

THE BLACK LENS

DECEMBER 2024 - VOL. 9 - ISSUE NO. 11

REST, RESET, COLLABORATE, PREPARE

Northwest Credible Messenger pairs with Black barbers beauticians, Shades of Motherhood to empower healing

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

Barbers and beauticians regularly engage with their clientele, and this connection often takes on a whole new meaning in the Black community. The chair becomes a place of familiarity, where culture intersects with advice, affirmation, laughter, or a place to just vent. It is the place where trust is built. The Shades of Motherhood Network (SOMN) realizes the value of this relationship, and as it aims to become a hub of additional resources, peer support training is a priority. Says Stephaine Courtney, founder of SOMN, “We’re going to create space for our barbers and beauticians to not only take care of themselves, but

to also take care of other people.” SOMN partnered with Northwest Credible Messenger, a community organization located in Federal Way, Washington, that has a behavioral health project for barbers and beauticians. According to their website, Northwest Credible Messenger focuses on the following areas: capacity building, positive youth justice, healing centered engagement and policy advocacy.

“Utilizing the Credible Messenger’s Model, we are focused on cultivating racial justice through the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for Black and Brown leaders,

empowering young people and strengthening our impacted communities to collective success,” the website says.

During a week in November, 18 Spokane professionals completed peer support training offered through the Washington Health Care Authority to become certified peer support counselors in the state.

“There’s lots of research that shows the importance of having someone that is from the same background or has the same life experience sharing their story,” Courtney said.

Mental health has become a national crisis. For varying reasons, acquiring support in the Black

See **HEALING, 10**



COURTESY OF SHADES OF MOTHERHOOD NETWORK

Jason Clark and Johnny Cheng, of Northwest Credible Messenger, help Spokane professionals ready for peer support training in November.

NAACP GALA BRINGS COLLECTIVE POWER TO THE FOREFRONT



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BREWCITY FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

Spokane NAACP President Lisa Gardner speaks at the NAACP Freedom Fund Gala.

By Lisa Garder
SPOKANE NAACP PRESIDENT

The NAACP Freedom Fund Gala was a remarkable success. It brought together a diverse crowd dedicated to raising awareness and supporting the NAACP’s civil rights advocacy in Spokane. The event started with spiritual libations acknowledging our ancestors and a land acknowledgement. The evening progressed

with the awarding of several community members for their work and volunteerism. Finally, the night ended with an engaging keynote speech by Hill Harper, who centered us by saying that we’re not divided; we’re disconnected, which set an inspiring tone for the evening.

The evening’s highlight was the recognition of our Michael P. Anderson

See **GALA, 10**



Jaime Stacy, background, presents the Rev. Walter J. Kendricks, of Morning Star Baptist Church, with the award for Community Champion.



Fay Baptiste, longtime Spokane resident and retired nurse, is presented the Presidents Award by Gardner.

Lt. Col. Tanisha Morton, MD FAAP, at right, is presented the Unsung Hero Award for her work as a pediatrician, during the NAACP Freedom Fund Gala.



CREATING A REST REBEL COMMUNITY

Introducing Kibi Anderson

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

Kibi Anderson understands the cost of a high-octane life. The Seattle native and Los Angeles transplant is a Harvard alum, an accomplished corporate executive, a Hollywood producer

and filmmaker, an executive performance coach and an author. She recently penned a chapter in the book “Point Taken: Brilliant Business Advice from Women at the Top.” At her core, Anderson says she is a storyteller stemming from a love of people and their experiences. Raised in

a thriving Black community in Seattle, with Mount Zion Baptist Church as a home base, she saw collective strength. An only child of a single mother, who worked hard for her daughter while also managing community

See **ANDERSON, 10**



Kibi Anderson is an executive performance coach, author, Hollywood producer, filmmaker and more.

COURTESY

ELECTION ROUNDUP

Hill named first Black woman to represent 3rd District, plus other key race results

From Black Lens staff reports

While the nation’s eyes were turned toward the presidential race on Nov. 5, a number of crucial seats were filled at the local and state levels.

In central Spokane, Natasha Hill defeated Tony Kiepe in Legislative District 3 for the House Position 1 seat.

“Congratulations to the victorious Natasha Hill for making history as the First Black Woman elected as the House Representative 3rd District,” the Spokane branch of the NAACP wrote on Facebook. “Wishing you prosperity and progress in Olympia!”

In northwest Spokane County and northeast Spokane, Mike Volz took the vote for Legislative District 6, House Position 1. In the same district, Jenny Graham landed House Position 2. In northeastern Washington, Andrew Engell won Legislative District 7, House Position 1, while Hunter Abell won House Position 2 in the same district. In southeastern Washington, Mary Dye nabbed the most votes for Legislative District 9, House Position 1, and will be joined by Joe Schmick for House Position 2.

In Spokane Valley, Suzanne Schmidt was named the representative for Legislative District 4, House Position 1. Rob Chase, meanwhile, was named House Position 2 in the same district.

Andrew Van Winkle won Spokane County Superior Court Judge Position 11. Marla L. Polin won Position 8.

Longtime incumbent Al French kept his seat on the Spokane County Commission.

Statewide, attorney general Bob Ferguson was voted to be governor, and Maria Cantwell was chosen to remain the U.S. senator, a position she has served since 2001.

Denny Heck is slated to become the state’s lieutenant governor, while Nick Brown will step up as attorney general. The next commissioner

See **ELECTION, 10**

REST, RESET, COLLABORATE, PREPARE



NEWS IN BRIEF

How Tennessee underfunded TSU by \$2B

Tennessee State University was founded to keep Black students out of the University of Tennessee. In 1890, states with land-grant schools, like the University of Tennessee, were given a choice. They could either admit Black students to these colleges, or the states could receive federal funding to create separate schools for Black residents. In Tennessee and other Southern states, separate schools were created. When states took the money, which ensured their flagship schools remained segregated, they agreed to provide “just and equitable” funding to both institutions. Few states interpreted that phrase as a requirement to provide equal funding, and most historically Black land-grant universities have been forced to operate with far less state support than predominantly white institutions. The federal government, today through the farm bill, provides grants for agriculture research, but states must match those grants on a 1-to-1 basis. Historically Black land-grant schools regularly must request a waiver from the matching requirement so they can still receive the federal research grant. Between 2018 and 2021 Tennessee State University received no matching funds from the state, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture records. In 2021, Tennessee’s Office of Legislative Budget Analysis calculated the state’s failure to match federal research funds to TSU shortchanged the school by \$151 million to \$544 million since 1957. In response, the state allocated \$250 million to TSU for infrastructure projects.

After fire at historically Black college, leaders speak out on school’s status

On Monday night, a devastating fire engulfed an abandoned building at Knoxville College, reducing it to ashes for the second time in its storied history and throwing another obstacle in the path of school leaders working to academically and physically restore the college. Originally built in 1893 as a girl’s dormitory, Elnathan Hall later served as an administration building and classroom facility. It first burned down on the campus of East Tennessee’s only historically Black college 126 years ago, in 1896, before being rebuilt in 1898. Frank Shanklin, a member of Knoxville College’s Board of Trustees, said Elnathan Hall was included among several campus buildings that were boarded up and had not been occupied for more than 40 years. He said the fire is another step backward for the institution as it continues to seek accreditation.

Tyson-Paul fight watched in 60M homes

Netflix looked for the silver lining in the technically flawed live stream of the Jake Paul-Mike Tyson fight on Nov. 15. The Los Gatos, California-based streaming giant said 60 million households watched the bout between Paul, a fighter who has established his fame through YouTube, and Tyson, the 58-year-old former heavyweight champion. The figure is more than 20% of its 283 million subscribers worldwide. Tyson came out aggressively in the first two rounds but was nearly immobile through the second half. By the end of the fight, Paul appeared to be holding back his attacks. Nearly 50 million households also watched the co-main event where women’s lightweight champion Katie Taylor won a decision over Amanda Serrano. Netflix said the bout is likely to be the most-watched professional women’s sporting event in U.S. history.

