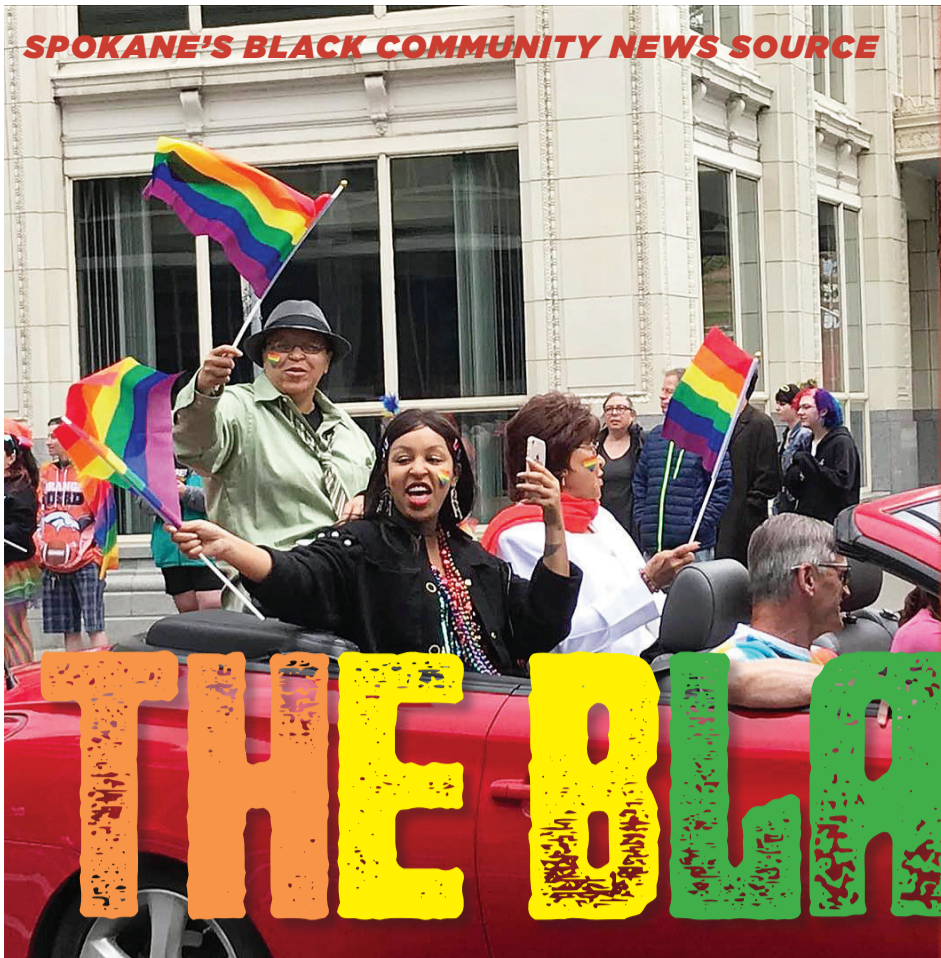


GAY PRIDE BEGAN IN BLACK COMMUNITY

Spokane NAACP's LGBTQ+ Right Committee honors history of Pride, invites community to march in Spokane's parade on June 8. **PAGE 3**

At right: A photo taken by a community member of Sandy Williams riding in the back of a car in the 2019 Pride Parade with her mother and daughter.



THE BLACK LENS

JUNE 2024 - VOL. 9 - ISSUE NO. 5

CELEBRATING BLACK PRIDE AND LIBERATION

MINSTREL-ESQUE MAKEUP PROVES BEAUTY INCLUSIVITY NOT SOLVED



Youthforia, a skincare-centric makeup brand that got its start on Shark Tank, has been celebrated for its commitment to clean, sustainable and inclusive beauty products. With the recent launch of their expanded Date Night shade range, the brand has sparked significant backlash, highlighting deeper issues within the beauty industry.

Last month, the brand launched foundation shade 600, intended for deeper skin tones. However, the darkest shade in range was found to contain only black pigment, more closely resembling black face paint rather than foundation. **PAGE 4**



AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER

Emancipation Day celebration on June 19, 1900, held in "East Woods" on East 24th Street in Austin, Texas.

AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATION SHOWCASES EDUCATION, TALENTS

The 28th annual African American Graduation celebration took place May 4 at the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center on the campus of Gonzaga University. Students were given kente cloths medals and for high achievement. **PAGE 5**



HEALING IS ACTION, HEALING IS FREEDOM

Juneteenth recognizes our ancestors



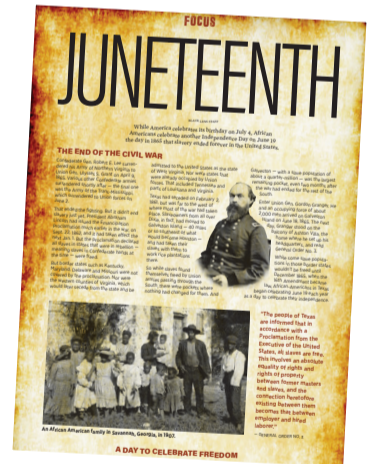
By Anna Franklin
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



In celebration of Juneteenth, I am honored to share a powerful story from the Simmons family history – my family's history. Our story is a testament to the resilience and healing power of our ancestors, whose legacy of love continues to inspire us today.

My great, great, great grandmother, whom we know as Morning, was torn from her home and sold into slavery at 15 years old, the same age as my youngest child today. Her journey in the horrific holding cells and across the Atlantic was marked by unimaginable suffering and loss. She endured months on a slave ship before being brought to Richmond, Virginia. Upon arrival in Richmond, Virginia she was purchased by our ancestor and taken to Alabama. She faced physical, spiritual, and emotional cruelty beyond belief, and became pregnant by the man that enslaved her. With fierce determination, she protected and nurtured her unborn child

See **HEALING, 11**



MORE INSIDE
FURTHER REVIEW: While America celebrates its birthday on July 4, African Americans celebrate another Independence Day on June 19 the day in 1865 that chattel slavery ended in the United States. **PAGE 7**



By Pastor Benjamin D. Watson, Sr. Bethel A.M.E.
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



Why fathers are important

Fathers are a crucial and irreplaceable part of our children's lives. We play an essential role in shaping our children's growth and development. We set a positive example by being role models of good behavior and values.

Dads also provide emotional support that is essential for our children's well-being. We are there to listen, comfort and guide them through life's ups and downs with sound advice.

Fathers help to create strong family bonds by reinforcing healthy, enlightened conversations, promoting an atmosphere of love and stability. Furthermore, we teach our children the importance of building solid relationships and being there for each other.

As spiritual leaders, priests in the home, my God dads, we have a critical role to play in guiding our children towards faith-based practices and values. We are the

primary lens through which our children will come to understand God and the nature of the universe. While trained spiritual leaders are wonderful and necessary, fathers, too, are called to be agents of spiritual guidance for their children.

In short, fathers are vital to the healthy and holistic development of our children and should embrace this God-given calling with the utmost care and responsibility.



MORE ON FATHER'S DAY
A thank you to our Black fathers for showing up and being anchors. **PAGE 10**

INSIDE

COMMENTARY: HUMAN RIGHTS IS THE PRIORITY

Shadle Park High School student uses voice to raise awareness of genocide, censorship and injustice. **PAGE 9**

KIDS CORNER: NEW SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

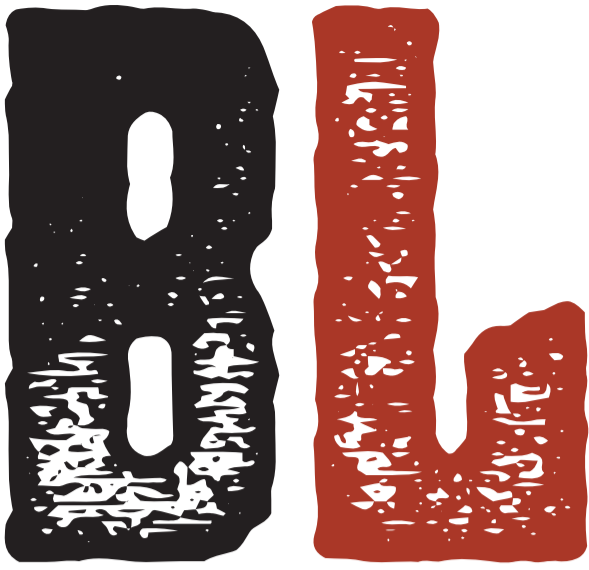
Illustrations celebrating Black liberation call for kids (and adults) to spot the differences between the two images. **PAGE 16**

COMEDIAN BABINSKI TO HOST SKETCH SHOW AS PART OF EXPO

Woman aims to spread joy throughout the Northwest. Now, she's leading a family-friendly show at Riverfront Park on June 22. **PAGE 12**



BLACK PRIDE AND LIBERATION



NEWS

BLACKLENS.NEWS

MAC seeks history from Spokane-area Black families



COURTESY

The Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture will host "Our Stories: Black Families in Spokane," starting June 28.

Black Lens staff

"Our Stories: Black Families in Spokane" will be a celebration of community and history at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture on June 28 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. This free event results from a series of meetings beginning in fall 2023 between MAC staff, Julie Williamson Serquinia and Marsha Rooney (former Senior Curator of History at MAC), regarding ways to make the MAC museum and its programming more relevant and welcoming to all Spokane audiences. It will be the first in a series, according to a MAC release. In preparation for the

event, organizers are asking for loans from the community to augment the historic displays.

"I would love to see anything representing the East Side Youth Center or Hamp's Camp (the Gospel Mission Youth Camp run by Rev. Mr. C.E. Hamp from 1962 until 2000)," Williamson Serquinia said in a release, "but we welcome any objects, photographs, menus, posters, or flyers that represent Black businesses or organizations from the 1920s through the 1960s."

Anyone interested in learning more or contributing to the project may email: ourstories789@gmail.com.

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NEWS

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FOR ALL



COURTESY

By Luc Jasmin III
THE BLACK LENS

My name is Luc Jasmin III, and nearly two decades ago, I left Boston, Massachusetts, for Spokane, Washington. The move was met with concern from my East Coast friends, especially due to Idaho's troubling reputation towards people of color. I remember prayers during church services, which left me questioning whether Spokane was the right place for me, given its history of intolerance.

Upon my arrival, I was struck by the "polite" culture here. Back East, racism was overt; here, it was subtle and insidious. In my early days, I struggled in workplaces where I was often the only person of color, becoming familiar with being gaslighted amidst micro-aggressions, without a guide to understand what was happen-

ing. This culture made it hard to discern why I was being marginalized, and I felt profoundly out of place.

However, as time passed, I began to connect with other people of color. Individuals like Tommy Williams, Sandy Williams and Betsy Wilkerson extended a welcoming hand, reassured me of my place in the community, and reminded me that there were others like me who could offer support and safety. This recognition allowed me to be myself, even as a 6-foot-7, 300-pound man who stands out.

The more I connected with others, the more I discovered incredible Black individuals and allies within our community who were unafraid to call out injustices and support one another. These relationships have provided me with a sense of affirmation and

acknowledgment that my experiences are real.

Today, as a father of two Black daughters in Spokane, I am deeply invested in ensuring that our youth and young professionals feel that they belong, are safe, and are seen. This is why I am involved with the Black Lens, a vital platform where our community can make our presence known and validate one another's experiences.

In my role as the Eastern and Central Washington Outreach Representative for the Governor's Office, I am committed to supporting not just Spokane but the entire state. My journey has been filled with challenges, but also with growth and community-building. Together, I believe we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

See you around,
Luc Jasmin III

Black Lens' founder Sandy Williams a social justice, LGBTQ+ pioneer

Black Lens News

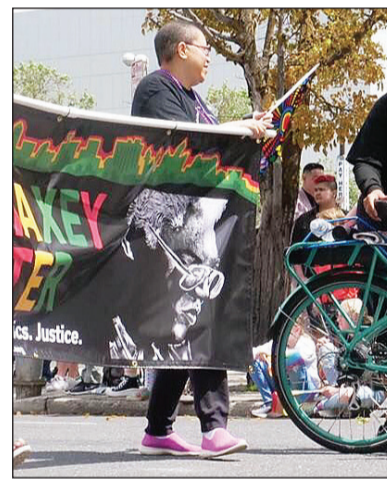
The Black Lens founder Sandy Williams was also an LGBTQ pioneer here in Spokane. She graduated from Washington State University in 1983 with a degree in psychology and was always passionate about social justice and community activism and gravitated to jobs that addressed issues like racism, sexism, classism, and discrimination.

After leaving Spokane to pursue a career in film, she moved back to Spokane to be closer to her parents. This led her to working a job with Suicide Prevention, working with teenagers to address mental health issues. That led her to become the Executive Director for Odyssey Youth Center, Spokane's LGBTQ Youth Center. From there, she helped Eastern Washington University start their Pride Center and became the first coordinator.

Sandy didn't stop there, starting The Black Lens newspaper and the Carl Maxey Center. Her investments in our community were always intentional and inclusive and we are proud to stand on her shoulders as we celebrate our queer black community this Pride season.

In Sandy's words: I was born a feminist, I believe. If it was possible to see me in my mother's womb, you probably would have seen a fierce and determined embryo with my fist raised high in protest about some gender-based injustice that was being visited upon me in utero, even before I had any understanding of what it meant to be a woman.

I started at a young age fighting for equality. Challenging my junior high school when I was forced to take Home Economics instead of



COURTESY OF SPOKANE PRIDE

Sandy Williams marches with the Carl Maxey Center during a Pride Parade. Williams was named the Over the Rainbow Grand Marshal of Pride in 2019.

shop class because "girls needed to learn how to cook and sew for their husbands." Challenging the pressure to use Miss or Mrs to identify myself, long before Ms was considered acceptable. Challenging the hospital that would not submit my daughter's birth announcement to the newspaper because I was not married to her father and I "needed to get his permission first."

