back against unexpected ex-

penses by building flexible buffers instead of rigid budgets, shifting to side hustles for extra income, shopping around for better rates on essentials, and treating financial literacy as a priority.

More households are asking the same questions. How do you recover when one unexpected cost triggers a chain reaction across the rest of your spend-

ing? What helps keep one bad month from turning into long-term financial strain?

If a surprise bill has ever wrecked your entire month, you are not alone. A survey by Qualtrics for Intuit Credit Karma found that nearly half of U.S. respondents, 49%, said their finances took a turn for the worse in 2025. Most pointed to unexpected ex-

penses as the main reason their budgets slipped.

Financial resilience is not about avoiding problems. It is about being able to absorb them without everything spiraling at once, and building it starts with knowing where the danger lies. Common risks include medical emergencies such

Continue Page 2
Expenses



Michael Jackson — (Constru-centro, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons) / NNPA

'Michael's' Billion-Dollar Success Meets a Stunning Family Reversal

By Stacy M. Brown

Source: Black Press USA Wire

As the blockbuster “Michael” crossed the \$1 billion mark at the worldwide box office and cemented Michael Jackson’s estate as the steward of the first music biopic ever to reach the milestone, another chapter

involving one of the singer’s closest relationships has moved into federal court.

A lawsuit filed by four members of the Cascio family has generated headlines around the world. But

court records, public financial filings and interviews with people close to the estate and Jackson family reveal a far more complicated story involving bankruptcy

Continue **Success** Page 7



Recognizing #BLACK EXCELLENCE for 78 Years



Local Children's Literacy Advocate Shares Five Simple Ways Parents Can Prepare Children for a Successful School Year

North Texas founder encourages families to build confidence through reading before the first school bell rings.



Sharon Jones-Scaife
Founder & CEO, Lil' Marco and Friends

PRINCETON, Texas (July 9, 2026) — As families across North Texas begin checking off back-to-school shopping lists, children's literacy advocate Sharon Jones-Scaife is encouraging parents to prepare children for something just as important as backpacks and school supplies—a confident start to the new school year through the power of reading.

While parents often focus on notebooks, pencils, and new clothes, Jones-Scaife believes one of the greatest investments families can make before the first day of school is spending just 20 minutes a day reading together. “Preparing children for

school isn't just about having the right supplies,” said Jones-Scaife. “It's about helping them walk into the classroom believing they can succeed. Reading together builds confidence, strengthens family connections, and helps children develop a love of learning before the school year even begins.”

Jones-Scaife is the Founder and CEO of Lil' Marco and Friends, a North Texas children's literacy company dedicated to helping children build confidence, character, and a lifelong love of reading through inclusive books and educational experiences. Since founding the company, she has helped place more than 60,000

books into the hands of children through storybooks, educational activity books, school visits, literacy events, and community partnerships throughout North Texas.

As students prepare to return to school, Jones-Scaife encourages parents to focus on five simple habits that can make a lasting difference in a child's confidence and enthusiasm for learning.

Five Simple Ways Parents Can Prepare Children for School Success

Read together every day. Even 20 minutes of reading together helps strengthen vocabulary, confidence, comprehension, and family connection.

Let children choose books that interest them. Children are far more likely to develop a love of reading when they are excited about the story.

Talk about the stories you read. Simple conversations help children think critically, build communication skills, and improve comprehension.

Celebrate effort instead of perfection. Children become confident learners when they know mistakes are part of learning and growth.

Create a simple family reading routine. Whether it's before bedtime, after dinner, or on weekends, consistency is more impor-

tant than perfection.

“Children who enjoy reading often become more confident learners,” Jones-Scaife said. “My hope is that every family discovers that reading together doesn't have to be complicated. A few minutes each day can create memories, strengthen relationships, and help children walk into school believing in themselves.”

Jones-Scaife is available for television, radio, podcast, newspaper, and magazine interviews to discuss:

- Five simple ways parents can prepare children for a successful school year
- Helping reluctant readers discover the joy of reading
- Building children's confidence through literacy
- Creating family reading routines that work
- Choosing books that engage young readers
- Why representation and positive storytelling matter in children's literature

As schools prepare to welcome students back into classrooms, Jones-Scaife hopes to remind families that one of the most valuable back-to-school investments doesn't come from a store—it comes from spending meaningful time together with a good book.



Continued Page 1
Expense

as urgent care, prescriptions or dental issues; vehicle repairs or tire replacements; home repairs or appliance replacements; and family emergencies or support.

