

ONME NEWS

Central Valley's Urban News & Current Affairs Spot

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Monthly News Post



BAPAC Fresno hosts regional conference to address pertinent community issues

May 13, 2017 | ONME Newswire



FRESNO, CA – “Social justice and equal rights” have always been the base mission of The Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC) represented through different chapters throughout California.

BAPAC Fresno held a mid-year planning conference last Saturday to address areas of concern in education, youth engagement, women engagement, veteran affairs, business enterprise and effective politics.

Community members frankly discussed their disappointments in the current educational system in regards to the lack of Black principals and Black educators, their awareness of disenfranchised Black veterans, to blanket issues in the Black community preventing advancement.

The all-day conference then addressed actionable solutions that the community can rally behind, as well as methods to reach political leaders to incite local and statewide change.

Although the topics discussed may seem quite a spread, BAPAC’s purpose was to have a wholesome approach to tackle issue of social and economic equity. On the contrary of its name, BAPAC was not meant to solely be a political organization; in fact, it does not contribute to candidates. They are a bipartisan 501c3 organization.



BAPAC was started in 1978 by 20 key political leaders, including Dr. Percy Pinkney, the late Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, former San Francisco Mayor and California Assemblyman Willie Brown and State Senator Mervyn Dymally. At that time, the state of California had very few Blacks in

political offices. Hence the means of the organization then was to change the political landscape to include more color.

Today BAPAC has over 55 chapters and over 60,000 members statewide with the overall mission to “ensure full political, social, and economic participation for California’s African American population, by educating, engaging and empowering California communities of color in an effort to restore and promote social and economic equity.”

In alignment with the mission, BAPAC has sought to do the following:

“Identify, document, effectuate and develop the political resources necessary to achieve the education equity and excellence for our children, prosperity-economic development, social justice and equal protection under the Constitution, public safety-protect the rights of our citizens and support lawful rulings for every citizen in California, and promote cultural and heritage events to educate our people on our rich traditions and contributions to California history and its growth.”



BAPAC Fresno made its historical mark in the early 1990s when President Mel Sanders, Frank Revis, along with Frank Williams were able to incite a grassroots effort to get 13 Blacks elected to school boards. Their progressive ground campaign

received statewide recognition, exemplifying the power and prowess of the BAPAC coalition.

Current BAPAC President Daren Miller along with Vice President Janee Young are taking progressive steps to revive BAPAC Fresno, with the hopes of taking the issues and formulating them into a viable plan for the community to become more aware and more involved in moving forward with tangible solutions.

Watch excerpts of the BAPAC Fresno Inaugural Regional Mid-Year Planning Conference on The ONME Network until May 30, 2017. It is listed on the [ONME TV guide](#) under “Special Events,” and airs twice daily from 4:00 PM - 6:00PM and 4:00 AM – 6:00 AM.

Download the FREE ONME app to watch on your mobile device: www.app.onmetv.com

(Click Pix below to review full TV guide.)

Soul Food Fest in downtown Fresno at Bitwise proves to be a major success

May 9, 2017| ONME News Wire



FRESNO, CA--If you build it, they will come ... especially if it is good home-cooked soul food!

The Bitwise parking lot was inundated with foot traffic from over 300+ hungry patrons and curious onlookers, who were devoured by the delicious aromas that permeated the Bitwsie parking lot this past Saturday afternoon in downtown Fresno.

Event coordinator Adrian Harris created an avenue to connect soul food restaurants and caterers with local citizens, bringing them more notoriety and future business to their brick and mortar locations.



As the first annual event, complemented with entertainment, crafts, and organizational booths, patrons the success was evident with the long lines, congested parking, and sold-out vendor, who were pleased to make a profit and more than even.

Watch full excerpt of event on The ONME Network daily from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM and 4:00 AM -6:00 AM, (listed on the ONME TV guide under "Special Events.") Download the free app to watch on your mobile device: www.app.onmetv.com

40th pastoral anniversary commemorates the community depth of the Binion family

May 8, 2017| ONME News Wire



FRESNO, CA-- It has been 40 years since the inception of the Westside Church of God, where Dr. Paul L. Binion II, and the first lady, Valarie Jean Metoyer Binion, put their vision into creating a real-life diverse community which has expanded to hundreds of members today; its open doors reside at 424 W. California Ave, in West Fresno.

