

THE SkannerChallenging People to Shape
a Better Future NowBernie Foster
Founder/PublisherBobbie Dore Foster
Executive EditorJerry Foster
Advertising ManagerChristen McCurdy
News EditorPatricia Irvin
Graphic DesignerMonica J. Foster
Seattle Office CoordinatorSusan Fried
Photographer

The Skanner Newspaper, established in October 1975, is a weekly publication, published every Wednesday by IMM Publications Inc.

415 N. Killingsworth St.
P.O. Box 5455
Portland, OR 97228Telephone (503) 285-5555
Fax: (503) 285-2900

info@theskanner.com

www.TheSkanner.com

The Skanner is a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association.

All photos submitted become the property of *The Skanner*. We are not responsible for lost or damaged photos either solicited or unsolicited.

©2018 The Skanner. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission prohibited.

THE Skanner.com

Local News
Pacific NW News
World News
Opinions
Jobs, Bids
Entertainment
Community Calendar

LOCAL NEWS BRIEFS
LOCAL EVENTS

Updated daily online.



Opinion

Rest in Peace: Texas Leaders Step Up to Protect the Sacred Remains of the 'Sugar Land 95'

The arc of the moral universe is bending towards justice for the 95 victims of the unjust and inhumane convict-leasing system in Texas, who were previously lost to history.

This past week, the Fort Bend ISD (FBISD) Board of Trustees unanimously voted to no longer move forward with any legal actions related to the historic cemetery where the 95 individuals, commonly known as the 'Sugar Land 95', were discovered by a contractor back in February of 2018 while working on the initial phase of FBISD's planned site of the James Reese Career and Technical Center. The game changing decision by FBISD came a week after the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court led the way by unanimously voting to work with FBISD to come up with an interlocal agreement to best handle the sacred site where the remains were found.

In a statement released by FBISD Board President Jason Burdine regarding the decision, he states:

"Fort Bend ISD agrees that the 'Sugar Land 95' need to be memorialized at the site of discovery. We have embraced the offer made by Fort Bend County to work with us to create an appropriate memorial for the victims of the convict leasing system. We are hopeful and optimistic that by working together with the County these bodies can be reinterred so they can rest in peace. Should we encounter any obstacles to this solution,



Jeffrey Boney
NNPA
Columnist

we will look to the State of Texas, other elected officials, as well as lawmakers, to assist us in finding a solution.

"We appreciate and welcome the County's recent commitment to work with the District toward a solution

Fort Bend ISD agrees that the 'Sugar Land 95' need to be memorialized at the site of discovery

that preserves the story and memory of those buried on this historic site. In order to show our good faith and commitment to working toward a comprehensive solution, the District will halt all further court action while we explore all available options with the County.

"The District's plan to build the portion of the building that is within the cemetery area has been cancelled. We are confident that our partnership with the County will result in a solution that al-

lows the historic cemetery to operate by a legally authorized entity. We look forward to working with local elected officials and community leaders to implement this solution as quickly as possible and keep our promise to honor and educate the public and future generations about the 95 souls who were previously lost to history."

FBISD had been under serious pressure to halt the construction on the site and work with community leaders to best address the situation. Prior to a coalition of community activists, elected officials and major stakeholders coming together to advocate on behalf of the 'Sugar Land 95', all indications were that FBISD was committed to moving forward with their construction plans and were completely disregarding the requests of many in the community.

Newly elected Fort Bend County Judge KP George (D-TX) stated that from his very first day in office, he encouraged Fort Bend County to pursue justice for the 'Sugar Land 95' victims.

"I am enthusiastic about the school board's decision to focus on negotiation as opposed to legal action or construction on the grave sites," said George. "The community should know that there is still considerable work to be done, and I look forward to making sure that all parties keep justice for the 'Sugar Land 95' as their guiding principle."

U.S. Congressman Al Green (D-TX), who represents con-

stituents in Fort Bend County, joined in with fellow elected officials and community activists to advocate for the 'Sugar Land 95' and believes the decision to halt construction was simply the right thing to do.

"I must express my gratitude for the righteous community activists tirelessly working to ensure these 95 bodies are properly memorialized," said Congressman Green. "It is my honor to advocate for this cause. We have an opportunity to right a wrong. This is an opportunity for us that we will respect the remains of people and treat them with dignity. This is what a great country does. Let's bring justice to this circumstance."

The discovery of the remains of the 'Sugar Land 95' victims, the majority of who are believed to be former slaves who were a part of the state of Texas' controversial and inhumane convict-leasing system, could have been unearthed well before the contractor found the remains if people chose to listen to community activist and historian Reginald Moore from the beginning.

Moore, who has served as the caretaker of the Imperial Farm Cemetery in Fort Bend County, constantly tried to inform elected officials, state employees, community leaders and FBISD that those bodies were more than likely buried on the land where they eventually were found.

Read the rest of this commentary at
TheSkanner.com

America Reacts to the Tax Surprise

The mainstream news has been covering an interesting story. People who were expecting significant tax refunds are, in very large numbers, either getting a minimal refund, no refund or having to pay the IRS. This, after the man Spike Lee has named "Agent Orange" — Donald Trump — promised a massive tax benefit for middle-income people.

When I first starting reading and seeing these stories I wondered why anyone was surprised. After all, in the lead up to Trump's tax bribe, economists across the board were warning that this was a scam to benefit the rich. They were telling the average taxpayer that this was not going to work to their benefit. And, while the majority of the public has generally opposed the tax bribe — reform — it was still the case that the actual implications of the tax bribe took too many people by surprise.



Bill Fletcher Jr.
The Global African

After more than 40 years of listening to right-wingers call for tax cuts and watching the public's reaction I have come to a few conclusions.

When it comes to taxes, much of the public hears what it wants to hear

First, when it comes to taxes, much of the public hears what it wants to hear. If someone says that there will be a cut and they can provide minimal evidence to that effect, such an argument can be a winner.

Even when one demonstrates that it is a lie, the possibility of tax relief serves as a seductive song that softens the brain.

Second, there are those who wish to believe that tax cuts for the rich really are positive because they themselves, despite not being rich, may at some point be rich. I realize that this sounds completely convoluted, but it turns out that there are those who believe that they will at some point in the future be rich and they do not wish to be penalized. This is called magical thinking.

Third, there is a disconnect in the minds of many people between public services and taxes. There is also a racialized element here, by the way. A friend of mine told me a story about arguing with some Trump supporters and they were suggesting that they only wanted to pay for the things that they needed and not pay "...for someone else..."

He asked them whether they drove on roads, pointing out that those roads were paid for by the taxes of many people who may or may not use particular roads. The discussion came to an abrupt halt.

Many of us act as if 'things' happen on their own and that they need not be funded. Or, worse, that our tax money is being used for allegedly un-deserving populations. Thus, there is a willingness to go for the right-wing arguments for tax cuts even when such tax cuts may cut one's own throat.

Welcome to another day in the United States of Agent Orange. Make sure that you test that bridge before you cross it. There may not be enough tax money to keep it standing.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is the former president of TransAfrica Forum. Follow him on Twitter, Facebook and www.billfletcherjr.com. He is the author of the mystery *The Man Who Fell From the Sky*.