From there, the next step is setting emergency fund goals. Experts often suggest saving three to six months of living expenses. That might sound like a huge amount, but it does not have to happen overnight. Even \$20 a month into a separate account builds a buffer over time. Consistency matters more than the size of any single deposit. Setting up automatic transfers, so a small, steady portion of each paycheck moves into savings, takes the decision out of your hands. Putting windfalls such as tax refunds or work bonuses straight into that account, rather than spending them, speeds things along. The money should stay out of a primary checking account, where it is too easy to spend on groceries or entertainment instead.

Tightening expenses is another piece of the puzzle. Paying close attention to where money is going makes it easier to stay on top of fixed costs, prioritize what matters most, and adjust spending where it makes sense. That can

mean switching providers or dropping a higher-tier plan that is not really needed. Going through subscriptions and memberships and canceling what is no longer used frees up money that can go toward savings or everyday essentials instead.

Debt deserves the same focused approach. Rather than trying to clear everything at once, tackling the highest-interest balance first reduces stress and frees up cash flow faster than spreading payments thin across every account.

Building skills matters as much as building savings. In 2025, nearly three-quarters of Americans said they either already had a side hustle or were seriously considering starting one. Side income does not have to mean a second full-time job. Basic admin work, tutoring, repairs, digital tasks, driving or delivery, and handmade crafts or products are all common starting points. Taking classes or earning certifications, and keeping a resume up to date, rounds out the picture.

Insurance is the first line of defense, but only if the coverage matches the real risk. If coverage is too low or does not apply to the type of risk faced, most of the cost still lands on the policyholder. Nobody needs every type of insurance at the highest level,

but covering the biggest risks first, health insurance, car insurance, home or renter's insurance, and income protection or disability coverage, keeps unexpected expenses from turning into long-term financial problems. Reviewing policies once a year is worth the time.

Financial literacy, including basic skills such as budgeting, understanding debt, knowing how interest works and making informed choices about saving and spending, is often discussed alongside broader economic conditions, including income and wealth inequality in the United States. It matters, but it does not operate in isolation. An Annuity.org report highlights that many Black Americans continue to face lower levels of wealth, credit challenges and lower retirement savings, factors that can make it harder to build financial stability over time.

Doom spending, or making purchases in response to economic anxiety rather than as a planned decision, is one of the more common ways financial resilience breaks down. Recognizing the emotional trigger behind a purchase, rather than just the price tag, is often the first step toward breaking that cycle.

Continue Page 7
Expense

JULY is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month - Focuses on improving mental health among minority communities.

Teddy's Creation

Youth News

July 15, 2026



SUMMER FUN WORD SEARCH



Find and circle the words from the list below!

S	U	N	S	H	I	N	E	B	A	L	L
B	E	A	C	H	T	O	W	E	L	S	U
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V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	F	U	N	H
W	A	T	E	R	M	E	L	O	N	K	I
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WORD BANK

SUNSHINE
BEACH
ICE CREAM
VACATION

WATERMELON
SANDCASTLE
SWIMMING
FRIENDS

BBQ
PICNIC
SUMMER
TOWEL

BALL
PLAY
FUN
POOL

SUNHAT
TRIP



ANSWER KEY ON PAGE 7



RELIGIOUS/NEWS

The Apostle John’s Letter to the Church at Sardis

Revelation 3:1-6



Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith

The Apostle John’s letter to the church at Sardis may be outlined under six headings: Destination (3:1), The Lord (3:1), Commendation (None), Condemnation (3:1b-2), Exhortation (3:3-4), Promise (3:5-6).

Destination (Revelation 3:1)

Sardis was about thirty miles south of Thyatira and was known for its wool industry. The word Sardis is probably from a Hebrew word meaning “rest or remnant.” This church may represent the Reformation period from 1500 to around 1750 A.D.

The Lord (Revelation 3:1)

Christ, the originator of this letter, is identified as having the

seven spirits of God (Revelation 1:4; 5:6). This is perhaps a reference to the perfection of the Holy Spirit, for the number seven denotes wholeness and completeness. If the church was to have life, it had to come from the Holy Spirit. Christ is also seen as the One who sustains the Pastors and has control over them!

Commendation (None)

There is no initial message of commendation.