Now considered one of the most prestigious churches in the Fresno area, 40 years later, many members of the church and community appreciate their ministry, sincerity and vision; as they have had a prime focus on fostering marriages, they developed the Married and Committed Ministry, (MAC) to teach and empower families and couples, as well as redeem marriages.

Many members of the community came out to celebrate Westside Church of God and the founders behind the strong church family foundation.

Dr. Paul Lawrence Binion II, was born in Fairfield, Alabama, and is the eldest of five children. The family eventually settled in Los Angeles, CA, where he became a long-time member of Wadsworth Church of God.

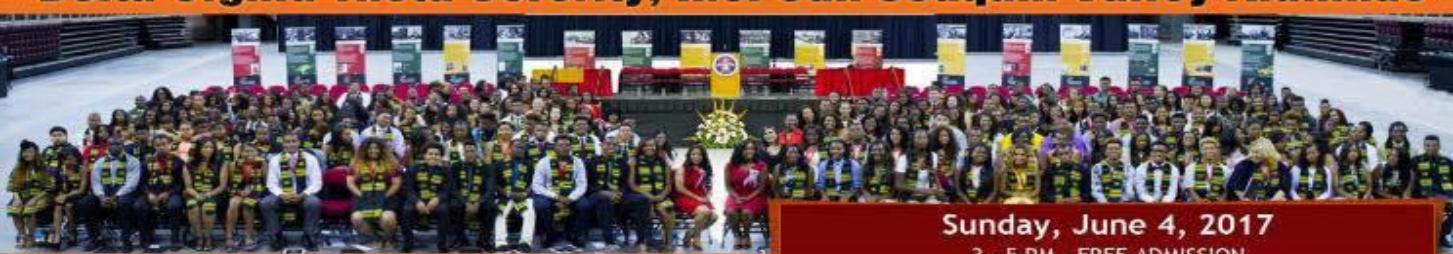
Pastor Binion is a graduate of Susan Miller Dorsey High School, California State University, Los Angeles, with a Bachelor's Degree in history, and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA, with a Master's Degree in Divinity. The Southern California School of Ministry conferred the Doctor of Divinity upon him.

He has resided in Fresno, California since 1977, when he came to assume Senior Pastoral Leadership of the Westside Church of God.

Pastor Binion has been married to Valarie Jean Metoyer Binion since 1978. They have three daughters: Tiffany (son-in-law, David), Crisandra, and Kimberley; a son, Ahmad (daughter-in-law, Gurdeep); four granddaughters, Alyssa, Amiaya, Zharia, and Asha; and one grandson, David Paul.

Watch full excerpt of event on The ONME Network daily from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM and 4:00 AM - 6:00 AM, (listed on the ONME TV guide under "Special Events.") It will air until May 30th. Download the free app to watch on your mobile device: www.app.onmetv.com.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. San Joaquin Valley Alumnae



24TH HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNITION CEREMONY
AFRICAN AMERICAN 2017

“It takes a village to raise a child.”
- Unknown

Sunday, June 4, 2017
 3 - 5 PM - FREE ADMISSION
 Fresno State Save Mart Center
 Participation Fee:
 \$16 (Cost of Kente Cloth)
 Speaker: Dr. Tanya A. Fisher
 Superintendent of Selma Unified School District
 Register at:
<http://deltaaaceremony.gotofresnostate.com/>
 For information, contact:
 Kimberly Lewis and Lisa Nichols at
 sjvaeducationaldevelopment@gmail.com
[sanjoaquin.deltas](https://www.facebook.com/sanjoaquin.deltas)
 Looking for an opportunity to give back to your community?
 Please contact us for scholarship and sponsorship opportunities



Saint Agnes Medical Center



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FRESNO COUNTY
OFFICE OF EDUCATION



CENTRAL UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT



FRESNO STATE
Undergraduate
Student Recruitment

Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Comm. new CEO discusses "E3" strategy

May 6, 2017| ONME News Wire



FRESNO, CA -- With over 200 Black businesses in the Greater Fresno area, the challenge has always been trying to find their location and visibility-- hence the need for a Black Chamber of Commerce is a necessity.

