Davis my pick for JC Smith

Now that Johnson C. Smith has given football coach Kermit Blount his walking papers, I have a couple of questions:

What took so long?

Who's next?

The first may be something humans will never figure out, like the meaning of life. Six years without a winning season is a mighty long time to prove you're not up to the task. I'll hand it to the university brass, though – they showed a lot of patience. Problem is, they wore out everybody else's. But enough about rehashing the lowlights.

If Smith, which has five winning seasons since 1996, is to become sustainably relevant in football, the school needs to make a splash hire.

HERBERT L. WHITE

Someone readily identifiable in the community, can rally people and knows his way around a football field at the highest level.

My pick is Thomas Davis.

He's never been a coach at any level, but as a recently retired NFL linebacker with ties to Charlotte through his long career with the Carolina Panthers and philanthropy, he's exactly what JCSU needs. I don't know if Davis would want to coach anywhere, much less a Division II program where losing is ingrained in its culture, but somebody should inquire. Make him say no – or yes, by some miracle – and go from there.

Other HBCUs have taken a similar approach. Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee Deion Sanders still has tongues wagging for taking the Jackson State gig and supplanting Grambling as the biggest fish in Black college football. Eddie George, a semifinalist for the hall, is trying to match Sanders at Tennessee State, a legendary program back in the day but an afterthought in today's Ohio Valley Conference.

Davis isn't as accomplished in terms of NFL on-field accolades, but he would give Smith the kind of public profile it can't buy. Imagine having this dude walk into a high school recruit's living room with a scholarship offer or pitching alumni about opening their checkbooks.

That's the first step toward winning. It would also signal a new era of accountability. In announcing Blount's dismissal, Smith athletics director Steve Joyner talked about opening a new era. Davis would be an ideal face for the program because of his NFL bona fides and people skills. Even local media who have given up on covering JCSU athletics would have reason to return.

Face it: To compete at anything – whether it's football or selling newspaper subscriptions – you need to invest in people and facilities. Smith and Davis would put themselves in position to do more of both. The curious would show up for games. Doors to long-shut community support are more likely to swing open. The larger community would have reason to talk about Smith athletics, an upgrade from being totally ignored. And perhaps winning will follow.

I couldn't go to a football game the last couple seasons without having both ears bent about why Blount wasn't sent packing. He earned a one-year extension by leading JCSU to a 4-6 finish in 2019, double the win total the previous season. Then COVID-19 scratched the 2020 campaign, followed by the 2021 disaster.

The writing was on the wall once Smith lost to Allen and Bluefield State, programs that are new to Division II football. It became pronounced when they couldn't compete against a clearly diminished Winston-Salem State and Livingstone delivered the coup de grâce by whipping the Golden Bulls on the field before a brawl brought the regular season to an inglorious end with a no-contest.

Maybe Davis could turn it around, maybe not.

Sports

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The Triangle TRIBUNE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021 – PAGE 1B

HBCU FOOTBALL

Bowie State coach Damon Wilson led the Bulldogs to another record-breaking season.

MEAC's Carter and Durant named players of the year

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

The honors just keep rolling for Bowie State, whose season ended last weekend against Valdosta State.

Senior Jonathan Ross earned the Super Region Two Defensive Player of the Year Award to lead five Bulldogs on the All Super Region Two teams.

Bowie coach Damon Wilson was named the AFCA NCAA Division II Region 2 coach of the year. Wilson led the Bulldogs to a second straight (minus 2020) undefeated conference season.

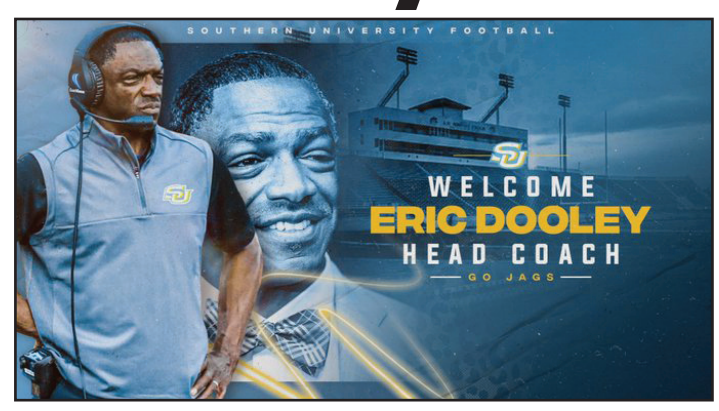
MEAC

Norfolk State redshirt senior quarterback Juan Carter was named the 2021 MEAC offensive player of the year.

South Carolina State continues its dominance by claiming another defensive player of the year – this time graduate defensive back Decobie Durant.

The announcement was made Tuesday during the National Football Foundation & College Football Hall of Fame press conference in Las Vegas.

"These two young men represent the continuing legacy of stellar student-athletes that this conference has produced since its founding more than 50 years ago," MEAC Commissioner Dennis E. Thomas said. "The work that they have done as both students in the classroom and athletes on the football field are a direct correlation to ideals taught by the institutions that they represent."



Carter led the league with 2,511 passing yards, 21 touchdown passes and a 63.8 completion percentage. He also rushed for 390 yards and six more TDs. Carter is now the Spartans all-time passing leader (9,271 yards) and in total offensive yards (10,249).

Durant amassed 37 tackles, including 29 solo, this season. He also led the MEAC in passes defended with 14. The pro prospect will guide the Bulldogs in next weekend's Cricket Celebration Bowl and will

Please see **HONORS/2B**

HBCU BASKETBALL

St. Aug's women off to one of best starts

By Bonitta Best
editor@triangletribune.com

WOMEN

N.C. Central (0-7)

The Lady Eagles visit their archrival this weekend in Greensboro. NCCU swept North Carolina A&T last season – twice during the regular season and in the first round of the tournament.

The Eagles are then off until Dec. 20, when Johnson & Wales comes to Durham for a 3 p.m. contest.

St. Augustine's (4-3)

The Lady Falcons won their second straight game and fourth in the last five contests after cruising by Bluefield State 83-51.

SAU travels to UNC Pembroke this Sunday before heading to Elizabeth City State next Saturday.

* **Notes:** Freshman guard Lauren Banks is the Food Lion women's rookie of the week, her second such honor this season.

COURTESY

Jordan Parks

St. Augustine's women have won 4 of 5.

Shaw (3-5)

After the postponement of their Nov. 30 Bluefield matchup, the Lady Bears will not have played for almost three weeks when they host Fayetteville State Dec. 15 at 6 p.m.

The Lady Broncos are the defending CIAA champions.

MEN

N.C. Central (3-7)

The Eagles got behind early and couldn't sustain a comeback against The Citadel Monday night. The 80-

Please see **SAU/2B**

COLLEGE CORNER

Lowe's CIAA Senior Class Award candidates

WOMEN

N.C. Central

The Eagles women and men opened the indoor season last weekend at the Visit Winston-Salem College Kickoff.

