1000s OF PHILADELPHIA CITY WORKERS ARE BACK IN THE OFFICE FULL TIME AFTER JUDGE REJECTS LAWSUIT -- TEAM USA PACKED WITH STAR POWER HEADING INTO OLYMPICS

THE PHILADELPHIA SUNDAY SUN

JULY 21, 2024

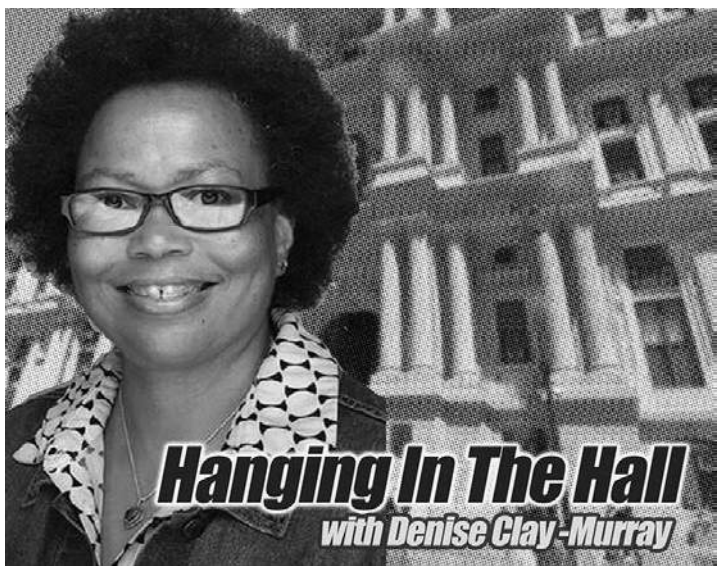
The remarkable story of a couple, who after enduring 21 years of incarceration continues fighting for the freedom of others.

TIME II: Unfinished Business

COVERAGE ON PAGE 17

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Competency Levels

If the Democrats, led by President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, can't beat a guy who refers to fictional characters like they're real, America is even more jacked up than we think.



PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN SPEAKS AT THE 115TH NAACP NATIONAL CONVENTION IN LAS VEGAS, July 16, 2024. Democrats at the highest levels are making a critical push for Biden to reconsider his election bid. Former President Barack Obama has privately expressed concerns to Democrats about Biden's candidacy. And Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi privately warned Biden that Democrats could lose the ability to seize control in the House if he didn't step away from the race. Biden says he's not dropping out believing he's best to beat the Republican Trump.
(AP Photo/Susan Walsh, File)

By Denise Clay-Murray

When I was in the hospital a few years ago, **SUN** Managing Editor Teresa Emerson gave me an assignment: review the Tyler Perry series "For Better or Worse."

I watched the episodes they had sent us to check out as I lay in a hospital bed with equipment strapped to me and a pic line transmitting medication throughout my system. Because I was expected to tell folks what I thought, I had to pay attention to what was going on.

I assessed that this would be 90 minutes --- I'd watched three 30-minute episodes --- of my life that I'd never get back. The writing was bad, the acting was bad, hell, even the MAKEUP was bad!

Since then, I've tried really hard to avoid things that feel like massive time wasters whenever possible. As you get older and realize you don't have as much time as you used to, you get really picky about how you spend it.

Unfortunately, the life I lead requires that I have to entertain some time wasters. Like, for example, the 90 minutes I'll never get back that was former President Donald Trump's acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention.

Now, I could get into why this felt like a speech from one of his rallies. Or how he just rambled incoherently about everything from his recent shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, to firing the president and the rank and file of the United Auto Workers union to the strength of Hannibal Lecter. Or the "hammer" motion he made when talking about former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi that alluded to her husband Paul's beating with a hammer in October 2022.

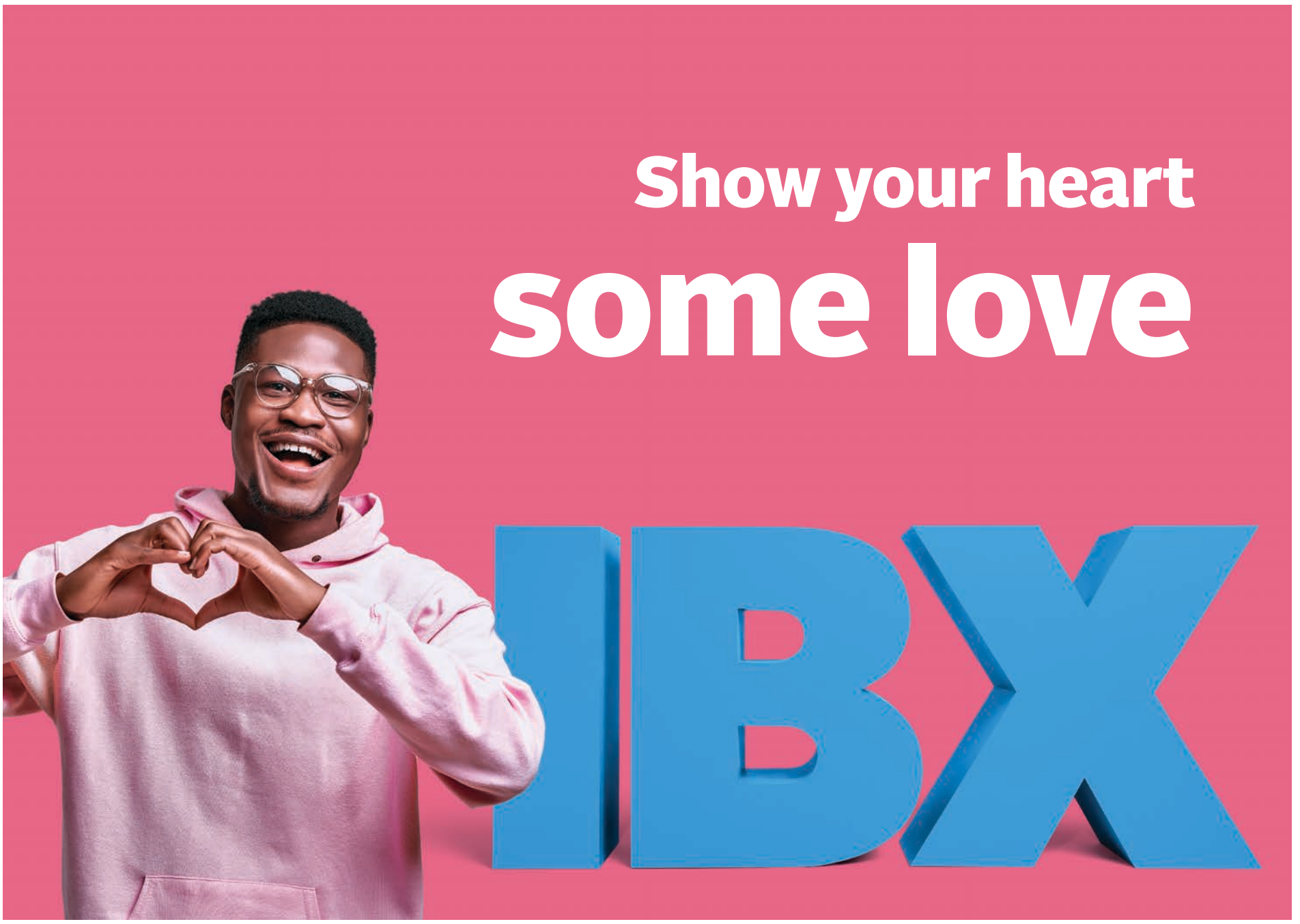
But instead, I'll say that if the Democratic Party really thinks that President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris can't create a messaging campaign to retain the White House over this clown and his running mate, Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance, and Quentin Fulks, principal campaign manager for the Biden/Harris campaign, needs to fire everybody.

Every. Damn. Body.

If your messaging apparatus can't work with the material that Trump and the rest of the Republican Party gave you this week to come up with a campaign that gets the job of retaining the White House done, I don't know what to tell you.

Over the last three weeks, voters have been bombarded with stories calling on President Biden to

Competency *continued on page 5*



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. The risk of developing heart disease is even higher for African Americans because they are more likely to have medical conditions which contribute to heart disease, such as high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes.

The good news is that you can take steps to reduce your risks. Talk to your health care provider about your medical conditions and health screenings that may be available to you. Eating a balanced diet, being active, and quitting smoking can also help improve heart health.

Visit **ibx.com/providerfinder** to find a doctor near you.

Independence

Thousands of Philadelphia city workers are back in the office full time after judge rejects lawsuit

By Bruce Shipkowski
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thousands of Philadelphia city employees are back in their offices full time after a judge rejected a union's request to block Mayor Cherelle Parker's requirement that they return.

District Council 47 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees had sued the city, claiming the mandate violates its contract and would harm city workers. The union, which represents 6,000 administrative and supervisory employees, has also filed an unfair-practices complaint with the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board, which is still pending.

A two-day hearing held last week on the lawsuit concluded when the judge ruled last Friday night that the city could impose the mandate, so the workers had to return to the office Monday.

Parker announced the mandate in May, saying she wanted to create a more visible and accessible government. The decision ended the city's virtual work policy, put in place in 2021, and essentially returns employee scheduling to what it was before the coronavirus pandemic.

About 80% of the city's 26,000 employees have been working fully on site since last year, while the rest had worked on site 31 to 75 hours per pay period, Parker said. Former Mayor Jim Kenney had left hybrid work decisions up to department heads.



PHILADELPHIA MAYOR CHERELLE PARKER in Philadelphia, Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

The union sharply criticized the decision when it was announced, saying it was unilaterally imposed instead of going through collective bargaining. It also believes the policy will worsen the worker shortage the city has suffered since the pandemic.

It also argues that the city lacks enough office space to bring all employees back and that making the change over the summer, when children are out of school, complicates schedules for parents.

Parker, a Democrat, has said her administration does not believe the new policy is subject to collective bargaining. She also noted changes that were made to be more worker friendly, such as extending paid parental leave from six to eight weeks and designating the Friday after Thanksgiving as a holiday. Officials have also said there will be relaxed restrictions on sick leave to care for family members.

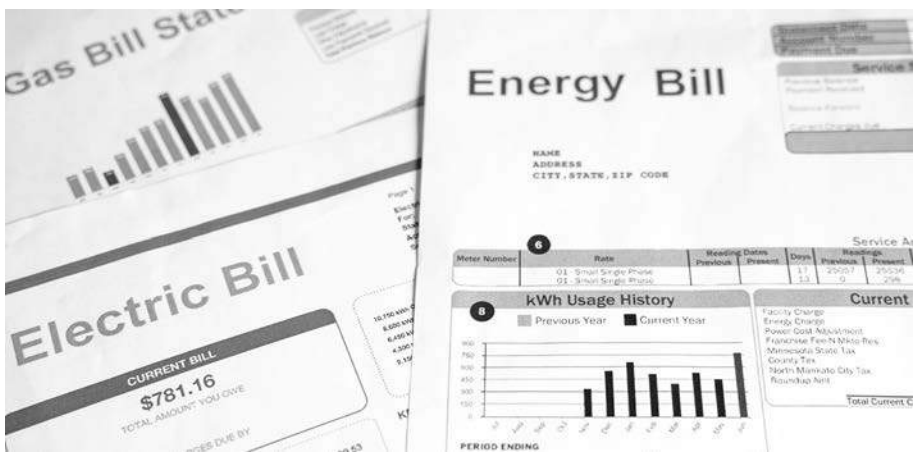
Business leaders have welcomed the announcement, saying it will benefit workers and the vibrancy of Philadelphia's downtown.

City of Philadelphia releases strategy for an equitable clean energy transition

The City of Philadelphia's Office of Sustainability recently released the Energy Poverty Alleviation Strategy, a roadmap for ensuring an equitable and just clean energy transition in Philadelphia.

The Energy Poverty Alleviation Strategy provides a near-term action plan addressing the challenges of energy insecurity and clean energy access in Philadelphia. The strategy prioritizes the energy needs of the city's historically marginalized, income-constrained, and vulnerable residents, including homeowners and tenants. This equity-based approach will ensure that all Philadelphians, especially those most impacted by and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, can participate in and benefit from the city's clean energy transition.