In the 1960s to the late 1970s, Black businesses were thriving in the Central Valley, coming together to collaborate on ventures, and making small successful enterprises under the auspices of the African-American Chamber of Commerce of Fresno: for the most part, desegregation was a nationwide phenomenon, but yet there were still invisible lines that separated Black communities.

Off the heals of the Black Power Movement and mass Vietnam War protests, the organization had over 1,800 successful Black businesses attached at that time and were growing exponentially, according to community activist Royce Dunn.

"They had membership, they had annual and bi-annual meetings, things were happening all the time," said Dunn. "That's when the West side (Fresno) was really a community until everything started moving north -- things



disintegrated. Businesses were being franchised and small business loans were being made, people were very successful," said Dunn.

However once the lack of support arose in the late 80s, the struggling organization fell apart; it was a challenge to find the right puzzle pieces to fit again to create something anew: Black businesses were dealing with significant discrimination challenges in equity lending and integration made competition steep and almost unreachable under such conditions. There was less representation in regards to affirmative action; black businesses began to dissipate.

"It was supposed to be economic integration is what King (Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King) was about," said Dunn. "They gave us social integration --it's okay to live next door to somebody, but you're not going to become the CEO of somewhere powerful, or anything like that," explained Dunn.

By the mid-1990s, Roy Turner and Ali Morris were able to assist in resurrecting the African-American Chamber of Commerce of Fresno. With the help of his future wife-to-be, Earlena Morris, who became vice-president of the organization under President Turner, the organization collaborated with the African-American Historical & Cultural Museum of the San Joaquin Valley, Black businesses, and other community organizations to create the successful venture, "Black Dollar Days." The concept helped Black businesses to gain and retain customers.

After the African-American Chamber of Commerce went defunct, in 1999, community leader Ken Blackwood was able to bring together a task force to eventually create the San Joaquin Valley Black Chamber of Commerce with Earlena Morris, Reynolds Johnson, Ali Morris, Patricia Ratliff, Darrell Hunter, DonPreyel Martin, Bobby Cowings, Michelle Thomas, Richard Midgett, and Valerie McCollum-Glass. The organization was officially incorporated December 1, 2000 but launched in early 2001. The name was originally derived to include businesses from Fresno to Bakersfield. Eventually Bakersfield broke off to create its own

organization, with guidance of founders Ali & Earlena Morris, to incorporate "The Kern County Black Chamber of Commerce," which still resides in Bakersfield, CA today.

Fast forward to 2017, this past week, The Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce (FMBCC) has recently named the new leadership from Tate Hill to Fairfield, CA native, Tara Lynn Gray.

In regards to her management background, Gray has received various awards in business community leadership and has served on the California Black Chamber of Commerce, Solano and Alameda County Small Business Development Centers and the California Black Health Network.

A graduate of Saint Mary's College of California, she received certificates from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Anderson School of Business, Management Development for Entrepreneurs and Intel Business Academy.

Gray also runs her own informational technology consulting business called YADARI Enterprises.

Gray briefly unveiled her "E3" platform to "Educate, Engage, and Empower" at the reception held at the UC Merced Outreach Center:

"At the core of our Chamber's work, we aim to elevate the level of success of the African-American business community while also uplifting our disadvantaged communities as a whole."

Watch full excerpt from new FMBCC President & CEO Tara Gray on The ONME Network until May 30th daily from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM and 4:00 AM - 6:00 AM, (listed on the ONME TV guide under "Special Events.") Download the free app to watch on your mobile device: www.app.onmetv.com



[\(Download the free ONME app!\)](#)

The ONME Network
Rating: 5.0 (5)
Number of Downloads: 10+
Last Updated: Wed, May 10, 2017