"We utilize this first meet to spearhead us into the spring semester," track and field/cross country coach Tavius "T.J." Walker said. "It helps us determine where we are, coming from the summer and preseason conditioning, to see what we have and to start our fine-tuning."

St. Augustine's

Senior Janina Mayers is a candidate for the 2021-22 Lowe's CIAA Senior Class Award. The trophy goes to a female and male student-athlete that exhibits excellence in the classroom, athletics, the community and personally. Mayers has a 4.0 cumulative GPA and

Please see **LOWES/2B**

NCAT track and field looks to exceed success

Both teams picked to win the Big South

By Erin E. Mizelle
N.C. A&T SPORTS INFORMATION

EAST GREENSBORO – North Carolina A&T track and field has enjoyed all the spoils of a champion. Downtown Greensboro allowed large, life-sized pictures of the NCAA outdoor champions to drape from parking decks.

Organizations threw numerous banquets to honor Aggies track and field. There were media and appearance requests for Olympians Randolph Ross Jr. and Trevor Stewart and coach Duane Ross. Images of Aggie national champions fill Truist Stadium. The Carolina Panthers invited Ross Jr. and Stewart to #KeepPounding by pounding the ceremonial drum before a preseason game, and Ross Jr. marshaled a parade.

But now, as the hoopla has subsided and 2022 approaches, it is time to get back to business and NCAT track and field couldn't be happier. The Aggies

Please see **SUCCESS/2B**

COURTESY

Virginia Union coach Mike Morita

COURTESY

Left to right: Juan Carter and Decobie Durant.

CIAA and MEAC players earn honors

Continued from page 1B

participate in the prestigious East/West Shrine Bowl in February.

Durant is the fifth Bulldog in seven seasons to earn defensive player of the year. SCSU won it four years straight with Javon Hargrove and Darius Leonard each winning the title twice from 2014-17.

North Carolina A&T's Darry Johnson Jr. broke the streak in 2018, and North Carolina Central's Darius Royster won it the following season. The MEAC canceled its 2020 season.

SWAC

Former Prairie View A&M coach Eric Dooley tied for the Region 3 coach of the year. Dooley will accept his award in a Southern uniform after being named the Jaguars head coach on Monday.

The Cricket Celebration Bowl matchup is set after Jackson State defeated PVAM 27-10. The Tigers will battle S.C. State Dec. 18 in Atlanta.

Virginia Union

The American Football Coaches Association named Panthers assistant coach Mike Morita the national assistant coach of the year.

Bowie State senior Jonathan Ross

Morita has coached at VUU for five seasons. He led the Panthers to the third best offense in the CIAA with a 362-yard average.

Bowls

The HBCU Legacy Bowl keeps adding players to its all-star roster for February in New Orleans:

* Prairie View OL Danny Garza
* Florida A&M OL Keenan Forbes
* N.C. A&T OL De'Jour Simpson
* Kentucky State RB Brett Sylve
* Chowan QB Bryce Witt
* Norfolk State DE Chris Myers

St. Augustine's women off to one of best starts

Continued from page 1B

67 loss was NCCU's second in a row.

Dontavius King scored 12 of his 16 points in the second half and grabbed 10 rebounds for his first double-double of the season. The Eagles have a rematch with Gardner-Webb Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. at McDougald. The Runnin' Bulldogs won the first contest 83-58 in November.

And former Eagle great Jordan Parks recently was named the top performer of the week in Italy. Parks recorded 18 points, 12 rebounds, two assists, two steals and a block in a recent game.

St. Augustine's (2-7)

After a thrilling last-second win over Bluefield State, the Falcons couldn't duplicate the feat against Johnson & Wales Tuesday. SAU lost 94-90 after trailing by as many as 15 points in the second half.

Sophomore guard Dhashon Dyson scored a team-high 26 points. The Falcons have a rematch with USC Aiken this Sunday before heading to Elizabeth City State next Saturday.

* **Notes:** Freshman guard Brian Keith Jr. is the Food Lion men's rookie of the week.

Shaw (4-2)

The Bears will follow the women in next Wednesday's Fayetteville State matchup. Shaw travels to Elon next Saturday for an exhibition contest.

Howard

The Bison men's basketball team has signed an NIL deal with College H.U.N.K.S. Hauling Junk moving company. The company's deal is believed to be the first one signed with an entire HBCU team. Players will receive an amount up front to split among themselves and earn more through company incentives.

"Our business started as an underdog with a beat-up cargo van in college, so aligning with student-athletes that historically have not received large media attention is important to our brand purpose," said co-owner Nick Friedman who played on Howard's intramural club basketball team. "College H.U.N.K.S. has a diverse team, and we strive to brighten the spotlight within and outside of our brand to build leaders and make a positive impact."

Delaware State

New Hornets coach Stan Waterman is the recipient of the 2021 John Wooden Legacy Award, presented to the top high school coach in the country.

Before DSU, Waterman led Stanford School in Wilmington, Delaware, to eight state high school championships in 30 years. He amassed 571 wins and 10 state titles.

NCCU ran its first track and field meet for the first time in 644 days.

Lowe's CIAA Senior Class Award candidates announced

Continued from page 1B

will graduate in May with an exercise science degree.

Shaw

Volleyball player Jessica Kelley is a candidate for the Lowe's Award.

MEAC

Five MEAC bowling teams are ranked in the latest National Tenpin Coaches Association Top 25 poll.

North Carolina A&T moved up to No. 4, Delaware State is at No. 14, Morgan State makes its debut at No. 16, Maryland Eastern Shore is No. 18 and Monmouth is No. 25. Remember, the Aggies and Monmouth are associate members for bowling only.

MEN

N.C. Central

The Eagles return 30 veterans to indoor track, including two-time MEAC medalist Marvin Jones and senior Earl Green.

"We are very excited about our returners and how they can utilize their experience to help guide and bring along the freshmen and newcomers," Walker continued. "It is essential that we have those individuals with experience, especially since we did not have an indoor season, and were excited about them having the opportunity to do what they love."

St. Augustine's

Senior D'Ontre Gilliard is a candidate for the Lowe's Award. Gillard has a 3.58 GPA and will graduate in May with a computer information science degree. He plans to attend graduate school at N.C. A&T

Shaw

Tennis player Panashe Garah is a candidate for the Lowe's Award.

And in case you haven't heard or seen, Shaw and the Platinum Sound are featured in a McDonald's advertising campaign. There's a McDonald's across from the campus, and you know students are its biggest customers. The title of the commercial is "Like the student union... but with fries."

N.C. A&T

The Aggies have partnered with the Taylor-Made Golf Company to receive accessories and equipment. NCAT will get bags, gloves, hats, golf balls and clubs.

"North Carolina A&T State University entered into collegiate golf five years ago with the inaugural season of our women's golf program.

"The men came a year later, and it is astounding how far both programs have come in a short time," athletic director Earl M. Hilton III said.

"Our agreement with TaylorMade is another giant step forward in the progression of women's and men's golf at North Carolina A&T. I am super excited for coach Richard Watkins and his golf programs."