Condemnation (Revelation 3:1b-2)

Christ was aware of everything this church was doing. They had a name (reputation) for being alive. They were regarded

as being an effective church, but they were devoid of spiritual life and power! They were truly satisfied with having a great name, but they had no depth of spiritual power. They had an impressive appearance, but they were lacking spiritual vitality! In verse 2, they were admonished to wake up, and be constantly on the alert. They needed to open their eyes and take a serious look at their terrible condition. Their service for the Lord was not perfect or complete. They had fallen far from Christ’s goal for them.

Exhortation (Revelation 3:3-4)

To remedy their poor spiritual condition, Christ exhorted them to remember the teaching they

had received and accepted at first. This was a call to go back to the basics! They were to concentrate on things that were truly important. What counts is not one’s reputation before others but approval from God! God was not satisfied with the church at Sardis. The members were living phony and hypocritical lives, trusting in their shallow reputation. This church needed to wake up from its spiritual stupor and repent. If they refuse to repent, Christ will come upon them suddenly, like a thief. He would come as a thief simply means He would come unexpectedly: “Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee” (Revelation 3:3). In verse 4, there was a small faithful remnant (a few names) who had not soiled their

garments (compromised with pagan society). The faithful remnant shall be privileged to walk with Christ, signifying having fellowship with Christ.

Promise (Revelation 3:5-6)

The believers (overcomers) are promised eternal citizenship in heaven. All believers’ names are written in the book of life. Our names will never be blotted out of the book of life because we are eternally secured in Jesus Christ (John 10:28-30). Another promise by Christ is that He will confess our names before God the Father and the angels. We need to heed this important message to the church of Sardis.

May God Bless!

CONTINUED SENATE PAGE 1

“This guy is also charming,” Cruz warned. “He is affable, he sounds like a preacher, and I worry about the voters who may not be paying close attention to the issues, who just turn on the TV and say, ‘Oh, he seems like a nice young man.’”

Abbott was more optimistic. “I personally think Talarico is going to be very beatable once Texans get to know who he really is,” the governor said, pointing to the litany of attack lines Cruz recounted. Abbott, who is up for reelection in November, has trained his early fire on Talarico, repeatedly calling him “Jimmy Talarico” while ignoring his actual opponent, state Rep. Gina Hinojosa, D-Austin.

Paxton has faced his own share of attack ads, including from Republicans hoping to stop

him from ousting U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in the primary. Cruz encouraged Republicans and “ordinary commonsense Texans” to vote, echoing concerns Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has raised repeatedly about the prospect of a divided GOP spelling the party’s defeat. In particular, Patrick has called on Cornyn to do more to help Paxton.

Cornyn has said he will support the Republican ticket but told reporters he will not campaign for Paxton.

“We need John to come around,” Patrick told conservative radio host Mark Davis on Wednesday morning, while also questioning whether acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock had officially endorsed his successor, GOP nominee Don Huffines, since losing the primary. Han-

cock announced his resignation last month, and Abbott said he would tap Huffines, Abbott’s one-time gubernatorial challenger, to fill the remainder of the term.

Cruz, meanwhile, was not the only guest to bash Talarico during Abbott’s run as talk radio host. Later in the show, National Republican Senatorial Committee Chair Tim Scott, a senator from South Carolina, likened Talarico’s values to the “amorality” of embattled Maine Senate candidate Graham Platner, who has described himself as a democratic socialist. Platner suspended his campaign Wednesday amid accusations of rape and sexual misconduct.

“Democrats are bound and determined to turn the page to socialism today and communism

tomorrow,” Scott said.

Abbott, a former Texas Supreme Court justice, and Cruz, a former state solicitor general, also discussed the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision rejecting Trump’s executive order banning birthright citizenship. The pair discussed ways around the ruling outside of a constitutional amendment, including passing a federal law or executive order denying visas to women who are visibly pregnant.

“If it’s someone coming before there’s any indication they’re pregnant, that’s one thing, but if someone is seven, eight, nine months pregnant and visibly pregnant, I think the administration ought to say we will not grant a tourist visa, visitor visa or any other visa to anyone who is pregnant,” Cruz said.

“That makes sense, and there’s no legal impediment to doing that.”

The governor’s other guests included White House border czar Tom Homan, newly anointed trillionaire Elon Musk, Buc’ee’s founder and CEO Arch “Beaver” Aplin III and Longhorns Football Coach Steve Sarkisian. Notably, neither Homan nor Abbott addressed the fatal shooting of a man in Houston on Tuesday by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

Humoring the governor, Musk told Abbott he’d try to get a Texas flag emoji on his social media platform, X, drawing a round of applause from the governor over the air.