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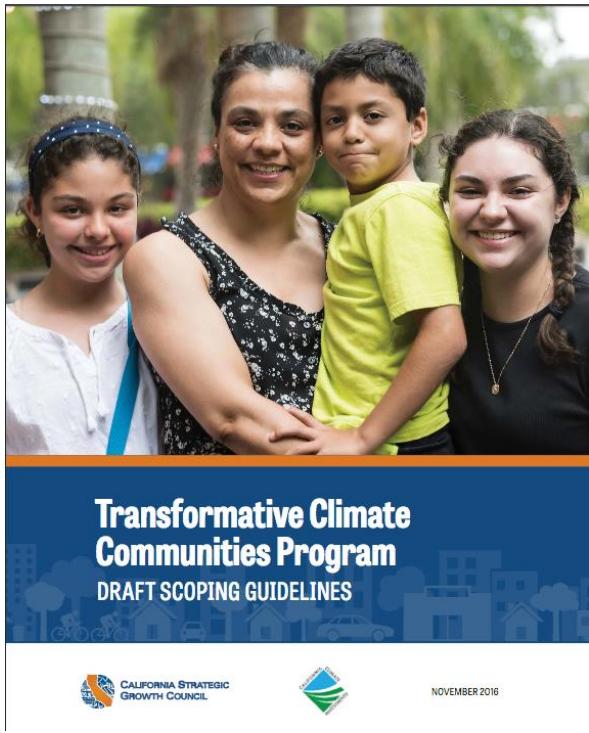
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City of Fresno town hall meeting reveals bias with the \$70 million state allocation to disadvantage communities

May 4, 2017 | ONME News Wire



FRESNO, CA—In December 2016, the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) adopted the Transformative Climate Community Program, a regulation that would ensure funds be allocated to Los Angeles and Fresno and a third location. Out of the current \$140 million allocation, more than half of these funds were to be allocated to the City of Fresno, being that it is the largest per capital population living in the most disadvantaged communities in the state, according to the CalEnviroScreen.

The Assembly Bill 2722 states that the Transformative Climate Community Program administered by the SGC was to

“... fund the development and implementation of neighborhood-level transformative climate community plans that include multiple coordinated

greenhouse gas emissions reduction projects that provide local economic, environmental, and health benefits to disadvantaged communities, as described in Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code.”

However concerned Fresno citizens are questioning how the High Speed Rail is a part of this funding allocation which is supposed to be directed specifically toward disadvantaged communities—they feel that somehow the southwest community will be left out.

At the end of last month, an unpublicized small town hall meeting was held at St. Rest Baptist Church and moderated by Dist. 3 Councilman, Oliver Baines and Pastor DJ Criner to address the southwest Fresno community concerns in regards to the \$70 million allocation. SGC executive director Randall Winston presented a PowerPoint presentation titled, “What is Transformative Climate Communities?” where he also discussed the tentative application process and timeline, where there is another 30-day public comment period geared toward late May to be announced.

According to the document, by June, there will be a second round of public feedback on a draft of the program guidelines to be announced, with a final draft to be presented by late July.

Winston outlined the plan for “neighborhood-level transformation,” by showing that there will be integrated projects that include transit-oriented affordable housing, transit and active transportation, urban forestry & parks, renewable energy, clean vehicle, food systems and recycling. The plan would also include workforce training and economic development. According to the plan, this would be ideal to attract private and other investments.

Fresno residents who were bused into the meeting expressed their concerns in regards to the funding from the government grant, missing the southwest Fresno area as the priority. In fact, Mayor Lee Brand made a previous public comment

that a majority of the funding would be allocated to downtown Fresno.

Applicants eligible for the funds according to the document include “diverse teams with multiple organizations and stakeholders,” who must also have the ability to leverage matching funds and show strong and diverse community support and participation.

The presentation also included a briefing of planning grants of \$1.5 million for 5-10 grants statewide; it was not clear on whether Fresno was also eligible for this funding.



About the SGC

In September 2008 SB 732 was signed into law, establishing the Strategic Growth Council. According to the CA.gov website, SGC is a cabinet level committee that is tasked with coordinating the activities of state agencies to:

- Improve air and water quality
- Protect natural resources and agriculture lands
- Increase the availability of affordable housing
- Promote public health and equity
- Improve transportation
- Encourage greater infill and compact development
- Strengthen the economy
- Promote water conservation
- Revitalize community and urban centers
- Assist state and local entities in the planning of sustainable communities and meeting AB 32 goals
- Advance the priorities developed in Safeguarding California, the State's climate adaptation strategy

- SGC Operating Guidelines (approved 04/01/2009) (.doc)

The Council consists of the following six members:

- the Director of State Planning and Research
- the Secretary of Resources Agency
- the Secretary for Environmental Protection
- the Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing
- the Secretary of California Health and Human Services
- a public member appointed by the Governor

The link between us

May 1, 2017 | [By Madlen Grgodjaian/CBM](#)



The biggest budget picture about the Armenian Genocide yet, funded by the late MGM owner Kirk Kerkorian was released on April 21. “The Promise,” stars Christian Bale and Oscar Isaac. Screening in over 2000 theatres across the states.