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NEWS

FROM THE EDITOR

Our preparation is paramount, collectivism is critical, courage is key

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

Angst. Reflection. Uncertainty. The month of November has been one roller coaster ride, many feeling these very emotions. Or perhaps not. We have seen the long game played by strategists culminate into the second presidential win for Donald Trump. A new set of realities is now upon us. In his keynote at the NAACP Freedom Fund Gala, Hill Harper crystallized the convoluted state of American politics. “The future does not belong to those who are fearful of bold projects and new ideas,” Harper said. “But rather the future belongs to those who can blend passion, reason and courage into a personal commitment to the great ideals and enterprises of American society.” Harper shared this quote from one of his Harvard professors. He exhorted that we must find new solutions to old problems, declaring that we fall to the level of our systems. He continued, saying that folks got sold on “Hope and Change” and then “Making America Great Again,” but change seems bleak, and things feel worse. The collateral damage: America’s most vulnerable. Both political parties are broken, he went on, referencing how both Democrats and Republicans have participated in money being used as the determining factor of elected outcomes. This has led to massive distrust and confusion among voters. Emphasizing that most people want the same things, safety,

economic stability, affordable living, decent education, Harper’s address wedged a message of collectivism into the skeptical consciousness that has inevitably gripped many of us post-Nov. 5. We are indeed at a point of inflection. A scarcity mindset breeds desperation, stokes paranoia, and evokes fear. In the meantime, manipulative forces can engineer the outcomes they desire and an apathetic mindset breeds suppression. A stark correlation of the political crosshairs we find ourselves in was drawn in Harper’s keynote address: being stabbed in the face or being stabbed in the back. This brutally honest synopsis, as hard as it is to hear, captures the state of the union; a rationale that swims in murky water. So then, what do we do now? This is not a new paradigm. W.E.B. Dubois, in 1956, penned an essay titled “I Won’t Vote.” In it he said, “I believe that democracy has so far disappeared in the United States that no ‘two evils’ exist. There is but one evil party with two names, and it will be elected despite all I can do or say. There is no third party ... Democracy is dead in the United States. Yet there is still nothing to replace real democracy. Drop the chains, then, that bind our brains. Drive the money-changers from the seats of the Cabinet and the halls of Congress. Call back some faint spirit of Jefferson and Lincoln, and when again we can hold a fair election on real issues, let’s vote, and not till then. Is this impossible? Then democracy in America is impossible.”



Hill Harper speaks at the 2024 NAACP Freedom Fund Gala.

Now is the time for courage. For collectivism. For preparation. We must use reason. The picture is far bigger than the 2024 election. We cannot afford to be fractured. As he ended his keynote on the topic of courage, Harper’s poignant commentary was the shoulder check we all needed to help us collectively recalibrate. “I often joke about many members of our community because ... it seems you can agree on almost nine things, disagree on one, (and say) ‘I can’t work with them’ ... but just notice, in a variety of other communities, they can disagree on nine and agree on one, and they’ll storm the Capital,” Harper said. As we exhale from the month of November, preparation awaits us all. Let’s get to work – together.

BLACK LENS HONORED AT SPOKANE HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS



APRIL EBERHARDT/THE BLACK LENS

Black Lens editor April Eberhardt, second from left; Alethea Dumas, center, Black Lens co-chair; and Black Lens contributor Bob Lloyd, second from right, are honored as the 2024 Spokane Human Rights Champion Awardees.

From Black Lens staff reports

The Black Lens, with a reflection of founder Sandy Williams, in addition to Bob Lloyd who also founded and operated the Spokane African American Voice from 1996-2000, were honored at the 2024 Spokane Human Rights Champion Celebration for uplifting the voices of the Black community in Spokane on Nov. 21. Also that night, the sons of the late Rev. Percy Happy Watkins, Jr., now the first posthumous award recipient, accepted the Community Champions Award in his honor, with past and present board members coming to the stage in his honor. Festivities included dinner, drinks, a silent auction, guest speakers, entertainment and the awards presentation. The Gonzaga Center for the



COURTESY OF SHALENA ARMSTRONG

The sons of the late Rev. Percy “Happy” Watkins Jr. accept a posthumous award in his honor at the Spokane Human Rights awards on Nov. 21.

Study of Hate’s Eva Lassman recipients were also honored at “Take Action Against Hate” award this event.

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

April Eberhardt, Rick Williams, Luc Jasmin III, Alethea Sharea Dumas, Michael Bethely, KJ January and Shamerica Nakamura

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About The Black Lens
The Black Lens is a nonprofit news organization funded through foundations, major donors, subscribers, sponsors 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.

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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.



BUSINESS AND FINANCE

BEING COMFORTABLE IN THE UNCOMFORTABLE

Businessman Brandon Douglas cultivates success with Bummy Boss Clips

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

Brandon Douglas is no stranger to hustle and innovation. He says he knew he would be his own boss someday and while serving in the Navy. Not only did he purify jet propulsion on a nuclear aircraft carrier, he also became a preferred barber among his peers. This set the stage for his current business located in North-Town Mall, Bummy Boss Clips and Beauty Supply. His first acquaintance with Spokane was when he won a news production contest in college. Media production is another area of interest for Douglas.

“I went to college at Olympic which isn’t too far from here. It’s in Bremerton, Washington,” Douglas said. “So, when I was in the service, when I got out, the first class that I took was media production.”

While living in California, he enrolled at San Joaquin Delta College in Northern California, earned his associate’s degree and then transferred out to California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Douglas says that cutting hair was just something that he did on the side. He learned, however, that the demand for his skill was significant.



SHADES OF MOTHERHOOD NETWORK

Bummy Boss Clips owner Brandon Douglas, left, and his mother, Jackie Douglas, pose at a November Northwest Credible Messenger peer support training event.

“That was when I knew for sure that I was going to do it officially at some point in my life,” he said.

Being exposed to the profession as a child in his mom’s beauty shop, Douglas remembers being prophesied over by his godmother that he would be in this profession.

“I was exposed to all that (at an) early age, but I don’t remember cutting hair until I was about 8, practicing on myself and my cousins and my brother,” Douglas said.

He jokes that everyone wanted to be a guinea pig. Early exposure to entrepreneurship created a vision for Douglas. We talked about how this correlates to understanding ownership and wealth in the Black community. Cultivation, he says, is the key.

“Cultivation theory includes the set-up, if not the components of having a piece of information or propaganda, continuously run by you to the point to where you’re digesting it easily,” he said. “So, you’re exposed to it, so much that it becomes a normality.”

He explains that creating a vision requires going beyond your normal reach and learning how to become comfortable being uncomfortable. This is how you learn; this is how you grow.

“So, that’s one way that we can move ourselves out of stagnation,” Douglas said.

Faith is a huge proponent in Douglas’ perspective on success. He further rationalizes, “I would say the importance of entrepreneurship and generational wealth is totally dependent upon our virtues and what we believe at heart to be most valuable.

So, with me, it definitely starts with my belief in Jesus Christ and all the other fundamentals that support that and how He goes about things.”

He goes on to share what an abundant life looks like, focusing on values first. The values that are passed down become foundational in how we approach opportunity. Accumulated wealth, Douglas said, comes with modeled examples.

“Whatever wealth is accumulated for my bloodline ends up trickling down,” he said.

This is where understanding that accumulation of wealth starts with a family mindset.

“Then it’s the gift that keeps on giving,” Douglas said. “So before we talk about somebody else’s kids, what have we done for our own kids? What have we done for ourselves? And let’s look a few ladders up and see what mom, grandpa, great granddad did for us.”

We discussed the difference between entering directly into the workforce versus going to college first.

“When it comes to the two, obviously (there are) pros and cons,” Douglas said.

There can be more benefits in entrepreneurship, if you are successful.

“But when you do go to college, one of the great things about it is the networking because you’re dealing with like-minded individuals who may not be on the same path as you, but one of the most meaningful things for me was being able to connect with those who had the same goals and aspirations as myself,” he said.

Part of business is being in spaces where you can contribute, learn, and connect, he reflected.

“The entrepreneur route (is) like grassroots, feast or famine from the jump,” he said. “And if you don’t have any financial backing, then that’s going to cost you as well.”

If saving money to build your business, he suggested to start now.

Douglas remembers being a kid with aspirations. His advice to the younger generation trying to find their way?

“Be passionate about whatever you’re into but it’s not going to always be a one size fits all,” he said. “Get off the TikTok and see what makes you tick.”

Exposure to new things, intrinsic values that guide personal decisionmaking, a strong family unit to reinforce the mindset of abundance that extends beyond material wealth, and faith – these components are what Douglas identifies as a recipe for generational wealth.

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BUSINESS

SIPS ‘N’ TIPS

Fighting financial illiteracy with Group B

As a recap from last month's Sips 'N' Tips I discussed that there are basically two paths of thinking financially. The two basic paths were labeled, groups A and B. The unique characteristics of Group A were addressed last month.

Let's take a look at Group B. This group has an intentional relationship with money, an understanding as to how money works, and a progressive impact on their families, with regard to passing on generational wealth. Group B represents about 5% of Americans often referred to as the wealthy.

This group tends to see the big picture and plans beyond the present. This group will look at where they desire to be and back engineer to the present to see what needs to be done to obtain the desired future result.

They tend to make well over \$100,000, often over \$250,000 a year which places them in the 5% to 14% income bracket. The group of individuals making over \$250,000 a year varies by state: 2% of households in South Dakota make over \$250,000 while 5% make over \$250,000 in Oklahoma, Nevada and Florida; 10% make over \$250,000 in California and 13% of households in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Maryland make over \$250,000 (worldpopulationreview.com; Median Income by State-Investopedia; Income Percentile by State Calculator).