NC A&T track teams look to repeat last year's success

Continued from page 1B

opened the indoor track and field season last weekend at the College Kickoff Classic at the JDL Fast Track in Winston-Salem. "Everybody is excited especially coming off what we did this past season," Ross said. "There is a lot of anticipation. Our freshmen are ready to jump on the track and try to outdo what the upperclassmen have already accomplished."

If the freshmen can exceed the accomplishments of their predecessors, a national championship could follow. The achievements in 2021 came in bunches.

One female and nine males reached the NCAA indoor championships last season after the MEAC canceled the 2021 conference championship meet. The men's indoor 4x400-meter indoor team of Ross Jr., Stewart, Daniel Stokes and Elijah Young won the national championship. Ross Jr. finished second nationally in the indoor 400 meters. The U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association named Ross Jr., Southeast Region athlete of the year.

Then there was the outdoor season. Both the men's and women's track and field teams reached the top-10 nationally. In addition, both won their respective MEAC titles in record-breaking fashion. The men scored a conference record 290 points, and the women broke the MEAC record with 288 points. It was the fourth straight conference title for the men, and the third in four seasons for the women. In addition, Ross sent a school-record 27 student-athletes to NCAA regionals, which resulted in the Aggies sending a school-record nine to the NCAA championships.

Delecia McDuffie earned first-team All-American honors during the 2021 indoor season.

Do NC A&T men have the goods to repeat again?

They brought home four event national championships. Cambrea Sturgis won the women's 100 meters and 200 meters NCAA titles, and Ross Jr. helped the Aggies 4x400 team couple their indoor title with an outdoor title. He also took home the men's 400m title. "That's one of the things about our program," Ross said. "We always want to do better than the year prior. We put that expectation on the incoming athletes. So the talk at practice is about competing at a higher level than we did last year. I think if we could compete all year long, I think we would."

One of the Aggies newest challenges is becoming dominant in their new conference. They have already earned credibility in the league. Both programs are picked to win the conference. The women earned seven first-place votes, and the men earned eight.

NCAT's most formidable competition appears to be High Point and Hampton universities. But, for the Aggies, it doesn't matter if it is Norfolk State or Florida A&M or HPU and Hampton; the preparation is still the same.

"We are going to prepare the way we always prepare," Ross said. "The Big South is not changing anything about how we recruit or about how we train or how we coordinate our competitions. That would be giving our opponents way too much influence on how we do things within our program. I bet you everyone else in the conference will conform to what we're doing before we conform to what they're doing."

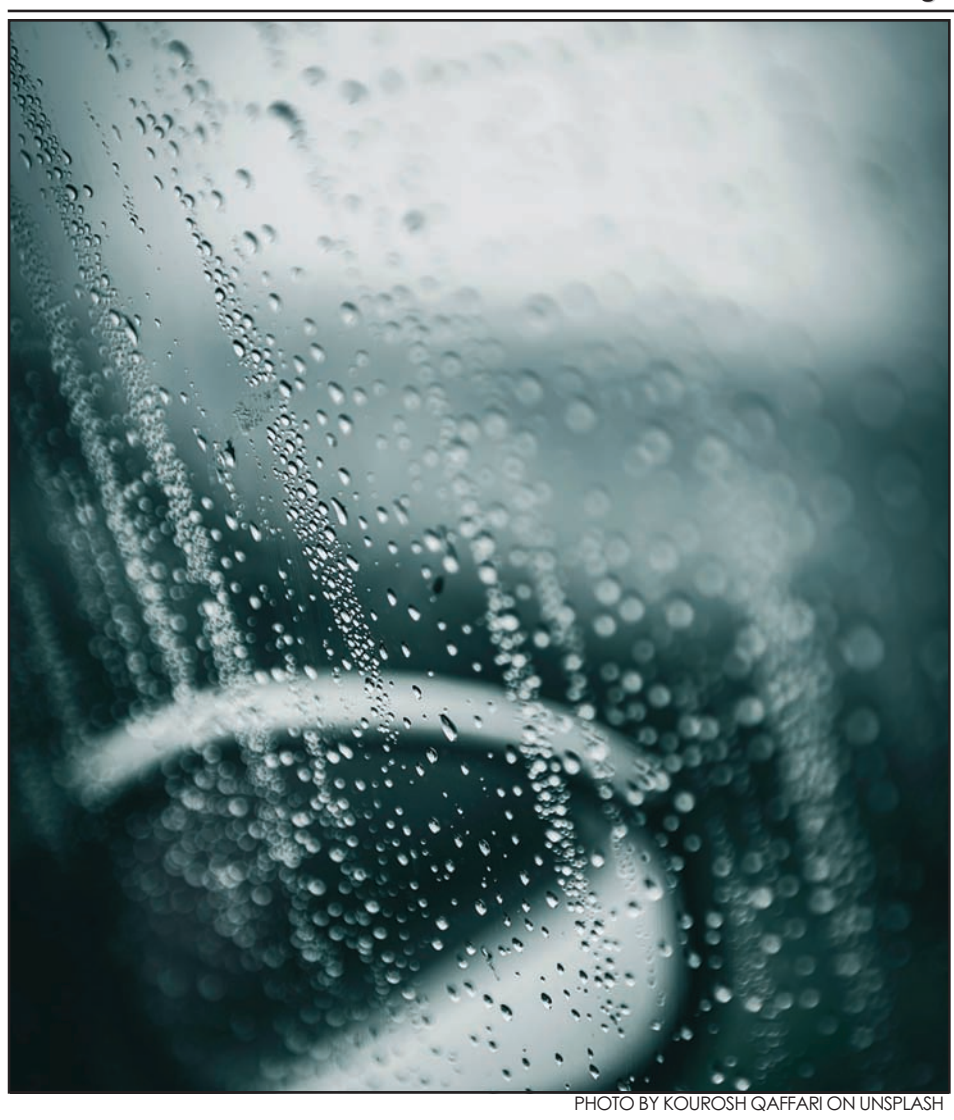


PHOTO BY KOUROSH QAFFARI ON UNSPLASH

New study finds crimes go up when it rains on Sundays

By Bob Smietana
RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

To help people avoid sin, pastors often advise prayer, going to church and reading the Bible or other religious books. They might also want to get a few umbrellas.

A forthcoming study from the Review of Economics and Statistics found that the more it rains on Sunday mornings, the more white-collar, drug- and alcohol-related crimes there are.

More rain means fewer people go to church, said the study's author, Jonathan Moreno-Medina, assistant professor of economics at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

The decline in church attendance is correlated with an increase in yearly rates of arrests for certain kinds of crime, including embezzlement, fraud, drug possession and driving under the influence.

"The results suggest that church attendance reduces the prevalence of substance-related crimes and white-collar crimes," the study found. "At the same time, there is a lack of evidence supporting the notion that church attendance alleviates serious crimes, such as murder, robbery or rape."

Moreno-Medina said he has long been interested in discussions about the impact religion has on the broader culture.

Some people argue religion can solve all of society's problems, he said. Others argue religion is irrelevant.