Compared to many other cities in the United States, Philadelphians face some of the highest energy costs relative to income, also known as high energy burden. These burdens disproportionately impact our households of color. Energy-burdened Philadelphians struggle to access and afford



energy to meet their basic household needs, from adequate heating and cooling, to maintaining safe food and medicine.

The Energy Poverty Alleviation Strategy seeks to address these burdens through stronger utility support and assistance, as well as greater access to energy efficiency and clean energy retrofits, repairs, and upgrades – all of which can lower utility costs and carbon pollution, improve housing quality and public health, and enhance quality of life.

To develop the strategy, the Office of Sustainability listened to feedback from six energy-burdened communities in Philadelphia and collaborated with government departments, community organizations, and stakeholders. The three-part strategy aims to:

- Support and strengthen Philadelphia's energy programs and services to address challenges in access, delivery, programmatic gaps, and scaling;
- Implement and advocate for enabling legislation and incentives at the local and state level; and
- Strengthen and support the city's community and partner network.

"The Energy Poverty Alleviation Strategy aligns with our plan to make Philadelphia a safer, cleaner, and greener city, with economic opportunity for all," the mayor said. "Reducing the energy poverty in Philadelphia addresses the challenges of improving quality of life for Philadelphians and reducing the city's carbon footprint, while spurring our clean energy economy."

"The Energy Poverty Alleviation Strategy will ensure that residents experiencing energy insecurity are included in Philadelphia's transition to clean energy," said Elizabeth Lankenau, Interim Director of the Office of Sustainability. "It will guide our work as we explore ways to reduce carbon pollution and achieve our vision of a city where all Philadelphians can access and afford energy that is clean, healthy, and safe."

Read the Energy Poverty Alleviation Strategy online at: www.phila.gov/documents/energy-poverty-alleviation-strategy/.

Joe 'Jellybean' Bryant, the father of Kobe Bryant, dies at 69

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — Joe "Jellybean" Bryant, the father of the late Basketball Hall of Famer Kobe Bryant, has died, his alma mater announced Tuesday.

Bryant, who spent eight seasons in the NBA with three different franchises, was 69. The Philadelphia Inquirer, citing La Salle coach Fran Dunphy, reported that Joe Bryant recently had a massive stroke.

"We are saddened to announce the passing of La Salle basketball great Joe Bryant," the school said in a news release. "Joe played for the Explorers from 1973-75 and was a member of our coaching staff from 1993-96. He was a beloved member of the Explorer family and will be dearly missed."

Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna and seven others died in a helicopter crash in January 2020 in Calabasas, California, as the group was making its way to a basketball tournament. Joe and Pam Bryant, who were married for nearly a half-century, had a sometimes frosty relationship with Kobe, but they were in the front row for the memorial service in Los Angeles about a month after Kobe and Gianna died.

"Sending our condolences upon hearing the news of my father-in-law's passing," Vanessa Bryant, Kobe's widow, posted Tuesday on her Instagram story. "We hoped things would've been different. Although the times we spent together were few, he was always sweet and nice to be around. Kobe loved him very much."

Joe Bryant was the No. 14 pick by Golden State in the 1975 draft, and the Warriors wound up selling his rights to Philadelphia before the start of his rookie season. He played four years for the 76ers, three for the San Diego Clippers and one for the Houston Rockets, averaging 8.7 points in 606 games.

From there, he embarked on an international career, with stops in France and Italy. The years in Italy shaped Kobe Bryant; it was there that he started to truly develop a love for basketball as well as becoming fluent in Italian. The family moved back to the Philadelphia area around the time that Kobe Bryant was 13, he became a high school star and was drafted four years later.



LOS ANGELES LAKERS' KOBE BRYANT, LEFT, TALKS TO HIS FATHER, JOE, as they watch a baseball game between the Los Angeles Angels and the Los Angeles Dodgers in Anaheim, Calif., Sunday, June 21, 2009. Joe "Jellybean" Bryant has died, his alma mater announced Tuesday, July 16, 2024. Joe Bryant, who spent eight seasons in the NBA with three different franchises, was 69. The Philadelphia Inquirer, citing La Salle coach Fran Dunphy, reported that Joe Bryant recently had a massive stroke. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File)

"I'm deeply saddened by the passing of Joe 'Jellybean' Bryant and join the basketball community in mourning a true Philly hoops legend," said Detroit Pistons vice chairman Arn Tellem, Kobe Bryant's former agent. "Our friendship opened the door for me to represent Kobe as he entered the NBA, a memory I'll always cherish. Joe was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, whose warmth touched everyone he met."

Joe Bryant had a number of coaching stints, including for teams in Italy, Japan and Thailand, as well as stints with the WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks — meaning he was coaching in the same city as his son was playing for a number of years.



Competency *continued from page 2*

step down --- and to allow his vice president to be stepped over --- because of the president's performance in the June 27 presidential debate. He's old, they say. He can't speak well, they say.

The president's stutter notwithstanding, if you can look me in the face and tell me that the stream of consciousness we sat through for 90 minutes Thursday night is somehow better, I'm going to connect you with some of Philly's local playwrights. You're a better actor than you probably thought.

Right now, there's an effort by big-ticket Democratic donors to starve the party of money in an attempt to get Biden out because, thanks to the self-fulfilling prophecy that tanking your nominee becomes, his poll numbers are down in battleground states.

But no matter how often the media asks him, President Biden has said he's not stepping down. He's not mulling it over. He's not considering it. He's not looking for a way to leave so that you can screw over his vice president. He's staying in the race.

(On some level, Biden is learning what it feels like to be a woman in corporate America. He's told people what he's going to do. He's said it more than once. He's emphasized it in a variety of ways. And folks have decided that they're not going to listen. Hopefully, he'll address this if he gets a second term.)

As I said, if you can't combat the last few weeks with a combination of Trump's nomination speech, the return to the 1800s that is Project 2025, and many of the speeches from the RNC, you need to find a new line of work.

Because if you can't make lemonade out of this bushel of lemons, I don't know what to tell you.

Disclaimer: The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the article belong solely to the author, and not necessarily to the author's employer, The Philadelphia Sunday SUN, the author's organization, committee or other group or individual.

ELECTION 2024

Conservative groups are pushing to clean voter rolls. Others see an effort to sow election distrust

By Julie Carr Smyth
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Conservative groups are systematically attempting to challenge the legitimacy of large numbers of voter registrations across the country before the presidential election.

The strategy is part of a wider effort raising questions about the integrity of this year's election as former President Donald Trump repeatedly claims without evidence that his opponents are trying to cheat.

The voter roll tactics include mass door-knocking campaigns, using special software designed to identify voters whose eligibility could be challenged, and a crush of lawsuits. Some of those have been brought by the Republican National Committee, which is currently hosting the GOP's national convention. Several Republican secretaries of state are combing through voter lists on their own, including in Ohio and Tennessee, or to comply with aggressive new state voting laws. Those behind the reviews cast them as good government endeavors intended to help local election offices clean up the rolls. Voting rights groups and Democrats believe the effort aims to shake faith in the results of the 2024 election and lay the legal groundwork to challenge the results.



PEOPLE CHECK IN TO CAST THEIR VOTES at a polling station in a mall on Nov. 8, 2022, in Las Vegas. Conservative groups are systematically attempting to challenge large numbers of voter registrations across the country ahead of this year's presidential election. The strategy is part of a wider effort to raise questions about the integrity of this year's election as former President Donald Trump repeatedly claims without evidence that his opponents are trying to cheat. (AP Photo/Gregory Bull, File)

Here is a look at what's happening around voter roll challenges:

States already must maintain their rolls

"Soles to the Rolls" in Michigan, whose name echoes the "Souls to the Polls" get-out-the-vote efforts of Black churches, and Nevada's Pigpen Project are among state-level initiatives in which volunteers are trying to find flaws in state voter rolls.

Their findings can sound ominous: dead people or non-U.S. citizens registered, or people listed at addresses where they no longer live, suggesting the potential for double-voting. Conservative activists identify the suspect records and then deliver them to local or state election offices for possible removal.

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, earlier this year told a suburban Detroit clerk to reinstate the registrations of about 1,000 people who had been removed through such an effort, after the purge was reported by The New York Times.

Amy Cohen, executive director of the National Association of State Election Directors, said information from member states suggests the efforts are happening nationwide. She said many of the challenges ignore or misunderstand the complexity and legal requirements around maintaining voter rolls.

The National Voter Registration Act already requires states to take steps to maintain accurate and current voter registration lists. Just because someone finds an outdated registration doesn't mean election officials are unaware of it, Cohen said.

"Voter registration lists are living, breathing databases," she said. "That's part of the challenge, because people move and die and change their names and just exist every single day, and when you get a list, you're purchasing a moment in time. Registration activities and voter registration list maintenance activities are happening on an ongoing basis."

The fight for voter data

Conservative groups behind the voter roll reviews have filed hundreds of public records requests across the country to gain access to voter files. In almost a quarter of states, the disputes have landed in the courts. One of their goals is to create public databases for anyone to search and question whether certain voters should be allowed on a state's rolls.

The Public Interest Legal Foundation, led by conservative attorney Cleta Mitchell, is behind challenges in Colorado, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, South Carolina, and Wisconsin. Mitchell is perhaps best known for participating in Trump's call asking Georgia's secretary of state to "find" the votes he needed to win the state in 2020. Arizona, California, Maryland, and Pennsylvania face lawsuits by other groups.

In Georgia, an Associated Press survey of the state's 40 largest counties found that more than 18,000 voters had been challenged over the past two years, even though local election offices had rejected most of them.

Many of the volunteer groups have received encouragement to mine the voter lists at workshops led by MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, a Trump ally and leading voice promoting election conspiracy theories. They also sometimes employ tools such as EagleAI Network, a data-matching software program developed for Mitchell's Election Integrity Network that creates voter lists from change-of-address forms, criminal justice records, and property tax data.

The Public Interest Legal Foundation also sued the Electronic Registration Information Center, a voluntary system in which states share data to maintain accurate voter lists. Its lawsuit sought access to information the member states had agreed to keep private when they joined.

The foundation's president and general counsel, J. Christian Adams, who previously worked in the Justice Department's Voting Section, said not a single eligible voter has been removed from the rolls as a result of his group's efforts. He called the movement's critics paranoid.

"Fraud, I don't care about," he said. "Accuracy is what I care about." He said correct voter lists are especially important in states that mail ballots to every registration on their lists. At least nine Republican-led states have abandoned the voluntary network, known as ERIC, after it became embroiled in election conspiracy theories, weakening its ability to cross-check voter records across state lines. Supporters of the system noted the paradox of the Republican states leaving because it's the only national system that helps states identify voters who are not eligible to cast a

Voter rolls *continued onss page 8*

Kennedy and West third-party ballot drives are pushed by secretive groups and Republican donors



HARVARD PROFESSOR CORNEL WEST speaks Oct. 22, 2019, in Cambridge, Mass. With early voting set to begin in late September in some states, there are signs that groups are trying to affect the outcome by using deceptive means. In most cases, in ways that would benefit Donald Trump by whittling away President Joe Biden's already tepid standing with the Democratic Party's base by offering left-leaning, third-party alternatives. Groups with Republican ties in Virginia, North Carolina and Arizona are working on West's behalf. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola, File)

By Brian Slodysko
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Libertarians in Colorado want to put Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on the ballot to create chaos.

Petition drives for Cornel West in Virginia and North Carolina are being run by groups with Republican ties.

And in Arizona, a convicted fraudster who's been repeatedly investigated for using deceptive tactics to gather signatures for conservative groups is also working on West's behalf.

With early voting for the November presidential election set to begin in late September in some states, there are signs across the country that groups are trying to affect the outcome by using deceptive means — and in most cases in ways that would benefit Republican Donald Trump.

Their aim is to to whittle away President Joe Biden's standing with the Democratic Party's base by offering left-leaning, third-party alternatives who could siphon off a few thousand protest votes in close swing state contests.