This article first appeared on The Texas Tribune.

~ THEME: KIDS' CLASSICS (Solution will appear in July 23 edition)

- ACROSS
- Capital of Ghana
 - Pilot's announcement
 - Bog deposit
 - Banned aerosol propellant
 - Lake, in France
 - ____ firma
 - Source of chocolate
 - Sensitive subject?
 - Twig of a willow tree
 - *Certain secret spot
 - *Beezus' little sister
 - Half a dozen
 - Final notice
 - CEO's deg.
 - Spew profanities
 - Swamp
 - Gateway ____
 - Boisterous play
 - *"All for one and one for all," to Musketeers
 - Steak preference
 - Flower's peak
 - *Butter____, Hogsmeade beverage
 - Like some East Coast universities
 - Archipelago unit
 - Plaintiff
 - Loads
 - Tiny bit
 - Snoop
 - Bruce and Spike, e.g.
 - Ovine mom
 - *Pocketful
 - *Cat's
 - *Lemony Snicket, to Daniel Handler
 - Shel Silverstein's "A Boy Named ____"
 - The company one ____
 - *Peanut butter and jelly sandwich to a kid
 - Lt.'s subordinate
 - Snail mail replacement
 - Says "What?"
 - As opposed to yeses
 - *Mystery solver

- DOWN
- Half of NFL
 - Rugged rock
 - Cecum, pl.
 - Lion sounds
 - Relating to anode
 - Dashing style
 - *"It" game
 - Sour
 - 100 centavos, in Mexico
 - Actress Moriarty
 - Equals 1/2 b x h
 - Smoker's lung residue
 - Double drum
 - Beyond suburb
 - Heart to Cupid
 - Reverse one, in the kitchen
 - *Super Bro.
 - "Music to my ears!"
 - Like thick smoke
 - Same as solos
 - Schneider and Reiner, e.g.
 - Consumed (2 words)
 - Ranch grazer
 - *Game of apologies
 - Achilles' weakness
 - Ralph Lauren's inspiration
 - Same as metre
 - Yummy
 - *" ____ Spot Run"
 - Rouse
 - Ruhr's industrial center
 - Swelling
 - Arithmetic operation
 - Piglet sound
 - Cul de ____, pl.
 - ____pool or ____pit
 - Like hard times
 - "The Iliad," e.g.
 - Pie ____ mode
 - *Shedding-type card game
 - *Like Aesop's fox

Statepoint Crossword Puzzle Theme: KIDS' CLASSICS

CROSSWORD													
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71						72				73			

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CLASSIFIEDS/NEWS

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Continue Page 1 Hinojosa

- Jorge Baldor, Founder Latino Center for Leadership Development
- Ron Price, Former DISD Board of Trustee Member
- Rene and Bea Martinez, Community Leaders
- Domingo Garcia, Former President of the League of United Latin American Citizens, State House Representative, Dallas City Mayor Pro Tem and Councilman
- Don Zale, Chairman of Zales Corp and Business Leader
- Eric Reeves, Former NC State Senator
- Debbie Sherrington, Community and Business Leader
- Mike and Debi Moses, Former DISD Superintendent
- Wes Jurey, Managing Partner at the South Dallas Employment Project

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The Dallas Post Tribune

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Now Is Planning Time For Politics Going Forward

By: **Dr. John E. Warren**, Publisher
San Diego Voice & Viewpoint Newspaper
Chairman of the Board of Directors, NNPA

Dr. John E. Warren

With the Fourth of July and its 250-year celebrations behind us, along with most Political Primaries, including California and the Mid Term General Elections four months away, many political entities are engaged in plan-

ning and budget preparations, most of which do not include most of us.

While a number of groups are organizing to get out the vote and to encourage voter registration, our personal efforts must focus on where we are and who each of us can personally reach. We must renew discussion groups that help a whole new generation and some of us who came before them, understand the importance of each and every vote.

We must be reminded that many people who came before us gave their lives for our right to vote. Can we allow them to have died in vain? The an-

swer is no. The personal decision is that “we will not”.