The movie details the torment Armenians endured for years in the hands of the Ottoman Turks in the early 20th century. That dark period in Eastern European history is known as the Armenian Genocide. Watching “The Promise” and other movies that depict the horrors inflicted on the people of Armenia – a small country that neighbors Turkey, Georgia, Iran, and Azerbaijan – has a strong emotional impact on me.

and many other Armenian Americans. It's a feeling I'm certain is similar to what African Americans experience when they watch "Roots," "The Color Purple" or either of "The Birth of a Nation" pictures; movies that display how African Americans and their ancestors have felt the boot of America's history due to slavery and racism.

I've felt a kinship with African Americans for as long as I can remember. An unspoken understanding of each other's pain.

My Armenian American friends in Southern California refer to it as "kindred spirits." Sharing histories that cannot be compared, yet unavoidably feeling we not only understand you, but we stand with you.

Los Angeles-based actor and writer Armen Babasoloukian, an Armenian American, believes Blacks and Armenians "have an unresolved trauma that keeps us in arrested development. Both are insulted and demeaned at every opportunity and yet are told to 'get over it,'" he said.

My good friend Jaivon Grant feels a bond and commonality with Armenians as a Black American. "Beyond our differences in skin colors are the similarities of our ancestors being subjected to harsh treatment and conditions," he said. "Sometimes, you'll find connections in the people and places you least expect."

The United States has continuously denied the first genocide of the 20th century. An organized massacre by the Ottoman Turks from 1915 to 1923 designed to cleanse the Armenian people. Over 1.5 million Armenians were killed during the Armenian Genocide by soldiers representing the most powerful of empires at the time. Women were raped and children were starved to death. Those who survived fled to adjacent countries for a chance of a better life.

The Ottoman Empire was a Muslim state and wanted to exterminate the Armenians who were considered inferior due to their Christian beliefs. Turkish soldiers forced people out of their homes and acquired a good portion of Armenian land.

As an Armenian-American living in Los Angeles, I can trace my roots back to the genocide where my great-grandmother, Astghik Chashudyan, experienced the horrors of a lifetime that shaped and molded her existence.

I grew up listening to stories my grandmother would tell me about the hardships her mother endured. Astghik's family was forced out of their home by Turkish fighters armed with guns. The men and women were separated and sent in different directions.

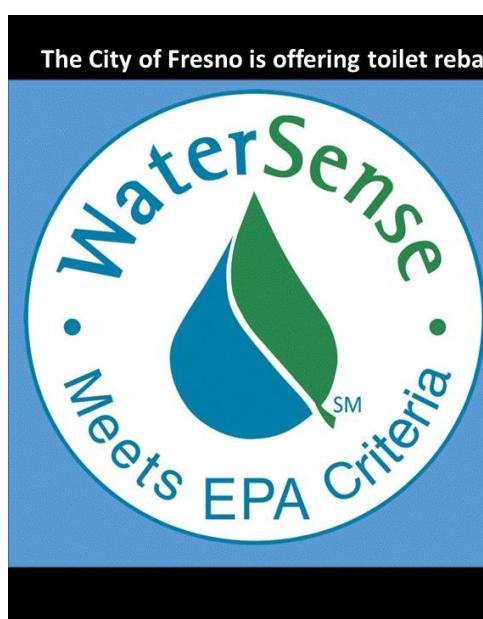
When Astghik was seven, she escaped with her sister and begged Turkish villagers for food after marching in the torrid sun for days. The family took them in and provided food, shelter, and protection.

Turkish forces raided the homes to make certain people were not protecting or sheltering any Armenians. My great-grandmother and her sister would hide in barrels in order to evade them.