For this new study, titled "Sinning in the Rain," he was hoping new data sources, such as Google's Popular Times, would allow him to measure changes in religious behavior and to see what effects those changes had. He also relied on the American Time Use Survey, which helped him identify when people are at church — usually on Sunday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m. He then looked at rainfall during those times as well as arrest rates overall, curious to see what he would find. "I didn't know what exactly I should expect," he said.

Moreno-Medina said a number of factors, including weather, have been shown to affect crime rates. For example, he said, hotter weather is sometimes correlated with more violent crimes. The calendar also plays a role: Other studies have found that fewer crimes occur on Sundays than on other days of the week. "It can readily be corroborated that Sundays are the days when fewest crimes are committed and that there is no jump in crime right after the time of church," Moreno-Medina argues in the study.

A number of previous studies have found a connection between crime and religious behavior. In 2018, a group of sociologists looked at 40 years of studies about the impact of religion on crime and found "certain aspects of religion reduce participation in criminal activity."

"In addition," the study concluded, "the specific ways in which these factors are associated with crime reduction have not been comprehensively identified."

A 2008 study in The Quarterly Journal of Economics found that the repeal of so-called blue laws — which limited commercial activity on Sundays — led to increased drug and alcohol use. And a 2006 study in the Journal of Law and Economics found that crime rates go up slightly after Easter — at a time when people are most likely to go to church. Growing up religious has also been associated with better health outcomes, as has regular participation in religious services.

Moreno-Medina takes a middle road when it comes to the relationship between religion and crime. He pointed out that, at least in his study, less church attendance seemed to have no impact on more violent kinds of crime. And while religion is important, he said, it's not a cure-all.

"I don't want to push it to say that this study is showing that religion is required for our community to be able to live in harmony," he said.

AROUND THE TRIANGLE

RALEIGH
THEATRE
Cinderella returns to Raleigh Little Theatre Dec. 3-19 onsite. Visit www.RaleighLittleTheatre.org.

MOTOWN
A Motown Christmas play is Dec. 10-12, 17-19, Pure Life Theatre Company, 3801 Hillsborough St., Suite 113. Tickets at purelifetheatre.com.

MEETING
A public meeting on draft recommendations for transit on New Bern Avenue is Dec. 14, 5-8:30 p.m., Tarboro Community Center. Contact: Jason.Hardin@raleighnc.gov.

GARDENING
Plant N' Sip evening of gardening is Dec. 18, 5-8 p.m., Black Farmers Hub, 1409 Cross St. Register at pedal2petal@gmail.com.

WATER
The NCDHHS has a new program to help families pay their water bill. Visit www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/ to apply.

PRODUCE
The Produce Project has added John Chavis Memorial Park as a pickup location for free produce every Thursday from 3-8 p.m. at the Carousel. Order at www.produceproject.org.

CARY
WAKE DEMS
Western Wake Democrats' holiday party is Dec. 15, 6-8 p.m., Cary Mellow Mushroom. Register at www.meetup.com.

CONCERT
The Gospel Breakthrough Christmas Concert is Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m., Freeway Church, 742 E. Chatham St., Suite F. Register at www.gospelbreakthrough.eventbrite.com.

MARKET
Cary Holiday Market is Dec. 18-19, Cary Public Library, 310 S. Academy St.

DURHAM
ARTISTS
A free business skills course for emerging local artists will be held Jan. 12-Feb. 16 via six virtual classes. Visit www.durhambusiness360.com. Deadline: Dec. 15.

EXHIBIT
The Durham Victims of Homicide and Violent Death Quilt exhibit is on display now thru Dec. 17, Courthouse lobby, 501 S. Dillard St.

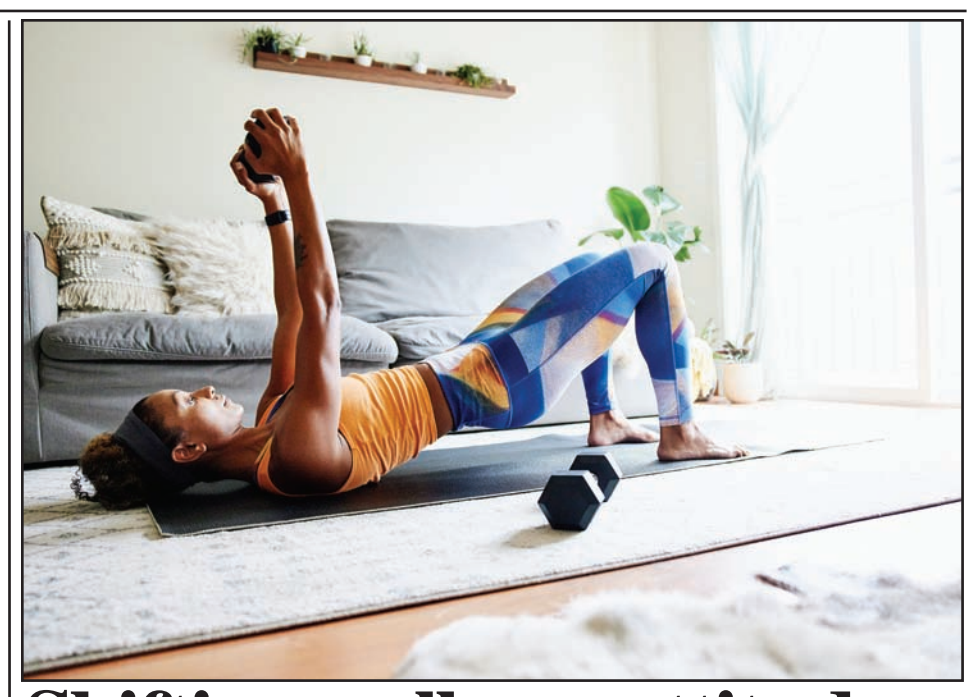
PARADE
Durham Holiday Parade is Dec. 18, 11 a.m., downtown Main Street.

BOOK LAUNCH
Abigail's Dream Book Launch is Dec. 18, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Future Leaders Preschool, 3707 Garret Road.

POP-UP
MAKRS Society will host its next pop-up market Dec. 19, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Durham Central Park, 501 Foster St.

ORANGE COUNTY
CENTER
Orange County Rape Crisis Center will host its annual auction fundraiser Dec. 12, 7 p.m. Contact: Nicole@ocrcc.org.

MISC.
ARTISTS
SisterSong is seeking a visual artist for its "Mothering in Abundance" program. Email questions to simran@sistersongnet.



Shifting wellness attitudes shape 2022 fitness trends

FAMILY FEATURES

In adjusting to the constraints of the pandemic, many Americans had to improvise where and how they worked out. After months of adapting to a "gym anywhere" mentality and learning to accommodate more flexible workout schedules, this new fitness mindset is inspiring some larger trends for healthier living.

"We've learned that wellness is not one size fits all, and that it's achieved by small habits like regular hydration that can really impact how you feel throughout the day," said celebrity fitness trainer Harley Pasternak. "Collectively, nourishing both body and mind together as one makes holistic health a sustainable lifestyle."