Many in Group B tend to be entrepreneurs. A significant amount of the wealthy, about 88% are business owners or entrepreneurs. There is a strong correlation between entrepreneurship and wealth. [10] Robert Kiyosaki stated in his book, The Cash Flow Quadrant that over 80% of Americans make their income trading time for money and will never become wealthy. The 5% that own a system that runs their business or know how to make money work for them are the ones who will achieve



By Rhonda Leonard-Horwith
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



financial wealth. They may be small to large business owners who are not satisfied with the 9 to 5. They have a vision of what they want to do and will do whatever it takes to get it done. They may work long hours but are in control (Forbes.com, cnbc.com, finance.yahoo.com).

They learn how to make their money work for them vs always working for the money. They understand and put to use many of the wealth principles

This group understands and utilizes the benefits of passive income, being debt free and wealth building aspects of permanent life insurance.

Group B understands the tax buckets and how to use them. They tend to live below their means, choosing to plow money away for the future.

They have a diversified portfolio which may include deferred retirement plans as well as indexed funds. The principles of tax-free growth, participation in the upside of the market, but protection from the downside of the market help structure sound planning.

This group tends to work with a financial advisor and understands the fundamentals of how money works. They understand the choices available to them and utilize the "power of choice" to build a balanced family growth and retirement plan.

The differences between group A, the working middle class, and group B, the wealthy, have and will continue to produce a profound impact on the financial standing of these individuals for generations to come. A positive relationship with money, understanding as to how money works, and the ability to pass on generation of wealth should not be reserved for the few. The final article in the series will look at some of the money principles that will enable our readers to have a better "toehold" in the world of financial planning and lesson the gap between group A and group B.

YOUTH CONNECTION

GENTRIFICATION VERSUS URBAN RENEWAL

In cities across the nation, neighborhoods are undergoing rapid transformation. New cafes open on once-quiet or vacated corners, modern apartment complexes replace aging homes, and tree-lined streets buzz with the hum of electric scooters. These changes can bring a sense of vitality, but they often come with a complex and controversial side effect: displacement. At the heart of this issue lies the debate between gentrification and urban renewal, terms often used interchangeably but rooted in distinct realities.

Gentrification refers to the process by which higher-income individuals move into historically lower-income neighborhoods, raising property values, improving infrastructure, and attracting businesses. While this may seem beneficial, it often results in rising rents and property taxes, pushing out long-time residents who can no longer afford to live where they once called home.

Take, for example, the once-vibrant, working-class neighborhoods of Brooklyn, New York. In the past two decades, these areas have been transformed into hubs for young professionals and artists. Boutique coffee shops and organic markets now dot the landscape, but the cultural fabric that has defined these communities for decades has been eroded.

Critics argue that gentrification prioritizes profit over people, leaving displaced residents to navigate the emotional and economic toll of losing their homes. Families are forced to relocate to less expensive, often less accessible areas, disrupting social ties and access to jobs, schools and health care.

Urban renewal, on the other hand, refers to planned development initiatives aimed at revitalizing neighborhoods without displacing their current residents. This approach often involves public-private partnerships that focus on improving infrastructure, creating affordable housing and



By Z'hanie Weaver
THE BLACK LENS STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR



preserving cultural heritage.

One example of urban renewal done right is the Paseo Gateway Project in Kansas City, Missouri. This initiative focused on improving public housing, increasing economic opportunities, and providing social services for existing residents. By involving the community in the planning process, the project balanced modernization with the needs of the people it was meant to serve.

The key to successful urban renewal lies in inclusion. Governments and developers must actively engage with residents, ensuring they have a say in the future of their neighborhoods. Rent control, affordable housing mandates, and community land trusts can also serve as tools to protect vulnerable populations.

The line between gentrification and urban renewal is often blurred, as intentions don't always align with outcomes. While urban renewal aims to enhance neighborhoods for all, even well-intentioned projects can inadvertently lead to displacement if safeguards aren't in place.

Communities can combat this by demanding transparency and accountability from developers and city planners. Advocacy groups and local governments must work together to ensure that revitalization efforts uplift rather than uproot.

The conversation about gentrification versus urban renewal is not just about buildings or streetscapes – it's about people. It's about honoring the histories and contributions of the communities that have shaped our cities while ensuring they can benefit from growth and progress. As cities continue to evolve, the challenge lies in finding ways to balance economic development with social equity. Only by addressing the root causes of displacement can we transform neighborhoods without losing the very essence of what makes them unique.

ATTENTION AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN THE SPOKANE AREA

SPOKANE BLACK VOICES

Northwest Passages, in conjunction with The Black Lens, is seeking submissions for the Spokane Black Voices Symposium from African American students in the Spokane area. Submissions may be published in The Black Lens during Black History Month 2025.

SPOKANE BLACK VOICES EVENT

Selected work will be presented at the fourth annual celebration of Spokane Black Voices on Monday, Feb. 10, 2025 on the Northwest Passages stage at the Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center Coughlin Theater (211 E Desmet Ave) at Gonzaga University at 7:00 pm.

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR IS "POWERED BY COURAGE: SOMETIMES JUST SHOWING UP IS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT" WHAT DOES THIS STATEMENT MEAN TO YOU AND HOW DOES IT CONNECT TO COURAGE?

Workshops for creating submissions will be scheduled by The Links, Inc., Spokane Chapter, a national organization for African American women and women of African descent over the next few weeks. Prompts to assist in your response:

- How can courage become contagious and why is that important?
- What is your definition of courage?
- Reflect on a time when you displayed great courage when the world was not watching.
- What person - family/friends/mentor has most influenced your courage?
- What time in your life did you need to be courageous and what happened?
- Describe an area of your life in which you wish you were more courageous
- Complete this thought in prose or art "Every day, I show courage by..."
- It can take a lot of courage to simply be yourself when you feel society doesn't accept you - how do you hide or express yourself. Do you feel courageous with that choice? Why?
- Tell/write/draw/express a time where you witnessed someone else be powered by courage.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Contestants must be current students within The Spokesman-Review circulation area. High School students are strongly encouraged to submit. Work must be original Include the writer's name, school, grade, email address and telephone. Essays or Stories - less than 1,500 words, nonfiction or fiction in any literary genre. (Please submit in .docx or .doc.)

Poems: less than 20 lines. All poems are accepted. (Please submit in .docx or .doc.) Art: Limited to three pieces per submission. Make sure all art is accessible in .PDF, .JPG, .PNG format Video/Film: All videos must be under 2 minutes. Please attach the video title, your name and high school you attend in a three-second post or pre-credits (mp4 is the only acceptable format)

SEND ENTRIES TO: SPOKANEBLACKVOICES@SPOKESMAN.COM

Entries to be received by midnight Jan. 10 and can be emailed to SpokaneBlackVoices@spokesman.com. In the subject line, please include "SBV Submission 2025 ." Along with the submission, please send over a bio written in the third person that includes the title of your piece, your pronouns, personal interests and other things we should know about you.

TICKETS ONLINE AND AT THE EVENT

NORTHWEST PASSAGES

AT GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

TICKETS ONLINE AND AT THE EVENT

Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center • 211 E. Desmet Ave., Spokane • spokesman.com/northwest-passages

YOUTH CONNECTION



Rebecca Lee Crumpler was the first Black American woman to earn a medical degree in the U.S.

BLACK FEMALE HISTORY ACROSS PROFESSIONS

Everyone learns and teaches about common historical Black heroes like Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, or Martin Luther King Jr. They have all made a very huge impact and their legacies live on and on. But there were others.

I've picked four unsung heroes in Black history. So if you're standing, sit down. Grab your glasses if you need them and get comfortable because your about to get a history lesson.

Alice Allison Dunnigan

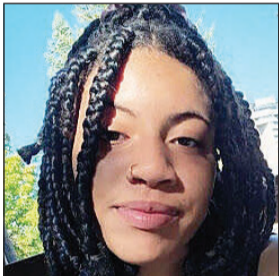
Alice Dunnigan was known as a journalist, civil rights activist and author. As a journalist, she broke ground being the first Black female correspondent to receive White House credentials, leading her to be the first Black female member of the Senate and House of Representatives press galleries. At the age of 13, she loved to write, and that love grew from there. Dunnigan became the chief of the Associated Negro Press in 1947 which led her to be the first female African American to follow a presidential campaign on the road. Later she would serve as an education consultant on the president's committee on equal employment opportunity until 1955. She was born April 27, 1906, and went to Kentucky State University and died May 6, 1983.