Throughout my life I have proudly held up high the title of feminist, even as it seems to have lost popularity with much of the younger generation in recent years, and is used almost as a slur in some circles. I have worn the banner proudly, defining what a woman is supposed to be by how clearly she articulates her support for what I consider feminist principles. Women are strong and assertive. Women are leaders. Women are change

makers and change agents. Women are powerful, intelligent and articulate. Women are the foundation and the bedrock upon which so many of the institutions that make up this country have been built. I am woman, hear me roar! Sure, there are women that do not fall into those categories, and in the spirit of inclusivity, I accept them and value them, but to be honest, for me, I felt that a REAL woman, a REAL feminist, had to encompass these categories... and more. And then I spent that past few months at my mother's side as we cared for my father who passed away on February 7. My mother - a nurse and a military wife, spent her entire married life supporting my father. Moving when he moved. Raising his children. Keeping his house. Dutifully cooking and cleaning and ironing and washing clothes. Never protesting for equal wages, never marching for equal rights, never challenging systems of patriarchy, or systemic and institutionalized oppression. Instead, my mother spent day after day and night after night dedicated and devoted to the man that she had lived with and loved for over half a century. I remember looking at my mom one night as she held my dad in her arms, cradling him and telling him to "let go and let God, if that was what he needed to do," and I thought to myself, "Sandy Williams, you have absolutely no idea at all what real power is. Real strength. Real feminism." It is that kind of power and that kind of strength, my mom's kind, that has held back the forces that are determined to drive Black people into extinction. And because of women like my mother, feminists like me, are still here to fight another day.

THE BLACK LENS

Serving Spokane's Black community since 2015

IN MEMORY OF SANDRA WILLIAMS
FOUNDING EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

THE BLACK LENS INTERIM EDITOR & BOARD MEMBERS

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The Black Lens newspaper is published daily online and monthly in print by "comma," a nonprofit community journalism lab. For information on comma, or to make a donation, please contact Innovia at (509) 624-2606 or visit www.blacklensnews.com/donate.

Statement of Independence

The Black Lens is a not-for-profit, independent newspaper that focuses on all aspects of the Black community in Eastern Washington. The Black Lens editor reports to its own board of directors, which was set up under the guidance of the founders' family.

As journalism calls for increased transparency, The Black Lens believes in being transparent about its work. The Black Lens is funded through foundations, donors, subscribers and the community. That funding pays for the work of the editors, reporters, photographers, designers, correspondents and columnists who produce The Black Lens newspaper, website and other platforms.

The Black Lens retains full authority over its editorial content. This organization maintains a strict firewall between news coverage decisions and funding sources and in-kind help. Acceptance of financial support does not constitute implied or actual endorsement of donors or their products, services or opinions.

All story decisions made by The Black Lens newsroom and its leaders are made independently and not on the basis of donor support. This organization does not give supporters the rights to assign, review or edit content, and if a supporter is covered in a story or other editorial content, The Black Lens will disclose this at the bottom of the story.

The Black Lens is a partner of the "comma" community journalism lab. The Black Lens will be located within the community journalism lab newsroom that is set to be stationed on the main campus of Gonzaga University in Spokane. Though The Black Lens and lab may be housed at Gonzaga, the university has no control or authority over the journalism created by The Black Lens or other newsrooms located within the lab. The comma community journalism lab is a nonprofit news organization with its own board of directors, separate from the university and separate from The Black Lens. The Black Lens' board of directors works closely with the comma community journalism lab and its leaders to

ensure that journalism's protected First Amendment rights continue to be an essential part of our nation's democracy. Though much of the content created by The Black Lens may appear in regional publications, newspapers or news websites, those organizations have no rights, authority or influence over the content created by this publication. The Black Lens' publications are only responsible to boards of directors for The Black Lens and the comma community journalism lab. Though other publications, including The Spokesman-Review, may assist in distribution, The Black Lens is not a publication of any of its third-party distribution partners.

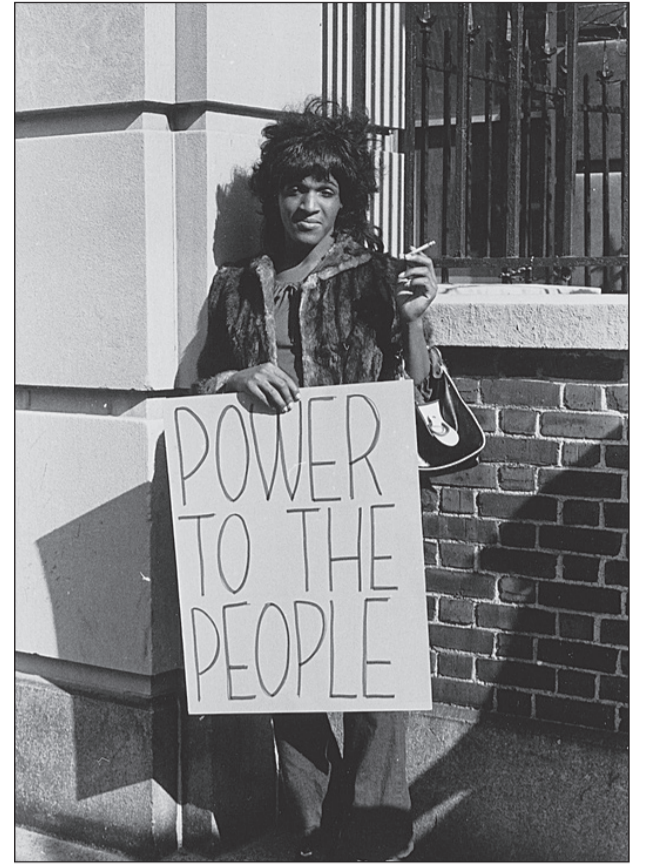


NEWS

HAPPY BLACK PRIDE AND LIBERATION



Unapologetically Black and Proud LA attends the 2023 LA Pride Parade on June 11, 2023 in Hollywood, Calif. GETTY IMAGES



NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY DIGITAL COLLECTION
Marsha P. Johnson pickets Bellevue Hospital, in Manhattan, New York, to protest treatment of gay and homeless people.

FIRST PRIDE WAS RIOT STARTED BY QUEER, TRANSGENDER PEOPLE OF COLOR

By NAACP

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Happy Pride Month! Did you know that the first Pride was a riot started by queer and trans people of color, or QTPOC? Like the Black, transgender activist Marsha P. Johnson.

Many people don't know that because Pride has turned into a weekend of rainbows, parades and corporate alcohol sponsorships. Pride has also centered, like many things in America, the White male experience.

On June 28, 1969, Marsha Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, a Puerto Rican transgender woman that she befriended when she first came to New York City, went out to the Stonewall Inn. Stonewall Inn was a popular bar for the LGBTQ+ community but that was a secret, as homosexuality was classified as a mental illness until 1973 by the American Psychological Association. Sodomy was classified as a crime until the Supreme Court struck it down in Lawrence vs. Texas on June 26, 2003.

Police raids against bars frequented by the LGBTQ+ Community were common and according to Johnson, "the place was already on fire, and there was a raid already. The riots had already started."

Multiple events that night are attributed to the riots such as the arrest of Stormé DeLarverie, a biracial butch lesbian and drag king, that kept resisting arrest while rallying the bar patrons. As well as Johnson throwing the "Shot Glass Heard Around the World," styled after the infamous bullet that started the American Revolution. According to those accounts, Johnson, frustrated by the constant raids, downed her shot of alcohol, threw it at a nearby mirror and yelled at the officers, "I GOT MY CIVIL RIGHTS!" then led bar patrons to fight back.

Johnson was on the front lines of what became the Stonewall Riots. It was the first time that the LGBTQ+ Community literally fought back against discrimination. The riots were followed by protests and community organizing. Every year after, it would be commemorated by marches against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. The music and dancing naturally followed in later years.

While Pride Month is a bold statement to the World saying,



A visitor with the LGBT+ and Jamaica flag at the UK Black Pride event in Haggerston Park in London on July 7, 2019. GETTY IMAGES

"This is me, accept me!" for many QTPOC it is an even bolder statement saying, "I deserve to exist in the same spaces that you do." That is why the Spokane Branch of the NAACP formed the LGBTQ+ Committee. The fight that Marsha P. Johnson started must continue!

According to the Human Rights Campaign, "at least 32 transgender and gender-expansive people have been tragically and inhumanely taken through violent means, including through gun and interpersonal violence in 2023." The US Trans Survey (2022) named Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia as the ten top States from which respondents moved because of state laws targeting transgender people for unequal

treatment. Many of these States have large Black, Indigenous and People of Color populations with almost 20% of Alabama alone self-reporting as non-White according to the 2020 Census, and Texas becoming a Majority-Minority State in that same census with 57.5% of Texans self-reporting as non-White.

So this Pride, while you are out celebrating the rights won by the LGBTQ+ Community, remember the Shot Glass Heard Around the World. Remember our Queer and Trans Siblings of Color. Remember Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Stormé DeLarverie, and consider joining the LGBTQ+ Committee of the Spokane NAACP as we continue the fight that they started and celebrate ALL LOVE in our communities.

SPOKANE NAACP STATEMENT

The Spokane NAACP expresses deep sadness following the recent vandalism of the Pride Crosswalk at Riverfront Park. Such public acts of hate are not only disrespectful but also serve as a form of intimidation.

While there is widespread awareness of the discrimination faced by individuals in the LGBTQ+ community and people of color, the additional challenges that arise when belonging to both communities are often overlooked.

The Spokane NAACP will stand in unity to safeguard, advocate for, and support the rights of all individuals of color, including those in the LGBTQ+ community.

On behalf of our Spokane NAACP LGBTQ+ Committee,
President Lisa Gardner



The Pride painting at the intersection of Spokane Falls Boulevard and Howard Street. COURTESY

NAACP
Spokane Branch

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JUNE 8

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SPACE IS LIMITED!

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Benefits include:

- * Access to exclusive networking events and opportunities to connect with 2SLGBTQIA2+ professionals.
- * Participation in educational workshops featuring industry experts and thought leaders.
- * Inclusion in the INBA Member Directory, facilitating visibility and collaboration.
- * Access to an Events Calendar showcasing upcoming events and community activities within the INBA member network.

The INBA empowers 2SLGBTQIA2+ entrepreneurs and allies through networking, education and advocacy. We foster inclusive communities, celebrate diversity, and drive economic growth across Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

NEWS

YOUTHFORIA'S MINSTREL-ESQUE MAKEUP SHOWS BEAUTY INCLUSIVITY NOT SOLVED

By Renika Williams
THE BLACK LENS

Youthforia, a skin-care-centric makeup brand that got its start on Shark Tank, has been celebrated for its commitment to clean, sustainable, and inclusive beauty products. Its unique products, including a popular color-changing blush oil meant to react to your skin's PH, were favorites amongst Gen-Z and Millennials looking for high-quality formulas that aim to evoke childhood joy and adult bliss. With the recent launch of their expanded Date Night shade range, the brand has sparked significant backlash, highlighting deeper issues within the beauty industry that have not yet been fully resolved.

In October 2023, Youthforia faced criticism for its limited foundation shade range for its bestselling product Date Night Skin Tint Serum Foundation, which many felt was not inclusive of darker skin tones. Responding to community feedback, the brand pledged to expand their shade range and improve inclusivity.

With the shade expansion, Fiona Co Chan, founder of Youthforia, seemed confident that the brand would quiet her critics. "I'm always looking to see where there are gaps," she said in March. "If I see a gap, I'm definitely going to go back into the lab and expand, but, in terms of the deepest of deep, I think we do have several options." They spent months building awareness for the new launch, recruiting influencers and other Beauty experts to generate content. Chan informed Beauty Independent that the brand had achieved "equal distribution in terms of shade represen-



Photo of Golloria George wearing the Youthforia Date Night Foundation in Shade 600. Courtesy of Golloria George's TikTok (@golloria)

tation across the influencers that we work with on a paid basis, especially for this launch."

Despite these efforts, Youthforia's latest release has been met with severe criticism. Earlier this month, the brand launched foundation shade 600, intended for deeper skin tones. However, the darkest shade in the range was found to contain only black pigment, more closely resembling black face paint

rather than a foundation. For clarity, no matter how dark the skin tone, there are undertones, no one's skin is matte, flat, black. Looking at the market, there are plenty of brands who have developed wide shade ranges for their products, inclusive of darker skin tones, and none of them—absolutely none—use only Black pigment. This means the formulas do exist, Youthforia just chose not to try. This choice not only failed to

cater to the needs of those with darker skin tones but also evoked painful historical associations with blackface, a form of theatrical makeup used to mock and stereotype African Americans.

The backlash was swift, with many accusing Youthforia of insensitivity and poor judgment. Influencer Golloria George compared the darkest shade of Youthforia's Date Night Skin Tint Serum Foundation to "minstrel show black" in a TikTok video that garnered over 30.7 million views and 2.5 million likes. "Nobody asked for a foundation shade that dark, and it doesn't have any undertones."

In the wake of this con-

trovery, major retailers Credo, Thirteen Lune, and Revolve have dropped Youthforia from their shelves. Black creators on TikTok have expressed their disappointment, further amplifying the fallout. Reviews on Ulta's website highlight the discontent among consumers. One reviewer called the product "malicious compliance," suggesting that Youthforia's response to demands for inclusivity was spiteful. Another review pointed out that the darkest shade lacks undertones, making it unusable as a foundation.

A sarcastic review underscored the offensive nature of the product: "Had a minstrel show the other day and wow! This really stayed on better than the tar I was previously using. It was so good, I decided to keep it on for a rally I had later that day! It was a huge hit and I got so many compliments. I

recommend this to all my fellow performers." This review starkly contrasts with Youthforia's mission to create inclusive and joyful beauty products.

Surprisingly, Youthforia has not responded to these complaints and retailers such as Ulta, have failed to remove the product from its shelves or website. They have yet to issue a statement acknowledging the misstep or promise to recall the product.

This incident underscores the importance of genuine inclusivity in the beauty industry. It is not enough to simply offer a wider shade range; brands must deeply understand and respect the cultural and historical contexts of their products. As consumers continue to demand more from the brands they support, it is imperative for companies like Youthforia to listen, learn, and act with sensitivity and awareness.



