

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

ACCOUNTABILITY, NOT CANCELLATION, A FORCE FOR CHANGE

Six months ago, I predicted that “cancel culture” would win phrase-of-the-year honors from Merriam-Webster. There’s still a lot of it going around, and it angers both liberals and conservatives depending on who or what gets canceled.

Cancel culture — and the idea of “canceling” someone — happens when a celebrity or other public figure does or says something that’s considered offensive. It begins with a person passing judgment and sharing it with others, most often on social media, building a mob mentality of sorts. The lucky offenders are publicly shamed; the not so lucky lose opportunities or even their careers.

Two recent stories of cancellation — or near-cancellation — have gotten a lot of attention. The stories, thus far, have very different outcomes.

Comedian Dave Chapelle was on the cancellation cusp after he made disparaging remarks about transgender people in his recent Netflix special, “The Closer.” Netflix was on the hot seat, too, as several organizations criticized

the special as transphobic and hateful. More than a thousand Netflix staff members voiced concerns that Chapelle’s remarks could incite harm against trans people. They organized a virtual walkout last week.

Defending “The Closer,” Netflix co-chief executive Reed Hastings said the company is committed to artistic expression — but acknowledged that tensions exist between freedom and safety. Stand-up comedians, he noted, say outrageous things for effect that not everyone will like. But apparently, plenty of Netflix subscribers like Chapelle.

And while critical reaction to “The Closer” has been mixed, the uproar has only given the comedian a publicity boost. The show is currently among the top 10 most popular Netflix shows in the U.S. At a recent Hollywood Bowl appearance, Chapelle received a standing ovation. He told the crowd, “If this is what being canceled is like, I love it.”

I doubt that Jon Gruden feels the same way. Earlier this month, Gruden resigned as coach of the National Football League’s Las

Vegas Raiders. Gruden left behind a 10-year, \$100 million contract with the team following a New York Times report that he made racist, homophobic and misogynistic remarks in emails sent over a 12-year period. The correspondence came to light as part of an investigation into the Washington Football Team that did not directly involve Gruden.

The Times review found that Gruden “casually and frequently denigrated people around the game,” mocking female referees, gay athletes and player protests during the national anthem. Ironically, it was a member of Gruden’s own team — defensive lineman Carl Nassib — who in June became the first active NFL player to publicly announce that he is gay.

In a blistering account of Gruden’s wrongdoing, Washington Post sportswriter Sally Jenkins observed, “Gruden is not some bygone relic. He is the current NFL, and as the Las Vegas Raiders head coach he was at the very top of its pay hierarchy. He has spent his life culling rewards in a public-facing business, in which 70 percent of player-col-

leagues are Black and nearly half the audience is women, in which he had every opportunity to grow a respectful heart. His facile, favored-son abuse of position strikes at the heart of the league’s public meaning. He made a farce of it.”

Many of the loudest anti-cancellation voices in the media have been remarkably silent in the wake of Gruden’s resignation — likely because they’re complicit in his bad behavior. After all, Gruden spent nine years at ESPN, where he was considered a marquee analyst on “Monday Night Football.”

Or perhaps there’s an emerging recognition that it’s well past time for accountability in the NFL. It differs from cancellation: When individuals are held accountable, they accept responsibility for their actions — and they understand the consequences. With accountability comes introspection and a greater likelihood of real, sustained change.

To be sure, Gruden’s behavior doesn’t fit in a league that is making significant investments in image building to attract and

retain a broad spectrum of fans. Last year, the NFL announced a pledge of \$250 million over 10 years to combat systemic racism and address injustices faced by Black people in our country. The league’s 2020 Social Responsibility Report proclaimed, “The NFL embraces its role in unifying our communities, addressing key social issues and serving as a force for positive change.”

Will the real NFL stand up, please? Because let’s be honest: Gruden didn’t act alone. There were other powerful men from all around the league on the receiving end of his emails. Many of them may be wishing their exchanges never happened. The NFL can’t be a force for positive change and continue to tolerate racist, homophobic and misogynistic behavior.

If Gruden’s departure hastens that realization, it will have been a very good thing for the game.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCRC’s programming, visit ncrconline.com.



