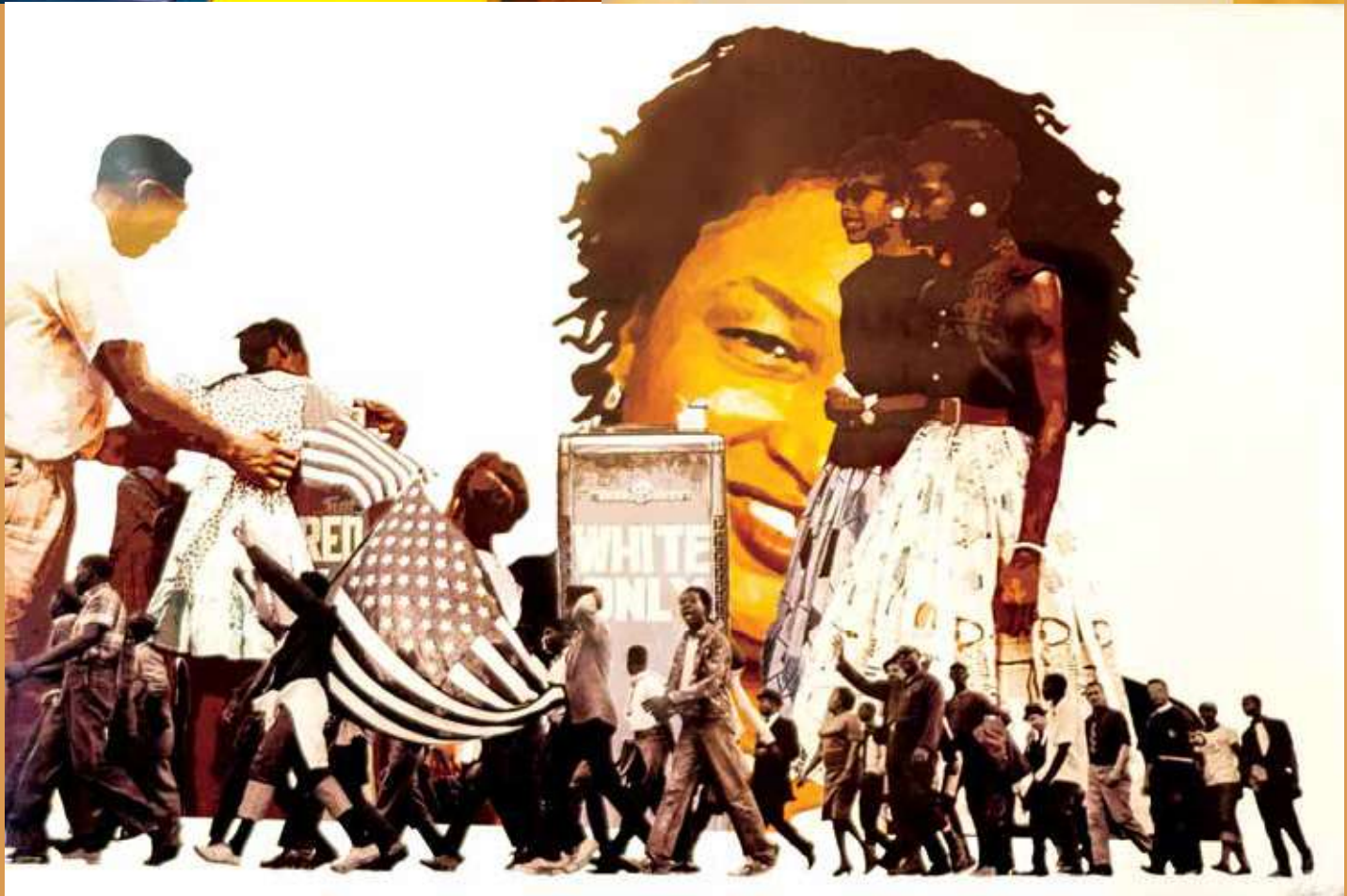
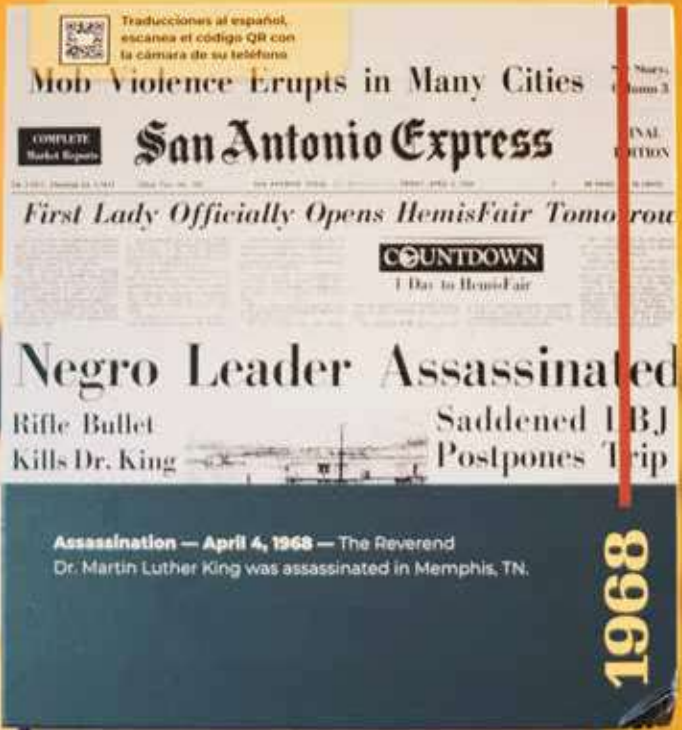


Photos courtesy of San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum

“It is our belief that black history is American history and that is 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.”