Photos of Youthforia's solid Black foundation, Shade 600. Courtesy of the Youthforia Website.

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We need volunteers to help run Our Sister's Closet, YWCA's free donation-based clothing boutique.

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JUNETEENTH EVENTS

Find more events and flyers on **PAGE 6**.

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Congratulations to our 2024 grads!

AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATION HIGHLIGHTS



Black Lens Staff
THE BLACK LENS

The 28th annual African American Graduation celebration took place May 4 at the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center on the campus of Gonzaga University. Students were handed Kente stoles and some earned special certificates for their hard-earned work.



BLACK COACHES MATTER

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS



COACH BROWN

Coach Arnold Brown has been coaching for the better part of two decades. He got to Spokane in 1978, as a military transplant and played basketball at Medical Lake High School. In the 2004-2005 season, he helped lead Medical Lake High School Boys Varsity Basketball Team to a state championship. Currently he coaches basketball for Coeur d'Alene in the IEL league, but coached in Medical Lake for 15 years, Yakima for 3 years, and has coached football, basketball, and baseball for the past 5 years at Shadle Park High School. He played in the very first Hoopfest event on a team called the Swackhammers. Representation has come a long way in 30 years. Brown says coaching is important to him because it is an opportunity to help kids with their lives, not just sports. "The game teaches players how to adjust to the changes that life throws at you. To have a winning mindset means to focus on what you are good at, staying positive helps manage conflict that can arise in the game." Coach Brown has known and watched many of the current high school coaches since they were younger players. "Most of these coaches I know, I actually coached them so I'm kind of proud of them, it's kind of like I am on the other side of it now and they are coming in." Watching this evolution of former players become coaches reflects the longevity of many in the Spokane basketball community. They are creating a cycle. Brown says there is always someone out there to show a kid the right way to get through.



KEMO PATRICK

Coach Kemo Patrick came to Spokane in 1990-1993 to attend Eastern Washington University, where he played basketball. When Hoopfest first kicked off in the early 90s, he too played on the Swackhammers, the first team to win two back-to-back championships. He joined the team in Hoopfest's second year. Coming from Los Angeles, CA, basketball was a way for Patrick to build connection and community in Spokane. Currently, Patrick coaches freshmen at Shadle Park High School and works as a local referee for football. During his first two years, he was assistant to Coach Brown for the varsity boys' basketball team. "Coaching is another form of teaching to me. I try to get the kids on one page ... teaching young men and women to work together, that's the first lesson. Sports is just another way to interact and come into these kids' lives, especially in the African American community." Patrick says that seeing Blacks in leadership helps students see themselves at all levels. "People see that we can do this, and jobs are out there to do. Being from Los Angeles, 95% of my teachers were Black." Patrick shares that this is instrumental in helping Black youth realize that their community can make it and they are out here doing it. When it comes to coaching, he believes that "competition is good; it forces you to push past the limits you have."



TYRONE ASHLEY

Coach Tyrone Ashley started coaching about 27 years ago when his daughter joined a basketball team. He has always had a love of the game, and while coming in as a first-year girls varsity head coach at West Valley High School, he already had two decades under him. This endurance and dedication landed Ashley the recognition of Co-Coach of the Year for the GSL in the 2A League. What does this

accomplishment mean for him? "I guess the biggest moment is the opportunity is to watch the kids grow, to watch my team grow as a group ... the kids are the most important part of it." Starting off the year 0-5, Ashley says they talked about making mistakes and developed an understanding that it is OK to make them while aiming to get better each time. Seeing the effort that got them to the state tournament was a full circle moment. "To watch them get to the state tournament was exciting and I got a chance to celebrate that with my daughter." He also got to celebrate the milestone with past players he's coached and a long-time mentor who recently passed away. "Him getting the opportunity to watch me do my thing ... those moments now become even bigger." To Ashley, coaching is about mentorship and teaching. There are multiple Black coaches in the area now, as he calls several out by name, there is a recognition of their impact on students, their presence in high school coaching, and their support of each other. "We all have a journey, sometimes our journeys don't start the way we want them to ... there's always going to be hiccups along the way, what you do with that hiccup is the important part of it."

See **COACHES, 8**

CULTURE

THE NEW RED, WHITE & BLUE

“The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity, and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn...” – This powerful statement by Frederick Douglass on July 5, 1852, in his speech “What to a Slave is Fourth of July”, starkly illustrates the glaring contrast in experiences between Black and White Americans during this period.

The Declaration of Independence of 1776, a beacon of hope, marked the independence of the first 13 states of the United States. This historic document, penned by the country’s founding fathers, boldly proclaimed independence with determination, passion, and a vision of a prosperous, resilient, and, most importantly, free nation. Yet, for the enslaved, this was a bitter irony. The freedoms of speech, religion, and bearing arms, values that have attracted people worldwide to yearn for the ideals embodied by Lady Freedom metaphorically, were cruelly denied to them. Their struggle for freedom was not a distant dream but a harsh reality, a constant battle against oppression.

Red, White, and Blue are the colors that adorn our American flag. Red represents courage and bravery. White represents purity and innocence. Blue represents vigilance, perseverance, and



By Lisa Gardner
THE BLACK LENS
CONTRIBUTOR



justice. It’s no secret that the representation of those colors did not apply to those who were enslaved. Despite being instrumental to the birth of the United States, Black Americans were long disregarded as only 3/4 of a person.

Like Frederick Douglass proclaimed, the rich ideals of inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity, and independence was shared by White Americans, not by Black Americans. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery through the Emancipation Proclamation, granting freedom to Black Americans. However, the news took a long time to reach everyone, and it wasn’t



FLAG DESIGN CREATED AND OWNED BY BEN HAITH

until 1865 that the last slaves in Galveston, TX, were notified of their freedom. Today, we know and celebrate Black Liberation as “Juneteenth,” Freedom Day.

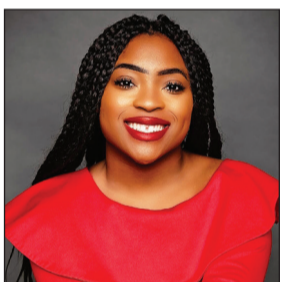
Still, the road to freedom is long and not fully realized. Black Americans went on to endure Jim Crow, segregation, the Civil Rights Era, mass incarceration, redlining, and the extreme numbers of police brutality and killings of Black men, reminiscent of the lynching of the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras. Despite the domestic terrorism against them, Black Americans have been resilient through each era of oppression. Each rising more robust, united, and gaining more significance than the previous

generation. Black Americans’ contributions to America have been undeniable in our ingenuity, athleticism, literature, politics, music, arts, and beauty. In the 161 years since Freedom Day, Black Americans have made contributions to this country that have aided in making what America is today.

According to flag creator Ben Haith, our Juneteenth Red, White, and Blue is a reminder that Black Americans descended from slaves who built the wealth of a nation and are surely Americans. So, for Black Americans, Juneteenth is our Independence Day, the day we sing our Black National Anthem, raise our Juneteenth Flag, and rejoice in our freedoms of the new, Red, White, and Blue.

CELEBRATING OUR ROOTS

“YOU BETTA RAISE YO HEAD UP CHILE!”



By Anyla McDonald
THE BLACK LENS
CONTRIBUTOR



My 112-year-old grandmother Mape describes how her knees would dig inside the pavement in her plantation cabin. As a 8 year old girl in 1865, she would hold together the last 6 fingers she had left into a prayer position. She would begin to pray to her spirit guides and ancestors.

Grandmother Maple’s fingers have drawings of X’s and O’s, diamonds, and crystals. Inside both her palms, you could see every shape and math symbol within them. Including octagons, pentagons, hexagons, division signs, and subtraction signs from the cotton thorns tearing into her flesh. Her arms look burnt, as if acid or alcohol had

been splattered on them. Her back printed with pinstripes, candstripes, chalk stripes, and graph checks. Her knees planted with brick dots and half- drop dots. Anyone would have thought someone had run her over with a tractor, physically installed nails in every part that revealed skin, or pulled off each piece of her skin and ironed it.

She would wonder if dinner, lunch, or breakfast would come about. As she would ask god things like, “Am I going to get hung next?”, “Are my eyes going to roll back?”, “Are my ears going to shiver?” “Is my heart going to lose rhythm?”, “Are my lungs going to lose structure?”, “Is my voice going to travel to the gates of heaven?”, “Are my feet going to float and fly off within the air?”, “As if they had bird wings and upheld the gravity that’s stored within a spaceship, with an astronaut suit on and the moon right outside the windows vision, as pluto and mars drift into the stars sunlight, and into a euphoria and zootopia like atmosphere?”

Due to the fact that, there was no place on earth where there was a home for people who looked like her. A place that didn’t treat her like the litter that lays on the side of the curb. A place that didn’t only see lightness but realized how great darkness could be. Once the flashlight was inserted into the parts where there was brightness. But as she begged God to spare her and not let her last breath be her choking on her own blood. God then whispered in her right ear and said “I will not let that happen to you my dear child!”

Soon after, her master Mark Smith breaks down her door and tells her to get off his property. She was now useless to him. As my grandmother ran through the woods, the train tracks, and the swamps. She saw other slaves running and carrying their babies. They were all headed to Chicago and once they arrived they all fell to their knees. Repeating “We’re free, oh God!” “We’re free!” “We’re free!”

Today, at 112 years old, she still tells me “Do not ever bow down to them, kiss their feet, or suck up to no white man!” You must never say “Yes Massa” “No Massa” “Don’t let no man call you gyal or drag you around like some lost puppy” “You betta raise yo head up chile!” Until the day I take my last breath, I live by her words and I walk with my head held high!

As the years have passed, we now celebrate the day she became free! Last year’s Juneteenth was the most memorable of them all. Me and the family all danced to “Brick House” by the Commodores, “Let it whip” by Dazz Band, “Mary Jane” by Rick James, “After the Pain” by Betty Wright, and “Have you ever loved somebody” by Freddie Jackson. As we danced, I could see the chitlins boiling and the pork chops frying. I saw the ribs drowning in barbecue sauce, I could see the sugar sinking into the kool aid, and the hot links spread across silver trays. I inhaled the smoke from the barbecue pit, I dug my hands inside the ice chest, I ingested the banana pudding, and I could hear the soft crunches from my aunties vacuum cookies. While my older cousins were breaking crab legs, peeling shrimp, opening oysters, biting at their corn, and unwrapping their crawfish. Dining as one big happy family! Celebrating our freedom, for those that had none!

FOCUS

JUNETEENTH

BLACK LENS STAFF

While America celebrates its birthday on July 4, African Americans celebrate another Independence Day on June 19, the day in 1865 that slavery ended in the United States.

THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR

Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865. Various other Confederate armies surrendered shortly after — the final one was the Army of the Trans-Mississippi, which surrendered to Union forces on June 2.

That ended the fighting. But it didn't end slavery just yet. President Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation much earlier in the war, on Sept. 22, 1862, and it had taken effect the next Jan. 1. But the proclamation declared all slaves in states that were in rebellion — meaning slaves in Confederate hands at the time — were freed.

But border states such as Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware and Missouri were not covered by the proclamation. Nor were the western counties of Virginia, which would later secede from the state and be

admitted to the United States as the state of West Virginia. Nor were states that were already occupied by Union forces. That included Tennessee and parts of Louisiana and Virginia.

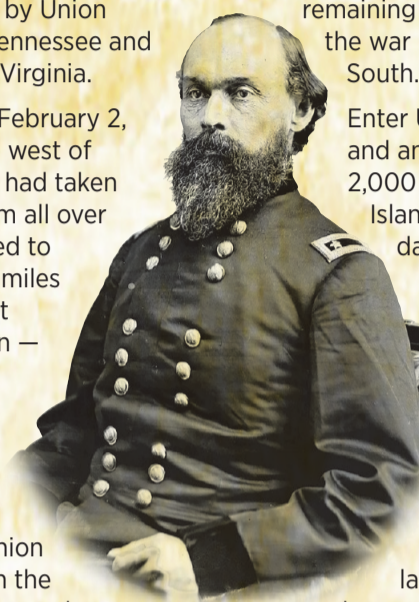
Texas had seceded on February 2, 1861, but was far to the west of where most of the war had taken place. Slaveowners from all over Dixie, in fact, had moved to Galveston Island — 40 miles or so southeast of what would become Houston — and had taken their slaves with them to work rice plantations there.

So while slaves found themselves freed by Union armies passing through the South, there were pockets where nothing had changed for them. And

Galveston — with a slave population of about a quarter-million — was the largest remaining pocket, even two months after the war had ended for the rest of the South.

Enter Union Gen. Gordon Granger. He and an occupying force of about 2,000 men arrived on Galveston Island on June 18, 1865. The next day, Granger stood on the balcony of Ashton Villa, the home where he set up his headquarters, and read General Order No. 3.

While some slave populations in those border states wouldn't be freed until December 1865, when the 13th Amendment became law, African-Americans in Texas began celebrating June 19 each year as a day to celebrate their independence.



An African American family in Savannah, Georgia, in 1907.

“The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer.”

— GENERAL ORDER NO. 3

A DAY TO CELEBRATE FREEDOM

Historian, educator, documentary filmmaker and commentator Henry Louis Gates Jr. writes there were a number of dates that modern African American leaders could have chosen to celebrate the end of slavery in the United States:

JAN. 1, 1863

The day Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation took effect.

JAN. 31, 1865

The day the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery passed Congress.

APRIL 3, 1865

The day Richmond fell to Union forces.

APRIL 9, 1865

The day Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House.

APRIL 16, 1865

The day slavery was abolished in the District of Columbia.

MAY 1, 1865

Decoration Day, the day former slaves of Charleston, S.C., gave the Union dead a proper burial on a former plantation.

JUNE 19, 1865

The day slaves were freed by Gen. Gordon Granger in Galveston, Texas.