MARIA BOWMAN

Brian Bedford; Kimberly Mayes-Bedford; Leslie Culbertson, A Step Beyond board chair; and Jay Culbertson.

SCENE

A Step Beyond

Organization’s wine-tasting benefit helps underserved youth

BY U-T STAFF

A Step Beyond, a nonprofit afterschool program in North County, recently hosted its inaugural Wine-Tasting Benefit at The Westin Carlsbad Resort & Spa to support college and career programs for its

more than 230 underserved youth. Most of the organization’s students will be the first in their family to graduate high school and to attend college.

The event raised more than \$150,000. It also honored A Step Beyond founders Frank and Jan Foster.

Carlsbad Mayor Matt Hall presented the Fosters with a proclamation recognizing their contributions to the community.

If your organization has held a philanthropic event, you’re welcome to email society@sduniontribune.com



ADRIANA HELDIZ

From left, Los Angeles Times columnist Jean Guerrero, chapter VP Samantha Rivera and secretary Roxy Becerril.

SCENE

Journalism scholarships

National Assn. of Hispanic Journalists, San Diego-Tijuana chapter

BY U-T STAFF

The San Diego-Tijuana chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists hosted its annual scholarship ceremony Oct. 9 at Mujeres Brew-house in Logan Heights. Karina Bazarte and Ana

Paola Olvera, journalism students at SDSU, were awarded \$2,000 each.

If your organization has held a philanthropic event, you’re welcome to email a high-resolution photo along with information on the event to society@sduniontribune.com.

Please clearly identify those in the photo, make them aware their image might appear in print and online, include the photographer’s name for credit and be sure to include the who, what, where, when and why information on the event.

ENTRY • Report shows just over 15% of requests for parole granted since August

FROM B1 through ports of entry since the Biden administration has not resumed asylum processing at the border following Trump’s shutdown of the system.

A report published Thursday by Human Rights First surveyed five legal service providers at the border and found just over 15 percent of parole requests had been granted since August. In some of those cases, CBP only granted parole for the person most at risk of harm, separating them from family members who were left waiting in Mexico.

“It keeps coming back to this over and over. There’s no reason for this,” Webb said. “The level of cruelty, of apathy, from the administration, it’s really terrible.”

The Human Rights First report lists numerous examples of cases that CBP either denied or has not answered, including a Honduran lesbian woman and her partner who had been raped by Mexican police; a Honduran woman who was raped by Mexican police, sex trafficked and forced to work in

massage parlor; a family whose 7-year-old child has cerebral palsy; and a Nicaraguan woman who fell from the border wall, breaking her leg in three places, before being expelled to the United States while her husband and son were released into the country to request asylum.

In Carlitos’ case, his mother learned of his life-threatening illness after the two were kidnapped by a cartel near the Texas border. They had fled Guatemala due to death threats in June.

The cartel tied Ana’s hands behind her back and filled her mouth with rocks while they beat and tortured her child, Ana said.

Once they were able to get away, the pair crossed onto U.S. soil and requested help, but they were quickly expelled without medical attention, Ana said.

The Human Rights First report noted that researchers have documented at least 7,647 instances of violent attacks on migrants expelled under Title 42 since Biden came into office. Among those, some have



ALEJANDRO TAMAYO U-T

Ana talks about her son’s medical condition in Tijuana last week. He has since entered the U.S.

been assaulted, kidnapped, raped and even murdered.

Ana begged for money to try to get help for her son, and a woman offered them a ride to Tijuana. She dropped the family off at a hospital.

Carlitos was later diagnosed with a type of leukemia, in addition to the injuries he’d suffered from the cartel.

The hospital in Tijuana did not have the resources or medications necessary to help him. As his condition worsened, a doctor treating him told CBP that if the agency did not let him in, he would likely die soon.

CBP did not respond to the parole request for more than a week, nor to attorneys’ repeated attempts to check on the case.

After the Union-Tribune sent an email inquiring about the case on Tuesday evening, CBP told the attorneys Wednesday that the boy and his mother had been approved.