Pasternak and the experts at Propel Fitness Water are forecasting five fitness and wellness trends to watch for in 2022:

Accountability Buddies
When gym closures ran rampant, folks leaned on others for inspiration to get moving, so it's no surprise working out in pairs (or more) is a continued way to focus on fitness. Feelings of burnout may be common heading into 2022, so having a partner who gives you a healthy sense of camaraderie and competition can help push you to show up on days when you'd rather rest and stay committed to your goals. It also provides a sounding board when you need suggestions for nutritious recipes or fresh at-home cardio ideas.

Gym Spaces and Schedules
When a large segment of the workforce started working from home, the rituals of before- and after-work gym visits fell by the wayside. People grew more accustomed to improvising where they work out, whether it was their neighbor's garage, their living room or a running path in the city. As exercisers are less beholden to studio or gym schedules, the "gym anywhere" mentality is a level of flexibility many are holding on to, even as they ease back into more normal work routines.

Health in Small, Achievable Doses
This trend is all about recognizing health transformations don't happen overnight, and even modest steps can make a big difference in how you feel throughout the day. One example is paying more attention to your hydration. If you aren't properly hydrated, few other things tend to go right either. Small habits like throwing Propel Powder Packs into your gym, work or school bag can make a difference. Filled with enough electrolytes to replace what is lost in sweat, they are handy for on-the-go hydration and are easy to add to a water bottle.

Wellness Goals vs. Fitness
Committing to overall wellness is more about lifestyle changes than numbers like weight loss or muscle mass. People embracing this trend are forgoing numeric goals based on performance in the gym or on the scale and instead emphasizing outcomes that affect life, nourishing both body and mind together as one.

Fitness goals are an essential component, but so is supporting your mental health as well as being cognizant of what you're putting into your body. When each piece is well taken care of, your body is better able to work like a well-oiled machine.

Low-Impact Workouts
This year, walking treadmill challenges gained virality on social media, marking the increasing popularity of workouts that are low impact yet effective.

Getting moving is the key, even if it means taking your tempo down. You don't need to do hours of HIIT every day to see results. In fact, less time- and energy-intensive workouts are easier to sustain and can often yield the same, or better, results.

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Tis the holiday baking season for goodies

FAMILY FEATURES

One of the best parts of the holidays is the aromas and flavors of the season, from walnuts and cinnamon to peppermint and nutmeg. Sweet treats and mouthwatering desserts can bring family and friends around the table to celebrate the season together, one bite at a time.

During your festive gatherings this year, choose walnuts as the star baking ingredient. As many home cooks turn to wholesome ingredients that offer health benefits, California walnuts make for a perfect addition to almost any dish and are an excellent source of omega-3. With a buttery flavor that elevates traditional and modern recipes, home bakers can do more with walnuts in the kitchen.

Walnut Pumpkin Cream Cheese Tart
Total time: 2 hours, 30 minutes
Servings: 12

Sweet Tart Crust:
1-1/4 cups flour
1/3 cup California walnuts, finely chopped
1/3 cup powdered sugar
1/3 cup salted butter, softened
1 large egg
nonstick cooking spray

Filling:
1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
4 ounces low-fat cream cheese, softened
½-cup brown sugar, packed
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg, plus 1 egg yolk
½-cup California walnuts, coarsely chopped

To make sweet tart crust: In medium bowl, stir flour, walnuts and powdered sugar. Stir in butter and egg. Using fork, stir well until soft dough forms. Gather into ball and wrap tightly.

Refrigerate at least 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.

Preheat oven to 350 F and coat 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom with nonstick cooking spray.

Lay pastry dough on lightly floured board and roll into 11-inch circle. Press dough into bottom and sides of prepared pan and poke with fork on bottom and sides. Bake 20 minutes.

To make filling: In medium bowl, whisk pumpkin and cream cheese until smooth.

Add brown sugar, pumpkin pie spice, vanilla extract, egg and egg yolk, beating until incorporated. Pour into prepared crust and top with walnuts.

Bake 40 minutes or until filling is set when pan is gently tapped. Remove from oven and let cool. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serve each slice with dollop of whipped cream, if desired.

AUCTIONS

Online Only, Merritt Logging & Chipping Co. Retirement Auction, Visit our website for a complete list of items, Bladen County, NC, Begins Closing 12/14 at 2pm, ironhorseauction.com, 800.997.2248, NCAL 3936

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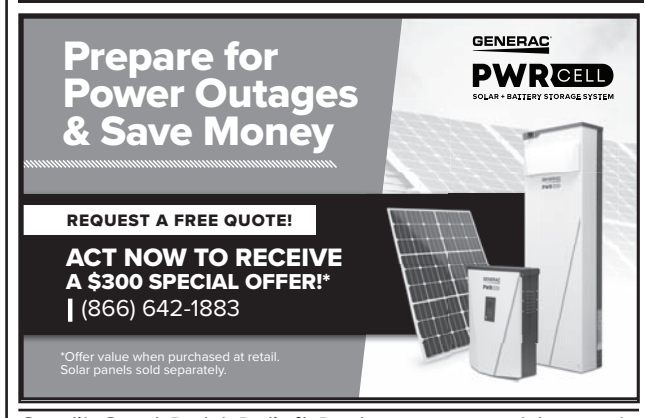

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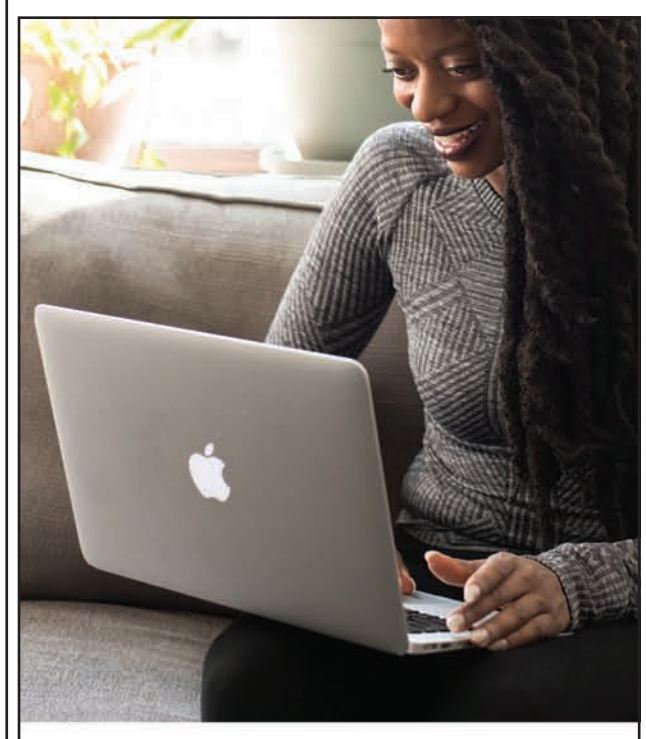

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BOOK

African Diasporans do have a history and a culture

The Reign: North and South America
By Christin Nichole
Pan African Publishing House, $22.99 HC

What was the aftermath of the Transatlantic Slave Trade? Where did the African descendants go, what became of their culture, how did they influence the world as we know it today?