JULY 4, 1776

America's original independence day, “four score and seven years” before Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

SEPT. 22, 1862

The day Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

DEC. 6, 1865

The day the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery was ratified by the states and became law.

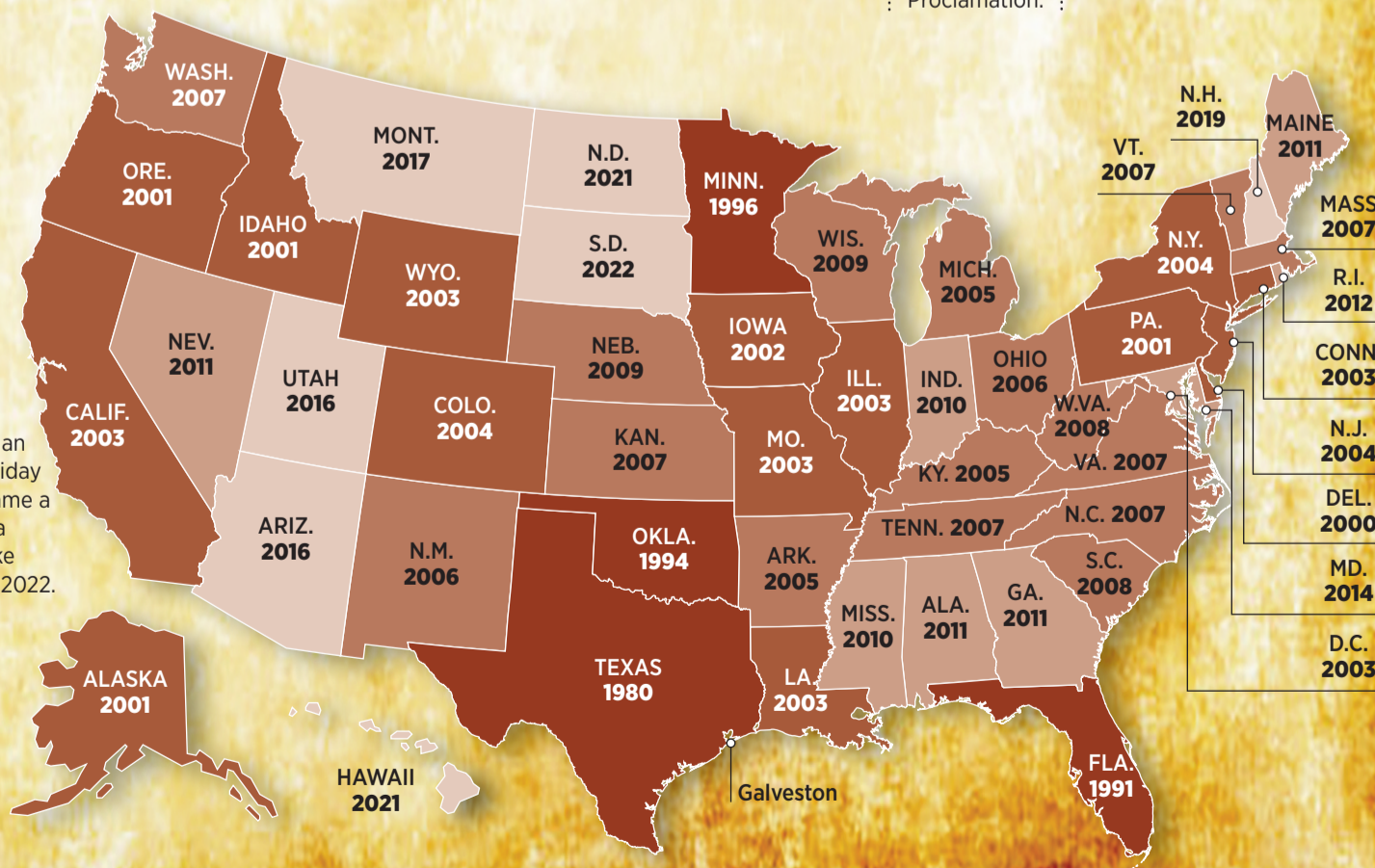
WHEN JUNETEENTH BECAME A HOLIDAY

Not surprisingly, Texas was the first state to declare Juneteenth a state holiday. That happened in 1980. Florida, Oklahoma and Minnesota followed in the 1990s and most of the rest of the country did the same in the 2000s.

North Dakota and Hawaii began observing the Juneteenth holiday in 2021, the same year it became a federal holiday. South Dakota became the final state to make Juneteenth a state holiday in 2022.

Sources: Smithsonian magazine, PBS, the History Channel, CNN, Juneteenth.com National Juneteenth Observance Foundation, Congressional Research Service, MyFreeTextures.com

PHOTOS: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



POLICY AND EDUCATION

VOTING IN AUG. 6 PRIMARY



GETTY IMAGES

The next primary election is Aug. 6.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Black Lens

The primary elections, Aug. 6, are voting processes by which voters can indicate their preference for their party's candidate in an upcoming local and general elections.

Here are some important dates and deadlines:

July 19

Start of 18-day voting period (through Election Day). Ballots are mailed out and Accessible Voting Units (AVUs) are available at

voting centers.

July 29

Online and mail registrations must be received 8 days before Election Day.

Aug. 6

Primary day. Also, the deadline for Washington state voter registration or updates (in person only).

To register to vote in the state of Washington, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States
- A legal resident of Washington state for at least 30 days prior to

election day

- At least 18 years old
- If you are 16 or 17, you can sign up as a Future Voter and be automatically registered to vote when you qualify
- Not disqualified from voting due to a court order
- Not currently serving a sentence of total confinement in prison under the jurisdiction of the department of corrections for a Washington felony conviction
- Not currently incarcerated for a federal or out-of-state felony

conviction

It's easy and secure to register online at voter.votewa.gov, by mail with a paper form, or at a county elections office. Check your registration at VoteWA.gov.

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, if you were convicted of a felony in Washington state, another state, or in federal court, your right to vote will be restored automatically, as long as you are not serving a sentence of total confinement in prison.

Future voter information is available at www.sos.wa.gov.

A SPECIAL HONOR: SERVANT LEADERSHIP AT 90 YEARS OLD

The Black Lens

Ernest McClain turned 90 years old in May and has been a parishioner and servant of Bethel A.M.E. for decades. He is considered a voice of wisdom, one who leads by example, as he still shows up to support church functions, lending his hands to do work when needed. On Sunday May 19th, he was honored in front of the

congregation with a Servant Leadership Award, for his "many years of dedicated service to Bethel A.M.E. Church."

As he gave McClain much deserved recognition, Pastor Benjamin Watson, Sr. said, "He doesn't say a lot, but when he speaks, we all listen." In accepting his award, McClain, standing humbly and assuredly, stated, "I am here because of

God." He was joined by his daughter, Patricia McClain and his wife, Carol McClain.

As a reflection on why fathers are important, Brother Mac (as he is affectionately called) said, "Being a good father is important to everyone around you; your kids need to have someone to look up to and get advice from. That is a good father."

APRIL EBERHARDT/THE BLACK LENS

Ernest McClain, left, is honored by Pastor Benjamin Watson, Sr., at Bethel A.M.E.



COACHES

Continued from 5

KARIM SCOTT

Coach Karim Scott has been the Rogers High School varsity boys head coach for the past six years. This year he was awarded GSL 2A Coach of The Year. "When I first started coaching in the GSL, on the boy's side I was the only Black coach... I always made sure that I carried myself in a professional way because I did not want the opportunity to be taken." Originally from San Francisco, he came to Spokane as a college student and athlete at Eastern Washington University from 1996-1999. He played in Europe for three years and returned to Spokane. In 2010 he coached at Cheney High School, and since 2012 he has been at Rogers. To him, coaching means everything. He reflects on the mindset he carried into practice this year: "Every day I went to practice and gave our kids an opportunity to win. I didn't want it to be my fault the kids were not successful, and I coached that way every single day." The payoff showed as Rogers won the district championship, went on to state, and had five players make the all-league team. "It was a dream come true and a blessing." Scott prioritizes building relationships with his players and their families. "That's always been my num-



ber one purpose. I look at it as building bridges instead of walls. That is the most important thing I can do on a daily basis." He explains to his players that there are mistakes, there is learning from those mistakes, there is forgiveness, and there is grace. "I wouldn't be where I am at today if I didn't have strong relationships with our kids. They have done nothing but work hard for our program." Scott understands how the sense of accomplishment empowered him as a young student with limited options. "I want just want everyone else to see the amazing kids that we have and the sacrifices they make to be great on a daily basis."

COURTNEY GRAY

A 2015 graduate of Northwest Christian High School, Coach Courtney Gray played basketball in high school and for

all 5 years that she attended Whitworth University. She has loved basketball since she was 3 years old. She became an assistant coach at Ferris High School during the 2022-23 season. This year she became the head coach of the Ferris High School girls' varsity team. She sees coaching as a way to give back to the community. "I have always had a huge passion and love for basketball specifically and to be able to help teach and grow these young women into not only strong basketball players, but also help them strive to be better in life and grow as young women is a big passion of mine." As she reflects on being a Black female coach, she thinks there could be more growth when it comes to gender and racial representation in coaching. There is certainly a connection within the Black coaching community. "It kind of feels like we are starting to break ground. I've connected really well with the Meade head coach and gotten a lot of advice and tips from him. This season it was cool to see because there was a lot more diversity across the board in the GSL than I think there's ever been in Spokane." Being in spaces where you don't fit in with the majority has an impact on the student experience. There were times, Gray reflects, when she didn't always feel represented. "We had to kind of prove ourselves or were held to a higher standard." At Ferris, Gray said



that it was somewhat of a culture shock for her compared to her high school years at Northwest Christian. This is why, she says, it is important to have coaches and teachers around to reinforce representation; it is another way to connect. She experienced this herself when a student came into a classroom to talk to her and another Black assistant coach. "Teachers might say they understand but they don't fully get it because they never lived being the odd one out," she remarks. As a woman, Gray says that most people think of men when they think of coaches. "I think one of the big challenges is changing that mindset and attitude that women can be just as good as coaches too and we know what we are talking about ...we know what it takes to win. We can be that strong competitor."

WELLNESS AND SPIRITUALITY

FROM THE WATER'S EDGE



By Dr. Robert L. "Bob" Bartlett
THE BLACK LENS
CONTRIBUTOR



In last month's column I called out environmental racism in Spokane. The purpose was not to cast blame or judgment on the more fortunate but rather an attempt to make an invisible, visible.

The environmental justice movement came into being as a response to acts of environmental racism. Black sociologist, Dr. Robert D. Bullard is recognized as the "Father" of the environmental justice movement. He first made headlines in 1990, when his book titled, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, class, and environmental quality*, hit the shelves. Dr. Bullard found that most toxic urban pollution exists in low-income

band would die there of lung cancer and unexplained illness would hit her children. That led Ms. Johnson to investigate the environmental conditions surrounding her neighborhood. She found that many of her neighbors had lung and other cancers, children suffered from skin and respiratory illnesses and many were born with birth defects. She also found that Altgeld Gardens was surrounded by toxic waste dumping sites and that it was built squarely on top of a former industrial waste dump. She labeled the area, the "toxic donut."

In 1979, Ms. Johnson founded the People for Community Recovery (PCR) to advocate for the issues facing her community. During her time there she would work with a young activist who would later become president of the United States, Barack Obama. Known as the "Mother" of the movement, Ms. Johnson died in 2011 from congestive heart failure.



communities, "... among people who generate the least amounts of it but suffer the great-

est risk from environmental hazards because they receive fewer protections." He also found that the asthmatic death rate for black children who reside in these neighborhoods to be eight times higher than that of white children.

Ms. Hazel M. Johnson is recognized as the black "Mother" of the movement. Mrs. Johnson was born in New Orleans, LA in 1935. She lived in an area now called "Cancer Alley"—where she was the only child of 4 in her family to survive past her first birthday and where both parents passed away by the time she turned 12.

Years later she moved to a housing project on the South Side of Chicago called Altgeld Gardens Homes. Her young hus-



Together Dr. Bullard and Mrs. Johnson stand as the most powerful black couple in its history. Neither lived anywhere close to Spokane, WA, but anyone here, or elsewhere who dares to enter the movement stands squarely on their shoulders. What these "parents" of environmental justice made visible was that toxic waste dumping produces indiscriminating killing fields among the less fortunate.

Living near major highways is also toxic. They contribute to poor air quality and toxic levels of noise pollu-

tion. Neighborhoods with pass-through freeways are exposed to the constant environmental consequences associated with an endless stream of traffic—in neighborhoods where sightings of nature and wildlife are only depicted on the sides of eighteen-wheelers on a rush to somewhere.

Ask yourself: Are there any neighborhoods in our city limits or beyond that are invisible killing fields?

My wife and I still live in the house we bought here, near I-90. The freeway passes approximately two blocks from our front door. Being concerned about its close proximity, we asked the sellers about the noise. Their response was epic, "We've lived here so long we don't even hear it. Think of it as the sound of a rushing river passing by." Well, I know rivers! After 35 years, and fortunately living just out of sight of it, I-90 still sounds and smells like a freeway!

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Expo '74 whose theme was "Celebrating Tomorrow's Fresh New Environment." Well done Spokane, if the singular goal was to beautify our downtown. However, just a short distance from River Park Square residents are still impacted by environmental injustice.

Like the Civil Rights Movement, the battle for justice will not be fought by the most fortunate—rather, by the victims of injustice. Thank you, Dr. Bullard and Mrs. Johnson, for making these likely, invisible crimes, visible. We stand on your shoulders!

Dr. Bartlett is a retired educator. He retired from Gonzaga University in 2007 and Eastern Washington University in 2020.

HUMANITY MUST WIN

By Kanani Park
SHADLE PARK HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2024

Growing up, I have been mostly exposed to white communities; I never knew much about where I come from culturally, so I had to do my own searching. The schools I went to never delved deep into African American history; classes seemed very concentrated on the White interpretation of what has happened in America. Of course, I learned about segregation, slavery, and the Civil Rights Movement, but those were just the basics. Which has been taught on repeat since elementary school. I wanted more. My darker complexion is something that I have questioned here in Spokane. Most times, Black and Brown students are one of few in their classes, if not the only, and this can cause a feeling of awkwardness, like being an outsider. The obvious differences don't have to equal a bad thing, but the feeling of not being what feels like the common preference, is what I could not stop myself from experiencing. This pushed me to want deeper learning about the Black experience.