CBP said later it could not comment on individual cases due to privacy concerns. The agency did not respond to follow up questions

about parole processing more generally.

“Carlitos is an integral part of my life,” Ana said in Spanish a few hours before her case was approved. “This is very difficult. It wasn’t something I anticipated.”

She has had to hide her emotional struggles since her son’s diagnosis. He’d been in and out of hospital stays for months.

“I have to be stronger than I feel to give energy to my child,” Ana said.

Ana hadn’t been able to see him in person since he’d been hospitalized again on Sunday. The hospital allowed a five-minute video call with him once a day. If she missed the appointment time, she would have to wait until the next day.

She has family in New York who she plans to eventually join, but first, Carlitos will need to receive care closer to the border. Ana will have to find a place to stay during his treatment and hope that their parole hasn’t come too late.

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TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, Oct. 24, the 297th day of 2021. There are 68 days left in the year.

Today’s highlight in history

On Oct. 24, 1940, the 40-hour work week went into effect under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

On this date

In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years War and effectively destroyed the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph message was sent by Chief Justice Stephen J. Field of California

from San Francisco to President Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C., over a line built by the Western Union Telegraph Co.

In 1931, the George Washington Bridge, connecting New York and New Jersey, was officially dedicated. (It opened to traffic the next day.)

In 1945, the United Nations officially came into existence as its charter took effect.

In 1962, a naval quarantine of Cuba ordered by President John F. Kennedy went into effect during the missile crisis.

In 1972, Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson, who had broken Major League Baseball’s modern-era color barrier in 1947, died in Stamford, Conn., at age 53.

In 1989, former television

evangelist Jim Bakker was sentenced by a judge in Charlotte, N.C., to 45 years in prison for fraud and conspiracy. (The sentence was later reduced to eight years; it was further reduced to four for good behavior.)

In 1992, the Toronto Blue Jays became the first non-U.S. team to win the World Series as they defeated the Atlanta Braves, 4-3, in Game 6.

In 1996, TyRon Lewis, 18, a Black motorist, was shot to death by police during a traffic stop in St. Petersburg, Fla.; the incident sparked rioting. (Officer James Knight, who said that Lewis had lurched his car at him several times, knocking him onto the hood, was cleared by a grand jury and the Justice Department.)

In 2002, authorities appre-

hended John Allen Muhammad and teenager Lee Boyd Malvo near Myersville, Md., in the Washington-area sniper attacks. (Malvo was later sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole, but Maryland’s highest court has agreed to reconsider that sentence in 2022; Muhammad was sentenced to death and executed in 2009.)

In 2005, civil rights icon Rosa Parks died in Detroit at age 92.

In 2007, rapidly rising Internet star Facebook Inc. sold a 1.6 percent stake to Microsoft Corp. for \$240 million, spurning a competing offer from online search leader Google Inc.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama offered mortgage relief to hundreds of thousands of Americans

during a visit to Las Vegas. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, visiting Yokota Air Base in Japan, lashed out at North Korea for “reckless and provocative” acts and criticized China for a secretive expansion of its military power.

Five years ago: Campaigning in battleground Florida, a defiant Donald Trump blamed his campaign struggles on “phony polls” from the “disgusting” media. Hillary Clinton and Sen. Elizabeth Warren pounded Trump, accusing him of disrespecting women and denigrating U.S. troops assisting Iraqis in their push to retake the city of Mosul. Pop idol Bobby Vee, 73, died in Rogers, Minn.

One year ago: A North Carolina health official ordered a large church to close its doors

temporarily because of concerns it was helping spread the coronavirus by disregarding social-distancing measures. President Donald Trump assured supporters packed shoulder to shoulder at a trio of rallies that “we’re rounding the turn” on the coronavirus; he mocked challenger Joe Biden for raising alarms about the pandemic.

Today’s birthdays

Musician Bill Wyman is 85. Actor F. Murray Abraham is 82. Director-writer David S. Ward is 76. Actor Kevin Kline is 74. Congressman and former NAACP President Kweisi Mfume is 73. Actor B.D. Wong is 61. Singer-rapper Drake is 35. Olympic gold medal gymnast Kyla Ross is 25.

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