Now, in the month of July, while many are on vacation, we must be engaged in planning our workshops and town hall meetings. There are several groups and organizations in the community that have already scheduled such events for the month of September. This is important to know because Labor Day has become the official start of intense political activity going toward the November General Election. The San Diego Voice & Viewpoint will make its facility available to the ex-

tent possible for some community meetings, not all. We encourage other members of the Black Press to do the same in their cities where possible. We must not lose this election because of low voter turnout due to a lack of interest and dollars to get us involved. While dollars will help, we must not fail to act because we were waiting for someone else to fund us when we are still Buying What We Want And Not Supporting What We Need.

Please share your thoughts and interest with us so that we can inspire others.

Quinn Minute

Have people improved?

By Rix Quinn

Have people evolved much?
We, humans, possess remarkable powers. We can walk, run, swim, and even fly (if we hold a boarding pass). Other creatures aren’t so adaptable.
Fish can swim but walk poorly. Birds can fly but often misjudge altitude and end up as hood ornaments.

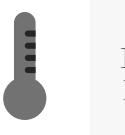
Some snakes can squeeze you to death... but who wants an affectionate reptile? Bears possess power but hibernate all winter, missing some great parties.
Rabbits multiply quickly, but can’t understand other math. Amoebas divide, but separate from their better halves.
Beavers build constantly, but live a dam

hard life. Wild pigs are unpredictable and can boar you senseless. Turtles appear gentle, but rarely come out of their shells.
However, animals can learn by trial and error.
Scientists discovered that many beasts can master complicated tricks if rewarded with food. I also love to be re-

warded with food and I have personally mastered many complicated recipes.
Over the centuries, folks have survived with intellect, ingenuity, and improvisation.
And when cornered – unlike animals – some folks can talk their way out of trouble. That’s a skill I have not yet mastered.

Recognizing #BLACK EXCELLENCE for 78 Years

7 Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, July 16	Friday, July 17	Saturday, July 18	Sunday, July 19	Monday, July 20	Tuesday, July 21	Wednesday, July 22
 H -85° L -76°	 H 88° L -78°	 H -92° L -78°	 H -95° L -78°	 H -97° L -81*	 H - 96° L - 81°	 H -95° L -80°

After a Fight for a Permit, Veritas Academy Is Still Standing

By **Fela Jamal**
Source: Black Press USA Wire



Susie Brooks, center, with Veritas Academy boys basketball players.
— Photo Credit: Courtesy.

From Nairobi to North Branch: Susie Brooks' Fight to Build Veritas Academy

Contributing writer Fela Jamal profiles Susie Brooks, founder of Veritas Academy, a classical Christian school in North Branch built around international and residential student programs. Brooks traces her path from a traumatic childhood in Nairobi to a career in higher education, and the frustration with how diversity was discussed there that pushed her to start her own school with three students and no money, overcoming a zoning dispute that drew national attention along the way.

By any measure, Susie Brooks did not have a typical childhood. Growing up in Nairobi, Kenya, she reflects on being raised by a

mother who had survived a traumatic experience at the hands of a minister connected to a missionary organization. “My mother was raped, and that’s how I came to be,” Brooks says. “I was a product of rape, so I don’t have a father.”

She shared that her mother died when Brooks was six, leading to being placed with a family she describes as unkind. At 17, she struck out on her own, facing years of hardship without money or family support. But she held on to a sense of hope she credits to her mother, a Christian woman who believed things would get better even when others told Brooks she would amount to nothing.

Years later, at 19, Brooks reconnected with a family from the same church as the man who had inflicted harm

on her mother. The relationship grew close enough that they helped fund her college education in the Netherlands, her first opportunity to leave Kenya. She thrived there as an international business student, and an exchange program brought her to the University of Akron in Ohio in 1997. An internship eventually took her to Alaska, where she landed a job and later moved to Minnesota to follow a relationship that did not last. She decided to stay in the state anyway, working first in the coffee industry before landing at a Christian university, where she finished a master’s degree and discovered a passion for education.

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Working across three universities, Brooks noticed the same pattern: students arriving unprepared for college-level work, forcing schools to spend money on remedial classes for material she believed should have been mastered in K-12. The disconnect pushed her to leave higher education in 2012 and focus on younger students instead. She quickly realized she was not suited to working inside someone else’s system. “If you are a visionary, it’s very

hard to go and work under someone else’s vision,” she says, “because you want to fix things, you want to make some changes.”

