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Opinion

The Social Crisis, Black Folks and the Economy



John E. Warren

The San Diego Voice & Viewpoint

It appears that we continue to live in Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities." He wrote these words: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

Where you fit in between "the best of times" and "the worst of times" really depends on who you are today in America. For African Americans, too many of us are still experiencing the worst of times, and things will not get better unless we decide to make them so. While America is excited about abortions and gun violence, we have been victims of the latter, with civil rights violations and voter suppression being more important than abortions to most of us. The speed with which the President moved with an Executive Order to assist the abortion issue and his

mentioning of overturning the Filibuster Rule were both absent on the Voting Rights and Civil Rights issues.

Nevertheless, it is now our turn to correct all this. Just as our votes made Joe Biden president and sent two U.S. senators to the Senate from

what the social issues that emerge, we must stay focused on who is seeking to get elected and whether they will commit to overturning the Filibuster Rule in the Senate.

While some say we need two more U.S. Senators so that we can break the chokehold of Senator Manchin and Senator Sinema, who vote with the Republicans on all issues, we must examine all the Senate races and throw our support into every state race where we find a candidate who will commit to our agenda. Remember, only one third of the

From the voter turnout in most primaries so far, they have been right.

Let's remember that we, as Black people, are responsible for the Voting Rights Act, and the Civil Rights Act. We elected Obama twice and Biden once.

We are not apathetic. We are just tired. But we cannot stop to rest. As Robert Frost wrote, "The woods are dark and deep, but I have miles to go before I sleep."

Voter Registration and Voter Turnout in all 50 States must become our Number One Priority, at all costs. More important than abortions, homelessness, high gas prices and bad Supreme Court Decisions. Let registration begin and let's track the numbers week by week. As Rev. Ben Chavis, President of the National Newspaper Publishers Association has said, "We want 10 million new registered voters by November 2022. Let's make this the "Best of Times" in spite of what appears to be the "Worst of Times."

Senate is up for election each election cycle. Just as in Georgia, we can make a difference. Trump and the Conservative Right are counting on a low voter turnout in November, just four months away.

Remember, only one third of the Senate is up for election each election cycle. Just as in Georgia, we can make a difference.

The State of Georgia, it is now our turn to rally in every state that the Trump people are trying to "Steal" in the coming elections. We must vote out their supporters.

This means that no matter

Growing the Voices of Our Future

Aftershocks from the Supreme Court's historic decision to nullify a woman's nearly 50-year-old constitutional right to abort a pregnancy are already starting to impact American society

The Westside Gazette Newspaper is honored to feature these editorial contributions made by local students.

Submitted by Layla Davidson, 11th grader | The Westside Gazette

Aftershocks from the Supreme Court's historic decision to nullify a woman's nearly 50-year-old constitutional right to abort a pregnancy are already starting to impact American society. It is becoming increasingly clear that a conservative Supreme Court majority's willingness to disregard established precedent

Progressives are becoming increasingly worried about what the court may do next. Concerns about how the decision would impact fertility treatments and even contraception are mounting.

has created a destabilizing dynamic that may extend far beyond abortion in a coun-



A fresh week can usher forth additional judgments that highlight the extremism of the Supreme Court majority.

discontinued in a few conservative states.

When the Supreme Court's ruling was announced on Friday, some clinics informed their patients that they would no longer be able to obtain an abortion there. Progressives are becoming increasingly worried about what the court may do next. Concerns about how the decision would impact fertility treatments and even contraception are mounting.

Additionally, companies are hastily formulating plans to pay workers or expand health insurance to cover out-of-state abortion services, but they are also concerned about upsetting leaders in Republican states who are itching for a fight. However, a fresh week can usher forth additional judgments that highlight the extremism of the Supreme Court majority.

This article originally appeared in The Westside Ga-

Murray cont'd from pg 1

son and Henry "Scoop" Jackson for longest service in the Senate from the Evergreen State. The powerhouse duo served 36 years and 30 years, respectively, and were among the most powerful senators of the mid-20th century.

Murray is now a member of the Democratic leadership and has risen to chair of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Murray would be the favorite in the November election as Washington hasn't elected a Republican to the U.S. Senate since 1994. But she's taking no chances in what could be a tough year for Democrats with rising inflation and economic turmoil.

Murray's campaign has spent more than \$1 million to run television ads since June blasting Smiley for supporting Roe v. Wade's reversal.

Smiley, 41, is a mother of three who has highlighted her advocacy for her husband, a military veteran who was blinded in an explosion while serving in Iraq in 2005.

Smiley worked as a triage nurse until her hus-

band, Scotty, was blinded. She quit her job and flew to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to be by his side.

Smiley says she worked tirelessly to stop the Army from pushing her husband, a West Point graduate, into a medical retirement. Instead, he became the first blind active-duty officer in the Army, and is featured in her political ads.

She recently announced her campaign had raised \$2.6 million in the second quarter and had \$3.5 million in cash on hand. Murray reported raising \$2.6 million in the same quarter, with about \$6.6 million in the bank at the end of June.

Smiley said the Supreme Court's decision on Roe leaves it to voters in individual states to decide if they wanted to allow abortions. Smiley said she doesn't support a nationwide ban on abortion, despite what Murray has contended in her ads.

Murray is also highlighting her efforts to help middle-class families, saying there should be more tax cuts for them than for corporations.

Landmark cont'd from pg 3

Shippen stayed at Shady Rest from 1931 to 1964.

Now Shady Rest has been designated as a historic landmark by The National Park Service, listed officially among other sites on the National Register of Historic Places deemed important because of their influence on American history, architecture, archeology, engineering,

A living reminder of a dark era in this nation

and culture. The designation is two and a half years in the making and a key next step in reclaiming Shady Rests' legendary history.