"The Reign: North and South America" answers these questions with a children's book that features 20 ethnic groups of the African Diaspora within the Americas, with lively illustrations and historical facts.

"The Reign: North and South America" is the second book from The Reign Series that teaches about different ethnic groups of African descent around the world.

From learning about the Mascogo ethnic group in Mexico who celebrate Juneteenth to learning about the Saamaka ethnic group, Suriname's oldest Maroon society since 1690, become immersed in the continents.

See the Americas, its African Diasporans and all its beauty.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *C. Nichole is a singer, songwriter, television producer, nonprofit founder, creative group and publishing house owner. "The Reign: North & South America" is her second book from The Reign series, which includes historical children's books about African and African Diasporan ethnic groups.*

Basic rules of business etiquette for newbies

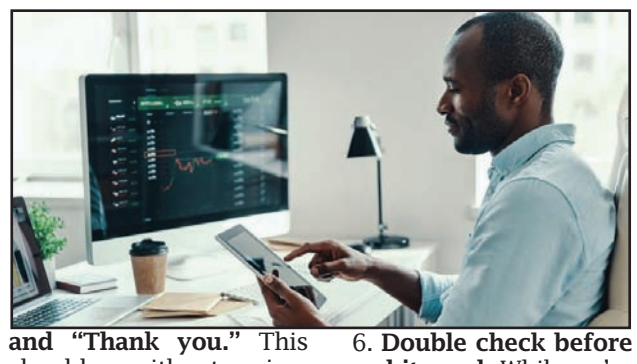
By Royale Scuderi

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

As times change, so do social norms for personal and professional behavior, but that doesn't mean basic etiquette doesn't matter. Performance and quality are important, too, of course, but not exclusively. We sometimes forget that business is about people. There is no shortage of competent and reliable people in the business world and manners can make the difference. Wouldn't you rather collaborate with, work for or buy from someone who has high standards of professional behavior? Many, but not all, of us follow these 15 time-tested rules of better behavior. Do you?

1. **When in doubt, introduce others.** Always introduce people to others whenever the opportunity arises, unless you know that they're already acquainted. It makes people feel valued, regardless of their status or position.

2. **A handshake is still the professional standard.** Not only does this simple gesture demonstrate that you're polite, confident and approachable, it also sets the tone for any potential future professional relationship. In a very casual work atmosphere, you might be able to get away with a nod or a hello, but it's worth it to make the extra effort to offer your hand.



3. **Always say "Please" and "Thank you."** This should go without saying, but even in a very casual professional atmosphere, this basic form of courtesy is still imperative. Today, sending a thank you email is perfectly acceptable, but a handwritten thank you note is always a nice touch.

4. **Don't interrupt.** We've become a nation of "overtalkers," so eager to offer our own opinions or press our point that we often interrupt others mid-sentence. It can be tongue-bitingly difficult to force ourselves not to interject, especially when the discussion is heated. Don't. It's rude and shows disrespect for the opinions of others. Remember, be assertive, not aggressive.

5. **Watch your language.** Verbal and written communications are often much less formal than in times past, but be careful to choose your words wisely. Of course, derogatory, rude or offensive language is unacceptable, but so is slang. While it may be commonplace in our society, it's never acceptable in a professional atmosphere.

6. **Double check before you hit send.** While we're on the subject of communication, always check your emails for spelling and grammar errors. Since the advent of spell check, there is no excuse for typos. Also, do a quick read to make sure the meaning and tone are what you wish to convey. And no smileys, please.

7. **Don't walk into someone's office unannounced.** It's disrespectful to assume that you have the right to interrupt other people's work. Knock on the door or say hello if it's open and ask if it's a good time to talk. If the discussion is going to take more than a few minutes, it's a good idea to call or email and schedule a good time for both of you.

8. **Don't gossip.** It's so hard sometimes to resist engaging in a little "harmless" gossip. But the reality is that gossip is never harmless. It is most certainly damaging to the subject of the gossip, but it also reflects poorly on you. It's natural to be curious and interested in what other people are doing.

Toyota to build $1.3B battery plant near Greensboro

By Gary D. Robertson and Tom Krisher

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — Toyota is preparing to build a $1.3 billion electric vehicle battery plant near Greensboro that will employ at least 1,750 people, government officials said Monday.

Toyota was identified during a morning meeting of the state Economic Investment Committee, which voted to award at least $79 million in incentives to the company if the project is completed. State officials scheduled a Monday afternoon news conference to announce a major economic development project at an 1,800-acre plot called the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite, about 20 miles southeast of Greensboro. The site is along a four-lane highway with water, sewer and railroad infrastructure already available.

Randolph County elected leaders voted unanimously Monday morning to offer a local incentives package to the expected company that they didn't immediately identify except as "Project Darwin." In October, Toyota announced that it planned to build a new U.S. factory to make batteries for hybrid and fully electric vehicles. The location was to be announced later in the year. The automaker said the plant would start making batteries in 2025, gradually expanding through 2031.