Amelia Boynton Robinson

Amelia Robinson was known for being a civil rights activist. She began her civil rights activism in the 1930s, when she started advocating for voting rights after becoming one of the few Black women registered to vote in Selma, Alabama. In 1964, she became the first Black American to run for office in Alabama, while also being the first woman to run for the ticket of the Democrats in the state. The following year, she helped Martin Luther King Jr. Plan the March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama on March 7, 1965, infamously known as "Bloody Sunday." Robinson, in 1965, was invited to the White House when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, she received the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Medal. Amelia Robinson was born Aug. 18, 1905 and she went to Tuskegee University. She died Aug. 26, 2015.



Madam C.J. Walker was an American entrepreneur, philanthropist, and political and social activist.



By Stori Taylor
THE BLACK LENS
STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR



Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler

Rebecca Crumpler was known for being the first Black American woman to earn a medical degree in the United States. Crumpler challenged the prejudice that prevented Black Americans and women from pursuing medical careers. She was the first Black woman to practice medicine as a physician and was also the first Black woman to author a medical text, titled "A book of Medical Discourses," published in 1883. From 1855 to 1864, Crumpler was employed as a nurse, physician and author. She experienced extreme racism and sexism, and her care focused on freedmen and freedwomen In 1860, she was accepted into the New England Female Medical College. She won a tuition award from the Wade Scholarship Fund. One of the first medical societies for Black women, The Rebecca Lee Pre-Health Society at Syracuse University and the Rebecca Lee Society, were named after her. Rebecca Crumpler was born Feb. 8, 1831, and died on March 9, 1895.

Madam C.J. Walker

Lastly, one of my favorite historical figures is Madam C.J. Walker, known as the first female self made millionaire in America. She made her fortune through the creation of her homemade line of hair care products for Black women; this came about after she experienced her own hair loss, which led to the creation of the "Walker System" of hair care. Walker founded several beauty training schools. Her birth name was Sarah Breedlove. And later changed by her second husband, Charles J. Walker. Walker was also known for her leadership in philanthropy and activism in the 1900s. She moved to Indianapolis to build a factory and establish a permanent company headquarters. Her legacy left its stamp through her alliances with groups like the National Association of Colored Women, and she funded schools and social service agencies led by Black women. Using business as leverage for social justice, Walker enlisted her company's sales agents in local charities and advocacy work. She was born on Dec. 23, 1867. She went to her competitor Annie Malone's Poro College. Later in life she died from hypertension on May 25, 1919.

Community care is part of collective healing

The community plays a vital role in the lives of young Black adults. Support systems, including family, friends, and community organizations, can provide crucial emotional backing. However, communities must also prioritize open conversations about mental health, aiming to reduce stigma and promote understanding. Community organizations that focus on mental health education can help bridge gaps in knowledge and resources. These initiatives can encourage young adults to seek help and foster a sense of belonging, which is essential for mental well-being.



By Daniella Musesambili
THE BLACK LENS
STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR



among young Black adults requires a comprehensive approach:

Education and awareness: Implementing mental health education programs in schools and communities can help demystify mental health issues and encourage individuals to seek help.

Increased access to services: Expanding access to affordable mental health care is essential. This includes training more culturally competent providers and increasing funding for mental health services in underserved communities.

Policy advocacy: Advocating for policies that address the root causes of mental health disparities, such as economic inequality and education access, is vital for long-term change.

Community support: Building supportive community networks that prioritize mental health can foster resilience and encourage open discussions about mental well-being.

Research in this article was done using the following resources: "Suicide in U.S. Black and African American Communities," by SAMHSA; "Suicide Data and Statistics | Suicide Prevention," by the CDC; "Youth Suicide Rates Increased During the COVID-19 Pandemic," by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH); and "Study finds spike in suicide rates for Black adolescents, young ... The tragedy of Black youth suicide," by AAMC.

Warning signs and prevention

Recognizing the warning signs of suicidal ideation is crucial. Common indicators may include:

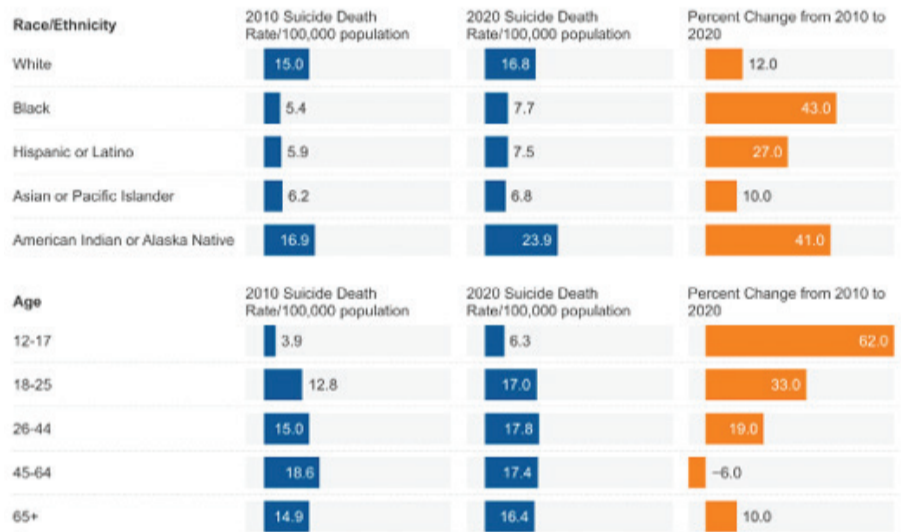
- Changes in behavior, such as withdrawal from social activities
- Expressions of hopelessness or feeling trapped
- Increased substance use
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Talking about wanting to die or expressing feelings of worthlessness

Awareness and education about these signs can empower friends, family members, and community members to intervene and provide support.

Path forward

Addressing the rising suicide rates

SUICIDE DEATH RATES BY DEMOGRAPHICS AND LOCATION, 2010 TO 2020



KFF ANALYSIS OF CDC DATA

“

Your voice can reach further than you think. Always remember to play chess not checkers. Don't let anyone use your culture against you.

REFLECTION OF EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

By Daniella Musesambili
BLACK LENS STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR

Being an immigrant in a new school system, I feel as if I must rebuild in a system that does not recognize my strength. There are assumptions about who I am and what I am capable of, before I even get the chance to show my full potential.

In trying to get placed in the correct classes, I have lost three years of my formal education from a school system that is recognized globally and even used in the United States as an advanced curriculum in some places. I came from a Cambridge/IB curriculum only to get told that my accomplishments are of no use I must restart from scratch.

Not being fully understood or given the opportunity to share fully created a sadness in me that was hard to shake. I lost my courage and strength, and I felt like I lost my voice. I gained insomnia, and felt mentally and physically drained.

I have had to prove myself where I am not recognized for who I am, but looked at for who they think I am.

It is assumed that I can't speak English since I am from Africa, even though I have taken English in school my entire life and it is the main language spoken where I came from. I have been negatively judged based on

my linguistic background. I struggled to readjust academically because it felt like I was moving backwards.

There was no consideration for the manner in which I was taught before and how that fits with methods here. Many things I have already learned in my studies in Uganda.

Then the big question is: Where do I see myself in the school system I am in right now and what does my future look like with all that I have experienced so far in such a short time? I wonder about this weekly. These issues are not just my issues and for those coming into this school system from other countries, a change in the way things are done should be greatly considered.

What I have found after several months, though, on the positive side of things, are new people who have had a great impact on me today and who have encouraged me to keep fighting and going forward. I have found advocates to help me get things changed for the better. I guess everything happens for a reason.

The advice I would give a student going through something like this is to keep your head up, keep going, and speak up! Your voice can reach further than you think. Always remember to play chess not checkers. Don't let anyone use your culture against you.

YOUTH CONNECTION

“
Never doubt yourself. Someone out there
is restless because of your capabilities.”

The art of getting what you want

We all want respect; we all want to be appreciated but the ugly truth is that these things will not come to us if we do not act like we want them. We want to be noticed so much that we end up losing ourselves in the process of trying to fit in and that is where we get it wrong. I am proud to be Black, but there are some things that we do that I am not so proud of. We spend most of our time worrying about people’s opinions about us that we really lose sight of what we want. The best advice I can give to anyone is become the best in whatever you do and here is why: No one whatsoever can bring you down if you are the best in any field, Be unbeatable. You can only achieve this kind of greatness by knowing who you are and appreciating your uniqueness.

Many times we come



By Anesu Whacha
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across individuals who do not know who they are, who they were or where they come from, and this is quite sad. We do most things for our own betterment, but if we work so hard on making invisible mirrors of ourselves who are we working for? Who

are we improving for? Who are we living for? Another painful truth is that we run away from our flaws, and we blame our incompetence on people and situations as it is “easier” to do. I know that most of us do this, but it is high time we stop and face the truth. Take a moment and look back on your life and think about the last time you took responsibility for whatever situation you landed in. The moment you start taking responsibility for all the negative and positive things taking place in your life, you start progressing; you grow. Note that the more you blame things on people, you get more frustrated as you cannot do anything about it.