"We could not be more pleased. For a number of years, the volunteers of the Preserve Shady Rest Committee, chaired by Tom Donatelli, have been steadily working toward achieving this important designation. The listing will further ensure that Shady Rest will remain an American landmark for perpetuity, enjoyed for generations, protected from development and a living reminder of a dark era in this nation, when African Ameri-

cans faced segregation," said Scotch Plains Mayor Josh Losardo.

Now the committee is looking to focus their efforts on obtaining government grants that will allow them to fully restore the place and maintain the upkeep. A white-owned country club took over the site in 1964, renaming it the Scotch Hills Country Club. But in recent years advocates have fought to reclaim its history, the Township Council voting unanimously to change the name back to Shady Rest last September. The announcement came on the 100th anniversary of the whites-only country club's purchase of the nine-hole golf course.

The club has also already undergone a \$1.1 million rehabilitation in 2015, restoring the facility to its original appearance and renewing a lot of its historic charm. Councilman Matt Adams is now encouraging Scotch Plains residents to revisit Shady Rest and take advantage of its recreation and facilities, which can be used to host gatherings, community meetings, and historic tours.

Read more at **TheSkanner.com**



PCC Bolsters Maritime Welding Pathway

Portland Community College's Maritime Welding Training Center, a partnership with Vigor Industrial, sits within earshot of the Swan Island shipyards. As a result of its location and recent collaboration, the facility is providing a steady stream of trained and qualified workers to companies like Vigor. Welding faculty have created two new Career Pathway Certificates that tie into the skills that businesses want. The three-class, 12-credit certificates - maritime welding and maritime shipfitting - allow students to move into the workforce early if needed and emphasize desired maritime applications like butt and socket welds, fabricating spools, straight run offsets, and more. For more details on the program's certificates, visit <https://www.pcc.edu/maritime-welding>.

Festival cont'd from pg 1

ilies out," Smith said.

Randol and Smith point out the park is near Roosevelt High, George Middle School and Sitton Elementary School, yet lacks public bathrooms and significant community amenities.

"It's a place for people to come together as a community," Randol said. "They should be proud of what's going on in the neighborhood. I think it's just something that could bring people together on a big scale."

"I think with this park there's an opportunity to look at park development a little bit differently too," Smith said. "The city already has a mission to make what they're calling '15-minute neighborhoods' where there's a walkable park in every neighborhood in Portland, and that's great, we're all for those things, but what can happen is that St. Johns will continue to gentrify and price people out, so by the time they do get around to developing that park, you'll be talking to a much different group of people."

To bring more of the neighborhood onboard with the project, and to show the city how important George Park is, Randol and Smith are launching the first annual The Kidz Outside festival on Aug. 26 - and it's slated to be an evening of dynamic local performances, headlined by Randol and featuring 12-year-old rapper J Prodigy, Nikki Brown Clown (<https://www.theskanner.com/news/northwest/20109-behind-the-makeup-nikki-brown-clown-2013-10-03>) will be in attendance, and as most area schools are back in session Aug. 30, the event will offer free school supplies to attendees.

"This event is a way to let people know this is your neighborhood still, this is your park to give voice on," Smith said. "We're going to bring this vision to life."

A Place to Gather

Efforts to revitalize George Park were slow going at first, the

cofounders of Friends of George Park admit. The early days of the COVID pandemic impacted their initial push to survey the community about what the park was lacking.

It makes a community safer when you actually have an active park

"Neither of us had ever worked on a park development before, so this is definitely new territory for us," Smith said.

They managed to distribute a survey via Facebook, text messages and word of mouth.

"We were making sure that really Black and brown people are front and center in terms of giving their voice to what you want to see happen in this park - not just Black and brown people, but people who are truly from the neighborhood, people who might've even got moved out of the neighborhood," Smith said.

"A lot of people said they wanted to see basketball courts there, or more lighting around the park," Randol said.

"A lot of what we heard too is that people don't spend time at George," Smith added. "They would like to. People are saying 'I spend less than 30 minutes there on average,' or 'I don't go there at all. I would go there if there was something for me or for my kids to do.' I think that's the biggest thing: How do we build this to be something that actually is for the kids and the families out there?"

"How can we make this a place that also reflects the neighborhood identity? How can we make this a place that really reflects St. Johns? We want to hear from people about that. So we're hoping to continue to deepen outside of this event our engagement and hear from people what that could really look like, and ultimately present a full-fledged vision to

the city and work to fundraise to implement."

Open to All

Other parks in the Portland Metro had been overhauled with newer play structures and inclusive play equipment that often included interactive instruments. Randol became uneasy with the bark dust ground cover at George, seeing potential for injury and also viewing it as a barrier to accessibility. Newer parks opted for soft-fall rubber in play areas, which provides even ground and a more forgiving surface.

Randol said they met with Cody Goldberg, who successfully headed efforts to revamp Arbor Lodge Park's play area into an accessible playground for children like his daughter, Harper, who was born with a genetic condition that restricted her ability to walk.

"The ADA component to this is definitely a (consideration)," Smith said. "If we're redesigning this, let's make sure more people have access to it."

They have been in conversation with the city, they said, and did a site visit with representatives from Jo Ann Hardesty's office and from the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

"We are of the understanding it is going to be a ground-up situation, we are going to have to be the main voices, we are going to have to continue to put community voice and pressure to make a vision for this park," Smith said.

Their early efforts gained them recognition as the 2021 U.S. Bank Parks Champions, awarded by the Portland Parks Foundation.

"As artists, volunteers, and advocates for change, they've worked on a number of projects focused on including communities of color who have traditionally been left out of placemaking and stewardship events," the foundation stated in announcing the award.

THE KIDZ OUTSIDE Festival will take place Friday Aug. 26, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.