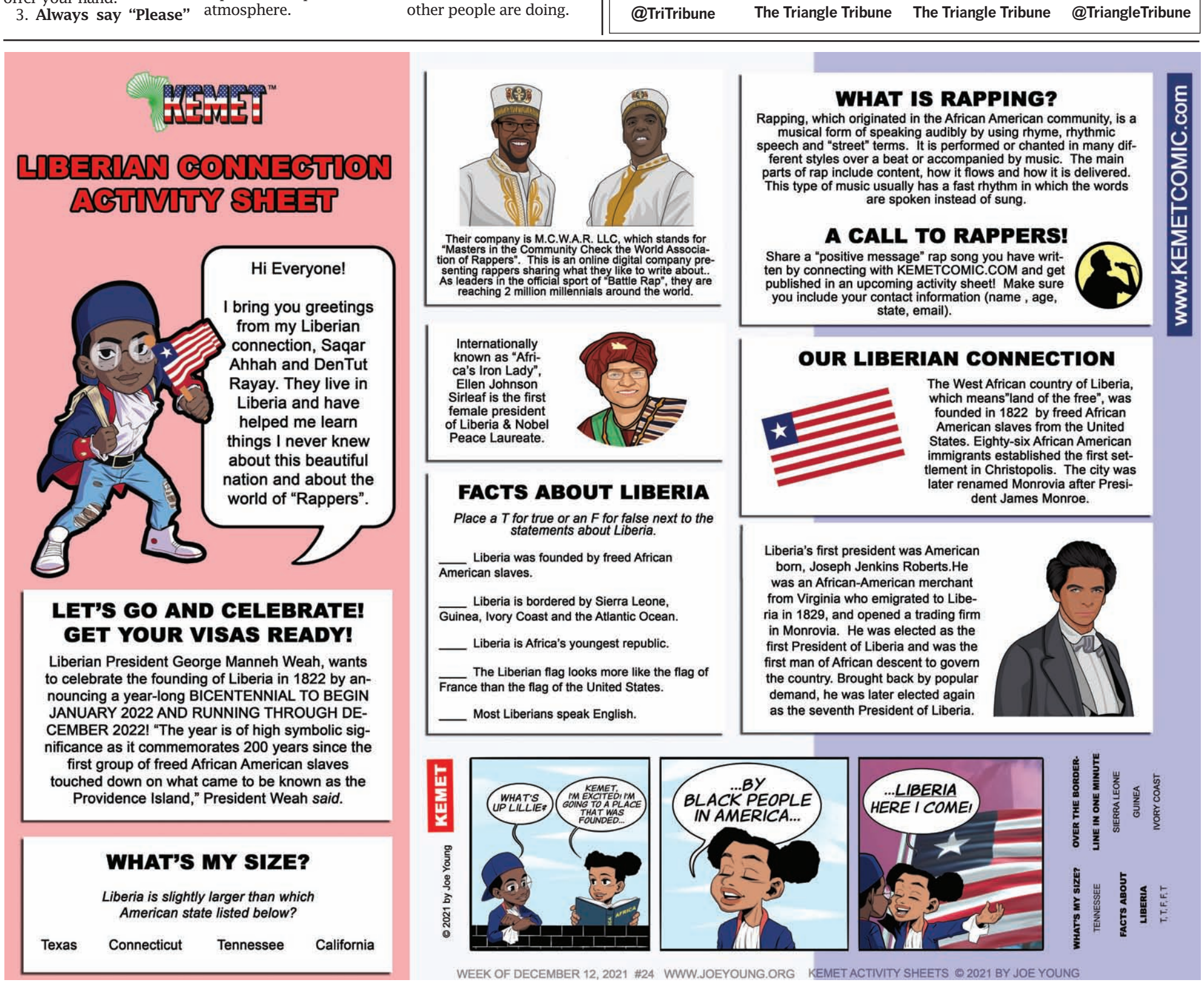
The plant is part of $3.4 billion that Toyota plans to spend in the U.S. on automotive batteries during the next decade. It didn't detail where the remaining $2.1 billion would be spent, but part of that likely will go for another battery factory. Toyota will form a new company to run the new plant with Toyota Tsusho, a subsidiary that now makes an array of parts for the automaker. The company also will help Toyota expand its U.S. supply chain, as well as increase its knowledge of lithium-ion auto batteries, Toyota said.

The site near Greensboro is relatively close to many of Toyota's existing U.S. auto assembly plants in Missouri, Kentucky, Indiana, Alabama and Texas. The company has yet to announce where it will build fully electric vehicles for sale in the U.S. A state Commerce Department official said Toyota Motor Corp. considered nine states including North Carolina.

The Randolph County package would result in an estimated $65 million in property tax rebates and the transfer of megasite land to the company should it invest $1 billion and create at least 1,750 jobs with average salaries of more than $62,000, according to a Randolph economic development official. The return to the company would grow if a second phase of the project occurs – a $3 billion investment and more than 3,800 jobs in total. An economic panel that must approve a separate, state packages of cash awards to companies seeking to build in North Carolina was to meet later Monday morning.

The North Carolina legislature already has promised to spend $135 million on road work and wetland improvements and would reimburse $185 million the company spends on similar upgrades should the second phase occur. Toyota plans to sell 2 million zero emission hydrogen and battery electric vehicles worldwide per year by 2030. In the U.S., the company plans to sell 1.5 million to 1.8 million vehicles by 2030 that are at least partially electrified.

The announcement comes as automakers race to build North American battery factories to supply what is expected to be exponentially increasing demand for electric vehicles as the world transitions away from internal combustion engines. Stellantis, formerly Fiat Chrysler, has said it will build two battery plants in North America. Ford announced three plants in Kentucky and Tennessee, and General Motors has said it would build four battery cell factories. Only two of those locations have been announced, in Ohio and Tennessee.



HBCU NEWS

FAYETTEVILLE STATE

Raleigh's James Montague (right) recently presented a check to Chris Davis, Fayetteville State University associate vice chancellor for development, to establish the Montague F7 Development Scholarship Fund. The fund will pay one year's tuition for 10 deserving students. To learn more, contact Davis at (910) 672-1683 or email him at cdavis18@uncfsu.edu.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S

SAU received the highest Giving Tuesday contribution ($128,535.16 and counting) since Giving Tuesday began in 2012. This total also includes an 80% increase in online giving.

The University's observance of Giving Tuesday took place on Nov. 30. It featured donations made by alumnus Dr. Ruben Cowart, '64, and his wife Evelyn for $50,000; an anonymous gift of $30,000; a $10,000 gift from alums Gilbert, '76, and Carolyn Knowles, '77; and another $10,000 donation from SAU President Christine Johnson McPhail.

"One of the greatest demonstrations of leadership is by giving," McPhail said. "We are reimagining Saint Augustine's University as an institution where we are cultivating long-term relationships to ensure our sustainability."

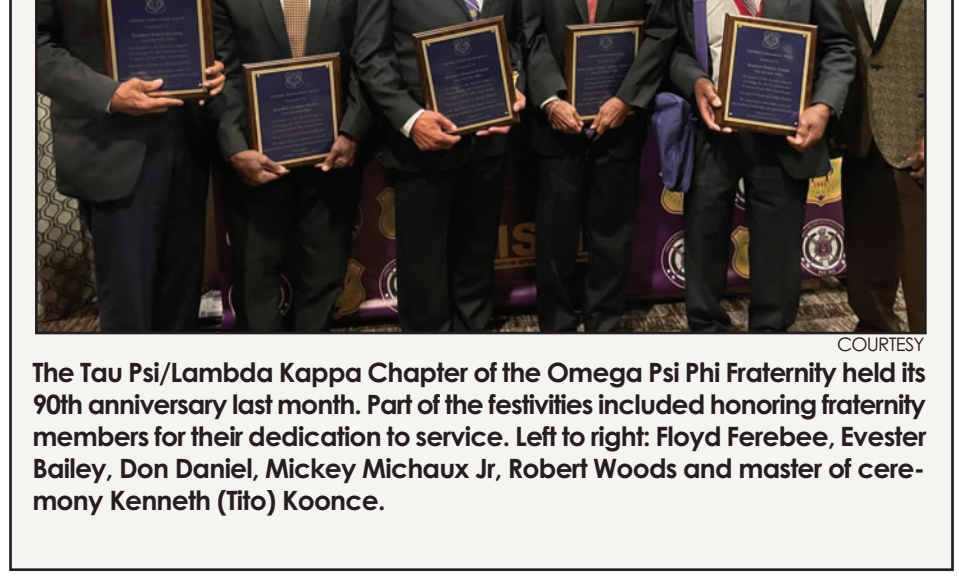
The University is still accepting contributions to kick off its end-of-the-year campaign.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity celebrates 90th anniversary

COURTESY

The Tau Psi/Lambda Kappa Chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity held its 90th anniversary last month. Part of the festivities included honoring fraternity members for their dedication to service. Left to right: Floyd Ferebee, Evester Bailey, Don Daniel, Mickey Michaux Jr, Robert Woods and master of ceremony Kenneth (Tito) Koonce.