But, if you consider your attitude, you turn the focus on what you can control: your emotions and your

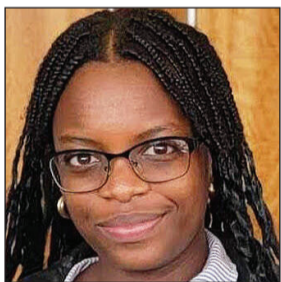
reactions. This is the time to unleash your power and work toward getting everything you have ever wanted. They do not like you, so what? They feel threatened by you? You should be glad. Set your standards up so high that no one can get in your way. Do not be worried about being liked by everyone, and remember that you, yourself, do not even like everyone. Stay focused and avoid anything that distracts you. Time is running out and you do not want to carry regret for the rest of your life. Take healthy risks, fail, get embarrassed but never stop going. I assure you, you will win in the end no matter what they say or what they do. You can achieve anything. You are surrounded by so many resources and people that make it possible, but you make it happen.

STUDENTS LEND VOICES
AT SPS EQUITY SUMMIT



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHON DAVIS

Students speak at the Spokane Public Schools Equity Summit in early November.



By Nikita Habimana
THE BLACK LENS
STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR



The Spokane Public Schools Equity Summit that happened on Nov. 4 of students from various multi-cultural students groups and diversity clubs throughout Spokane high schools was a chance to discuss various issues impacting students of color in the school system, and how to deal with them best.

We kicked off the event by each school giving a five-minute presentation on a topic that pertained to awareness around equity, racism, and stereotypes in their respective schools with a solutions based activity given for participants. This helped promote a proactive approach and advocacy.

After the presentations, students were broken up into groups with students from different schools, where they got together to brainstorm on a variety of topics on how to solve and reduce issues affecting students of color. Topics included tokenism, cultural appropriation, hate speech, slurs, and micro aggressions.



At times throughout the event, it was heart breaking to be in a room full of students and hear about how unwelcomed, unsafe and unheard they felt in schools. There was also frustration. No child should be having panic attacks in a bathroom because they feel unwelcomed and unsafe; no child should be walking down the hallways, minding their own business at school, and be harassed by other students simply because of the color of their skin. No student should feel targeted by insults while eating at the cafeteria because of their race or their ethnicity. No child should hear from a teacher that they are not fit to be in an advanced class when they have emigrated from another country and have not been given

a chance to show what they know based on what they have already done in their previous education. These examples were given during the summit in conversations and ideas for solutions were shared in small groups. What was undeniable by the end: a call to action that things must change.

These issues did not start from nowhere and will continue to plague the schools unless we take a stance against racism and bigotry. Consequences can shape new learning and changed behavior. There should be accountability when these incidents occur, and a standard that is followed. Prejudice and stereotyping create horrible experiences for students who deserved to come to school and feel safe. Giving a slap on the

wrist for acts of prejudice and racism is not an appropriate or serious response. Also, parents need support in educating their children on why bigotry against a certain group of people or stereotyping is wrong.

A child is not born racist, nor is a child born with prejudice or hate in their heart. A child becomes racist due to the surroundings and systems they grow up in. We cannot continue to live in a city that doesn’t address racism directly, and when confronted with it does nothing. This sends a message to children watching that hate of any kind is OK and allowed. If we continue to do nothing about it, we will be raising a hateful and racist future generation. Some steps we can take to reduce discrimination in schools include:

Educate. Teach students about race and racism in historical and current context.

Create a safe environment. All students should feel welcomed and should have an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

Take action. Take a stand against offensive language and behaviors.

Report. Making administration aware and keeping a record helps build accountability and tracks the follow-up on the outcomes of the reports made.

We need to work together to fight against oppression and hate of any kind so that no child feels unsafe, or unheard at school, or unwanted at school. No matter what race, gender, nationality or background they have, all should feel welcome at school.

REFLECTING ON THE
NAACP FREEDOM
FUND GALA

As the finale of the Grant Drummers and Dancers mesmerizing performance faded into the air during the social hour, the energy in the room at the NAACP Freedom Fund Gala was palpable. Held amidst the



By Z’hanie Weaver
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backdrop of a community processing a contentious election season, this event wasn’t just a celebration – it was a balm, a gathering that sought to remind us of the power of collective resilience and purpose. The students from Grant Elementary School brought a cultural vibrancy that fostered connection and celebration to shared histories, while the honorees and speakers reminded everyone of the importance of community power.

Lisa Gardner, president of the Spokane

NAACP, captured the essence of the evening in her opening displays of passion: “Being able to celebrate, (to) celebrate the Black excellence, and I think it’s time that we highlight all of the names that are under Black history.”

“So we gather today on the unceded lands of Indigenous peoples, and more specifically, the Spokane Tribe, honoring their enduring connection to this land and acknowledging the historical injustices they have faced,” a land acknowledgment delivered by Brandon T. Jones from KREM 2 News, emcee for the night.

He continued by raising the amplitude of restlessness, “Come together for this NAACP fundraiser, let’s commit ourselves to the ongoing fight for justice and equity, and may we strive to amplify the voices of Indigenous communities, descendants of the enslaved people, and all marginalized communities.

“Together, we honor their legacies and work towards a future grounded in respect, equality, and solidarity for all.”

The room responded with resounding applause, the audience sharing his sentiment of honoring both history and the present efforts of Spokane’s Black community.

The ceremony brought moments of reverence, with Pastor Benjamin Watson of Bethel A.M.E. Church leading a heartfelt libation in honor of African ancestors: “Divine Creator, source of all life and energy, we pour this libation in honor of our African ancestors who paved the way with their resilience, courage, and wisdom. We remember those who suffered and sacrificed for our freedom and dignity. Your spirits continue to guide us, and your legacy lives within us. To the ancestors, we honor you, the keepers of our history and culture.”

The celebration of Black excellence and community achievement was underscored by the presentation of three different award categories: the Community Champion Award (Stephaine Courtney, Walter Kendrick, Faith Washington, and Chauncey Jones), the Unsung Hero Award (Dr. Melissa Mace, Dr. Tanisha Morton, and Dr. Charina Carrothers) and the Spokane NAACP President’s Award, honoring two distinguished members of the Executive Committee (Fay Baptiste and Hadley Morrow). Each honoree’s story, example, and work ethic exemplifies a commitment to justice, equity, and education—powerful reminders of the community’s potential when achievement and unity spans over years of dedication.

Bringing smiles, tears, and admiration to the faces of the Spokane community was the announcement of the Michael P. Anderson Scholarship, which honors the legacy of the former U.S. Air Force pilot and NASA astronaut. This year’s recipient, Howard University freshman Birdie Bachman, was presented her award by 2020 recipient Mayah Eberhardt, now a senior at Eastern Washington University, to symbolize a full circle moment of progress and promise for the next generation of leaders.

The evening wasn’t only about reflection – it was a call to action. Hill Harper, keynote speaker for the night, emphasized the need for innovation and unity in addressing current challenges. He spoke candidly about overcoming fear and division, urging the audience to act boldly: “We need new ideas and innovation to improve the condition of marginalized communities. This work requires unity and collective action. Let’s act with courage and bring others along.”

Sparkling different reactions from the community, you could hear “that’s right” and several harmonious “mmm-hmms” synchronized with head nods and claps in agreement to Harper’s electric words. Inter-generational solidarity was also a key component of this event, as four tables of high school students from the Mead and Spokane Public Schools districts were purchased to grant an opportunity for youth to bask in this special occasion. Many represented the Black Student Union at their high schools.

The Freedom Fund Gala was more than an event; it was a testament to the strength and resilience of the Black community and the allyship within the Spokane community. It served as a breath of fresh air and a place of healing for many, as a community grappled with election results from just four days prior in a historical race for the presidency, and all of the implications that follow.

As the evening concluded, the question lingered for me: What lies ahead? The gala offered a glimpse of the possibilities when a community comes together to honor its past, celebrate its present, and commit to building a future rooted in respect, equity, and collective strength. The Spokane community showed up not just to celebrate but to reaffirm its dedication to progress – proving once again that the road forward is paved with perseverance and unity. It starts with our voice.



COURTESY OF BREWCITY FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

A young audience member watches as award recipients take the stage during the NAACP Freedom Fund Gala.