When 2020 came around, COVID-19 forced us into quarantine, with everything happening in the country, Black history became urgent for me to understand. When, on May 25, 2020, I saw the excruciating death of George Floyd on the news. My 14-year-old self was crushed watching that scene, and these feelings exist still to this day.

Police brutality was the wakeup call that I never wanted. I knew it could happen but until I saw it play out on national news, I had no real idea. Then I remembered being 8 years old and my step dad telling me and my 4-year-old brother to always be respectful to policemen. This was a conversation between a father and his preschool aged son, that I also absorbed in just 2nd grade. My brother tried so hard to understand this without really knowing why he had to, but I've always known that Black and Brown people have had a history of different treatment. I will never truly understand why though. I heard my dad's words and it clicked; death could be right around the corner when deadly force is used to justify murder. All over the world, I watched the protests that were going on to signify justice for Floyd's death. Seeing people being violently tossed around and detained was chilling. I have always wanted to make a difference in the dark world we live in. With Floyd pinned to the ground, I sensed something that was deeply, morally wrong. I didn't understand everything, but I knew it was not okay. That was life being robbed from his body casually, as if it was no big deal.

On June 7, 2020, the Spokane community joined the national protest. People united downtown, objecting to police brutality. I had to be there. I remember feeling so scared, yet confident that this was the right thing to do. Marching in protest inspired me; change was needed. So, I went, and I marched. Calling out injustice was the first step. Humanity has to mean something to all of us. Standing on common ground with others, at 14-years-old, I shouted: "NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE, DEFUND THE POLICE!" I saw so many signs that said things like, "SAY THEIR NAMES" or "NO FREEDOM 'TIL WE ARE ALL EQUAL!" The more signs I read, I realized that this was bigger than I could imagine. There was a real problem in this country. The history that I craved to know more of during quarantine was being challenged right before my eyes. As everyone marched to the courthouse, I remember seeing lots of law enforcement. We continued to yell, and we continued to march. On Main Ave., right outside the Nike store, I looked to my left and saw a lineup of SWAT officers with their big SWAT trucks right behind them.



We all marched towards them; my mom and I were in the front, face-to-face with them. In the background I heard Kendrick Lamar's "Alright" playing loudly from a speaker. As the beat dropped,

the SWAT team threw tear gas. I have never feared for my life more. And this became a moment of clarity; power can harm.

Fast forward to October 7, 2023, when Israeli forces began to air strike Hamas and Palestinian civilians. This 75-plus year conflict that has now created a new version of genocide. There has been an estimate of about 34,000 Palestinian citizens, particularly women and children maimed and slaughtered. Bodies scattered in the streets. Everyday people just trying to live are being sacrificed in relentless bombings. It's devastating to know that this is happening in the world without action or efforts to stop it and that opposition to it is being censored. This is not about politics, this is about human rights. The same sinister feeling I experienced watching George Floyd die is retriggered every time I see Gaza in the news. Knowing that there is torment and despair happening daily, I am overcome by feelings of sadness and guilt for having a life that the murdered will never have the chance to live. I have feelings of extreme gratitude for my life but also extreme sorrow for those that have been and continue to be lost.

I know I was put on this earth to make a difference, and I want to use my voice to raise awareness. When I walk across the graduation stage on June 8th, with the Class of 2024, I want it to be known that I am walking for the students who lost their chance to prosper because of the genocide that is happening at this very moment, as I write this reflection. THEIR LIVES MATTER. None of us are free until all of us are free. Humanity has to win.

SPONSORED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DIVINE 9 BLACK GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATION

BODY & SOUL HEALTH FAIR

June 22, 2024 | 10 AM - 2 PM
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center
500 S. Stone St. 99202

Free health screenings and resources provided

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

AMPLIFYING BLACK FATHERHOOD

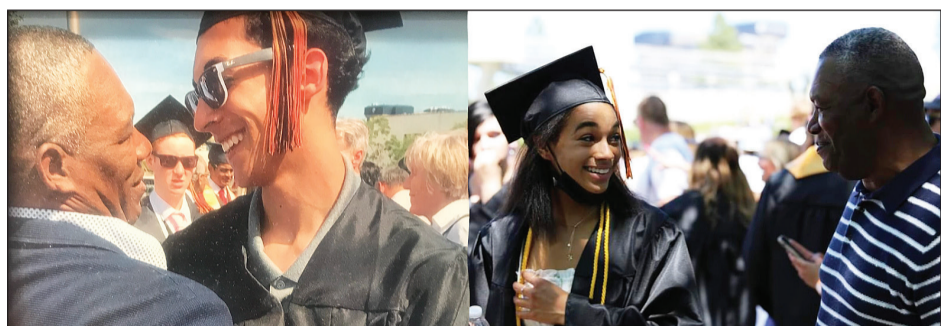
Black Lens News

Dear Black Fathers,

In a world that has not always seen you, this moment is yours. We do see you, holding your infant sons and daughters as you cover them with protection and promise. We see you showing them the value of hard work and responsibility. We hear you having long talks, building bonds and giving advice. We yield to your warnings,

embrace your wisdom, digest the tough love, depend on your strength, admire your tenacity, and cleave to your hope. Even without a compass at times, you have found your way through the journey of life, while creating new direction for the generations that will succeed you. You have broken cycles, hung in there when the odds have not always been in your favor, and still take time to teach and correct, even reaching the ones who are not in your own household. You are coaches,

laborers, soldiers, entrepreneurs, wingmen, advocates, knowledge bearers, legacy builders, educators, ministers, encouragers, visionaries, and disciplinarians who have held up your families and stood in the gap for many others. Thank you for showing up and being the anchor. Thank you for instilling confidence. Thank you for leading by example and walking in your purpose. Because of who you are, we know whose we are.
Happy Father's Day.



Coach Cecil Jackson: Growing up without my dad, I never realized the depth of the void until I finally built a relationship with him. It became the most rewarding bond in my life because I found myself striving for his approval. Children want to make their mothers proud, but they crave their father's approval. Through that experience, I now thrive in fatherhood ... children that are fathered are better off for it!



TJ Armstrong: Being a father means caring for, protecting, and guiding your child. It involves loving, supporting, and teaching them as they grow. A father shapes their child's values, celebrates their achievements, and comforts them during tough times.

J. Clarke: What does being a father mean to me? You might think that being a father for 49 years and looking forward to at least 51 more years, this would be an easy question to answer. As a father of 4 amazing, accomplished children, one could assume that I have a thoughtful answer with sesquipedalian considerate words on fatherhood, which I am passionate about. Well, I started to cogitate on what fatherhood means to me outside of the joy and purpose I feel. I remembered a Wayne Newton quote just before he sang "America the Beautiful." At the end of his concert, he said, and I will say to my children, "I can't promise you I will love you for the rest of your life, but I can promise you I'll love you for the rest of mine." The love, joy, purpose, pride, and affection I have for my babies (yes, they are and will always be my babies), for me, is what it means to be a father. Glory, Glory Hallelujah, thank you Gina, John, Austin and Iain for giving your father love, joy, purpose, pride and meaning. Thank you Lord for blessing me with my loving wife and incredible children!



Taurus Richardson: Early on, I realized I was destined to be a father - not just a good or bad one, but a present one. I solemnly commit to being physically available, guiding my kids through life's challenges, celebrating their successes, and cheering them on tirelessly. Fatherhood has been a remarkable journey, and I cherish my children deeply. I will support them wholeheartedly as they grow into adulthood, and until then, I'll relish in their joy of learning, making friends, and playing together. The adage holds true for the bond of protectors who have embraced fatherhood together. It takes a community to raise a child. A village of men, linked across the universe, to guide you through life, early-education and social-development as productive citizens.



Sayeed X: As a father, our presence is crucial because we offer our children unique perspectives and experiences. We provide the balance they need to navigate the world with confidence, resilience, and love.



James Alexander: Being a dad is about building a foundation and safety for your children. Most importantly, just as you teach them they also teach you.

Reginald Perkins: When it comes to fathers raising children, especially sons, Reggie believes that there are lessons that fathers can bring greater understanding to in order to provide solid learning. "A woman has to have help from that man, and that man needs to know he's a man."



Robert Nathaniel Davis: Fatherhood means being a role model and example for my son, teaching him right from wrong, how to become a man, and life lessons passed on from experiences so that he may become a responsible, caring and driven adult.



Jason Courtney: A father is defined by telling his son or daughter, "Thank you for being my child."



Tommy Williams, Jr.: Being a father is the biggest blessing that comes with so much responsibility because I am raising my sons to be a better father, husband, and leader for their community!



Sgt. Donald Gardner: Fatherhood is an overwhelming feeling that can't be put into words but to feel it is to know that you're doing what needs to be done.



Luc Jasmin, III: Fatherhood is modeling gratitude, perseverance, growth and hard work, while consistently showing up for them.



Michael Bethely: What does fatherhood mean to me? Being the unconditional covering (hood) that my children need so they can learn how to navigate life.



Edward L. Eberhard, III: As a man who was raised by his step-father from the age of 2, I realized that all men aren't equipped to be fathers. It's important not to just be a donor. Fathers are the guardians and provide safety for their child's well-being. He instills the values that you learn to live by and instills a work ethic into his kids. Fathers teach us that you can do all things through Christ and to never give up. A father provides wisdom and tough love when needed. A father also facilitates sound advice when you're ready for it. He has patience for his children, even if they are not biologically his own. As a father you have to be selfless, attentive, and devoted. I love being a father because I have a chance to be for my own what my biological father was unable to be for me. That harsh reality taught me the importance of meaningful relationships, and I also saw how someone stepped in to fill a void.

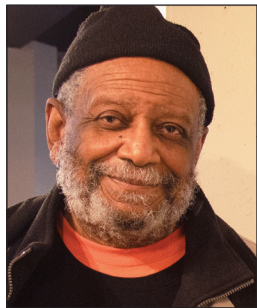


Staff Sgt. Aaron Hamilton: It's not what you know. It's who you know. As a father your children know you. So as a father you need to guide and train them to be independent adults. Manners, Socializing, athletics, academics, morals, etc. introduce your kids to people in the industries that they are interested in. Let them learn what it takes for them to achieve their life goals and then you can create a life road map for your child.

Justin Jefferson: Fathers play a crucial role in a child's development by providing guidance, support, and a sense of security that only a man can give. They contribute to emotional, social, and cognitive development, fostering resilience and independence in their children. Additionally, father-child interactions offer unique perspectives and experiences that complement those provided by mothers, creating a well-rounded upbringing.



OPINION



By Robert Lloyd
THE BLACK LENS
CONTRIBUTOR



HOW I SEE IT: THE N-WORD

Let's educate our community about why the N-word (I am refraining from spelling it out due to its derogatory nature) is never acceptable and why it is a deeply offensive and derogatory racial slur historically used to denigrate and dehumanize African Americans. The term has a long and painful history of being used as a tool of oppression, discrimination, and racism against Black people.

The N-word has been used as a means of reinforcing systemic racism, white supremacy, and the subjugation of Black individuals. It has been associated with slavery, segregation, violence, and discrimination against African Americans in the United States and beyond.

While the origins of the N-word date back to the era of slavery in the United States, its derogatory connotations and harmful impact persist to this day. Many people, particularly in the Black community, view the term as deeply offensive, hurtful, and unacceptable due to its historical context and the continued racism and discrimination faced by Black individuals.

Despite its derogatory nature, there are unfortunately still individuals who use the N-word in a casual, insensitive, or even intentionally harmful manner. Some people may mistakenly believe that it is acceptable to use the term in certain contexts, such as in music or popular culture, without fully understanding or acknowledging the harm it causes.

It is crucial to recognize the harm and pain caused by the use of racial slurs like the N-word and to actively work towards creating a more inclusive, respectful, and anti-racist society. Engaging in open dialogue, education, and empathy-building can help foster greater understanding and awareness around the impact of derogatory language and promote a culture of respect and dignity for all individuals.



COMMENTARY

Rethinking career and tech education in the African American community

GETTY IMAGES

Career and technical education is a great career avenue with an economic upside that looks very bright in comparison to other options for African Americans and all.

By Goldy Brown III
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
WHITWORTH UNIVERSITY
BLACK LENS NEWS

"The individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of his race."

-Booker T. Washington

Last month, I had the privilege of attending the Old Parkland Conference in Dallas, Texas, to honor the great Tomas Sowell, an American economist, social philosopher, and political commentator. The conference was a reconvening of sorts around a similar vision Sowell had orchestrated in San Francisco in 1980 at the Fairmont Conference. The conference theme addressed the upward mobility of low-socioeconomic groups, including African Americans.

As a Black Conservative, I am more cautious than most about jumping to race as a singular problem or reason for societal gaps – especially when African Americans have made significant economic progress over the last 7 to 8 years. In 2018-19, historic economic benchmarks in the African American community were reached as we constituted 12% of the middle class while being 13% of the population. Some point to the fact that African Americans are still disproportionately represented within the roughly 37 million Americans living in poverty, and identify wealth gaps as a sign that the fight for income equality among races in America is not over.

One highlighted theme from the Old Parkland Conference was that a different view of (CTE) could improve this disproportionality. Today, southern rural White males, a specific demographic that comprises a portion of people living in poverty, are more likely to be in CTE programs than any other group. The economic upside is that CTE-related jobs are comparable to many 4-year degrees outside science technology engineering and math (STEM) majors. Also, depending on the degree one pursues, the upside of CTE may even bode much greater economic benefit. The skills acquired in CTE are more likely to be used to start a business related to plumbing,

electrical, and welding work, to name a few, that could lead to greater earnings over time. So, why wouldn't more African Americans, particularly those whose 4-year college prospects appear bleak, consider CTE more thoroughly as a viable career option in this economic climate?