Spoiler candidates are as old as representative democracy. But in a polarized country in which many Americans have voiced disapproval for both Biden and Trump, the zeal with which Trump's supporters and allies have lent assistance to third-party candidacies adds a new dimension that's deeply troubling to Democrats.

Since his 2016 campaign, Trump has railed against the specter of voter fraud and falsely accused Democrats of "rigging" elections, which he blames for his 2020 loss, a claim rejected in more than 60 court cases and by his own attorney general. Now, it's his allies who are pushing questionable ways to tilt the vote in his favor.

"We've known for years that Donald Trump can't get 50% of the vote. His people know that. And they know they need to find ways to win. One way to do that is propping up third-party candidates," said Josh Schwerin, a spokesman for Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, which many Democrats believe she lost because the Green Party played spoiler.

West's campaign did not respond to an email seeking comment. The Trump and Kennedy campaigns also did not respond to inquiries.

Democrats have focused closely this year on the threat of third-party candidates, intent on avoiding Clinton's fate. Indicators of Republican involvement were quick to surface.

In April, The Washington Post reported that pro-Trump activist Scott Presler was gathering signatures for West outside a Trump rally in North Carolina. In a video posted online, Presler described West, an academic, as a "far-left Marxist" who "if we get him on the ballot he could take a percentage point away" from Biden.

But Republican involvement in getting West and his Justice For All party on the state ballot runs far deeper.

At the beginning of June, West had been largely absent from the campaign trail and his political operation was $30,000 in debt, disclosures show. He had spent just $2,400 this year to gather the signatures needed to qualify for the ballot in states across the U.S.

But then, Justice For All submitted well over the roughly 13,800 signatures needed. State government emails obtained by The Associated Press show current and former employees of Blitz Canvassing, a Republican firm that earned millions of dollars doing work for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, helped West pull off the feat. The emails, previously reported by NBC News, show the employees affiliated with Blitz Canvassing were the designated representatives to pick up and drop off petitions for West's campaign.



INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR. speaks during the Libertarian National Convention in Washington, May 24, 2024.

It's unclear who paid the firm, which isn't listed as a paid vendor in West's campaign finance reports. Representatives for Blitz Canvassing didn't respond to requests for comment.

On Tuesday, North Carolina's election board blocked West's Justice for All Party from appearing on the ballot.

State elections officials said they surveyed roughly 50 petition signers and many said they didn't sign it or didn't know what it was for. Another group gathering signatures for West refused to provide information sought under subpoena.

The board's Democratic majority reasoned that there were enough doubts about the legitimacy of the petition drive to deny West's party, though their action could still be appealed in court.

But the GOP-linked signature collection effort on West's behalf isn't limited to North Carolina.

Signature gatherers in suburban Washington were witnessed asking people in a Target parking lot to sign a petition to "get Donald Trump off the ballot," NBC4 reported. The signatures were actually being collected to help get West on the Virginia ballot, and one of the workers said they would be handed off to the state GOP, the TV station reported.

Last month, more than 80 paid out-of-state signature gatherers descended on the pivotal battleground of Arizona to collect signatures for West, state records show. Many of the workers listed Wells Marketing, a mysterious Missouri limited liability company, as their employer.

The company, which didn't respond to a request for comment, is closely affiliated with Mark Jacoby, a signature-gathering operative from California with a long-standing reputation for using deceptive tactics and who was convicted in 2009 of voter registration fraud, court records show.

In 2020, Jacoby worked to gather signatures to place the rapper Ye, formerly known as Kanye West, on the ballot. Ye's quixotic presidential campaign was widely viewed by Democrats as an effort to dilute Biden's popularity with Black voters.

Jacoby's firm, Let the Voters Decide, was investigated for using dubious sig-

Third party push *continued on page 8*

Third party push *continued from page 7*

nature-gathering tactics during a 2020 petition drive in Michigan that sought to roll back some of Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's emergency powers during the coronavirus pandemic. No charges came of the investigation, though, in a report, state Attorney General Dana Nessel said investigators "found evidence of sleazy practices and shady activity."

For Jacoby, it was nothing new.

He was accused in 2008 of tricking voters into registering with the California Republican Party by telling them they were signing an initiative to strengthen penalties for child molesters, the Los Angeles Times reported.

In 2006, signature gatherers told Massachusetts lawmakers that Jacoby instructed them to use deceptive tactics, like asking people to sign a petition to allow for the sale of wine in grocery stores. They were actually gathering signatures to roll back the state's historic gay marriage court ruling, the workers testified during a hearing.

Jacoby did not respond to a request for comment.

Legal experts say West's reliance on an army of paid signature gatherers financed by an outside party could cause him legal trouble because it could be viewed as an in-kind contribution to his campaign.

"The short answer is, yes, there is a potential issue," said Adav Noti, a former Federal Election Commission attorney who's now executive director of the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center in Washington. Noti added, however, that it's "complicated" and the success of any campaign finance complaint would heavily depend on specifics because "the law on this issue is really messy."

West is hardly Democrats' only concern.

Kennedy, a scion of one of America's most storied political families, may have entered the race as a Democrat challenging Biden. But even before his break with the party deeply intertwined with his family name, he drew an inordinate amount of attention from Republicans.

Republican megadonor Timothy Mellon, himself the heir to a storied Gilded Age fortune, donated $25 million to a super political action committee supporting Kennedy, records show. Other major pro-Trump donors have followed suit, including Leila Centner, who donated $1 million to the Kennedy super PAC, as well as arch conservative donor Elizabeth Uihlein, who gave $3,300 to his campaign.

Kennedy, an avowed environmentalist, has long been a champion of liberal causes. But he also has been a leading proponent of vaccine conspiracy theories, which helped him rise to greater prominence during the pandemic and earned him admiration from conservatives like former Fox News Channel host Tucker Carlson.

Democrats are worried Kennedy still has enough left-wing star appeal that he could peel off voters from Biden. And that appears to have been part of the calculus when Colorado's Libertarian Party reached an agreement to let him use its ballot line.

Hannah Goodman, the chairwoman for the Colorado Libertarians, did not respond to a request for comment. But in interviews posted to YouTube, Goodman, who has said she intends to vote for Trump, expressed disdain for Democrats and said she would like to give them a "taste of that medicine."

"The idea is we could essentially leverage this to make a swing state situation and become real viable players," Goodman said in an interview with the website Free State Colorado. "I am tired of living under a Democratic monopoly."

Legal experts say elections will continue to be susceptible to dirty tricks and chicanery unless the more states adopt different methods of casting a ballot, like ranked choice voting, which allows voters to weight their candidate preferences.

"Unfortunately, we obviously cannot put in place a better electoral system for this year's election, and thus have to hope that no third-party or independent candidate acts as a spoiler," said Edward Foley, a law professor at the Ohio State University who specializes in elections.

THE PHILADELPHIA SUNDAY SUN

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Voter rolls *continued from page 6*

ballot.

Cleaning the rolls or sowing distrust?

The Republican National Committee, newly reconstituted under Trump, also is involved in efforts to challenge voter rolls before the November election.

Michigan's voter rolls have been targeted in numerous lawsuits over the past four years by the RNC and others. A Nevada lawsuit filed by the RNC in March alleges the state is violating the National Voter Registration Act by failing to keep voter registration records accurate and updated. RNC Chair Michael Whatley at the time cited the need for "clean voter rolls."

Experts say the federal law actually errs on the side of enfranchising voters.

To prevent eligible voters from being disenrolled, it requires outdated records to remain in the system for some years after they're flagged as a potential concern. It's a technicality that can explain questions often raised by conservative groups, such as the number of voter registrations exceeding a jurisdiction's population.

It's like "comparing apples to orangutans," Nevada's Democratic attorney general said in faulting the data RNC cited in its analysis. In its brief, the Democratic National Committee cast the RNC lawsuits as building ammunition for a 2024 election challenge.

"This lawsuit is little more than political theater, designed less to address any real (much less substantial) issue with Nevada's voter registration lists than to sow public distrust in the security and integrity of our electoral systems," the filing said. "It is no more than a continuation of Republicans' 2020 efforts to undermine public confidence in our elections."

Casting suspicions on voting

Trump ally Ken Blackwell, who leads election efforts at the America First Policy Institute, has said legitimate voters "run the risk of having their hard-won right to vote diluted by unlawfully cast ballots" if voter roll glitches aren't addressed.

However, election law experts say the problem that such efforts aim to fix — ineligible voters casting ballots — remains exceptionally rare.

"Why? Because it's common sense that one person voting when they're not eligible is not going to swing an election, and is going to expose himself to criminal penalties," said Alice Clapman, senior counsel with the Brennan Center for Justice's democracy program. "So, even if someone were inclined to do this, it's very high risk and very low reward."

Clapman said the disinformation around voter rolls is eroding trust in election officials, who already face pressure and threats, and is undermining faith in the "proud civic activity" of voting.

WEEK IN REVIEW

Biden seriously considering proposals on Supreme Court term limits, ethics code, AP sources say

By Colleen Long and Zeke Miller
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden is seriously considering proposals to establish term limits for U.S. Supreme Court justices, and an ethics code that would be enforceable under law amid growing concerns that the justices are not held accountable, according to three people briefed on the plans.

It would mark a major shift for Biden, the former head of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who has long resisted calls to reform the high court, though since taking office he has been increasingly vocal about his belief that the court is abandoning mainstream constitutional interpretation. The details were first reported by The Washington Post.

Any changes would require congressional approval, which would be unlikely in a divided Congress. But with Republican nominee Donald Trump bragging about putting the three justices on the high court who are now part of the conservative majority, Biden's call for major changes could help animate his voters.



PEOPLE PROTEST outside the Supreme Court Monday, July 1, 2024, in Washington. (AP Photo/Mariam Zuhaib)

Biden is also considering calling for a constitutional amendment that would eliminate the broad immunity for presidents granted by the court in its most recent term, after Donald Trump claimed he was immune from prosecution for his actions on Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of his supporters violently descended on the U.S. Capitol.

The people were not authorized to speak publicly about proposals that have not been finalized and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The consideration of such proposals comes in response to growing outrage among Democrats about high court opinions that overturned landmark decisions on abortion rights and federal regulatory powers that had stood for decades. There have also been increasing questions surrounding the ethics of the court after revelations about some of the justices, including that Clarence Thomas had accepted luxury trips from a GOP megadonor.

Biden in an interview with BET on Tuesday predicted "there are probably going to be two more appointments" in the coming four years when justices retire and blamed Trump for nominating three conservative justices who helped overturn Roe v. Wade. "Just imagine if he has two more appointments, what that means," he said.

The Supreme Court did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the proposal.

Biden, speaking in a weekend call with the Congressional Progressive Caucus, talked about the possibility, the people said. Biden often tells voters they need more Democrats in Congress and a Democrat in the White House to counter the impact of the conservative-leaning court, but these proposals would go much further.

"And by the way, I'm going to need your help on the Supreme Court, because I'm about to come out. I don't want to prematurely announce it, but I'm about to come out with a major initiative on limiting the court and what we do and — I've been working with constitutional scholars for the last three months, and I need some help," he said, according to a transcript of the call.

About 2 in 3 Americans say they favor term limits or a mandatory retirement age for Supreme Court justices, according to a 2022 poll from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

According to June survey on the court, confidence remains low: 4 in 10 U.S. adults say they have hardly any confidence in the people running the Supreme Court.

The survey found that 7 in 10 Americans think the high court's justices are more influenced by ideology, while only about 3 in 10 U.S. adults think the justices are more likely to provide an independent check on other branches of government by being fair and impartial.

In November, the court adopted its first code of ethics. The policy, agreed to by all nine justices, does not appear to impose any significant new requirements and leaves compliance entirely to each justice.

Republicans have focused for years on remaking the federal judiciary and Supreme Court. When Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., was the majority leader, he refused to even meet in 2016 with Obama's pick for the high court — current Attorney General Merrick Garland, a federal judge at that time. The nomination stalled until a Republican president, Trump, took over.

Establishment GOP operatives backed Trump because of his pledge to name as many judges to the bench as possible. Their gamble worked. Trump ended up with three Supreme Court nominees and 54 federal appeals court judges, reshaping the courts for a generation.