ARTS AND INSPIRATION

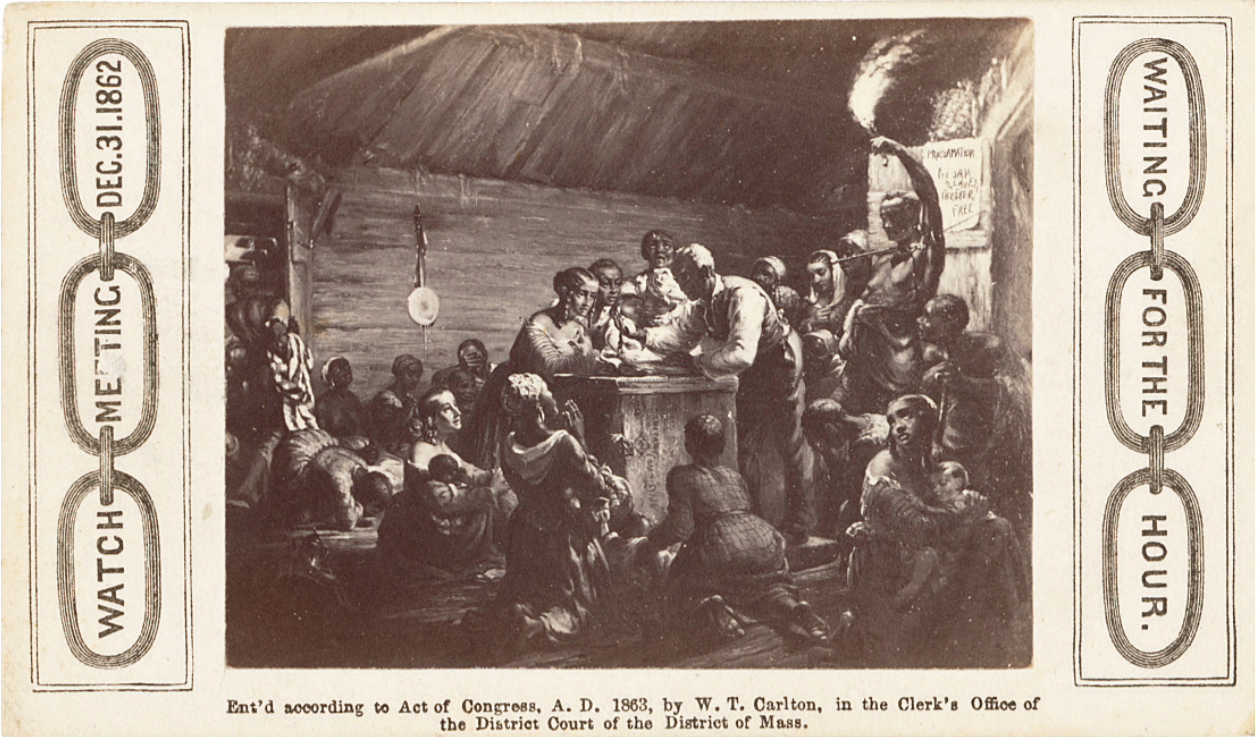
The Watch Night tradition in the Black community

From Black Lens staff reports

“It is a day for poetry and song, a new song. These cloudless skies, this balmy air, this brilliant sunshine ... are in harmony with the glorious morning of liberty about to dawn up on us.”
-Frederick Douglas

On the night of Dec. 31, 1862, enslaved and free African Americans gathered, many in secret, to ring in the new year and await news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. Just a few months earlier, on Sept. 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the executive order that declared enslaved people in the rebelling Confederate States legally free. However, the decree would not take effect until the clock struck midnight at the start of the new year. The occasion, known as Watch Night or “Freedom’s Eve,” marks when African Americans across the country watched and waited for the news of freedom. Today, Watch Night is an annual New Year’s Eve tradition that includes the memory of slavery and freedom, reflections on faith, and

celebration of community and strength. Watch Night service is rooted in African American religious traditions. During the first Watch Night, many enslaved African Americans gathered to pray, worship, sing, and dance. At the time, enslaved black people could find little respite from ever-present surveillance, even in practicing their faith. White enslavers feared that religion, which was often used to quell slave resistance, could incite the exact opposite if practiced without observance. They wrote laws that restricted worship and large gatherings, such as that in the 1848 Georgia Slave Code: *No person of color ... shall be allowed to preach, to exhort, or join in any religious exercise with any persons of color, either free or slave, there being more*



A carte-de-visite of an emancipation watch night meeting in 1863, as seen from the collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

than seven persons of color present. Despite these laws, enslaved people sought to exercise their own religious customs, including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous faith practices reflective of the homes from which they were stolen. They convened at praise houses on plantations or secretly gathered in the woods, where they practiced their faith under the protective cover of the trees and brush in what became known as “hush harbors.” As Charlotte Martin, a formerly enslaved woman from

Florida, recounted, “(The plantation owner) would not permit them to hold religious meetings or any other kinds of meetings, but they frequently met in secret to conduct religious services.” Charlotte’s own brother was beaten to death for participating in such secret worship meetings. But enslaved people persisted in their faith practices as forms of resistance and freedom. This spirit is still visible in Watch Night services today. The Watch Night service typically begins around 7 p.m. on Dec. 31 and lasts through mid-



More Information
All information is from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American Arts and Culture. To learn more, visit nmaahc.si.edu or scan the accompanying QR code.

night, as faith leaders guide congregants in praise and worship. Many congregants across the nation bow in prayer minutes before the midnight hour as they sing out “Watchman, watchman please tell me the hour of

the night.” In return the minister replies “it is three minutes to midnight”; “it is one minute before the new year”; and “it is now midnight, freedom has come,” to bless their transition into the new year.

‘Save the Children’ documentary a call to action

By Daniella Musesambili
THE BLACK LENS

“In 1972, during a time of political and racial unrest, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson and his newly formed organization Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity) sought ways to empower Black excellence in business, arts and culture. This led Rev. Jackson to organize and produce a five-day landmark festival called PUSH EXPO with the theme, ‘Save The Children.’ Rev. Jackson insisted the event be documented and a film crew was assembled. A feature-length movie was released in 1973, but after a limited theatrical run, it was pulled from the theaters and has remained virtually unseen for almost 50 years. In 2021, Rev. Jackson, his wife Jacqueline, their son Yusef, and Stan Lathan embarked on a mission to resurrect and re-release the film.”

This is the opening frame for a documentary currently on Netflix, titled “Save the Children.” The documentary is a powerful piece of storytelling that highlights the urgent need for action to protect Black children. As urban blight met a social and political climate that needed the community to come together in the 1970s, this five-day festival delved into the challenges faced by children worldwide, from poverty and hunger to lack of education and health care. Through compelling visuals and

heartfelt narratives, the documentary not only sheds light on these issues, but also emphasizes the role of collective responsibility in addressing them. Quincey Jones, Dick Gregory, the Jackson 5, Sammy Davis Jr., Marvin Gaye, Richard Roundtree, Rev. Willie Barrow and other icons in the Black faith and entertainment communities were among this event that underscored the transformative power of education in breaking the cycle of poverty. This is a demonstration on how to use a platform for a greater good, not just for fame. What sets “Save the Children” apart is an optimistic tone despite the grave issues that inspired its production. The film does not dwell solely on despair but also celebrates resilience and potential. It features grassroots initiatives and success stories where communities have come together to create lasting change. These examples inspire hope and demonstrate that solutions are within reach. Ultimately, “Save the Children” is more than a documentary; it is a call to action. It urges governments, organizations, and individuals to invest in the well-being of children. In 2024, this message is just as necessary. Protecting children is not just a moral obligation, but a necessary step toward building a more equitable and prosperous world.



“Save the Children” is streaming on Netflix.



Black-eyed peas and collard greens can double your luck just in time for New Year’s Day.

LUCKY NEW YEAR FOOD

Black-eyed peas recipe and its history in the community

By Patricia Bayonne-Johnson
THE BLACK LENS

I helped my mom prepare the family dinner when I was 10 years old. I chopped the “trinity,” onions, green pepper and celery, and stirred the pot. Although garlic is not part of the “trinity,” we never cooked without it. My mom told me that eating black-eyed peas on New Year’s Day brings us good luck in the new year. I have been cooking this meal ever since. I did not realize at the time that I was learning to cook.

Black-eye peas history

Black-eyed peas originated in Africa and came to North America via slave ships in the 1700s. Because of the trade routes, they are common in Europe and India. Although we call them peas, they are technically beans. It is unclear when black-eyed peas became associated with good luck and prosperity. The New Year’s tradition of eating them on Jan. 1 began in the South, but due to migration, this tradition has spread throughout the United States. Black-eyed peas and rice are known as Hoppin’ John in some southern states. There are two ways to cook

black-eyed peas: Cook the peas and serve them over rice or cook the peas and rice together, known as Hoppin’ John. In New Orleans, we cooked black-eyed peas and rice. I never heard of Hoppin’ John until I left Louisiana.