Two barriers appear to be contributing to the smaller number of African Americans participating in CTE programs compared to White and Hispanic students: (1) The perception of CTE produced by the "tracking" of African American students into vocational programs in the 1970s and 1980s and (2) Low literacy rates among African American students.

In the 1970s and 1980s, CTE, then known as "vocational education," was used by some schools to segregate or "track" students based on race into vocational courses and thereby exclude them from college preparatory high-school classes. This period saw a stark difference in pay between the four-year, college-educated and the non-college educated, which some would argue contributed to economic inequality. Due to these past practices, "tracking" is now a taboo term in educational spaces and has led to policy and laws ensuring that tracking in any capacity by race, economics and even learning disabilities, are policy "no-no's" in the American school system. A 2020 report from the National Education Policy Center entitled, Tracking and the Future of Career and Technical Education: How Efforts to Connect School and Work Can Avoid the Past Mistakes of Vocational Education addressed how state and district educational leaders can protect their institutions from making the "tracking" mistakes it made in the past.

One recommendation from the study was to simply monitor the enrollment of school programs by subgroups, which is a common practice for most school districts today. Since the 1970s and 1980s, educational systems have developed safeguards through audits and state demographic reporting to ensure that no student group is over-represented in programs outside of traditional mainstream education. Even with

these improvements, however, some argue that the negative connotation persists within the African American community. An award-winning dissertation in 2022 by Dr. Nzinga Williams, entitled History Doesn't Decide for Us: A Case Study of Black Parents and their Perception of Career and Technical Education with an In-depth Look at the Philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B Du Bois, found barriers to communicating CTE to Black parents. Williams maintained that CTE could be better communicated to the Black community if it more readily addressed their experiences, addressing the negative perception generated by past practices. This could include how "tracking" practices have been mitigated. The effort to communicate and break down these barriers for Black families should include more African American leaders and recruiters within CTE programs. Such programs should also highlight African Americans who have built successful CTE careers.

The economic upsidetoday – versus 40 or 50 years ago – should be communicated vigorously to the Black community by those who have established trust. This economic upside could lead to continued upward mobility for many African Americans, and could see the greatest impact by targeting Black men, a demographic that some could argue is the most economically disenfranchised.

The lack of literacy is a second barrier that too many African American students must overcome. CTE programs require students to enter with a higher level of skills than vocational education did in the past. To be successful in a CTE program, many estimate that a student should be able to read at least at a 10th-grade level. If African Americans in a low-socioeconomic bracket have a chance at upward mobility in the current economy—and the one we are heading into—it is imperative that we increase skill attainment at a higher rate than we currently are.

Unfortunately, according to the National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Results (nationsreportcard.gov) that biannually as-

sesses and presents the National Academic Achievement of American Students, only 17% of black students were proficient on the 12th-grade assessment in 2019. Notable, these dismal results preceded the COVID-19 learning loss. There must be a policy-driven return to accountability and incentive for states to expand charter schools. The federal government needs to oversee state accountability systems that ensure every group of students is making literacy gains. Texas started the accountability movement and, according to the NAEP, African American students in Texas perform higher in reading than their counterparts in any other state. Also, evidence from the recent CREDO report of 2023 showed that children who attended charter schools – including African American students – outperformed their counterparts in public schools on the NAEP assessment. Even within the dismal results of the NAEP reading assessment, policy based on accountability and choice have showed potential to improve results.

Adult literacy programs also must be taken more seriously from a funding and research standpoint. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act showed positive steps, providing grants to organizations with a focus on adult literacy. However, based on dismal literacy rates from K-12 schools, the importance of literacy to upward mobility, and the labor shortage caused by the American skill shortage, we need more evidence on best practices regarding Adult Literacy Education. Fortunately, a bipartisan proposal to increase research funding to study effective adult education programs is being discussed by Congress.

Career and technical education is a great career avenue with an economic upside that looks very bright in comparison to other options. African Americans should reconsider CTE as an opportunity, and advocate for programs and policies that increase literacy rates among African American children that will help produce continued increases in economic upward mobility among African Americans in the United States of America.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

HEALING

Continued from 1

– my great, great grandfather. Upon learning of her pregnancy, her captor made the decision that his son, our great, great grandfather, would no longer work in the fields, although he remained enslaved.

When slavery eventually came to an end, our family received a horse and a few acres of land as symbolic tokens of our newfound freedom. It was on that land in Alabama that my grandmother Sally gave birth to my father, Willie Simmons. These beginnings mark a time of significant trauma and a journey toward healing and self-discovery.

As a family, we gather to honor Morning's memory. We speak on our family's strength, endurance, pain, and the love and faith that has carried us through the darkest of times. Researching, acquiring knowledge, and preserving our family's history is a privilege we hold close to our hearts; not only as a means of remembering the past but as a powerful act of healing. These practices shape our identity and instill a sense of pride and purpose for all of us, and will for generations yet to come.

Healing is not just remembering; it is action. Our family stays active in

our communities, regardless of where we live. We advocate for racial and social justice, each in our own unique way. We engage in dialogues about our history, fostering understanding and empathy. By engaging in spaces for open conversations, we actively work to heal the wound of the past and build a stronger future.

The yearning for connection, belonging and attachment is deeply ingrained in us as human beings. Exploring our past strengthens our bond with those who came before us, is what I call "healing love in action." This is also why I place great importance on celebrating the history of all individuals. By honoring the lives of both past and present generations, we reignite their memory to continue the fight for equality and justice in our America.

On this Juneteenth, I invite you to join me in commemorating Black freedom and liberation and paying tribute to the countless lives and generations affected by slavery and racial injustice. Let us remember and celebrate Morning's legacy – a beacon of hope and resilience that lights and paves our path forward. Together, we will continue to uplift their stories and strive towards a future marked by genuine freedom and liberty, ensuring their sacrifices were not in vain.

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JUNE 14, 2024
3-6 PM

Schoenberg Center, 800 N. Pearl St.

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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

'The Negro National Anthem'

By James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson

Lift every voice and sing,
 'Til earth and heaven ring,
 Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
 Let our rejoicing rise
 High as the listening skies,
 Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
 Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
 Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
 Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
 Let us march on 'til victory is won.
 Stony the road we trod,
 Bitter the chastening rod,
 Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
 Yet with a steady beat,
 Have not our weary feet
 Come to the place for which our fathers died.
 We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,

We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
 Out from the gloomy past,
 'Til now we stand at last
 Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
 God of our weary years,
 God of our silent tears,
 Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
 Thou who has by Thy might
 Led us into the light,
 Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
 Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
 Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
 Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
 May we forever stand,
 True to our God,
 True to our native land.

Lyv Babinski hosts comedy sketch as part of Expo '74 50th anniversary

Black Lens News

Lyv Babinski is a wife, mother, artist and comedian. In 2023, she launched her art and entertainment business called Blessed and Beautiful Creative Company. In her business, she spreads laughter and joy throughout the PNW region with stand up comedy and original comedy sketches.

Check out Babinski's family-friendly original comedy sketch at 1 p.m. June 22 at the Lilac Bowl in Riverfront Park.

The comedy sketch is called "Lyv from 1974" and will include fun interactive moments, clean humor, and a creative journey through the evolution of music, dance, and pop culture since the '70s. It will be an amazing event for all ages to enjoy!

Babinski recently hosted for comedian and singer Kristen Key on May 24 and May 25 at the Spokane Comedy Club and took part in the 12th annual Listen to Your Mother event at the Bing Crosby Theater.

Follow Lyv's comedy journey on at lyvlaughs.square.site.



COURTESY

Lyv Babinski stands outside the Bing Crosby Theater in front of the marquee for Listen to Your Mother. Babinski called the Sunday event "THE BEST MOTHER'S DAY EVER" on Instagram.



Watch Lyv online

To view a recent clip of Babinski's comedy, visit youtube.com/watch?v=mi90zWIVFmM or scan the QR code at left.

WE ARE HIRING!

THE BLACK LENS EDITOR & RACIAL/SOCIAL EQUITY REPORTER

- Cover race-related topics for The Black Lens and The Spokesman-Review.
- Develop stories that discuss race and culture on a personal, community and national level.
- Educate readers about racial equity and how it affects the Inland Northwest.

For more information, visit spokesman.com/careers

[APPLY NOW!](#)

WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

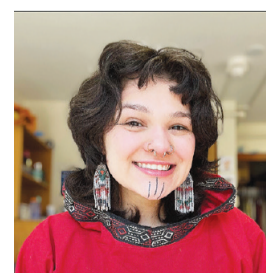
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SOLUTIONS TO PAGE 15



FLIP UPSIDE-DOWN FOR SOLUTIONS TO THE SPOT THE DIFFERENCE PUZZLE ON PAGE 16

DIFFERENCES: WOMAN'S GREEN HAIR TIPS, HAND EXCHANGE, WOMAN'S EAR, HAIR CLIP COLOR, "B" IN BLACK LIVES MATTER FLAG, MAN'S BELT LOOP, WOMAN'S RINGS, WOMAN'S TEETH.



About the artist
 SCYLA DOWD

Scyla Dowd grew up moving around the Spokane area. They went to school at Lewis and Clark High School and is currently getting their bachelor's degree with a double major in anthropology and art.

OBITUARIES

WATCH YOUR LIGHT

REMEMBERING DREY DAVIS

IN MEMORIAM

Ruth N. Nichols



Courtesy of the family
Ruth N. Nichols
 8/9/1925 – 1/18/2024

OBITUARY

Ruth Nichols, a long-time Spokane resident, passed away at age 98 at Holy Family Hospital on Jan. 18, after complications from a fall.

She was born at Sacred Heart Hospital to Marie Nichols Mailey, whose mother was a freed slave, and Louis Patrick Nichols Sr. She attended Sacred Heart Elementary and was a graduate of Marycliff High School and Holy Names College. She received her Occupational Therapist certification from UCLA and later earned a master's degree and teaching certificate from the University of Oregon.

She was predeceased by her parents; and her siblings, Frances Scott, Mildred Louise Elliott, and Louis Nichols Jr.; and a niece and four nephews. Surviving her are her nieces and nephews, Tracie Hall-Clow, (Albany, NY), Anthony Elliott (Denver), Reginald Nichols (Sacramento), Diane Scott Mackey (Seattle), Kelly Scott (Seattle); and many grandnieces and nephews.

Ruth was a proud veteran, who could often be seen wearing her Veteran's baseball cap. She enlisted in the Army in 1950, serving in the Women's Army Corps. Before the Army, she was with the American Red Cross in Korea. Her professional life included being an Occupational Therapist for several years in Sitka, Alaska, working in both Seattle and Spokane in the mental health profession as well as in the vocational rehabilitation field.

She was fearless in taking on issues she believed in. As an activist, she ensured her voice was heard on such issues as aging, human rights, and racial equality. Ruth enjoyed a rich spiritual life rooted in her Catholic faith and drew spiritual inspiration from other churches of various denominations. She was a member of Bethel AME Church. She was an active member of the Spokane Alumnae chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. The family would like to thank several of her sorority sisters for providing unwavering support and assistance to her as she began to experience a decline in her overall health.

In one of her writings when she was reflecting on her life, she wrote in part "Life was, and is, for me a magnificent experience. I feel satisfied and delighted with the life I have lived so fully." May she rest in eternal peace.

Join us in celebrating a long life lived well:

MEMORIAL SERVICE

When: 11 a.m. Saturday, June 8
Where: Bethel AME Church, 645 S. Richard Allen Ct.

More info: The Spokane Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will hold the Omega Omega Service at 10:30 a.m. at Bethel. The Omega Omega Service is a Rite of Passage that the Sorority gives its deceased Sorors.



COURTESY OF ERICA DAVIS

Drey Davis' family poses in Riverfront Park in shirts honoring the late musician and teacher.

By April Eberhardt
 BLACK LENS NEWS

You cannot go anywhere in Spokane and say the name Quindrey "Drey" Davis-Murphy without hearing accolades. His connection to the community reverberates across churches, schools, and the Spokane entertainment scene; he was, by all accounts, pure joy and love. His grandfather, Earon Davis, says that Drey never met a stranger. Using his musical acumen as a self-taught drummer, Drey engaged audiences with talent so profound that he won drum-offs in his youth, played with the Eastern Washington University band for college games while still a student at Cheney High School, jammed with the group Sessionz here in Spokane, became a music teacher at Northwest Christian Academy, performed with Grammy winning artist Donnie McClurkin and Grammy nominee Allen Stone, and completed his first Broadway musical, "Ain't Too Proud" in 2023.

On Saturday, May 11th, Northwest Christian Academy students honored him in the Spokane Junior Lilac Parade, donning shirts that showed him with his sticks doing what he loved to do.

Church roots set the stage for Drey's life, says his mom, Erica Davis. Church is where Drey honed his craft and his faith. It is here that God made room for his gifts. Erica knew that her son was going to be great. "I used to tell him all the time, almost every day, you're destined for greatness." Drey believed his mother's words as reflected in his diligence and professionalism in music. Very early, she recognized the magnetic pull Drey



BOB LLOYD/THE BLACK LENS

Northwest Christian Academy students, led by Drey Davis' son, don T-shirts in honor of Drey Davis.

had to rhythm, even before he was born. "I was at a concert in Seattle... and my son, when he heard the drums and the music, I was pregnant, he was rolling and bouncing in my stomach so bad that I had to leave the sanctuary and go outside." There was something about the music, even in the womb. Erica sensed then that God was stirring a remarkable gift within her first-born child. When she got calls from the school about him interrupting the learning process through his incessant beat-making, she never skipped a beat to explain that it was his passion.

Behavioral labels that often tag young Black boys did not stand a chance in the Davis family because they recognized that what Drey had was extraordinary. "He would hear beats and melodies in his head all day long. I loved his passion for music." Practice towards perfection is what he did,

with the support of his family. He was so serious about drumming that even a brief stint in high school football came to a quick end to keep his hands from injury. Earon remembers the day his young grandson asked him to go to Hoffman Music. "The man in the store put him on the drum set," he recalls. After watching him play, Drey's talent was unmistakable. "You might have something here," his grandfather recalls. That day, Earon bought Drey his first drum set. At 5 years old, Drey played the drums at Disneyland near the entrance as people entered the park. While most kids were probably more interested in cotton candy or shaking Mickey's hand, Drey found his place in the drummer's seat. This is one of his mother's favorite memories.