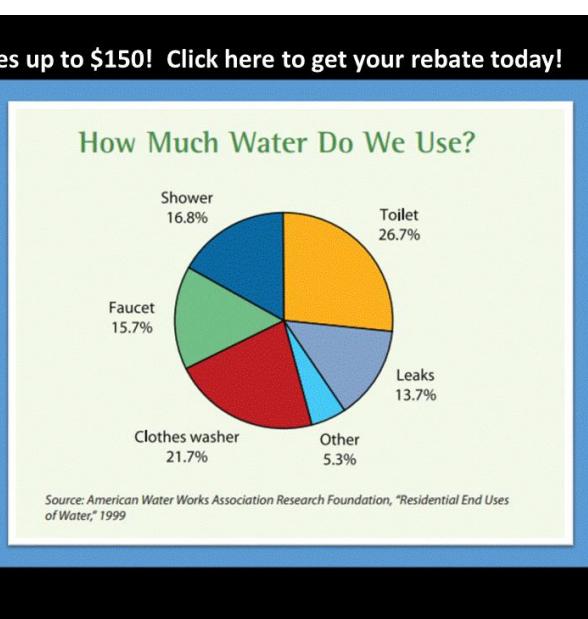
The stories are endless. Family members set to be drowned in the Araks River by Ottoman government military, placed their babies under a tree on the shores of the river in the hopes someone would rescue them.

Towards the end of the genocide, word spread that

The City of Fresno is offering toilet rebates up to \$150! [Click here to get your rebate today!](#)



How Much Water Do We Use?



Use	Percentage
Toilet	26.7%
Shower	16.8%
Faucet	15.7%
Clothes washer	21.7%
Other	5.3%
Leaks	13.7%

Source: American Water Works Association Research Foundation, "Residential End Uses of Water," 1999

ferries were taking Armenians to neighboring countries and so, my great-grandmother and her sister fled in the middle of the night. They journeyed through the Aegean Sea and arrived in Greece where they took shelter at an orphanage.

In 1947 my great-grandmother returned to Armenia and worked tirelessly to create a new life for her children. Reality was the country never recovered from the genocide, so in 1989 my grandfather, Akop Grgodjaian, made the decision to move our family to the U.S.

Due largely to the genocide and its repercussions many Armenians are scattered all over the world in countries such Canada, Syria, Iran, France, and the U.S. In California, a large contingent of Armenian Americans live in Glendale, just outside of Los Angeles.

Although several European countries have recognized the mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire, now present-day Turkey, as genocide, the U.S. refuses to do so, even though staggering evidence proves otherwise. Historians, scholars, the European Parliament, and the Vatican,

have roundly recognized the atrocities as the 20th century's first genocide.

It is no secret Turkey is a longtime American ally and houses two U.S. military air bases. Election after election presidential candidates promise to recognize the genocide, but never follow through given Turkey's threats to shut down the U.S. air bases and more.

The American government has repeatedly let Armenian Americans down. Therefore, year after year we ensure our voices get louder and are not silenced. Bringing to light our history and sharing it vastly amongst non-Armenians across the globe.

Kerkorian had been trying to make "The Promise" since the late 1960s. Inevitably Turkish propaganda and funding stood in the way. Kerkorian pledged \$100 million to create the movie.

"He felt if we don't shine a light, we're doomed," said Eric Esrailian, a lead producer with Survival Pictures, Mr. Kerkorian's production company.

While filming the movie, documentarian Joe Berlinger included behind the scenes interviews with the actors to embed in the documentary, "Intent to Destroy."



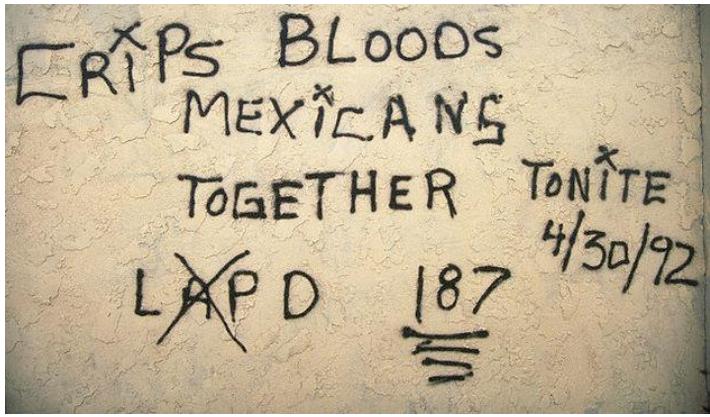
On June 2-3 in Fresno, California, we plan to build on our commitment to heal and build trust through reform by reflecting on strategies that Leaders have taken to try and transform the public safety system in their local context. Please join us for the second statewide H.E.A.T. Symposium!