Democrats are now finally understanding the power of judges as a voting tool, and Biden has made judicial nominations a priority, appointing a record number of judges for a president at this point in his first term, including some of the most diverse picks yet to the judiciary. Biden often speaks about those accomplishments during his reelection campaign, but Democrats have pushed him to go further.

Trump, in a post on his Truth Social platform, panned the possible Biden move, saying: "The Democrats are attempting to interfere in the Presidential Election, and destroy our Justice System, by attacking their Political Opponent, ME, and our Honorable Supreme Court. We have to fight for our Fair and Independent Courts and protect our Country."

Historically Black town in Louisiana's Cancer Alley is divided over a planned grain terminal

By Sharon Johnson and Stephen Smith
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WALLACE, La. — Sisters Jo and Dr. Joy Banner live just miles from where their ancestors were enslaved more than 200 years ago in St. John the Baptist Parish, Louisiana. Their tidy Creole cottage cafe in the small riverfront town of Wallace lies yards from property their great-grandparents bought more than a century ago.

It's a historic area the sisters have dedicated themselves to keeping free of the heavy industry that lines the opposite shore of the Mississippi River.

"We have all these little pockets of free towns surrounding these plantation cane fields. It's such a great story of tenacity and how we were able to be financially independent and economically savvy," Joy Banner said.

Today, miles of sugarcane borders homes on Wallace's west side. Eastward, two plantations tell the story of enslaved people: One has more than a dozen slave quarters, the other a memorial commemorating a slave revolt.

Directly across the Mississippi, refineries and other heavy industry crowd the view, showing Wallace residents exactly what the Banners are fighting against taking over their side of the river. Together, they created a nonprofit called The Descendants Project to preserve Black Louisianans' culture. The immediate goal is to stop a 222-acre proposed grain export facility from being built within 300 feet of the Banners' property and near several historic sites.

"It would essentially pave the way for the whole entire West Bank area that doesn't have any heavy industry on it to just be industrialized," Jo Banner said. "We have a lot of heritage, and that's going to be decimated if we get these plants."



TWIN SISTERS JO AND JOY BANNER pose on the porch of their place of business, Fee-Fo-Lay Café, March 13, 2024, Wallace, La. (AP Photo/Stephen Smith)

Their sentiments echo those of residents who live in other towns along Louisiana's Cancer Alley, an 85-mile corridor along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. It's filled with industrial plants that emit toxic chemicals, including known carcinogens.

The Descendants Project has tangled with Greenfield Louisiana LLC, the company proposing the grain terminal, as well as the local St. John the Baptist Parish Council, for nearly two years, seeking to prevent the Greenfield Wallace Grain Export Facility from being built.

It would receive and export grain byproducts via trucks, trains, and barges. While some town residents support the project, the Banners and other neighbors fear it will eradicate historic landmarks and pollute the area.

"We already have issues with industry from the other side of the river," said Gail Zeringue, whose husband's family purchased their property in the late 19th century. "To add to that with a grain elevator is just piling it on."

The Parish Council recently rezoned nearly 1,300 acres of commercial and residential property for heavy industry. Another swath along a residential zone was redesignated for light industry. All the tracts are owned by the Port of Louisiana and have been leased to Greenfield Louisiana LLC.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers found the grain facility could adversely affect several historic properties in and around Wallace, including the Evergreen, Oak Alley, and Whitney plantations. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said the terminal could add to the "many existing manufacturing industries and other existing sources of environmental burden for the St. John the Baptist Parish community."

After nearly two years, Greenfield is still waiting for the permitting process to be complete.

"It appears to me that the Army Corps wants to make sure that everyone is heard," said Lynda Van Davis, counsel and head of external affairs for Greenfield Louisiana. "Before we did anything, we talked to the community first, and so our system is safer, and it's green."

The facility will be used for transportation, and there will be no chemicals or manufacturing on site, something Greenfield representatives said sets it apart. They also plan multiple dust collection systems to minimize emissions.

They are aware of Wallace's historical significance, Van Davis said.

"We had testing done. We made sure that there were no remains of any prior slaves that were maybe buried in the area," Van Davis said. "In the event that we do find any remains or maybe some artifacts, we would stop and make sure that the right people come in and preserve any artifacts that are found."

Specifically, Greenfield said, the State Historic Preservation Office would step in. The Amistad Research Center, the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum, and the state park system are also potential partners to help decide what to do with any artifacts or remains that might be discovered.

Some neighbors are more worried about Wallace's future than its past. They're concerned the town's prosperity hangs on whether the facility is approved. Wallace doesn't even have a gas station, and school enrollment has been declining.

"The only changes I've seen in my community are people leaving. We have absolutely nothing on our West Bank," said Willa Gordon, a lifelong resident.

"It automatically meant to me jobs coming into my community and economic development and growth, so I was very excited. I'm disappointed that, years later, it's still not here," Nicole Dumas said.

Greenfield plans to create more than 1,000 new jobs during construction and 370 permanent positions once the site opens. The company also has promised to host local

Cancer *continued on page 11*

Tuskegee syphilis study whistleblower Peter Buxtun has died at age 86

By Mike Stobbe
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Peter Buxtun, the whistleblower who revealed that the U.S. government allowed hundreds of Black men in rural Alabama to go untreated for syphilis in what became known as the Tuskegee study, has died. He was 86.

Buxtun died May 18 of Alzheimer's disease in Rocklin, California, according to his attorney, Minna Fernan.

Buxtun is revered as a hero to public health scholars and ethicists for his role in bringing to light the most notorious medical research scandal in U.S. history. Documents that Buxtun provided to The Associated Press, and its subsequent investigation and reporting, led to a public outcry that ended the study in 1972.

Forty years earlier, in 1932, federal scientists began studying 400 Black men in Tuskegee, Alabama, who were infected with syphilis. When antibiotics became available in the 1940s that could treat the disease, federal health officials ordered that the drugs be withheld. The study became an observation of how the disease ravaged the body over time.

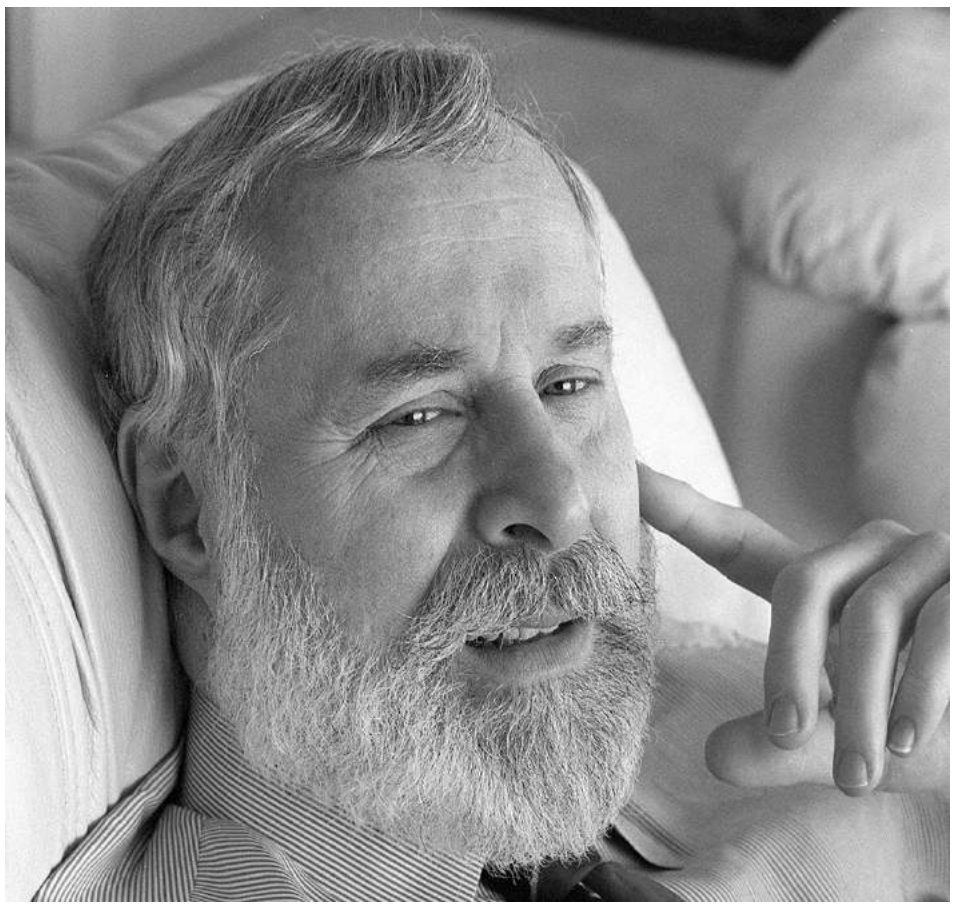
In the mid-1960s, Buxtun was a federal public health employee working in San Francisco when he overheard a co-worker talking about the study. The research wasn't exactly a secret — about a dozen medical journal articles about it had been published in the previous 20 years. But hardly anyone had raised any concerns about how the experiment was being conducted.

"This study was completely accepted by the American medical community," said Ted Pestorius of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, speaking at a 2022 program marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the study.

Buxtun had a different reaction. After learning more about the study, he raised ethical concerns in a 1966 letter to officials at the CDC. In 1967, he was summoned to a meeting in Atlanta, where he was chewed out by agency officials for what they deemed to be impertinence. Repeatedly, agency leaders rejected his complaints and his call for the men in Tuskegee to be treated.

He left the U.S. Public Health Service and attended law school, but the study ate at him. In 1972, he provided documents about the research to Edith Lederer, an AP reporter he had met in San Francisco. Lederer passed the documents to AP investigative reporter Jean Heller, telling her colleague, "I think there might be something here."

Heller's story was published on July 25, 1972, leading to Congressional hearings, a class-action lawsuit that resulted in a $10 million settlement and the study's termination about four months later. In 1997, President Bill Clinton formally apologized for the study, calling it "shameful."



PETER BUXTUN is pictured in San Francisco in this undated photo. Buxton, the whistleblower who revealed that the U.S. government allowed hundreds of Black men in rural Alabama go untreated for syphilis in what became known as the Tuskegee study, died on May 18, 2024, from Alzheimer's disease in Rocklin, Calif. (Liz Hafalia/San Francisco Chronicle via AP)

The leader of a group dedicated to the memory of the study participants said Monday they are grateful to Buxtun for exposing the experiment.

"We are thankful for his honesty and his courage," said Lille Tyson Head, whose father was in the study.

Buxtun was born in Prague in 1937. His father was Jewish, and his family immigrated to the U.S. in 1939 from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, eventually settling in Irish Bend, Oregon on the Columbia River.

In his complaints to federal health officials, he drew comparisons between the Tuskegee study and medical experiments Nazi doctors had conducted on Jews and other prisoners. Federal scientists didn't believe they were guilty of the same kind of moral and ethical sins, but after the Tuskegee study was exposed, the government put in place new rules about how it conducts medical research. Today, the study is often blamed for the unwillingness of some African Americans to participate in medical research.

"Peter's life experiences led him to immediately identify the study as morally indefensible and to seek justice in the form of treatment for the men. Ultimately, he could not relent," said the CDC's Pestorius.

Buxtun attended the University of Oregon, served in the U.S. Army as a combat medic and psychiatric social worker and joined the federal health service in 1965.

Buxtun went on to write, give presentations and win awards for his involvement in the Tuskegee study. A global traveler, he collected and sold antiques, especially military weapons and swords and gambling equipment from California's Gold Rush era.

He also spent more than 20 years trying to recover his family's properties confiscated by the Nazis and was partly successful.

"Peter was wise, witty, classy and unceasingly generous," said David M. Golden, a close friend of Buxtun's for over 25 years. "He was a staunch advocate for personal freedoms and spoke often against prohibition, whether it be drugs, prostitution or firearms."

Another longtime friend, Angie Bailie, said she attended many of Buxtun's presentations about Tuskegee.

"Peter never ended a single talk without fighting back tears," she said.

Buxtun himself could be self-effacing about his actions, saying he did not anticipate the vitriolic reaction of some health officials when he started questioning the study's ethics.