Around the time her son entered kindergarten, Brooks discovered classical education and became convinced it offered the most complete path to preparing students for leadership. That conviction, paired with her frustration with how diversity was discussed in higher education, led her to found Veritas Academy, a classical Christian school built around international student and residential programs. She says diversity conversations in higher ed rarely felt like an even playing field. “It never felt like we were starting out neutral and we were all the same,” she says. Instead, she felt the message was that others were being granted a seat at a table where white men remained in charge, with the implicit reminder that outsiders would never truly belong.

Brooks started Veritas with three students and no money, relying on private donors to get off the ground. Finding a home for the school proved difficult. After a two-year search, she and her team purchased a building in North Branch, only to have the township deny their permit, citing zoning while, according to Brooks, making comments that suggested the objection

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EDITORIAL PAGE

How Do You Feel Now About How You Voted In 2024?

By James B. Ewers Jr., Ed.



Dr. James Ewers

All of us have had occasions in life when we made the wrong choice. After all, life is about the choices that we make. Each day, from our rising to our resting, we make decisions. It's inevitable. Being a part of our society requires that we engage in decision-making. As a child maturing, I had to make choices each day. Mind you, the choices that I made really didn't move the needle that much. As children, we made childlike decisions. Over time, our decisions mattered much more. Decisions about college, where to live, and, of course, our life's work. Relationships and friendships, too, had a bearing on what our futures would be. When you are young, you have your parents to guide you and to assist you if you make a wrong turn. The key, though, is to listen to them and not have a hard head. You know what that makes. Sometimes, as adults, we listen to other adults to help us make personal choices. Now, that approach can be both good and bad. Wouldn't you agree? If a person is easily swayed, they'll probably decide based on what someone else says. You let others make the decision for you. One of the greatest privileges that we have in the United States of America is the right to vote. It is individual freedom that we should not take for granted. Globally, there are countries that wish they had what we have. Humbly, I say that I have never voted in a group. I have always read about candidates' issues and qualifications when voting for people. The review process has always worked well for me. Have the candidates and issues that I voted for always won? No, they have not. I voted for a presidential candidate in 2024, and they did not win. The candidate I voted for had a platform for the people and had leadership experience throughout her career. Her last experience was that of serving as the vice president of the United States of America. I voted for Kamala Harris. To this day, I do not regret voting for her. She was the best choice, an opinion shared by many people. There simply weren't enough people who thought that way. Now, we have what we have. Since that November night, we have lost standing in the world. We are seen as bullies and takers. We are no longer thought of as participants in the global uplift of the world. The perception and reality are that we force our way into getting what we want. Look at us now. Are these the results that you expected? As we celebrated our 250th birthday, did you think we would be in this morass of mayhem and misery? If you are honest with yourself, the answer is no. Did you buy as much food to celebrate as you did last year? Just be clear and say no. Were you missing people at your table or at your backyard barbecue? There are thousands of people documented and in various stages of documentation who are now in jails. Some you will never hear about again in life. They have become persona non grata (an unwelcome person). They were simply taken by force and in horrific fashion from their families. What is so sad about this scenario is that some of their relatives voted against Kamala Harris. They were sold a bill of goods with no receipt and now, no refund. You are stuck. That's what happens when you stop listening to verified facts. Now you sit discouraged and disillusioned. Do you remember the timeless expression, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me"? Weren't you fooled the first time? I guess not. Poll numbers are not good. It doesn't matter what poll you review. The numbers don't lie. This is our present-day circumstance.. How do you feel about your vote now? Tell the truth.