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER.**](#)

Highlighting the events of the Armenian Genocide, which is currently being screened at the Tribeca Film Festival. [Continue reading online here](#)

Remembering the role of L.A.'s Black media 25 years after the 1992 Civil Unrest

April 26, 2017 | [By Jasmyne A. Cannick - Special To CBM](#)



I was having a conversation recently with a local producer who was trying to put together a piece commemorating the 25th anniversary of the South Central Los Angeles Riots. Before I could even get into the conversation—which was probably my fifth at the time on the exact same subject I'd had with other producers—I had to break down for her the difference between labeling what happened in 1992 as a riot versus a rebellion, uprising or civil unrest and the reaction that “riot” evokes in the people she's trying to get to participate. In my experience, those looking from the outside in often use the term riot while those who were there understand that it wasn't just Black people wilin' it out for the sake of wilin' out.

Over the next few days there is no angle that is not going to be exploited and exhausted in discussing and dissecting what happened in Los Angeles 25 years ago—except for one. The role that the Black media played in communicating to and connecting the stories of the Blacks in South Los Angeles to Blacks everywhere. In 1992 our version of social

media happened weekly on Thursdays and Fridays when most Black newspapers published.

When the 1992 Civil Unrest occurred, the mainstream media was scrambling trying to find and hire Black reporters and photographers who could get into Black neighborhoods and get stories without being booted out by angry residents who were tired of being exploited and mischaracterized on the evening news and in the Los Angeles Times. Television newscasts opened with commentators using words like “riot” and with images of Black people running through the streets of South Los Angeles, Watts and Compton with couches, television, shoes and groceries. Believe it or not, there are even some reporters and photographers today that have written reflection pieces commemorating the 25th anniversary as if they survived World War 3 those six days in the spring of 1992.

But what about the drumbeat of the Black community? Los Angeles' Black media has not had their story told. The story of how newspapers like the Los Angeles Wave, Los Angeles Sentinel, L.A. Watts Times and Final Call continue today providing Blacks in Los Angeles with culturally relevant news from a Black perspective. How when

Janet Jackson live at the Savemart Center!

Get your tickets now!

Click this pix to buy tickets!

in 1992 Black people were being labeled as thieves, looters, rioters, and arsonists and seemingly being compared to animals running wild and in need of control—it was the Black media who set the story straight and explained that a community of people who have suffered police brutality and abject poverty didn't necessarily view the structures burned down as their own and that while there was some unnecessary looting, the majority of the looting was for food and necessities.

[Continue reading online here](#)

FAX announce improvements to its bus service

April 26, 2017| [ONME News Wire](#)



FRESNO, CA - Mayor Lee Brand, along with Transportation Director Brian Marshall, announced today that Fresno Area Express (FAX) is making improvements to its bus service during a press conference held at the FAX Complex, 2223 G Street, Fresno, CA 93706.

On Monday, May 1, 2017, FAX will begin serving the community with extended weekday night hours on the most highly traveled sections of five of its routes until 1:00am, and will offer more frequent 30-minute service seven days a week on five of its popular routes. To celebrate these extended hours, FAX will offer free rides to all passengers after 6:00pm beginning on Monday, May 1st through Friday, May 5th and free weekend service on May 6th and May 7th.

"Along with our FAX 15 service launched earlier this year on the Shaw and Cedar Avenue corridors, FAX is continuing to improve its system to give

riders more transit choices and to support jobs and businesses in Fresno," said Mayor Brand. "FAX has a number of service and infrastructure improvement projects in the works this year to even further enhance the transit experience in Fresno."

"We are pleased that we are able to improve FAX service by providing later service during the week and more frequent service on Saturdays and Sundays," said City Manager Bruce Rudd. "It is extremely important that we continue to find ways to provide public transit services that are responsive to our customers as well as the community."

By expanding its services, the City is making FAX more convenient for riders. These two service changes are a continuation of the service enhancements that residents can expect this year from FAX.

About FAX

FAX, The City of Fresno's Public Transportation Department offers 16 fixed-route bus lines and Handy Ride Paratransit Service serving the greater Fresno Metropolitan Area with a modern clean and green fleet of over 100 buses. Fresno Area Express is operated by the City of Fresno as a public service to all the citizens and visitors of Fresno.

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