At a Johns Hopkins University forum in 2018, Buxtun was asked where he got the moral strength to blow the whistle.

"It wasn't strength," he said. "It was stupidity."

Cancer *continued on page 11*

job fairs, training and certification programs.

St. John the Baptist Parish Council members Virgie Johnson and Lennix Madere Jr., the elected officials who represent Wallace, declined to comment on the proposed construction. Both voted in favor of the zoning change.

The tug-of-war between past and present is a familiar one across the country, with small, historic Black towns dwindling because of gentrification, industry, or lack of resources.

Through their nonprofit, the Banners want to create a network of historic communities and economic opportunity. They recently moved a plantation house their ancestors once lived in to their property in hopes it can be given a historical marker and of preventing any industrial building on their land.

"We are doing what we can to protect and to hold on, but it's so crucial that we keep these plants out," Jo Banner said.

FOOD & BEVERAGES

Create a family-friendly grazing board



FAMILY FEATURES

A beautifully designed charcuterie board may feel more like a grown-up treat, but with the right ingredients, delicious grazing boards can provide fun and nutrition for the whole family.

No matter what you call it, charcuterie boards, grazing boards and snack platters are all basically the same thing. The boards make a trendy addition to an entertaining menu, but a platter or kid-friendly board can be equally pleasing.

What you serve on a grazing board is entirely up to you. Most include a selection of meats and cheeses, and many incorporate nuts, crackers, dips and jams. Some also incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables. Creating your own board means there really are no rules; you can add just about anything you want.

To build a successful board, keep these tips in mind:

• Choose ingredients and elements that don't require temperature control. The idea of a grazing board is that it sits out for a while.

• Avoid anything that needs refrigeration, heat or will lose its shape or flavor if it rests for an extended amount of time.

• Select a surface large enough to hold a variety of food. It can be a simple cutting board or a cute platter. There's no specific size requirement but err on the side of bigger; spacing out your goodies can be more attractive and less messy.

• Use high-quality ingredients to ensure every bite is delicious and nutritious. While shopping, remember to look for the Produce for Kids and Healthy Family Project logos next to favorite items in the produce department, as adding these flavorful fruits and veggies to your cart can help make a difference in your community.

• Build your board around a theme to add an extra element of fun. Use mini cookie cutters to make fun, kid-friendly shapes out of cheese and meats. Be mindful of colors; a rainbow platter is vibrant and appealing, and colorful fruits and veggies offer a strong mix of nutrients.

• Remember it doesn't have to be elaborate. Classic favorites are all you need. Even kid favorites like sections of mandarin oranges, carrot sticks and chocolate chips are fair game for a family-friendly board.

Find more ideas for creating family-friendly treats at healthyfamilyproject.com.

Taco Tuesday Board

Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project's "Come Graze With Us" e-cookbook

Guacamole
Salsa
Queso
Hard and soft taco shells
Ground turkey, seasoned and browned
Lettuce
Diced tomatoes
Shredded cheese
Chopped onions
Chopped peppers
Sour cream
Cilantro
Lime wedges

On grazing board or platter, arrange guacamole, salsa, queso, taco shells, ground turkey, lettuce, tomatoes, shredded cheese, onions, peppers, sour cream, cilantro and lime wedges.



Weekend Breakfast Grazing Board

Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project's "Come Graze With Us" e-cookbook

Hard-boiled eggs
Cooked sausage links
Mini frozen waffles, toasted
Mini frozen pancakes, toasted
Mini muffins

Grazing *continued on page 22*

SUNRISE Inspiration for the soul...

cj speaks...

No longer toil with self



By cj



Life is filled with ups and downs, ins and outs, and uncertainty surrounding who you are, what you are doing, and about how you seek to uplift your life. However, God is always in control. As I struggled with some thoughts and actions concerning who I believe I am, and the spiritual talents that God has given me, I wondered how I was going to continue to use those talents and share them with others. When I reached a point of giving up, I then had to realize within myself, as I spend so much time with God, that it is not about others, it is about myself. It is about all the things that God gives me, all the opportunities He allows me to have, and the road that He has prepared just for me.

God has prepared a road for you as well, and a way to help you navigate it. He has provided opportunities to help you live your life to the fullest, and access to all of the possibilities of what you can achieve and become. The real deal is that you cannot allow what others say or do to influence your decisions. You cannot allow others' inconsistiences to shut you down. Most importantly, you can no longer struggle with self.

Trust what God has in store for you, and no longer worry about how you will get there. Remember that you are able and everything God says you are. You just have to be all you can be at all times, accept those defeats and celebrate your gains. Expect that something good is going to happen to you at every level -- good, bad and indifferent, the highs the lows and the in-betweens, knowing who God is and who He says you can be. Go get it and be it. Seek it and want it. Feel it and move into it. Stop toiling with yourself because of the actions of others. Furthermore, don't wrestle with your own actions, because sometimes self is the worst enemy of al and you do not want to be your own worst enemy.

God is great and glorious. He will continue to show you your way, as He continues to open doors, and at times, may close a door so that you can see and experience who you really are the same way He sees you. Be in tune to yourself --- not others --- allowing yourself to flourish and grow and experience the joy and peace found when your embrace what God has destined for you. Yeah, continue to prosper and grow into who God says you are. Until next time, take care... PEACE!

cj is an author, poet, educator, spoken word artist, writer, motivational speaker, and inspirational writer who resides in Philadelphia. If you were moved by this piece, shoot cj a "like" or comment at: spokenwordofphilly@gmail.com.

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Why it's important to start talking about inflammation and heart disease



BPT

Did you know that cholesterol and inflammation are partners in causing heart attack and stroke? Inflammation is your body's internal fight against harmful conditions, but if it's on overtime, it can cause its own harm. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with heart disease, you may want to talk to your doctor about the role of cardiovascular inflammation, and what you can do about it.

Because heart disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S.,[1] it's vital for those with risk factors for cardiovascular (CV) disease to learn how they may be able to help prevent a significant cardiac event like a heart attack or stroke from happening to them. A recent study demonstrated that among people already taking cholesterol-lowering statins, residual vascular inflammation strongly predicts future CV events -- perhaps even more than high cholesterol.[2]

Data from many peer-reviewed publications confirm that patients at high risk who are already using statins may benefit from additional anti-inflammatory therapy to further reduce their risk of cardiac and stroke events. Until now, there have only been approved therapies to treat high cholesterol risk - which do not address remaining vascular inflammation. Reducing inflammation may be key to further lowering the risk of heart attack, which over 800,000 Americans with CV disease may face this year.[1]

Why inflammation is so crucial

Heart attacks are caused by blocked blood flow to the heart, while strokes are caused by blocked blood flow to the brain. Inflammation plays a critical role in atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), a condition where arteries become narrowed and hardened due to buildup of a substance called plaque which can lead to reduced blood flow and blood clots, resulting in heart attacks and strokes.[3] Because of this, people with ASCVD are at high risk for acute cardiovascular events.[4] Inflammation is a partner with high cholesterol in forming plaque, which contributes to the development and progression of ASCVD.[5]

How to reduce CV inflammation

To find out whether inflammation is a risk for you, the first step is getting tested. A simple blood test to determine the level of high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), which is a biomarker for inflammation, can be measured in your blood and gives you an idea of your risk of heart disease.

If this test finds that your hs-CRP level is higher than normal, the next step is to reduce it. One treatment option includes low-dose colchicine, 0.5 mg, a once-daily, single oral anti-inflammatory tablet shown to reduce the risk of a major event, including heart attack or stroke.

"Inflammation has been known to cause heart attacks and strokes for years, and low-dose colchicine, 0.5 mg is a major advance in treating people with cardiovascular inflammation," said Philip Nimoityn, M.D., FACC, clinical cardiologist at Cardiology Consultants of Philadelphia at Jefferson and attending physician at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. "With the potential to save millions of lives, low-dose colchicine, 0.5 mg, is proven to reduce the risk of cardiac events, including heart attack and stroke, in patients with established cardiovascular disease by 31%."

If you've been diagnosed with ASCVD, or you have multiple risk factors for ASCVD, you may be suffering from untreated CV inflammation. To help reduce this damaging inflammation and lower your risk of a heart attack or stroke, ask your doctor about getting tested for hs-CRP, and about new anti-inflammatory treatment options such as low-dose colchicine, 0.5 mg.

Learn more about your risk and steps you can take to support your cardiac health at: CVDInflammation.com.

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Richard Simmons, a fitness guru who mixed laughs and sweat, dies at 76

By Mark Kennedy
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Richard Simmons, television's hyperactive court jester of physical fitness who built a mini-empire in his trademark tank tops and short shorts by urging the overweight to exercise and eat better, died Saturday. He turned 76 on Friday.

Simmons died at his home in Los Angeles, his publicist Tom Estey said in an email to The Associated Press. He gave no further details.

Los Angeles police and fire departments say they responded to a house — whose address the AP has matched with Simmons through public records — where a man was declared dead from natural causes.

Simmons, who had revealed a skin diagnosis in March 2024, had lately dropped out of sight, sparking speculating about his health and well-being. His death was first reported by TMZ.

Simmons was a former 268-pound teen who became a master of many media forms, sharing his hard-won weight-loss tips as host of the Emmy-winning daytime "Richard Simmons Show" and author of best-selling books and the diet plan Deal-A-Meal. He also opened exercise studios and starred exercise videos, including the wildly successful "Sweatin' to the Oldies" line, which became a cultural phenomenon.

"My food plan and diet are just two words — common sense. With a dash of good humor," he told The Associated Press in 1982. "I want to help people and make the world a healthier, happy place."

Simmons embraced mass communication to get his message out, even as he eventually became the butt of jokes for his


AP Photo/Tina Fineberg, File)

outfits and flamboyant flair. He was a sought-after guest on TV shows led by Merv Griffin, Mike Douglas and Phil Donahue. But David Letterman would prank him and Howard Stern would tease him until he cried. He was mocked in Neil Simon's "The Goodbye Girl" on Broadway in 1993, and Eddie Murphy put on white makeup and dressed like him in "The Nutty Professor," screaming "I'm a pony!"

Asked if he thought he could motivate people by being silly, Simmons answered, "I think there's a time to be serious and a time to be silly. It's knowing when to do it. I try to have a nice combination. Being silly cures depression. It catches people off guard and makes them think. But in between that silliness is a lot of seriousness that makes sense. It's a different kind of training."

Simmons' daytime show was seen on 200 stations in America, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan and South America. His first book, "Never Say Diet," was a smash best-seller.

Throughout his career, Simmons was a reliable critic of fad diets, always emphasizing healthy eating and exercise plans. "There'll always be some weird thing about eating four grapes before you go to bed, or drinking a special tea, or buying this little bean from El Salvador," he told the AP in 2005 as the Atkins diet craze swept the country. "If you watch your portions and you have a good attitude and you work out every day you'll live longer, feel better and look terrific."

Simmons was a native of New Orleans, a chubby boy named Milton by his parents. (He renamed himself "Richard" around the age of 10 to improve his self-image). He would tell people he ate to excess because he believed his parents liked his older brother more. He was teased by schoolmates and ballooned to almost 200 pounds.

His life changed after getting an anonymous letter. "One dark, rainy day I went to my car and found a note. It said, 'Dear Richard, you're very funny, but fat people die young. Please don't die." He was so stunned that he went on the starvation diet that left him thin but very ill.

After the crash diet he gained back 65 pounds. Eventually, he was able to devise a sensible plan to take off the pounds and keep them off. "I went into the business because I couldn't find anything I liked," he said.

In 2022, Simmons broke his six-year silence, with his spokesperson telling the New York Post that the beloved fitness icon was "living the life he has chosen."