Recipe

- 1 pound dried black-eyed peas, rinsed, and picked over to remove soil or broken peas.
- 6 cups water
- 2 tablespoons vegetable cooking oil
- 1 smoked ham hock
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 2 stalks of celery, diced
- 4-6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- Green onions, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions

1. Add vegetable oil to a large pot. Add the onion, green pepper, and celery and saute for about 5 minutes; add garlic and cook for a minute.
2. Add water, peas, ham hock, salt, and pepper.
3. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and cook for an hour and 15 minutes. Stir the pot frequently, and cook until peas are tender. The texture of the peas should be thick and “creamy”

- but not watery. Add more water if the mixture gets too thick.
4. Remove the bay leaf.
 5. Remove the ham hock and cut meat from the bone if desired.
 6. Taste and adjust the seasonings.
 7. Serve over cooked rice and garnish with chopped green onions.

What to serve alongside

Increase your luck by serving black-eyed peas with collard greens, which represent money, and cornbread for gold. Ham hocks and pork sausages from pigs that root forward when searching for food, representing positive motion and progress, complete a traditional New Year’s dinner. Enjoy!

Other options

Substitute dried black-eyed peas with canned or frozen peas. Soaking your peas overnight or a few hours will shorten the cooking time. Use bacon, ham, sausage, smoked turkey drumsticks, wings, neckbones. Substitute collards with cabbage or mustard greens. Use chicken broth instead of water. Happy New Year!

THE NEED FOR AFFINITY SPACES FOR BLACK EDUCATORS

Washington state education, equity experts Erin Jones, Angie Mason speak on need

Affinity spaces for educators of color provide a supportive community where individuals can share experiences, resources, and strategies for navigating the education system as a person of color. These spaces also serve as a platform for advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools and promoting professional development opportunities tailored to the unique needs of Black educators.

Erin Jones and Angie Mason often lead workshops and discussions on racial equity, sharing the need for affinity spaces that support BIPOC educators. These affinity spaces provide a safe and empowering environment for educators to share their experiences in a profession that can be isolating and challenging. Jones and Mason work hard to make sure the spaces are psychologically safe for BIPOC educators to connect with one another and feel validated in their unique perspectives and struggles.

The result of desegregating education pushed out Black educators, leading to a significant decrease in diversity within the profession, ultimately perpetuating systemic inequalities. As more Blacks and people of color enter the education profession, it is crucial to provide them with support and resources to ensure their success and retention in the field.

On a recent visit to Spokane to meet with educators of color, Jones expressed that BIPOC educators need to be in community with each other, which is essential for building a network of support and empowerment. She shares the experience of being “the only Black educator” in educational institutions, emphasizing the importance of representation and solidarity within the BIPOC community. The majority of BIPOC people in education are support staff. There are not a lot of Black teachers in the field, which is a significant issue that needs to be addressed.

Educational institutions that want BIPOC educators in their buildings must be willing to do the work around hiring, retention, and making sure the space is inclusive, welcoming, and supportive for all individuals. Angie stated, “Black people who have experienced their own trauma as students are less likely to want to work in educational institutions.”

Representation with lived experience matters in education. Erin expressed, “Not to denigrate or diminish the experiences of support staff, but it sends a clear message to kids about where they belong.” As support staff, BIPOC educators are called upon to provide additional support and representation for students who may not see themselves reflected in their teachers. They under-



By Jaime Stacy
THE BLACK LENS
CONTRIBUTOR



stand the importance of being a role model and advocate for all students, but they are left feeling exhausted, being called upon to navigate issues that their white colleagues may not fully understand, be equipped to handle, or simply want to avoid. This can lead to feelings of isolation and burnout among BIPOC educators, ultimately hindering their ability to effectively support students.

Jones emphasized the importance of providing ongoing support and resources for BIPOC educators to thrive in their roles within educational institutions. She also highlighted the need for continuous dialogue and collaboration between educators and school leaders to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all individuals. The next iteration for Jones and Mason is to continue doing the work alongside white leaders, creating systemic change with suggestions like cohort hiring, shifting from intent to implementation.

The true benefit of affinity spaces for educators of color is realized when diverse perspectives are represented and valued within educational settings, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

This is the work: dismantling systemic barriers and creating a more just educational system for future generations.

Erin Jones has worked in and around schools in different capacities for over 30 years. She has been recognized locally and nationally for her work in education and equity. Since 2017, Erin has spoken to over 500,000 students and provided trainings and keynotes to a similar number of adults. She has three TEDx Talks and recently published a book, “Bridges to Heal US: Stories and Strategies for Racial Healing.”

Angie Mason-Smith serves as Program Director for Career Pathways at Washington STEM where she designs and implements innovative and scalable programs to advance STEM education in Washington state. Her work focuses on excellent, equitable, and engaging K-12 STEM learning, STEM career and college pathways, and STEM literacy.

EDUCATION

THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN RACE IDENTITY, CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

By Anyla McDonald
and Black Lens staff reports

Mental health for Black students has been a significant issue that has gained attention in recent years, highlighting the unique challenges and disparities faced by this demographic group. In order to fully understand the complexities surrounding mental health for Black students, it is important to explore the historical context of mental health within the Black community, key figures who have contributed to the field, and the impact of mental health on Black students today. Throughout history, the Black community has faced systemic racism, oppression, and discrimination which have had profound effects on mental health.

From slavery to segregation to present-day institutional racism, Black individuals have been subjected to trauma that can manifest in various mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. The stigma surrounding mental health in the Black community has also prevented many individuals from seeking help, leading to higher rates of untreated mental illness. Key figures in the mental health field have played a crucial role in advocating for the mental health needs of Black students.

Black psychologist, Dr. Kobi K.K. Kambon (1943-2018) was considered a radical in the field of psychology, as it pertained to Black people. Kambon, in his research, asserted that Black people around the world possess “African Self Extension Orientation (ASEO), or an unconscious but deeply felt experience of Blackness” (Center For Advances Hind-sight). This attribute embodies the acknowledgment of identity as African, and a commitment to the liberation, improvement, and respect of other African individuals and the larger African community. Essentially, Kambon drew a connection between self-awareness within the context of one’s social circumstance



in a larger society. He further asserted that cultural misorientation can occur when Eurocentric norms are internalized, reinforcing racism and incongruence with the cultural background of Black people. This creates a state of internal conflict.

Another radical Black psychologist, Bobby Wright (1934-1982) emphasized the need for Africans to define themselves. He focused on recognizing the psychology of racial warfare and held the belief in self-determination through independence from European world views. “He coined the phrase ‘Mentacide’ which he described as the deliberate and systematic destruction of the African mind, and his ideas helped develop protocols for a culturally sensitive and relevant treatment of Black mental health” (Blackpast.org). Another important theory that came from Wright was the Wright Social-Political Model, wherein he evaluated the occurrence of Black suicide and drew parallels between suicide, socio-political influences dynamics and self-destruction.

Dr. William Cross, a renowned psychologist who developed the theory of Nigrescence which explores the racial identity development of Black individuals. His work has provided valuable insights into the unique experiences of Black students and how they navigate their racial identity in educational settings. Additionally, Dr. Monnica Williams, a clinical psycholo-

gist, has focused her research on the intersection of race and mental health, shedding light on the disparities in access to mental health care for Black individuals. The impact of mental health on Black students is multifaceted, with various factors influencing their overall well-being.

Issues such as racial discrimination, socioeconomic disparities, and lack of culturally competent mental health services can exacerbate mental health challenges for Black students. Studies have shown that Black students are less likely to receive mental health treatment compared to their white counterparts, highlighting the need for culturally sensitive and accessible resources. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of addressing mental health for Black students, leading to initiatives and programs aimed at providing support and resources.

Organizations such as the Steve Fund and the National Association of Black Psychologists have worked to promote mental health awareness and support for Black students on college campuses. These efforts have helped to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for Black students to address their mental health needs. Despite the progress made in advocating for mental health for Black students, there are still challenges that need to be addressed.

In the future, it is essential to continue to elevate the voices of Black students and advocate for policies and programs that prioritize their mental health. Increasing representation in the mental health field, providing culturally competent care, and addressing systemic barriers to access are crucial steps towards improving mental health outcomes for Black students. By fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment, we can ensure that all students, regardless of race, have the resources they need to thrive mentally and emotionally.

Book ban ripple effects on U.S. education

By Dr. Sharah Zaab
THE BLACK LENS

In a startling statistic, Texas led the nation with over 800 book bans during the 2023-24 school year, followed closely by Florida and Pennsylvania, highlighting a nationwide trend of escalating censorship in schools. Framed as efforts to protect children from “inappropriate” content, these bans disproportionately target books addressing race, gender, sexuality, and cultural identity. According to PEN America, over 2,500 titles were challenged across the country. While proponents cite the need to shield young minds, critics warn that such actions harm students’ intellectual growth and critical thinking.

Who is most affected?

The most affected age group includes students between 11 and 18, crucial years for developing reasoning, empathy and analytical skills. Middle and high school curriculums often use literature to spark discussions about identity, history, and ethics. Banning books that address these themes robs students of opportunities to engage with diverse perspectives and prepare for the challenges of higher education.