Outside of drumming, remembering the man that Drey was, you will see a blueprint for passion,

dedication, humility, and kindness. His grandfather speaks of how he would go the extra mile to help others, especially when it came to impacting children. There are kids who had given up on music until they worked with Drey. His passion transformed many students' motivation. "He was just a likable person. I miss seeing him. He was my oldest grandson...at least every week or every 2 weeks, I have somebody come and say something about him. A lot of the things I was trying to teach him, especially being a young Black male, in this society, in Spokane, he took it to heart. He respected everybody and he wanted everybody to respect him also." His grandfather recalls conversations he had with Drey about representing himself and his family name well, treating others how he wanted to be treated and how he would be there as an advocate and protector. "All my kids, they always know where I am, I always tell them where I am, because if something goes down, I want them to call me."

When asked what message Drey would share with everyone, his mother says, "One thing about him, he was loved. Music brought everyone together, from all cultures. One thing he would always say to us as a joke was 'watch your light.' He wanted you to be the best you could be, to be a good person. Basically saying 'watch what you do, be kind to other people, you are a light in this dark world and God is love.'"

Quindrey Davis-Murphy loved his family, he loved music, and he loved God. He showed everyone how to live in their purpose and his legacy will tell this story for many years to come, as his light continues to shine through family and community.



BOB LLOYD/THE BLACK LENS

Northwest Christian Academy students march in honor of Drey Davis on May 11 in the Spokane Junior Lilac Parade.

Have you lost a dear loved one, who was part of Spokane's Black community?

THE BLACK LENS
In remembrance

We are offering free obituary services. Email info@blacklensnews.com with "Obituary" and your loved one's name in the subject line. Please limit obituaries to 400 words or less. A photo of the loved one is encouraged, but not required. We may lightly edit the obituary for brevity and clarity, but will otherwise leave it in its entirety.

LISTINGS AND EVENTS

BLACK BUSINESS DIRECTORY

4AM Vintage – Vintage clothing store owned by Christian Jones. Contact (832) 652-4580 or coojones4am@gmail.com. 1009 N. Washington St., Suite A, Spokane, 99201. Instagram: 4am.spokane.

A Do Good Cleaning Service LLC – Janitorial service by Daryl Givens Jr. Contact (509) 714-8113 or dgizzle21@gmail.com.

A Man & A Truck – Junk removal by Demetrius Bell. Contact (509) 319-8860, (509) 319-7126 or amanandruckspokane@gmail.com.

A Truly Reliable Cleaning Services LLC – Janitorial service by Tatiana Ross. Contact (678) 974-6907 or trulyreliablecleaning@gmail.com.

A Woman's Worth – Woman Empowerment Group by Gaye Hallman. Contact (509) 290-7687, (509) 385-7074 or ghallman@aww.community. 59 E. Queen Ave., Suite 210, Spokane, 99206.

Allie & Austin Accounting Services – Bookkeeping by Dorothy Hood. Contact (509) 242-3324 or dhood@allieaustin.com. P.O. Box 142207 Spokane Valley, 99214.

Allowing Change, LLC. – Pre-Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Certified Life & Relationship Coach Britney Richards (she/her). Contact (509) 795-0376 or allowingchangeclc@gmail.com. 9 S. Washington St., Suite 420, Spokane, 99201.

Andrews Care – Assisted Living Facility for Adults with Disabilities owned by Ashley Andrews. Contact (509) 939-7218 or ashandrews@comcast.net. P.O. Box 1629, Veradale, Wash., 99037.

Spokane Beard Papa's – Cream puff bakery owned by Marc Bryant. Contact (509) 290-5128 or spokanebeardpapas@gmail.com. 4808 E. Sprague Ave., Suite 204, Spokane Valley, 99212.

Beauchamp and Chase – Luxury Soaps and Comfort Wear by Genesis Veronon. Contact (509) 608-1511 or beauchampandchase@gmail.com.

Bethely Entertainment Group – Owned by Michael Bethely. Contact (509) 710-1338 or mbethely@be2become.com. P.O. Box 28931, Spokane, 99228.

Betty Jean's BBQ – Restaurant owned by Omar Jones. Contact (509) 828-5931 or bettyjeansbbq@yahoo.com. 2926 E. 29th Ave., Spokane, 99223. Online at www.bettyjeansbbq.com, Instagram: Betty_jeans_bbq and Facebook: Bettyjeansbbq.

Brendan Blocker Realty Services – Real Estate Agent Brendan Blocker. Contact (509) 290-9645 or brendan.blocker@gmail.com. 4407 N. Division St., Suite 200, Spokane, 99207. Online at brendan.spokanearearealestate.com or Facebook: Blocker Real Estate.

Brittany Trambitas Hair Design – Natural hair stylist Brittany Trambitas. Contact (509) 768-3925 or btrambitas1228@gmail.com. 802 E. 29th Ave., Suite 14, Spokane, 99203.

B & B Pro Video – Video Production by DeShawn Bedford and Michael Bethely. Contact (509) 818-0864 or admin@bbpvideo.com. 1011 W. Railroad Alley, Suite 100, Spokane, 99201. Online at bbpvideo.com.

Cascadia Public House – Restaurant owned by Jordan Smith. Contact (509) 321-7051 or info@cascadiapublichouse.com. 6314 N. Ash St., Spokane, 99208.

Chicken-N-More – Restaurant owned by Bob and Teresa Hemphill. Contact (509) 838-5071 or manysmiles@comcast.net. 414½ W. Sprague Ave., Spokane, 99201.

Clear View – Window cleaning by Limmie Smith. Contact (509) 319-7526 or fresh00274@icloud.com. 3011 E. Columbia Ave., Apt 3, Spokane, 99208.

Dennis Mitchell Empowerment Seminars – Education services by Dennis Mitchell. Contact (509) 981-0646 or dennispeaks@gmail.com. 9116 E. Sprague Ave., Suite 66, Spokane Valley, 99206.

DM & Owl – Vending service by Deandre Meighan. Contact (702) 954-2562 or dm.owl247@gmail.com.

Discovery Counseling Group LLC – Mental/Behavioral Health Counseling by Melissa Mace. Contact (509) 413-1193 or

info@discovery-counseling.org. 1008 N. Washington St., Spokane, 99201.

Ebony Hair Salon – Salon owned by Pam Thornton. Contact (509) 325-4089 or ebhair3@yahoo.com. 3125 N. Division St., Spokane, 99207.

Ethan Mendoza-Pena Insurance Agency, LLC – Insurance Agency owned by Ethan Mendoza-Pena, M.A. Contact (509) 590-4726 or emendoza@farmersagent.com. 2010 N. Ruby St., Spokane, 99207.

Exclusive Barber Shop – Barber shop owned by Keno Branch. Contact (509) 862-4723 or branchingoutbiz@gmail.com. 1423 N. Argonne Road, Spokane Valley, 99212.

Fantasy Kleaning LLC – Commercial Janitorial Service by Nathaniel Harris. Contact (509) 890-0819 or fantasy.kleaning@gmail.com.

Fresh Soul – Restaurant owned by Michael Brown. Contact (509) 242-3377 or spokanereunion@gmail.com. 3029 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202. Online at freshsoulrestaurant.com.

Gorilla Park Music – Music production by Brandon Batts. Contact (256) 642-6463 or gorillapark2@gmail.com.

I Hear You Sis LLC – Nutrition/health coaching by Prosperetti Coleman. Contact (509) 995-7044 or ihearyousis1@gmail.com. Online at www.ihearyousis.com, TikTok: tiktok.com/@i.hearyousis.

Inter-Tribal Beauty – Master esthetician, Reiki practitioner and TV/film makeup artist Octavia Lewis. Contact (509) 201-8664 or octavia@intertribalbeauty.co. 59 E. Queen Ave., Spokane, 99207. Online at www.intertribalbeauty.com, Instagram: instagram.com/inter_tribal_beauty/.

JSandoval Real Estate – Real Estate Broker Jacquelynn Sandoval. Contact (509) 460-8197 or JSandoval@windermere.com. 1620 E. Indiana Ave., Suite 1250, Spokane Valley, 99216. Instagram: instagram.com/therealestateantie/.

Koala Koi Massage – Massage therapy by Joy Robinson. Contact (509) 900-8968 or koalakoimassage@gmail.com. 1008 N. Washington St., Spokane, 99201.

Lacquered and Luxe – Nail salon owned by Lisa-Mae Brown. Contact (509) 993-7938 or brownlismae@yahoo.com. 33 E. Lincoln Road, Suite 205, Spokane.

Larry's Barber & Styling – Barbershop owned by Larry Roseman Sr. and operated with Master Barber QC. Contact (509) 869-3773 or ljrbbarberman@aol.com. 3017 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202.

League of Women for Community Action, Nonprofit, dba Southeast Day Care Center – Nonprofit Child Care Center owned by Day Care Director Sug Vilella and the League of Women for Community Action. Contact (509) 535-4794 or lwca@gmail.com. 2227 E. Hartson Ave., Spokane, 99202. Online at www.southeastdaycare.org.

Legacy Barbershop – Barbershop owned by Dougie Fades. Contact (509) 315-8312. 28 E. Sharp Ave., Spokane, 99202.

Lilac City Legends Inc. – Professional sports team owned by Michael Bethely. Contact (509) 774-4704, info@lilaccitylegends.com or michael@lilaccitylegends.com. 631 S. Richard Allen Court, Suite 205, Spokane, 99202. Also at P.O. Box 28931, Spokane, 99228.

Maranatha Evangelical Church – Church owned by Luc Fils Jasmin. Contact (509) 389-4539 or eem.maranatha@gmail.com. 631 S. Richard Allen Court, Suite 211, Spokane, 99202.

Mary Kay – Beauty Consultant Nicole Mills. Contact (509) 666-4929, (252) 365-4971 or MKwithNicole@gmail.com. Online at mkwithnicole.wordpress.com, Facebook: facebook.com/MKwithNicoleM.

Maxey Law Office – Lawyer Bevan Maxey. Contact (509) 326-0338 or info@maxeylaw.com. 1835 W. Broadway Ave., Spokane, 99201.

Mo-Nu Hair City – Wig retailer Jackie Douglas. Contact (509) 443-3193 or jazzyjackie9@yahoo.com. 4750 N. Division St., Spokane, 99207.

Moore's Boarding Home – Residential care by Betsy Wilkerson. Contact (509) 747-1745 or betsy@mooresassistedliving.com. 1803 W. Pacific Ave.,

Spokane, 99201. **MoVin Properties** – Property management by Latrice Williams. Contact (509) 565-0325 or movinproperties@gmail.com. 5723 N. Division St., Spokane.

Natasha L. Hill, P.S. – Lawyer Natasha Hill. Contact (509) 350-2817, (509) 357-1757 or natasha@nhlawoffices.com. Patsy Clark Mansion, 2208 W. Second Ave., Spokane 99201.

New Beginnings Hair & Beauty Salon – Hair styling and braiding salon owned by Stephanie Tullos-Brady. Contact (509) 475-3556 or tullos_stephanie@yahoo.com. 3019 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202.

New Developed Nations – Level 1 & 2 Substance Use and Mental Health Outpatient Facility owned by Rickey "Deekon" Jones. Contact (509) 964-1747 or info@newdevelopednations.com. 3026 E. Fifth Ave. Spokane, 99202.

Nina Cherie Couture – Bridal boutique owned by Nina Nichols. Contact (509) 240-1782 or info@ninacherie.com. 827 W. First Ave., Suite 109, Spokane, 99201.

Operation Healthy Family – Dental and youth programs by Tommy Williams. Contact (509) 720-4645 or tommy@ohfsokane.org. Good News Dental is located at 3009 S. Mount Vernon St. at (509) 443-4409. Emmanuel Fitness is located at 631 S. Richard Allen Court at (509) 822-7058.

Parkview Early Learning Center – Early Learning Center owned by Luc Jasmin. Contact (509) 326-5610 or parkviewelc@gmail.com. 5122 N. Division St. Spokane, 99207.

Pro Mobile Auto Detail LLC – Auto detailer Antonio Holder. Contact (509) 995-9950 or antonio@spokanepromobile.com.

Provisional Solutions – Counseling and coaching by Charina Carothers, LICSW. Contact (509) 795-0150 or info@psurnotalone.com. Richard Allen Court, Spokane, 99202.

Quality Blacktop & Striping – Residential and commercial blacktop by Barrington Young Jr. Contact (509) 251-6019 or young.barrington@gmail.com. 5759 E. Broadway Ave., Spokane, 99212.

Queen of Sheba – Restaurant owned by Almaz AINU. Contact (509) 328-3958 or info@queenofsheeba.com. 2621 W. Mallon Ave., Suite 426, Spokane, 99201.

Quick and Classy Auto Customs – Mechanic Jamar Dickerson. Contact (509) 315-5090, (509) 795-6065 or 2gn2tythoon@gmail.com. 3627 E. Broadway Ave., Spokane.

Share Farm Inc. – Online farmers market and supply chain logistics company owned by Vincent Peak. Contact (509) 995-8451 or vince@share.farm.

Smoov Cutz Barber Shop – Barber shop owned by Jason "Smoov" Watson. Contact (509) 703-7949 or jsmoov923@gmail.com. Two locations at 13817 E. Sprague Ave., Spokane Valley, 99216, and 14700 E. Indiana Ave., Spokane Valley, 99216.

Spacehub Production – Photography Studio owned by event photographer Eugene Muzinga. Contact (509) 216-1072 or spacehub@gmail.com. 1023 W. Sixth Ave., Building 1, Spokane, 99204.

Vision Properties – Real estate firm owned by Latrice Williams. Contact (509) 431-0773 or transactions.thevision@gmail.com. 5723 N. Division St., Spokane.