One of the online tributes after Simmons' passing was from actor-comedian Pauly Shore, who previously devel-

Simmons *continued on page 22*

James Sikking, star of 'Hill Street Blues' and 'Doogie Howser, MD,' dies at 90

By Mallika Sen and Lindsey Bahr

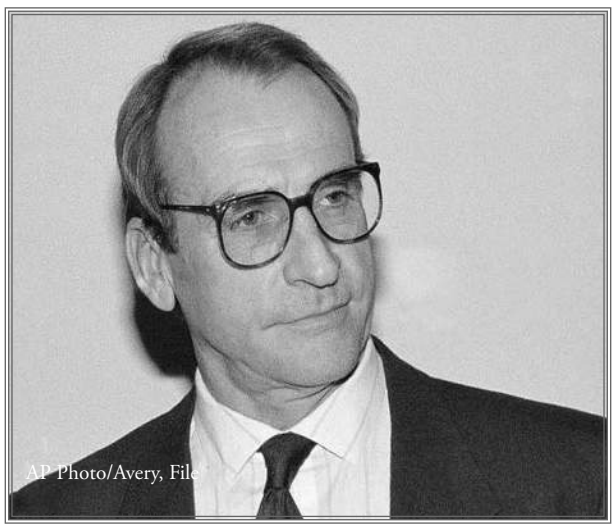
ASSOCIATED PRESS

James Sikking, who starred as a hardened police lieutenant on "Hill Street Blues" and as the titular character's kindhearted dad on "Doogie Howser, M.D.," has died at 90.

Sikking died of complications from dementia, his publicist Cynthia Snyder said in a statement Sunday evening.

Born the youngest of five children on March 5, 1934 in Los Angeles, his early acting ventures included an uncredited part in Roger Corman's "Five Guns West" and a bit role in an episode of "Perry Mason." He also secured guest spots in a litany of popular 1970s television series, from the action-packed "Mission: Impossible," "M.A.S.H." "The F.B.I.," "The Rockford Files," "Hawaii Five-O" and "Charlie's Angels" to "Eight is Enough" and "Little House on the Prairie."

"Hill Street Blues" would debut in 1981, a fresh take on the traditional police procedural. Sikking played Lt.


AP Photo/Avery, File)

Howard Hunter, a clean-cut Vietnam War veteran who headed the Emergency Action Team of the Metropolitan Police Department in a never-named city.

The acclaimed show was a drama, but Sikking's character's uptight nature and quirks were often used to comic effect. Sikking based his performance on a drill instructor he'd had at basic training when military service cut through his time at the University of California, Los Angeles, from which he graduated in 1959.

Sikking would earn an Emmy nomination for outstanding supporting actor in a drama in 1984.

Aside from "Hill Street Blues," Sikking played Captain Styles in 1984's "Star Trek III: The Search for Spock." He wasn't enthusiastic about the role, but had been lured by the idea that it would take just a day on set.

"It was not my cup of tea. I was not into that kind of outer space business. I had an arrogant point of view in those days. I wanted to do real theater. I wanted to do serious shows, not something about somebody's imagination of what outer space was going to be like," Sikking explained to startrek.com in 2014. "So I had a silly prejudice against it, which is bizarre because I've probably and happily signed more this, that or the other thing of 'Star Trek' than I have anything of all the other work I've done."

He married Florine Caplan, with whom he had two children and four grandchildren.

"I probably would do something if it got me going. Acting is a license to do self-investigation. It's a great ego trip to be an actor," he told startrek.com in 2014. "I must say that, in the past few years in which I haven't worked, the obscurity has been quite attractive."

"The condiment of my life is good fortune," he finished.

Shannen Doherty, 'Beverly Hills, 90210' star, dies at 53

By Lynn Elber
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Shannen Doherty, the "Beverly Hills, 90210" star whose life and career were roiled by illness and tabloid stories, has died at 53.

After years with breast cancer, Doherty died Saturday, according to a statement from her publicist, Leslie Sloane.

"The devoted daughter, sister, aunt and friend was surrounded by her loved ones as well as her dog, Bowie. The family asks for their privacy at this time so they can grieve in peace," Sloane said Sunday. The news was first reported by People magazine.

Her illness was publicly revealed in a lawsuit filed in 2015 against her former business managers, in which she alleged they mismanaged her money and allowed her health insurance to lapse. She later shared intimate details of her treatment following a single mastectomy. In December 2016, she posted a photo of her first day of radiation, calling the treatment "frightening" for her.

In February 2020, Doherty revealed that the cancer had returned and was at Stage 4. She said she came forward because her health conditions could come out in court. The actor had sued insurance giant State Farm after her California home was damaged in a fire in 2018.

"I have no idea how long I'm going to be on the chemo for. ... That's not something that I can predict, it's not something my doctors can predict. And it's scary, it's like a big wake-up call," Doherty said on a late June episode of her podcast "Let's Be Clear," adding that a recent change in the shape of her cancer cells meant there were new treatment protocols for her to try. "For the first time in a couple months probably, I feel hopeful because there are


Editorial credit: DFree / Shutterstock.com

so many more protocols now, whereas before I was hopeful — but I was still getting prepared."

A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Doherty moved to Los Angeles with her family at age 7 and, within a few years, became an actor.

"It was completely my decision," she told The Associated Press in a 1994 interview. "My parents never pushed me into anything. They support me. It really wouldn't matter if I was a professional soccer player — they'd still be as supportive and loving."

As a child star, she worked steadily in such TV series as "Little House on the Prairie," in which she played Jenny Wilder. She detoured as a teenager to the big screen in "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" (1985) and "Heathers."

In 1990, the doe-eyed, dark-haired actor won her breakout role as Brenda Walsh in producer Aaron Spelling's hit teenage melodrama set in posh Beverly Hills. She and Jason Priestley's Brandon, Brenda's twin brother, were fish-out-of-water Midwesterners.

But Doherty's fame came with media scrutiny and accounts of outbursts, drinking and impulsiveness — the latter most notably after a very brief marriage to actor George Hamilton's son, Ashley. Doherty's second marriage, in 2002, was to Rick Salomon and was annulled within a year. In 2011, Doherty married photographer Kurt Iswarienko. She filed for divorce in April 2023.

She left "Beverly Hills, 90210" at the end of its fourth season in 1994 (the show aired until 2000), reportedly removed by Spelling because of conflicts with her co-stars and chronic lateness.

But in her 1994 AP interview, Doherty described her life as peaceful.

Three years later, in 1997, Doherty was sentenced to anger-management counseling by a Beverly Hills Municipal Court judge after she allegedly smashed a beer bottle onto a man's windshield during a quarrel. After a 2001 drunken driving arrest, she pleaded no contest and was ordered to serve five days in a work-release program.

Doherty reunited with Spelling when he cast her in 1998 as Prue Halliwell in "Charmed."

Doherty starred with Holly Marie Combs and Alyssa Milano in "Charmed" from 1998-2001, at which point her character was replaced by one played by Rose McGowan. Doherty appeared in the "90210" sequel series seven years later and competed on "Dancing with the Stars" in 2010. She also worked on the third "Beverly Hills, 90210" reboot, "BH90210," a meta send-up that reunited most of the original cast and aired for one season in 2019.

She also appeared in a tribute episode of "Riverdale" dedicated to that show's star — and her late "Beverly

Doherty *continued on page 22*

Jacoby Jones, a star of Baltimore's most recent Super Bowl title run, has died at age 40

By Noah Trister
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE — Former NFL receiver Jacoby Jones, whose 108-yard kickoff return in 2013 remains the longest touchdown in Super Bowl history, has died. He was 40.

The Houston Texans, Jones' team for the first five seasons of his career, announced his death on Sunday. In a statement released by the NFL Players Association, his family said he died at his home in New Orleans. A cause of death was not given.

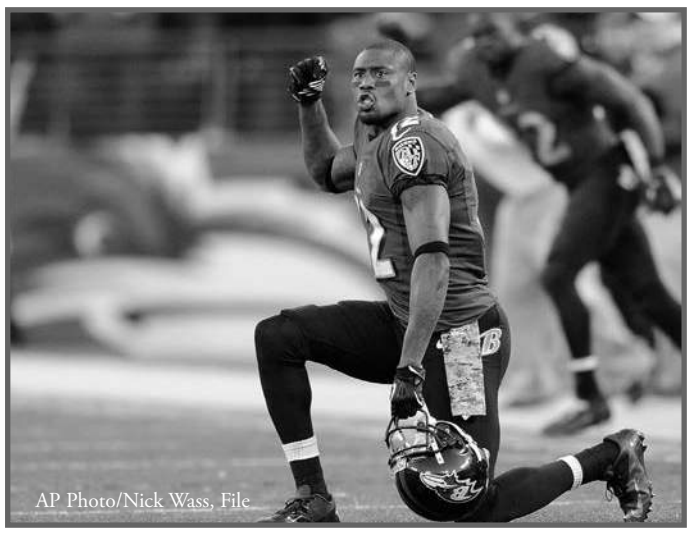
Jones played from 2007-15 for the Texans, Baltimore Ravens, San Diego Chargers and Pittsburgh Steelers, and he made several huge plays for the Ravens during their most recent Super Bowl title season.

Jones was a key part of Baltimore's "Mile High Miracle" in a playoff game at Denver in January 2013. He caught a 70-yard touchdown pass with 31 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter to tie the score. The Ravens eventually won in double overtime.

In the Super Bowl that postseason against San Francisco, Jones caught a 56-yard TD pass from eventual game MVP Joe Flacco. Then he raced 108 yards to the end zone to open the second half and give Baltimore a 28-6 lead. The Ravens held on for a 34-31 victory.

That Super Bowl was played in New Orleans, where Jones grew up.

"My favorite football play was when Jacoby was talking to his mom in the end zone,


AP Photo/Nick Wass, File

just before a late-game kickoff return against the Vikings in a snowstorm shootout. Jacoby then raced to catch the ball and run it back for a touchdown," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said in a statement. "My favorite Jacoby personal moment was every time I saw his smiling face full of joy."

Jones made The Associated Press All-Pro team as a kick returner for the 2012 season. Shortly after that, he appeared on "Dancing with the Stars."

"Jacoby was one of the most fun-loving teammates and people I've ever been around," former Texans pass-rushing star J.J. Watt said on social media. "Always dancing and laughing, with a permanent smile on his face. Gone far, far too soon."

In April, Jones became coach of the Beaumont Renegades, an arena football team in Texas.

"What can be said about him as a football player is only scratching the surface of who he was as a man," the Renegades said in a statement. "When you needed something, he was there. When you called him, he answered. Didn't matter if you were a family member, a close friend, player he coached, etc."

ENTERTAINMENT & THE ARTS

'TIME II: Unfinished Business' -- A conversation with Fox and Rob Rich

By Kharisma McIlwaine

There are some love stories that stand the test of time, come what may. Sibil Fox Richardson (Fox Rich) and her husband Robert Richardson are an example of one of those stories.

This couple endured 21 years as an incarcerated family in Louisiana, and their fight for true freedom continues daily. The couple began sharing their story of love and endurance that spanned over two decades in the 2020 Oscar-nominated (Best Documentary Feature) film, "Time."

Directed by Garrett Bradley, "Time" shared the compelling story of Fox Rich's ongoing battle to bring her husband home. Rob was sentenced to 60 years in prison without parole, as a first-time offender for armed robbery of a Credit Union in 1997 having never fired a shot. Told from a first-hand account through the lens of Fox, and with the use of home videos, their heart-breaking and simultaneously inspiring story touched the hearts and lives of many.