Remembering: The Masterful Tony Brown

By Dr. J. Ester Davis



J. Ester Davis and Tony Brown

My whole life changed in 1974 when I left for Rochester, New York, and a new position with the Eastman Kodak Company. I was hired in 1972 and stayed at home, working in the Dallas-area locations. Rochester was indeed a whole new 'country' because there was still snow on the ground in early Spring. There were heated sidewalks and deer that roamed the campuses. From that year on, I spent four (4) to twelve (12) weeks in Rochester, mostly in class at the Marketing Education Center with a dress code. On weekends, we were free to roam anywhere, including Canada. It was on one of those weekends in the city at the "Black Fashion Museum" that I met Tony Brown. Tony Brown kept up with 'all things black'. Before the 1980's, J. Morris Anderson, founder of the Miss Black America Pageant, Inc., started the company because his young daughter wanted to be a beauty queen. That company soared to nationwide status. I was invited to the nationals in Los Angeles... and so was Tony Brown. The Miss Black America Pageant received a substantial advertising boost from Avon Corporation, contributing to its many years of success. In 1982, Tony Brown gave President Reagan a platform request for African Americans in his administration. Not sure about his timing, but he had a master plan to run for President of the United States to get the attention of African Americans. The plan for that experience was to start with the 150 noted black conventions. Tony did a strategic line item study of these conventions held each year at a luxurious hotel resort, and the activity surrounding preparation was all detailed in his timeline, scaled at retail cost, I might add. The common-sense approach, according to the legendary crusader, was to omit the conventions for one year. Place the sum of the funds in a financial institution and watch it grow. In 1989, Dallas writer Charles O'Neal wrote an article about ABRO (Alliance of Black Retail Owners). ABRO was a nationwide "buying service" for small black boutiques. But along the way, students joined tours of the fashion industry. Prairie View's Department of Fashion Design was the first college to request inclusion. After some research, I saw a need to unite these small businesses... to become more competitive while enjoying a happy romance with that bottom line. Diane Fuller, owner of an upscale boutique in Houston, had an unmatched clientele of AME worshipers from her town to Los Angeles... Bishops worldwide: We registered several boutiques with this resume. Another favorite story I just have to squeeze in. Now, retired Judge Alan Page, who played and graduated from Notre Dame in 1967, wanted 5th graders to read. It came to pass after a scribbled proposal written on a napkin. Alan Page announced a 10-city tour speaking directly to inner-city 5th graders about reading. But, of course, Dallas had to be on that list. And black reading was a 'hot topic' on Tony Brown's Journal. More importantly, Professor Brown was indeed the Executive Producer of Tony Brown's Journal when public affairs was true to its creed and intentions. Tony Brown finally came to Texas for the Coca-Cola 'Black Expo USA', hanging out with the models backstage at the Convention Center and me. He was a speaker at one of the three Black Enterprise Conferences held in Dallas. What a pleasure to have known such a talent...for all of us.

Esterdavis2000@gmail.com

HEALTH FAIR



Continued Page 2 Expenses

Staying on track financially is not a one-time task. Setting aside time each week or month to review accounts and spending, and looking for patterns instead of fixating on every transaction, makes it easier to catch problems early. Keeping essentials, savings and everyday spending separate makes it easier to see where money is actually going, and anyone who feels overwhelmed should not hesitate to seek profes-

sional financial planning advice.

A workable budget does not have to be complicated, but it has to match real life rather than ideal spending. Starting with actual income, listing fixed costs such as rent, transportation, utilities and basic debt payments, and then splitting the remainder into categories like food, personal spending and savings gives every dollar a job before the month even starts.

Unexpected expenses are part of life. Nobody can prevent every flat tire or every leak, but building an

emergency fund and staying on top of debt changes how those events affect a household. The next bill will come. The goal is to already be ready for it.

This article appeared first in Black Press USA. It has been edited for style and length.

For the original, visit <https://blackpressusa.com/unexpected-expenses-are-breaking-personal-budgets-heres-how-people-are-fighting-back/>. Arin Barry is a contributing writer for Black Press USA.

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.” - M.L.K., Jr.

Continued Success Page 1

proceedings, tax liens, foreclosure litigation, an alleged unpaid \$600,000 loan from Jackson himself and a family that for decades stood among the superstar’s most vocal defenders.

The federal complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, accuses Jackson of sexually abusing Edward Cascio, Dominic Savini Cascio, Marie-Nicole Porte and Aldo Cascio while they were children. It names the Michael Jackson Company, co-executors John Branca and the late John McClain, MJJ Productions, MJJ Ventures and others as defendants, asserting claims that include sex trafficking of children, negligence, fraud and breach of fiduciary duty.

For those who knew Jackson, however, the lawsuit represents an extraordinary reversal.

Jackson first met Dominic Cascio Sr. in 1984 while he was serving as banquet and general manager at New York City’s Helmsley Palace Hotel. The chance meeting developed into one of the closest friendships of Jackson’s adult life.

Over the next quarter-century, Jackson became a frequent guest at the Cascio family’s home in Hawthorne, New Jersey. He celebrated holidays with the family, spent extended periods there away from the pressures of celebrity and developed close relationships with the Cascio children. Just as significant, the family became one of the very few outside Jackson’s immediate relatives whom he trusted around Prince, Paris and Bigi Jackson, the children who today are among the principal beneficiaries of his estate.

That history makes today’s litigation particularly striking.

For years, Frank Cascio emerged as one of Jackson’s strongest public defenders.