3 Performance Institute – Sports performance and physical therapy by Louis Hurd III. Contact (509) 869-2344 or Louis@spokane3pi.com. 211 W. Second Ave., Spokane, WA 99205. Online at spokane3pi.com.

Are you a Black business owner and you don't see your name or business in this directory? Contact info@blacklensnews.com with your name, business, contact information, address or website, if available. Put "Black Business Directory Entry" in the subject line. This listing was made with the help of the Black Business and Professional Alliance and the Carl Maxey Center. If you are part of the Maxey online directory but not seen here, The Black Lens needs your updated contact information in order to publish.



COURTESY

Mt. Olive Baptist Church has Sunday Service at 11 a.m.

AREA BLACK CHURCHES AND MINISTRIES

Holy Temple Church of God in Christ – Auxiliary Bishop Ezra Kinlow. 806 W. Indiana Ave, Spokane, 99205. Sunday School is 9:45 a.m. Worship Service is 11 a.m.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal – The Rev. Benjamin D. Watson, Sr. 645 S. Richard Allen Court, Spokane, 99202. Sunday School is 9:30 a.m. Sunday Service is 11 a.m.

Calvary Baptist – The Rev. Dr. C. W. Andrews. 203 E. Third Ave., Spokane, WA, 99202. Sunday School is 9 a.m. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

Morning Star Baptist – The Rev. Walter Kendricks. 3909 W. Rowan Ave., Spokane, 99205. Sunday School is 9:30 a.m. Sunday Service is 10:45 a.m.

New Hope Baptist – The Rev. James Watkins. 9021 E. Boone Ave., Spokane Valley, 99212. Sunday Service

is 10:45 a.m.

Saving Grace Ministries – The Rev. Earon Davis Jr. 3151 E. 27th Ave., Spokane, 99223. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

Word of Faith – The Rev. Otis Manning. 9212 E. Montgomery Ave., Spokane Valley, 99206. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

Jesus is the Answer – The Rev. Shon L. Davis. 1803 E. Desmet St. Spokane, 99202. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

Restoration Church – The Rev. Andre A. Dove. 2815 W. Sunset Blvd., Spokane, 99224. Sunday Service is 10:45 a.m.

Mt. Olive Baptist Church – The Rev. Patrick Hamm. 2026 E. Fourth Ave., Spokane, 99202. Sunday Service is 11 a.m. Wednesday Bible Study is 6 p.m.

EVENTS TO WATCH FOR

JUNE 7: NIGHT OF SISTERHOOD – Celebrate Black women's strength and beauty with sip and paint stations, food, drinks, poetry and dancing. This year's theme, "You Are More Than Enough." Hosted by the Shades of Motherhood. 6 p.m. June 7, Madison Home Market, 2928 N. Madelia St. Free.

JUNE 8: 2024 BIZFEST: A CHILDREN'S BUSINESS FAIR – The Children's Business Fair is an event that provides a platform for children to showcase their entrepreneurial skills. This exciting free event is an opportunity for kids ages 6-14. 10 a.m.-noon June 8 at the Hive, 2904 E. Sprague Ave.

JUNE 9: FAMILY PRIDE CELEBRATION – Celebrate community and inclusion with the whole family at

Central Library from 1-3 p.m. with crafts and a storytime from library staff.

JUNE 18: A NIGHT OUT WITH ACUTE INFLECTIONS – A theatre-style concert with New York's jazzy R&B duo. 6:30 p.m. June 18. Spokane Community College, Lair Student Center. 1810 N. Greene St. \$15-35. Tickets and more information can be found at eventbrite.com.

JUNE 26: FILM SHOWING OF "BETWEEN THE SHADES - CONVERSATIONS ABOUT BEING GAY IN AMERICA" – This documentary explores the many different shades of being "gay" in America. Conversations focus on the varying perceptions of how people define themselves, their lives, struggle and triumphs. 5:30-7 p.m. June 26 at Shadle Park Library.

NAACP MEETINGS

To join, visit naacpspokane.com/contact.

GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Third Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE: Second Monday of each month at 5:15 p.m.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE: Second Wednesday via zoom at 7 p.m.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Fourth Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: First Tuesday at 5 p.m.

Black Lens pickup: Get on our list!

For newspaper pickup and distribution, please contact info@blacklensnews.org. Pickup is at the Schoenberg at Gonzaga on Fridays before Sunday publication. The Black Lens is published the first Sunday of each month.

THE BLACK LENS

IT'S A COOKOUT

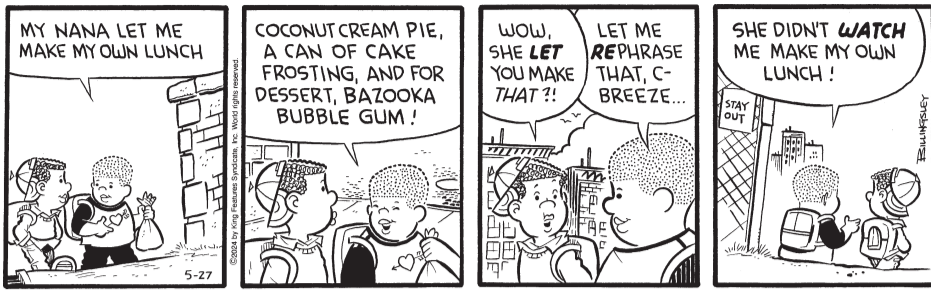
INFO@BLACKLENSNEWS.COM

Do you have treasured family recipes you'd like to share with The Black Lens? Please email us with "Cookout Recipe" in the subject line. Send us the recipe with a blurb explaining its history. A photo of the food is strongly encouraged.

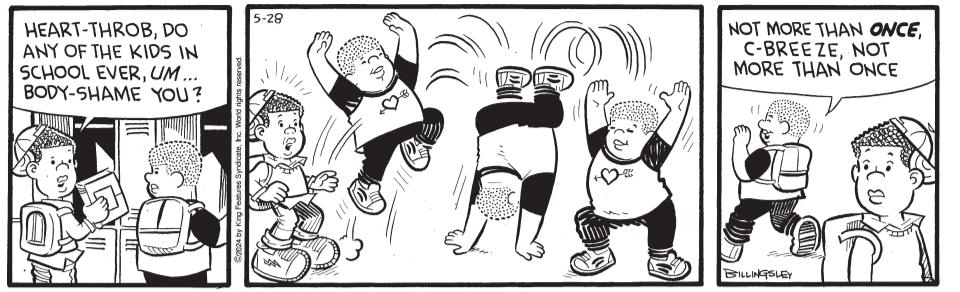
COMICS

CURTIS • BY RAY BILLINGSLEY

MAY 27



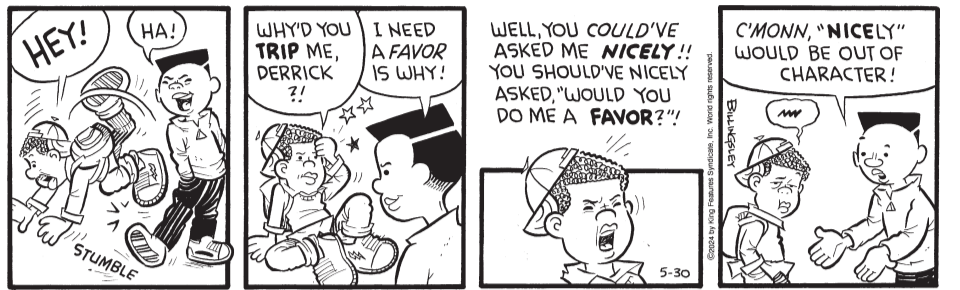
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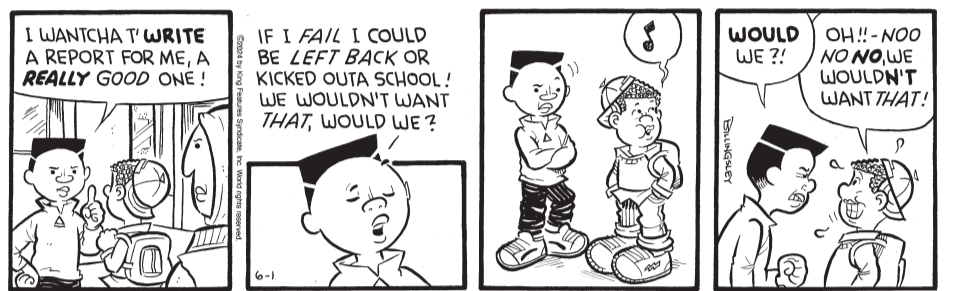
MAY 30



MAY 31



JUNE 1



CRABGRASS • BY TAUHID BONDIA

MAY 18



MAY 20



MAY 21



MAY 22



MAY 23



MAY 24



BLACK PRIDE AND LIBERATION WORD SEARCH

Huey Newton founded the Black Panther Party.

- Black Power
- Pride Movement
- Protest Riot
- Justice Equity
- Transgender Drag Queen
- Inclusive Intentional Love

- Protect Liberation
- Freedom Gay Rights
- Expression Autonomy
- Acceptance



ANSWERS ON PAGE 12

NVZ JBMFXQATEWIDZVXNVVDWTHLVBVXDU
 BGGPVEUBVFUWUKFOSXDRAGQUEENIRQ
 AZPFESIGBRSSYPXDTINCLUSIVEXFFS
 CZRGKXNQJSVENEKUAAGCVJNHEPBOOZV
 CDOMETPRAINTENTIONALALXYWIOGQLRE
 EXTCMIHRMAAXZBLIOISKQKLMOUHWBB
 PDEQOSXLEMZXZEUVGMSTDBTGOSZIJJV
 TBCFBPJRJSPROTESHKEBRAVNTPTZL
 ANTMJETCUQSDPGWOFHGSQBAREGALKYH
 NSZEDTADSIIYIMPTSFCNLBNVMWVYOWE
 CMNNBOBKTMRDORFLKXFQSSREJYFHWI
 EGATWKJAIKSUNNTQYOFFMGINVSKUNIF
 GEGPCHZOCFXPHMQEFHMRGEOTFREOCB
 YTIJUMVAIEJCGZAFTNPOBXNTGYZSPOU
 DWDSOGSOABIRNTOMODJXHDFWMZIWVE
 VJFIMECCRPNPOWERXIKGKEITOGZRSA
 WYTKTFPSJUHQPZJBHOFNDRVNJWRXPK
 IVIDNAAXRDTKWQQTWHEIMUJRUSINEK
 GASQTDASRXBIOMMMONTLDIPRIDESGA
 MCKWTOEPGKIDQOHOZDIMUTFZKNNTW
 NNJLFLLEONXMF LGWTBNPBGHYWTFOMYX
 JTLYFKAHCKYFPVQXGEBSEJLCNCJOGGH
 QNEFAFRPJTXURLFXHURLRFLAUTONOMY
 XULOVEAIRUPBREXGHWAFWAGRLHKJFC
 YGOAJVONOBYSKEOEMXTCOGWIGWZDC
 AMMGXNBPTXBPYIDLXBIVKSATJRPQR
 XIQZQWDIWRMURTCIOEDOWWKOGAOFJB
 CYGYDUCSYMXTWAZSJMSNIXSYLSVWK
 YFDHTBITAXZZIFEAGAYRIGHTSOCIJLM
 LHIAWREDCWPDGUGEMXBOKUMNWLEBVD



Spokane civil rights activist and founder of "The Black Lens."



COOKOUT

KIDS CORNER: CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCES?



HINT: THERE ARE EIGHT. ANSWERS: PAGE 12.

THIS MONTH ON... **BLACK SOCIAL**

01 LEGEND CANDACE PARKER LEADS AT ADIDAS

FC fastcompany • Basketball legend Candace Parker is set to make her mark off the court—as the newly appointed president of Adidas women's basketball.

The @WNBA star shocked fans and players alike at the end of April by announcing her retirement. Parker, who played 16 seasons in the league, has become almost synonymous with women's basketball. Deepening her partnership with @Adidas seemed like the natural next step.

02 QUEEN LATIFAH APPEARS WITH PARTNER AT MET GALA

People people • Queen Latifah made her Met Gala debut in style!

The Equalizer star attended the glamorous event for the first time on May 6, walking the red carpet alongside her partner Eboni Nichols, a dancer and choreographer.

Read more in our bio link. | <#> : Getty

03 KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS RECEIVES SOCIAL JUSTICE CHAMPION AWARD

EBONY ebonymagazine • In honor of @KarlTowns being named this year's NBA Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Social Justice Champion, let's take a look back at EBONY's July/Aug 2021 cover featuring Towns' personal story and the inspiration behind his activism:

"Being the recipient of the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Social Justice Champion Award is one of my proudest moments," said Karl-Anthony Towns. "I will always fight for social justice, equality, and change."

POETRY CORNER

Something lost

By AJ the Wordsmith

They call me a lyrical genius ...

But then why is it that I feel so fiendish ?

Missing direction no mentor to help me make the right selection.

My ancestors sing "let freedom ring" well I believe they should have said "let us have freedom or we'll make your ear drums ring. but that is our flaw within, we fight the disease that pleads for us not to fall to the floor, if we do then it will be with an unbent knee, leaving me to ask the question what is it to die with pride.

Looking at lives should make us all slide, from the complicated to the sophisticated, from the crown comes the frown Questioning every lyric that I speak, am I not one for change, glory of fame, dad said this was my story so please let me speak! I'm not some rapper for hire, or some poet for desire, I just want to be me, but labels are all that I see, so I guess it's heaven for me, where everything is free.

Tired of the hate, so I left it at the gate, singing blues song cause I lost my mate, now I don't wanna be another lost soul, going for the goal to revive my soul. I'm leaving a trail for the next ones to come, my time may not be over there's still more do, I look at the future now and say who am I too you. No problem although I am zoned unable to make a comment on this lyrical phone, putting the pieces of the puzzle together like Sherlock Holmes, blinders down shaded frowns keep walking straight, they'll never understand me that's why I never walk straight.