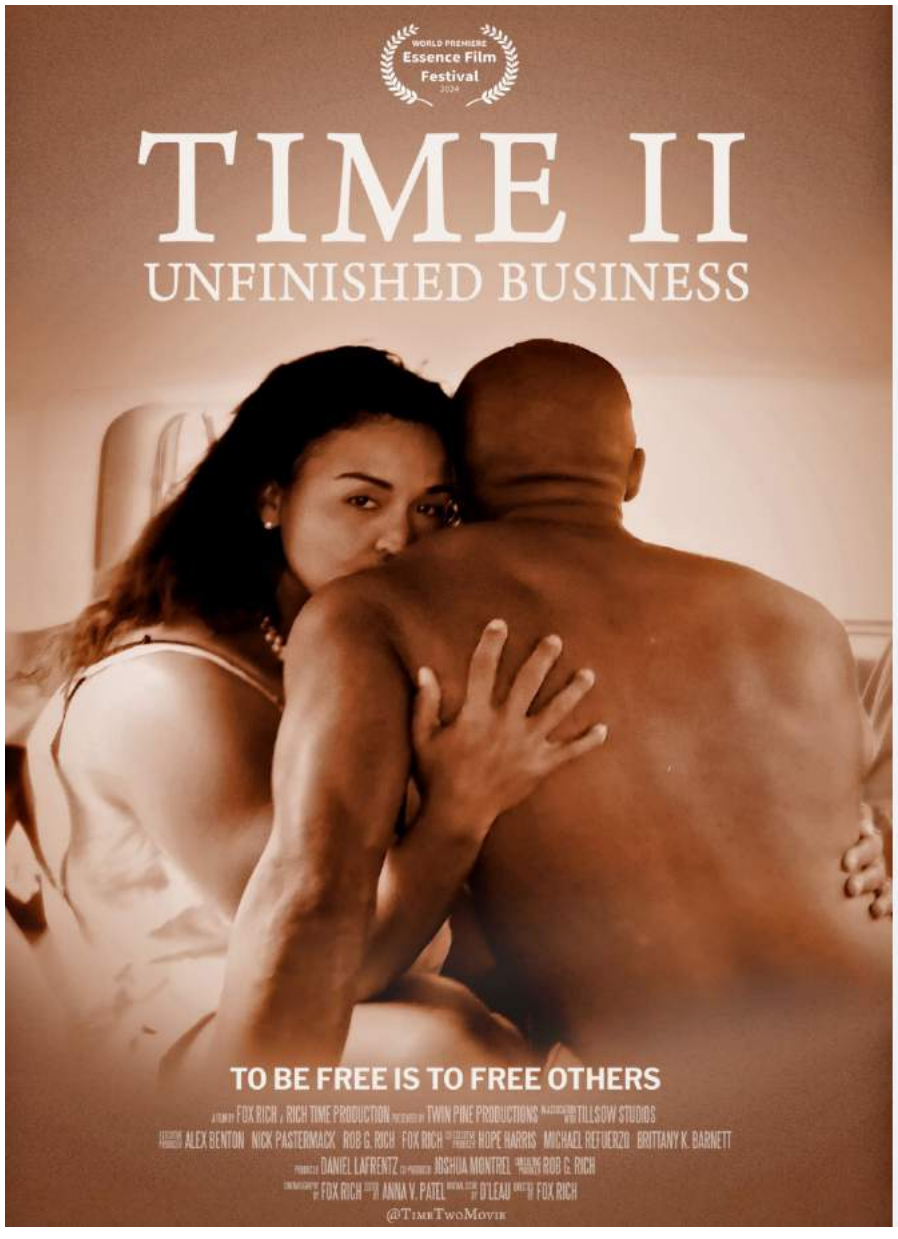
Fox and Rob Rich now return, with Fox as the director of "TIME II: Unfinished Business." This sequel explores their family's life after Rob's release from prison, the fight to have their nephew and fall partner Ontario, released from prison, and their continued efforts to reform the gross injustices within the criminal justice system. Fox and Rob Rich spoke with the **SUN** about this project, and their ongoing quest for freedom for all in the form of their mantra "to be free is to free others."

When Fox Rich first began documenting her family's life in the 90's, it was not a common practice. That decision to turn the camera on and press record changed their lives forever.

"I had just encountered the most amazing thing I had ever imagined," she said. "Rob and I after 10 years of dating on and off and three children between us made a family. We got married! It was like we grabbed hold of this American institution and were unrelenting about it. That's why the night that we married, as we share in "TIME II," you see us bungee jumping together as a form of consummating. When we got married and started a family, it was one of the most beautiful things that I had experienced, and I wanted to document it. I wanted to hold onto it so I could share it with generations to come."

Mass incarceration in America has become an epidemic with millions of Americans having the shared experience of a loved one incarcerated. To shed light on her own experience --- including the struggle to keep her family together while raising six sons with her husband behind bars --- Fox, who also served 3 1/2 years behind bars, pushed past the stigmas that are so often associated with being incarcerated to share a powerful story.

"We have to get over ourselves and realize that these issues are so much bigger than us. We do the universe a disservice when we don't share. It is our duty and our obligation to inform other human beings when other's humanity is being denied," Fox exclaimed.



"When you look at national statistics and you think about the fact that 65% of all marriages end in divorce, you can already see that statistically speaking, marriage is a challenge, and incarceration only compounds that challenge," Rob added. "I don't even know what the numbers are of people who successfully make it through, but it wasn't the statistics of today that I looked toward in an effort to draw my strength. My strength came from the marriages that happened during slavery, when families were divided and separated due to the conditions that other people placed upon them. Giving up on one another, they didn't exercise that as a luxury. So much of the same held true when I found myself in Louisiana's criminal justice system faced with a practical life sentence."

In order to advocate for their freedom and the freedom of others, Rob and Fox Rich had to do an extensive amount of research to inform themselves on the laws in place, in order to work towards what needed to be changed.

"It was quite the challenge…Imagine yourself being dropped in the middle of a land where you don't speak the language," Rob said. "Thinking about the people that came on the first ships, that had been brought into a land where they didn't understand the people, didn't understand the language and those things and had to figure it out. Their very survival depended upon it. Much of the same held true for me going into Louisiana's criminal justice system. The law is a complicated language."

"Learning to speak it, to interpret it, to understand it and all of those things, they come with the same challenges as I would imagine if you had to learn Mandarin or Swahili," he continued . "But, when you know your life depends upon it, you eventually get to a point where you say I've got to figure this out. So, I spent countless days in Angola's prison library and every prison that I was in on my route getting to Angola. Every juncture, if they had a law library, I was in it. If they didn't have a law library, I was asking for books to be sent to me about the law in an effort that I could be able to one understand the law, and with hopes that then I would be able to take my grievances and my complaints to the court in a manner that they could receive it."

Though technically "TIME II: Unfinished Business" serves as Fox Rich's directorial debut, "Time" was told from her perspective. The decision for Fox to officially step into the role as director came naturally.

"This was important to me," she said. "Mine was not so much the research of law as it was I wanted to raise cases that I saw that just really vexed my heart and were flagrant. Faith Winslow was one of those. Faith Winslow was from my hometown, and it was like my husband and I. Sixty years for attempting to take $5,000, and you're saying nobody sees the wrong in this? They think this is

TIME II *continued on page 18*

TIME II *continued from page 17*

ok? Nobody has the power to fix this? So even though Faith passed recently after he was released from prison, I wanted to make sure we could lift his name and his story. That's why we chose some of those stories that were in our documentary."

Fox and Rob realized that by sharing their own journey towards freedom, they were also helping so many other people and families during their own fight for freedom. One of those people still fighting for freedom was their nephew Ontario Smith, who was sentenced to 45 years in prison for accompanying them during the robbery.

"To me, Rob getting out was important, yes, but the real testament to things would be what would we do with freedom now," Fox said. "What would we do upon his return? This was the important story to us. It was the honor code. We had invited our nephew to be with us and he still remained behind when we became free. It was, how do we get to know each other after 21 years as husband and wife? What does this look like? This is not a collect call. So many of those things I thought were important for the 2.3 million people that are behind bars as well as those that are related to those behind bars, that they had an opportunity to know what happened next for us. People fell in love with "Time"… they deserved to know what happened next."

Many people discuss the horrors of life behind bars, but the adjustment required once freedom is attained comes with its own set of challenges. One of those major challenges is survivor's guilt.



Fox and Rob Rich

"I think probably the biggest challenge when I came home was just that no one was really ecstatic to see me other than my immediate family," Rob said. "When I say my immediate family, I'm talking about the house that Fox and Rob built. We were excited about seeing each other, our children were excited about seeing us together and seeing me on this side of things, but my family of origin were not necessarily as excited… because they knew that one of our family members was still left behind."

"The first thing they wanted to know was when is he coming home? Why didn't he come with you? He went with you," Fox said. "In "TIME II," I make mention of a thing called survivor's guilt. It's a real emotion for people who experience life behind enemy lines, and they forge relationships, camaraderie and partnerships for survival purposes. With that being said, some of the men I was incarcerated with, I know them in ways that I don't even know family members that I share the same blood with. So, when you've been through what I've been through, with many of the men who have been incarcerated, you come home with a sense of guilt because you know that you left behind a lot of deserving individuals that needed the same opportunity that you needed. One of the recurring themes in the film is that you come to the understanding that to be free is to free others. You utilize the freedom that you've been blessed to have with the hopes that you can free other people."

Rob and Fox are still fighting for the freedom of others and themselves after Rob was sentenced to another sentence of 40 years of probation as a retaliation for their advocacy for prison reform.

"When you take all of those things into consideration, people are not excited about you escaping to freedom and then returning back talking about freeing someone else," Rob said. "It comes at a cost and it costs us tremendously. When I first went up for my clemency, I went in anticipating that I was going to be receiving credit for time served for the offenses that I had committed some two decades ago. But, instead after it had been realized that I was working to free what they deemed as countless others, they thought to brand me, to whip me so to speak by saying 'we'll let you out of prison because this request for your free-

TIME II *continued on page 22*



SPORTS

Fight Night In Philly

It was a great night for undefeated welterweight boxer Jaron "Boots" Ennis and Philadelphia boxing on Saturday night, as 14,000 fans came to the Wells Fargo Center to see the North Philadelphia fighter put on a virtuoso performance.

By Chris Murray
For the Philadelphia Sunday SUN

The two biggest questions leading into Jaron "Boots" Ennis International Boxing Federation welterweight title defense against David Avanesyan were how long it would take for Ennis to take out his opponent and whether Philadelphians would come out for Fight Night on Saturday.

Over 14,000 fans packed the Wells Fargo Center to see Ennis, a year removed from his last fight, unhinge and dismantle a game Avanesyan with a fifth-round technical knockout. The fight was stopped before the start of the sixth round by the doctor at ringside after Avanesyan complained of severe pain in the jaw.

No doubt that most of Avanesyan's pain came from a devasting barrage of Ennis punches from what turned out to be a decisive fifth round in which Ennis floored the Armenian former world champion with a counter left hook to the jaw.

Throughout the fight, Ennis, fighting both in the orthodox and southpaw stances, peppered Avanesyan with body and head shots from all kinds of angles. Ennis showed some ring rust and took shots most ring observers weren't accustomed to seeing him take.

"I didn't think my timing would be off, but it was," said Ennis, who saw his record improve 32-0 with 29 knockouts. "I definitely knew I was going to stop him. Every round I felt him breaking down and decreasing. It was just a matter of time. I had to get into my bag a little bit and pick it up a little more."

Despite showing signs of rustiness in the ring, Ennis still dominated and battered Avanesyan into submission. He landed 46 percent of his punches and 53.4 percent of his power punches. Sixty-six of his punches found their way to Avanesyan's mid-section.

For Ennis to have that kind of performance when he wasn't on top of his game speaks volumes about his potential as one of boxing's best pound-for-pound fighters.

"I feel like I can be phenomenal. I was off for a year, but I have many more tools in my arsenal," Ennis said. "I've just got to get the opportunity to show it against the top guys."

Ennis's promoter, Eddie Hearns, CEO of Matchroom Boxing, echoed his young fighter sentiments. He said he would like to see Ennis tested against tougher opponents.

"It was the way he did it … (Ennis) felt his performance was more average … If that was an average performance, you just destroyed Avanesyan. It was so one-sided. I know Avaneysan was trying. He's breezing through guys like that. … I want him to be tested … who wants to see a one-sided beatdown. You've got to create a great fight so they can define their legacy."



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT DEREK "BOZY" ENNIS, Jaron "Boots" Ennis, and Eddie Hearn, CEO of Matchroom Boxing.

Photo: Chris Murray

Is Terence Crawford next?

The one guy who could help boost Ennis's legacy in the sport is former undisputed world welterweight champion Terence Crawford (40-0, 31KOs), who's not all that impressed with Ennis's prowess in the ring and sent out a dismissive tweet shortly after the fight:

"World Class fight now huh?," (with laughing emoji) Crawford said in his tweet. "my the double standards must be crazy. @Eddie Hearn, you talk good."