Bright Lights, BIG BOATS

By Lakendra Lewis

The San Antonio River Walk is teeming this month with a variety of boat tours that showcases the city's rich downtown history, beauty and diversity. So, for a view that takes you off the footworn path, consider these family fun tour excursions that keep SA's bright lights and legacy afloat.

With more than 2 million people currently calling it home, there is no denying San Antonio is not only a keystone in the development of Texas history but it is also a city made up of diverse residents.

In a desire to bring more of that diversity to the forefront, the **San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum (SAAACAM)** is hosting a new River Walk boat tour that spotlights the contributions of African Americans in San Antonio.

The result is the museum's Black History River Cruise, a floating 90-minute tour that explores San Antonio's rich black history as it relates to the center of the city.

"There's no book written on San Antonio black history," Deborah Omowale Jarmon, SAAACAM CEO and director, said. "It is our belief that black history is American history and that is 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Our goal is to share the African American contributions that have been made to the city."

The cruise, which celebrated its maiden voyage this past March following SAAACAM's grand opening a month earlier, explores a variety of topics such as African Americans in politics, education, churches, neighborhoods, businesses and culture. Along the way,

guests are treated to a scenic river view of historic sites that include the Museum Reach, the Aztec Theatre and the Pearl.

Originally planned as a one-time excursion that was slated to take place in February of 2020 for Black History Month but had to be postponed, the cruise has become a recurring popular attraction, with tours offered twice monthly. This month's outings are scheduled for Sunday, September 12 at 2:30pm and Saturday, September 25 at noon.

Jarmon believes the addition of this new cruise to the downtown area helps serve to educate passengers on the significant influence of African Americans in the shaping of San Antonio.

"The response has been overwhelming," Jarmon said of the cruise, which has been regularly selling out. "People are engaged. They're excited, they want to come back."

In addition to the cruise, guests are invited to visit SAAACAM (located in La Villita), which was founded as a nonprofit in 2017 to serve as a community archive specifically for the preservation of stories of African Americans in San Antonio. Admission to the museum is free. Tickets for the cruise are \$25 for general admission and \$20 for SAAACAM members. Private tours also are available.



FOOTLIGHT PARADE

There is nothing more beautiful than the lights of downtown San Antonio at night, and for those seeking some nocturnal wonder, the **Ford® Parade of Lanterns** is sure to be a showstopper.

Now in its fourth consecutive year, onlookers will be wowed by the free parade, which features 10 eye-catching 26-foot-long boats filled with large illuminated lanterns that float throughout the downtown sector of the River Walk. The lanterns in past years have showcased a variety of shapes and images that have included flowers, animals and luminescent trees.

The parade route starts at the International Center—located at 203 South St. Mary's Street—where the floats will make two laps throughout the downtown area. Spectators are encouraged to make an evening of the event by having dinner and drinks on the patio of a restaurant along the River Walk in order to take advantage of the view while watching the pageantry of the illuminated boats.

Due to heavy boat traffic, this year's parade will only occur on the weekends and the floats will not go in the Shops at Rivercenter or into the Convention Center lagoons.

The event, which normally takes place in February to kick off the Chinese New Year, was pushed back this year. The Ford Parade of Lanterns will run Friday through Sunday evenings, August 27-29 and September 3-5, from 8:00 to 10:00pm, weather permitting.

GO RIO River cruises



NARRATIVE RIVER BOAT TOUR

Sure, the River Walk may be known for its foot traffic but did you know you can also see it in style on a boat tour with **GO RIO River Cruises**?

Take a load off those tired tootsies and enjoy a 35-minute narrated boat tour to some of the most interesting places along the River Walk as you learn a thing or two about San Antonio's culture and history.

Boasting a fleet of eco-friendly electric river boats in vibrant colors inspired by Mexican folk art, GO RIO was awarded a 10-year contract with the City of San Antonio to operate river cruises in May 2017.

The tour, which is available throughout the year, floats through downtown San Antonio, taking its passengers under winding rock walkways and bridges, past bustling restaurants and picturesque structures and near historic sites, including La Villita—the city's first neighborhood—Old Mill Crossing and many architectural wonders. During the trip, passengers are also treated to historic tidbits about the many cultures that helped transform the Alamo City into what it is today.

In addition to its narrated excursions, GO RIO offers chartered tours. Guests also are encouraged to visit the GO RIO beverage bar and retail location near the Rivercenter ticket booth to purchase a cold beverage, as well as to buy a souvenir or other necessities like sunblock.

Tickets for the narrated tours are available on GO RIO's website.

WRITER'S BIO

Lakendra Lewis is an arts and entertainment journalist, editor and author whose articles have appeared in Edible San Antonio Magazine, The Texas Observer and San Antonio Christian Woman Magazine. She enjoys movies, music, cooking, singing and telling other people's stories. You can contact her/read more of her stories at lakendralewis.journoportfolio.com.



click on this:

SAAACAM PRESENTS BLACK HISTORY RIVER TOUR

www.Saaacam.org/

event/black-history-river-cruise

FORD PARADE OF LANTERNS

www.TheSanAntonioRiverWalk.com/

events/ford-parade-of-lanterns

GO RIO SAN ANTONIO RIVER CRUISES

www.Goriocruises.com