

# Letters to the Editor — Family Gateway, UTD’s space studies, Canadians, Neiman’s

Readers urge more care for homeless families; tout UTD’s space studies program; don’t welcome American to Canada; and share fond memories about Neiman Marcus.

By [Letters to the Editor](#)

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Heather Bruce hands a man four meals for his family, Nov. 18, 2022, at Annette G. Strauss Family Gateway Center in Dallas. Families at the center receive support and spend an average of 80 days at the facility. (Rebecca Slezak / Staff Photographer)



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## Help homeless families

Re: “Homeless solutions must be comprehensive — Cold weather reminds us of the need for shelter, but unhoused people need much more,” by Lynn McBee, Feb. 23 Opinion.

Our community’s focus is understandably on those most visibly homeless. A less visible, vulnerable population must also be recognized. More than one-third of those experiencing homelessness across the country are families with children. They do not want to be seen. They are living out of cars, or in and out of motels.

Families with children are triaged daily for assessment, diversion (alternatives to shelter), shelter placement and supportive housing with comprehensive services, something McBee notes is so critical to recovery.

We receive no city or county dollars for the operating costs of our shelter or for increased need during periods of extremely cold or hot weather. Post-pandemic, the number of families seeking homeless services has risen dramatically.

Families have been hit hard by 30% increases in rent, priced out of available housing. While there may be a prevalence of mental illness and addiction issues among individuals who are unsheltered, most families become homeless due to trauma, poverty or because someone in the family has a serious health issue (child with a seizure disorder, severe autism, etc.).

Let’s please not forget about families with children hiding in plain sight.

*Ellen Magnis, Dallas*

*President and CEO, Family Gateway*

## UTD, institute space leaders

Re: “Texas is the new space state — California and Florida may disagree, but we’ve become the leader in exploration,” by Bruce McCandless III, Feb. 22 Opinion.

I was disappointed to see no mention of the University of Texas at Dallas or the Southwest Research Institute in McCandless’ op-ed on Texas’ leadership in space. Both have decades of

history building scientific instruments for space research.

UTD scientists and engineers flew their first instrument on Explorer 51 in 1965 (when UTD was the Southwest Center for Graduate Studies) and since have flown instruments on over 60 missions, including to the moon (all Apollo missions, except 11), Mars (Viking 1 and 2 and Phoenix), Venus (Pioneer Venus) and Halley's comet (Giotto).

UTD scientists and engineers have deployed instruments on the International Space Station and the space shuttle. There are nine satellites currently orbiting Earth with UTD instruments, and they were recently selected to build instruments for the NASA flagship mission, the Geospace Dynamics Constellation.

There is a tremendous history here, and UTD ranks as a world leader in building instruments for space studies.

*Phillip Anderson, Richardson,*

*Director, UTD W.B. Hanson Center for Space Sciences*

## **Don't come north**

I'm a Canadian veteran and worked many times with the American military. I've traveled innumerable times on work or vacation to nearly all the U.S. states. In all that time and in all my travels, I never felt that Americans weren't Canadians' friends.

Until now. Your president and his supporters clearly believe that neither friendship nor being comrades-in-arms is meaningful. Rather they clearly think that what's best for them and your country is to win big at the expense of others; to disregard friendship, mutual respect, honesty and fairness; and to economically and politically beat down others.

Your new leadership's election and antics the first time around could be considered a mistake. To elect them a second time around shows a majority of Americans back up your incoming government's declarations and approach to dealing with others.

Any talk about "America First" and your government's posturing, bargaining position, negotiation tactics, etc., are hollow, insincere and false attempts to put a shine on a "horse apple."

Our friendship is over. Do us all a favour and don't come north — you're not welcome.

*David Merritt, St. Albert, Alberta, Canada*

## **Kakistocracy, indeed**

Re: “It’s a kakistocracy,” by Blake Frank, Wednesday Letters.

Thank you, Blake Frank. Adding the word “kakistocracy” to my lexicon has made me smile all day.

I’ve been searching for something that articulates well our current state of affairs. And, dear reader, if you don’t know that word, by all means look it up, just like Frank says.

*Amy P. Jones, Dallas/Preston Hollow*

## **Fitting and witty**

In two cleverly worded sentences, Blake Frank fittingly and wittingly described the current Washington administration.

*Claude Caffee, Honey Grove*

## **Missing Zodiac most of all**

Having been transferred to Plano in 2000, a tradition began of having Christmas Eve brunch at the Zodiac at Neiman’s downtown flagship. That first event consisted of incredible service, a bountiful buffet and an opportunity to meet Stanley Marcus, my retail idol.

After brunch, we’d take the escalators down to visit beautiful home goods and aspirational menswear. Occasionally, one of us would break down and purchase something very special. Little did we know our visit on Dec. 24, 2024, would be our last.

I was downtown the other day and thought I’d go to the Zodiac one last time. Unfortunately, they were overbooked. And, they removed the stools from the bar, so that wasn’t an option.

It’s quite probable I’ll never taste that demitasse of chicken broth, the warm popover with strawberry butter, nor the macaroni and cheese or prime rib at the buffet. But most of all, I’ll miss that great room itself — the Zodiac!

*Craig N. Perry, Plano*

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