Crawford, who is now fighting in the 154-pound junior middleweight division, will be taking on World Boxing Association Super Welterweight champion Israil Madrimov (10-0-1, 7 KOs) on Aug. 3. There has also been talk that Crawford might be fighting super middleweight champion Canelo Alvarez.

Hearn said during the post-fight interview that he and Ennis spoke via FaceTime with Saudi Arabian boxing broker Turki Alalsheikh about the possibility of an Ennis-Crawford fight.

"(Alalsheikh) asked me 'Will we make the Crawford fight?' and Boots said to him, 'Send the contract,'" Hearn said. "So, Terence Crawford, if he gets past Madrimov on Aug. 3rd will have the chance to see if Boots is a world-class fighter."

Hearn said the fight between Ennis and Crawford could take place sometime within the the four months of 2025.

But later during a raucous Ennis post-fight press conference, Hearn, Ennis, his trainer, and father Bozy Ennis all said they would take a more pragmatic approach by beating all the fighters in the welterweight division.

"Right now, we ain't worrying about Crawford. We're going to clean 147 out. Then, we gonna move to 154, and if (Crawford is there and he got a belt, we're coming after him," said Bozy Ennis.

In one last verbal jab at Crawford, Boots Ennis reacted to Crawford questioning his status as a world-class fighter: "Sign the contract … if he wanted to fight, he would have stayed at 147."

Successful fight night in Philly

In addition to his outstanding performance inside the ring, Ennis got rave reviews for packing in a large, raucous crowd at the Wells Fargo Center. The exact number was 14,119. Hearns said he was shocked to get that large of a crowd to come out to see a boxing match.

"I was honestly blown away by the crowd," Hearn said. "I would like to say it was down the promoter, and the promotion had to be great, but I never expected to do over 14,000. It was just incredible. Bozy was looking around and saying, 'I can't believe all these people."

For the unbeaten Ennis fighting in front of a large home crowd was a dream come true.

"It was great, and it was everything I thought it was going to be," Ennis said. "I had just rung the bell back in March for the Sixers Game. I said to myself, 'I'm going to sell this place out …(Hearn) brought me home and I did it."

From Biles to Sha'Carri, Team USA packed with star power heading into Olympic Games

By Pat Graham
ASSOCIATED PRESS

From Simone Biles to Sha'Carri Richardson and Diana Taurasi to Katie Ledecky, Team USA will provide some of the biggest star power at the 2024 Olympic Games.

And it will be the women leading the way as the U.S. looks to top the overall medal table for the eighth consecutive Summer Games.

The nearly 600 athletes going to the Paris Olympics include more than 250 returning Olympians and 122 Olympic medalists. Golfers Xander Schauffele and Nelly Korda, along with surfer Carissa Moore, are among the numerous Olympians set to defend their titles in France.

It's a loaded U.S. roster where the women outnumber the men 314 to 278 — at last count — and ages range from 16 to 59. The most decorated member of Team USA in Paris will be Ledecky, who's trying to add to her collection of 10 medals (seven golds).

Comebacks and redemption

Biles is back in action after pulling out of multiple gymnastics finals in Tokyo to protect her mental health and safety. There's Richardson making her Olympic debut after a much-debated absence three years ago because of a positive marijuana test.

The 27-year-old Biles leads a U.S. women's gymnastics team filled with familiar faces and looking for redemption in Paris. The team settled for silver three years ago behind the Russian athletes competing as the Russian Olympic Committee.



SHA'CARRI RICHARDSON, OF THE UNITED STATES, celebrates after winning the gold medal in the final of the Women's 100-meters during the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, Aug. 21, 2023. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek, File)

Richardson has become a media sensation for her speed, charisma and perseverance. The 100-meter world champion earned a spot for Tokyo in 2021 but was banned following her positive test for marijuana. It sparked an intense debate about whether she was being unfairly singled out for taking a substance that doesn't improve performance.

The 24-year-old Richardson, who graces the cover of Vogue magazine, said she was "overwhelmed with the emotions of just joy" after making the team.



SIMONE BILES AND THE U.S. WOMEN celebrate as the 2024 team is named at the United States Gymnastics Olympic Trials on Sunday, June 30, 2024, in Minneapolis. (AP Photo/Abbie Parr, File)

Star power on the court

On the court, hoops royalty LeBron James and Taurasi lead their teams. And it's no surprise that the men's and women's basketball squads brimming with talent are heavy favorites to bring home the gold.

James, Joel Embiid, Kevin Durant and Steph Curry join forces to lead a U.S. contingent going for a fifth straight Olympic title. A'ja Wilson, Brittney Griner and Taurasi headline a women's squad that has won seven consecutive Olympic gold medals. Taurasi has been a part of five of them.

Who else is on the Team USA roster?

Decorated swimmers Ledecky and Caeleb Dressel are on deck to shine again in the pool, and majors winners and world No. 1 golfers Scottie Scheffler and Korda take to the links.

"We're telling these stories — we're laughing, we're crying, we're cheering them on," said Lyndsay Signor, senior vice president of consumer engagement at NBC Sports. "So that really warrants both the combination of the athletes themselves and the celebrities we've partnered with."

NBC has been airing promotional Olympic material around the clock. There's Biles being interviewed by singer SZA. Other athletes featured in spots include Richardson, sprinter Noah Lyles, 400-meter hurdles world-record holder Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, Ledecky and reigning Olympic all-around gymnastics winner Suni Lee.

The U.S. women's soccer team, led by new coach Emma Hayes, chases after its first Olympic gold since 2012 and Victor Montalvo — "B-Boy Victor" — will be a contender when breaking makes its Olympic debut in Paris. Coco Gauff is among the favorites to bring home a medal on the clay courts at Roland Garros, the site of the French Open.

Medal forecast

That abundance of star power is why Nielsen's Gracenote forecasts the U.S. hauling in 123 medals. That's ahead of China (87), Britain (62) and France (56). This could be the eighth straight Summer Games where the Americans have topped the medal table.



KATIE LEDECKY swims during a Women's 800 freestyle preliminary heat, June 21, 2024, at the US Swimming Olympic Trials in Indianapolis. (AP Photo/Michael Conroy, File)

"If American athletes win, that drives ratings and endorsements, and makes it attractive for American corpora-

Star power *continued on page 23*

NAACP Philadelphia Branch NEWS UPDATES

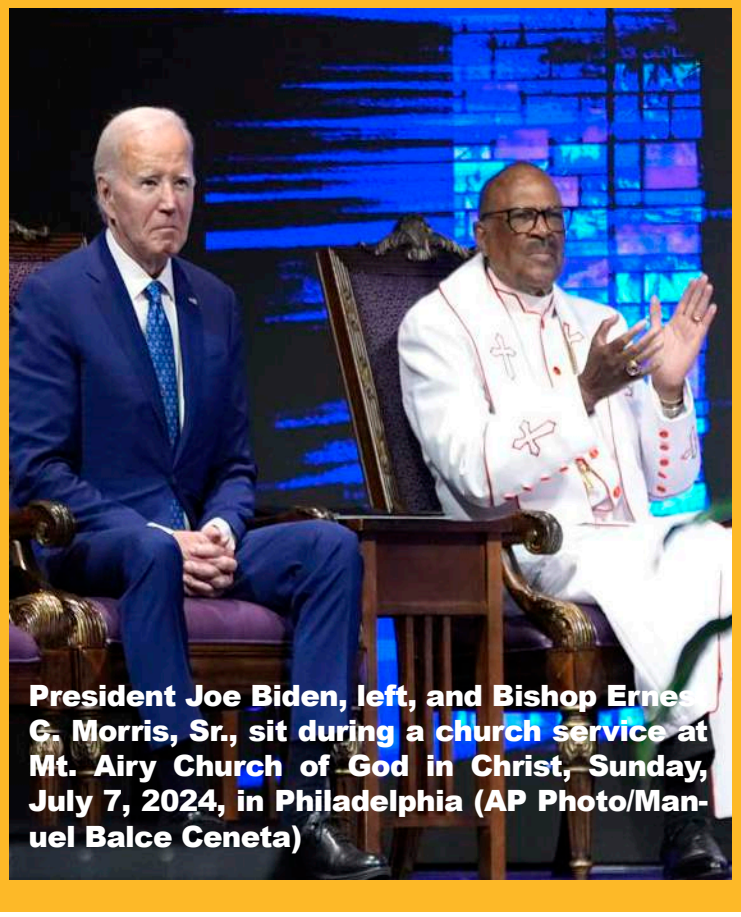
President Joe Biden visits Mt. Airy Church of God in Christ



A church service attended by President Joe Biden is pictured at Mt. Airy Church of God in Christ, Sunday, July 7, 2024, in Philadelphia (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)



President Joe Biden, right, and pastor Dr. J. Louis Felton sit during a church service at Mt. Airy Church of God in Christ, Sunday, July 7, 2024, in Philadelphia (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)



President Joe Biden, left, and Bishop Ernest C. Morris, Sr., sit during a church service at Mt. Airy Church of God in Christ, Sunday, July 7, 2024, in Philadelphia (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)



Bishop Ernest C. Morris, Sr., from right, President Joe Biden, Dr. Priscilla E. Felton and Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker sit during a church service at Mt. Airy Church of God in Christ, Sunday, July 7, 2024, in Philadelphia (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

TIME II *continued from page 18*

dom is coming from a tall order much higher up than us, but at the same time it doesn't mean I can't leave a scar or marking on you.' This is why you hear me say in "Time II: Unfinished Business" that it's like I went from slavery to sharecropping."

Much like the movie's title states, there is still unfinished business and a great deal of work to be done. To help Fox and Rob Rich continue their fight, follow them on IG @ FoxandRob, and visit their websites at: www.richfamilyministries.org and www.pdmnola.org.

For more information on how you can assist their nonprofit organization Rich Family Ministries and their initiative the Participatory Defense Movement Nola. Additionally, "Time II: Unfinished Business" will be screening at The Martha's Vineyard Film Festival August 2-10th. For more details visit www.tmvff.org.

Simmons *continued from page 15*

oped an unauthorized biopic of Simmons, which Simmons objected to at the time.

"I just got word like everyone else that the beautiful Richard Simmons has passed," he began in an Instagram post. "I hope you're at peace and twinkling up in the heavens," adding "You're one of a kind, Richard. An amazing life. An amazing story."

Doherty *continued from page 16*

Hills, 90210" on-screen love interest — Luke Perry.

Doherty advocated for cancer awareness and care, and spoke to the AP in 2021 about how spending years with the disease affected her life and sense of optimism.

"When you get something like cancer, your tolerance for drama is zero. I don't like people wasting my time. I don't like negativity," she said. "It's odd because I think if you look back, you're like, 'Oh, gosh, it's so much drama around her,' but I don't think I was necessarily into the drama. I just think if we took young 18-year-old Shannen, 19-year-old Shannen, and we took her and planted her like right now, I would be a nerd and nobody would be writing about me."

Grazing *continued from page 12*

Yogurt
Fresh fruit
Syrup
Jelly

On grazing board or platter, arrange eggs, sausage links, toasted waffles, toasted pancakes, muffins, yogurt, fruit, syrup and jelly.

Source: Healthy Family Project



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Star power *continued from page 20*

tions to invest in the Olympic movement," said Dr. Yoav Dubinsky, an instructor of sports business from the Lundquist College of Business at the University of Oregon. "All part of the story of American lifestyle. Their successes, and at times failures or adversities, contribute to Brand America."

Olympic entertainers

NBC brought in Academy Award-winning director Steven Spielberg to narrate a short film titled, "Land of Stories," where the Olympics set a scene to tell tales.

Even more stars will participate in the network's coverage as celebrities Snoop Dogg, Kelly Clarkson, Peyton Manning, Colin Jost, Leslie Jones and Jimmy Fallon make appearances.

Snoop already is trotting out his tracksuits to get in some work. The 52-year-old hip-hop star ran a 200-meter race against Ato Boldon and Wallace Spearmon at the Olympic track trials in Eugene, Oregon, last month.

His time was 34.44 seconds. Usain Bolt's world record of 19.19 remains safe.

"(Snoop) has really brought a perspective that's not only fun and interesting," Signor said, "it's lovable as well."

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