Artists selected for New Bern Avenue project



Raleigh Arts has selected 11 local artists to create artwork for the bus rapid transit stations along New Bern Avenue. Nine artists will design glass windscreens for the stations: Leslie Bartlebaugh, Jane Cheek, Max Dowdle, Shawn Etheridge, Mayanthi Jayawardena, Georges Le Chevallier, Alberto Ortega, Kiara Sanders and Wendy Spitzer. Artist David Wilson will create railings for the stations, and poet Johnny Lee Chapman III will create embedded poetry and artwork within the concrete of the stations along the corridor. All 11 artists are working with local historians and the community to gather inspiration and will be working on concept designs that they will begin sharing with the community this spring.

SCHOOL NEWS

DPS's homeless students have increased over the past year.

DURHAM COUNTY

Ebony Ross reflects upon the challenges of her first year as the coordinator of McKinney Vento Homeless Education for Durham Public Schools by simply admitting to lots of tears. Taking the reins of a program that serves displaced students and their families is a heavy lift, but she came to understand that her emotions paled compared to the people she was serving. Now, three years later, she's made a commitment: to ask for help through partnership.

"I know that I cannot serve and advocate alone," Ross said. That's the premise behind National Homeless Youth Awareness Month. Ross is doing her part to educate the community about the plight of homeless students and their families and to find people and partner with organizations willing to help address the issue.

Congratulations to Mister Hillside Cameron Ponton and Miss Hillside Morgan Comer, who were recently crowned.

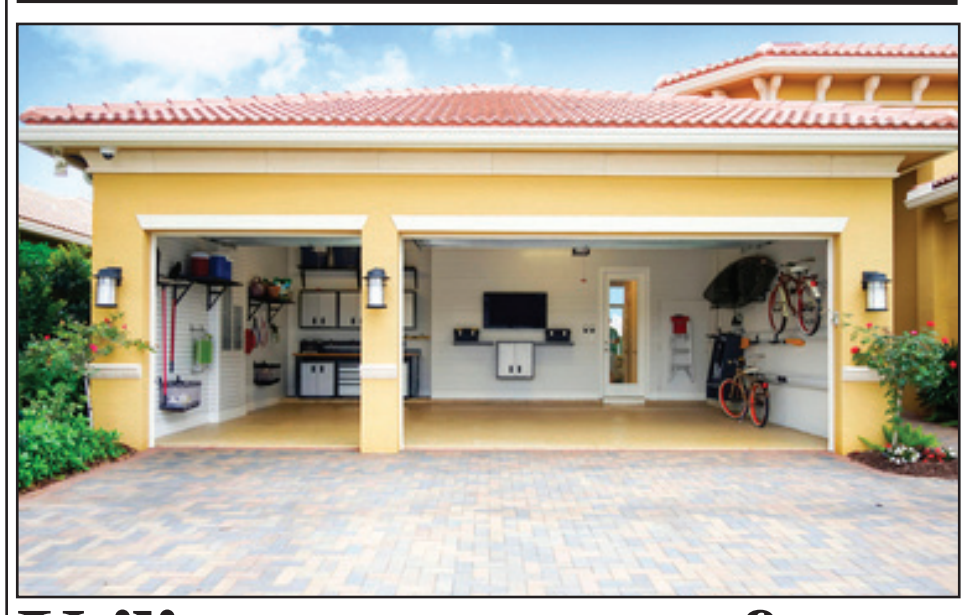
Last year, due to COVID, the number of homeless students documented by the MKV office dipped to 656, the lowest it had been in five years; this year, it's already at 675, and Ross expects a spike in the spring. Research shows that displaced students can fall four to six months behind their peers in their studies, Ross says. Finding these students and removing the barriers to their enrollment and engagement is critical to their success in and out of school.

While homelessness is a phenomenon she wishes would go away, her success stories tell her that the work towards its eradication is worthwhile. There's the unaccompanied teenager for whom she helped to find a bed in a shelter for young adults and who is now enrolled in high school and catches the bus every day. There was the mom and her children who were living in the car. Ross and the mother called the county's Entry Point office every day until they were able to speak to someone who facilitated the disbursement of funds from the county's committee funds for a brief hotel stay. She then found room in a shelter for three months, and the family now has permanent housing. The students were assigned a school social worker, and the mom's case worker is based with the county.

Ross says that most times, when families get permanent housing, the students can remain at school they were initially assigned to for the entire year. "We want to know who our students are so that we can provide the support they need," she said.

That support includes full-circle, comprehensive care like counseling and social work assistance; academic tutoring; online classes; and a "store" filled with supplies, clothes, and laundry items. Ross and her colleague, Deja Flythe, are constantly seeking partnerships with people and organizations willing to fund needs, stock the Family Resource Closet, and help raise awareness about homelessness and its adverse effect on students' lives. "Let's find and remove the barrier together," she said.

Ross can be reached at (919) 560-3927. Flythe's office number is (919)560-2000, ext. 85310.



Utilize your garage for maximum storage

By Shanta Jackson
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Whether you use your garage to store your cars or your golf clubs, you know that storage space is always at a premium. When clutter gets out of hand, a garage can become nothing more than an overgrown storage unit. Before this happens, try the following storage tips that can help you use the space in your garage even more efficiently.

Jackson

Install shelves

Shelving is the single best way to increase your storage space. It's up to you to decide the form these will take. Wooden shelves, built-in shelves, wire shelves or plastic shelves are all possibilities. Evaluate the space you have and the best way to add shelving to improve your storage capacity.

Utilize vertical space

Even if you don't park your cars in the garage (but especially if you do), it's important to take advantage of vertical space. Use the upper walls for cabinets or shelves. Use overhead storage suspended from the ceiling of the garage to increase your ability to store the items you don't use every day but need to have on hand.

Hang tools on racks

Long garden or outdoor tools can be a huge pain to store. They don't stack easily, and they don't fit on shelves or inside cabinets. They're just unwieldy. But they're also essential, especially if you live in an area where snow is common. You can store your shovels and other long-handled garden tools on racks along your walls. You can buy hooks designed for the task or install long boxes or gates that will hold your tools out of the way.

Organize trash and recycling

Some cities make it easy to recycle, whereas others do not. But if you want to work on your carbon footprint, recycling is one way to get started. If you need to sort your recyclables to be able to take them to a center once a week or once a month, install bins labeled for each item: glass, cardboard, aluminum and whatever else you're able to recycle in your community.

Use storage bins

Unlike the rest of your house, your garage likely isn't climate controlled. That may mean some of your items need additional protection from the elements. Storage boxes can help and also will keep your garage from looking or becoming too cluttered. If you store items in boxes and label them properly, you can prevent clutter from taking over.