In interviews, public ap-

pearances and his memoir, Frank Cascio repeatedly rejected allegations that Jackson abused children. He described Jackson as a loving friend and insisted the entertainer never behaved inappropriately toward him or members of his family. During appearances with Oprah Winfrey and Wendy Williams, he defended Jackson’s character and dismissed earlier accusations against the singer. Years later, members of that same family are now asking a federal jury to hold Jackson’s estate liable for allegations they say occurred decades ago.

People close to the estate and Jackson family say the lawsuit cannot be viewed apart from the family’s financial history.

Public court records reviewed by The Informer show that James Victor Porte, the husband of plaintiff Marie-Nicole Porte, sought Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in South Carolina in November 2025 before the case was converted to Chapter 7. During those proceedings, a bankruptcy judge granted a lender relief from the automatic stay, allowing foreclosure remedies involving real property to proceed.

Public records also show plaintiff Edward J. Cascio previously filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy protection in New Jersey.

Additional public filings document federal tax liens involving the Portes.

Sources familiar with the estate also pointed to a residence in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, valued at approximately \$1 million, while arguing that Jackson himself had already demonstrated extraordinary financial generosity toward the family years earlier.

According to multiple people familiar with Jackson’s finances, the singer loaned Dominic Cascio Sr. approximately \$600,000. Those sources contend they have never found evidence

the money was repaid.

“The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” one family associate said. “They are just trying to get money that they don’t deserve.”

The latest lawsuit also follows an earlier dispute first reported exclusively by the Informer.

Last September, The Informer revealed that the estate had accused former Jackson associates of attempting to obtain \$213 million while threatening to publicize allegations they had spent years publicly denying. At the time, Branca described the effort as “a shakedown” and declared, “Enough is enough.”

Branca, who this week celebrated the new film’s milestone with social media postings, has consistently rejected accusations that Jackson abused children, speaking from a position few others occupied.

His relationship with Jackson stretched over decades. Although the two occasionally disagreed professionally, Jackson repeatedly returned to Branca for advice. Eight days before Jackson died in June 2009, the two reunited at rehearsals for “This Is It” at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

“Trust was never easy for Michael,” Branca told the Black Press in a recent interview. “We had a wonderful relationship in the ‘80s and a little more challenging as time went on because there were so many people in his ear... We parted ways on more than one occasion over the decades, but we always reunited when it counted.”

When Jackson finalized his estate plan, he selected Branca and longtime music executive John McClain to serve as co-executors, a decision Branca said demonstrated the trust Jackson ultimately placed in them.

“In the end he chose to keep John McClain and me in the will as executors and that said a lot to us,” Branca said.

Teddy’s Answer Key

Youth News

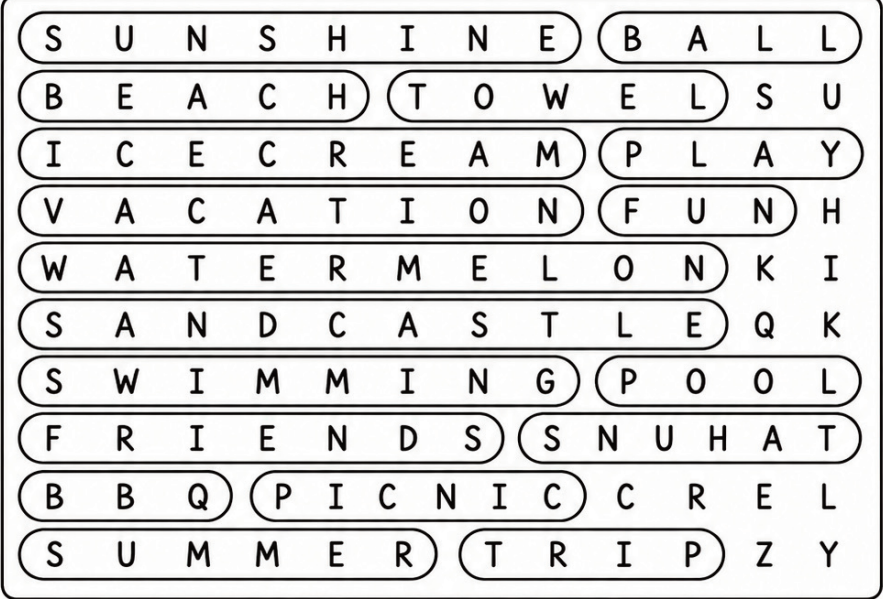
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