What’s being targeted?

Many banned books deal with vital societal issues. Titles like “The Bluest Eye” by Toni Morrison, “Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You” by Jason Reynolds and “Ibram X. Kendi, and Between the World and Me” by Ta-Nehisi Coates often face challenges for addressing racism and historical inequalities. These works provide critical insights into systemic injustice, helping students grapple with the historical and present-day realities of race in America.

Impact on African American students and communities

The African American community is particularly affected by book bans, which often target literature highlighting Black history, culture, and struggles. Many of these books illuminate the systemic racism embedded in American institutions and celebrate the resilience of African Americans throughout history.

For African American students, these stories are more than educational tools – they are affirma-

tions of their identity and heritage. Removing such books erases their voices from the curriculum, fostering a sense of invisibility and exclusion. Additionally, books that critically examine issues like slavery, the civil rights movement,

or police violence equip students of all backgrounds to understand racial dynamics in the U.S.

Book bans also impede efforts to address the racial achievement gap. African American students often face systemic barriers in education, and literature celebrating their history and potential can be a source of inspiration. Without these resources, schools fail to create

inclusive environments that nurture success and pride in cultural identity.

Impact on education and higher learning

Reduced critical thinking

skills: Exposure to diverse and challenging literature fosters critical analysis. By censoring these books, students miss out on essential skills, making them less competitive in college admissions and unprepared for rigorous coursework.

Cultural and historical blind spots: Banned books often explore marginalized histories and cultures. Without access to these stories, students may lack the cultural competence and historical understanding necessary for fields like sociology, political science, or law.

Difficulty in diverse environments: Higher education exposes students to a variety of perspectives. Students who haven’t been challenged to consider different viewpoints may struggle to adapt, limiting their success in discussions, group work, or networking.

Broader implications

Book bans can deepen societal polarization, turning education into a battleground for ideological conflicts. Furthermore, they exacerbate educational disparities. Students in districts with fewer restrictions benefit from richer curriculums, while others are left behind, widening the knowledge gap. For African American students, this means continued underrepresentation and denial of the tools necessary to understand and address systemic challenges.

What parents can do to bridge the gap

Parents play a crucial role in addressing the gaps left by book bans. Here are some practical ways they can help:

Build a home library: Stock your home with diverse books that reflect multiple perspectives. Many of the banned books are available through independent bookstores and online platforms.

Encourage independent reading: Motivate students to read widely by recommending books that explore themes of race, identity, and social justice. Consider using family reading nights to discuss these topics openly.

Leverage digital resources: Platforms like Project Gutenberg, Open Library, and e-book services often provide access to banned or challenged books. Additionally, many authors offer digital copies for free or reduced prices.

Advocate for local access: Parents can collaborate with community organizations, libraries, and local bookstores to ensure these books remain accessible. Organize book clubs or reading groups focused on topics that are no longer covered in school.

Talk about censorship: Engage your children in age-appropriate discussions about censorship, its impacts, and the importance of intellectual freedom. These conversations can empower students to think critically about the content they encounter.

By taking these steps, parents can supplement their children’s education and ensure they have the resources to grow into informed, empathetic individuals despite the restrictions imposed by book bans.

The fight against censorship

Despite these challenges, resistance is growing. Organizations like the American Library Association, PEN America, and Black-led advocacy groups are working to preserve access to books that reflect the Black experience. Community initiatives, such as book drives and public discussions, aim to ensure these stories remain accessible to students and families.

Conclusion

Book bans are not just a threat to individual students – they undermine the core principles of education: fostering curiosity, empathy and critical thinking. For African American students, the impact is particularly profound, denying them representation, erasing their history, and perpetuating systemic inequities. Education must empower all students to face challenges with open minds and informed perspectives, celebrating the diverse voices that shape our shared history.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE



“I was so honored to be recognized at this event. Being a part of such an amazing event really showed me how special the Spokane NAACP truly is. Your efforts will continue to push me as a young person and activist, and I can’t wait to get further involved with the organization once I get back home!”

Spokane graduate and Howard University freshman Birdie Bachman



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BREWCITY FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY



ABOVE: Black Lens editor and educator April Eberhardt with daughter Maya, right, a 2020 scholarship recipient, present Spokane native and Howard University freshman Birdie Bachman a certificate of achievement for her 2024 Michael P. Anderson Scholarship during the NAACP Freedom Fund Gala.

AT LEFT: Charina Carrothers, an educator, clinical social worker and social justice and racial equity advocate accepts the award for Unsung Hero, presented by Luc Jasmin III.

Reflections on the journey

Gala nurtures advocacy, amplifies community progress

The Spokane Doubletree Hotel was aglow on Saturday, Nov. 9, as the NAACP Spokane branch hosted its annual Freedom Fund Gala. It was an evening of elegance, empowerment, and extraordinary unity, drawing attendees from all walks of life to celebrate the shared mission of advancing equity and justice.

As a Haitian immigrant and advocate for my community, I was struck by the evening’s resonance with themes of resilience and collaboration. The gala wasn’t merely an event; it was a series of stories woven together by a common goal: to uplift, empower, and honor the efforts that drive change.

In between the formalities, the gala offered plenty of moments to connect, celebrate, and simply enjoy each other’s company. The lively atmosphere, filled with laughter, music, and photos was a testament to the power of joy as an act of resistance.

I have to mention the speaker Hill Harper as he was not to be missed. His messaging of unity above all else as we face an uncertain political future, was one in which every political party member could join in on the chorus.

As the night drew to a close, I couldn’t help but reflect on how far we’ve come and the road ahead. The Freedom Fund Gala was a reminder of the profound impact that advocacy, community, and perseverance



By Katia Jasmin
THE BLACK LENS
CONTRIBUTOR



can have.

For me, as a leader of Creole Resources, the evening reinforced the importance of creating spaces where all voices are heard and valued. It’s a mission that transcends borders, one that resonates deeply with my Haitian heritage and my commitment to building bridges across communities.

The NAACP Spokane Freedom Fund Gala illuminated the path forward. By nurturing advocacy, unity, and amplifying community progress, we’re creating a world where everyone can thrive. As we move forward, let us carry the spirit of the gala with us – building unity, celebrating each other’s victories, and investing in the future. Together, we are unstoppable.

Katia Jasmin is the executive director of Creole Resources.

GALA

Continued from 1

scholarship winner, Birdie Bachman. Her presence and achievements served as a powerful reminder of the event’s core values: scholarship, opportunity, and academic excellence for our Black and Brown students. The live music performances, a key element of the evening, added a festive touch, encouraging everyone to

mingle and celebrate their contributions.

This year, Spokane has faced its share of cultural insensitivities, racism and discrimination. But through our collective efforts, we have addressed these injustices, sought to correct missteps, and overcome obstacles. The Freedom Fund event showed us the power of unity and the potential for true racial solidarity. It’s this unity that will continue to drive our mission

forward.

In 2025, my vision is to advocate across the spectrum for racial harmony in health care, education, government, community, sports, youth activities, our congregations, entertainment venues and grocery stores – essentially anywhere where there is hate.

Together, we will advocate for justice and strive to create psychologically and emotionally safe environments.



Brandon Jones, at left, was emcee of the NAACP Freedom Fund Gala. Here he is joined by wife Jordy Jones.



Hadley Morrow, Spokane NAACP secretary, hugs Gardner as they receive the Presidents Award during the gala.

HEALING

Continued from 1

community presents obstacles, be it cost of care, disgrace, or an inability to find a therapist that fits. Courtney realizes the complicated history of mental health struggles in communities of color. She explains that even during enslavement, those who tried to escape were given a diagnosis of “drama mania” and would be medicated and stigmatized. Generationally, this residue of shame coupled with invalidation has developed into an acute issue within the Black community, with implications around epigenetics. A grass-roots approach to changing this in the Black collective experience equates to building awareness and support; that is what this peer support program intends to do.

“When we think about our barbers and beauticians and the Black community, they are our counselors, our mentors, our guides, our safe space,” she said.

She reflects on years in her youth when she went to the salon for service, watching her own stylist care for people, care that transcended the physical. There is a lot of time spent over years in the chair of a barber or a beautician and



COURTESY OF SHADES OF MOTHERHOOD NETWORK

Spokane professionals pose with certificates for completed peer support training offered through the Washington Health Care Authority, granting them as certified peer support counselors through the state.

Courtney, though her own experiences, realized the leverage of effective training in the hands of those who are already in relationship with their own community. Witnessing how much of themselves they pour into their clients; Courtney speaks of healing the healer by providing a new bridge of service and an additional skillset for professionals.

“Sometimes they are giving out so much, you know, they’re not truly being compensated for what they’re actually doing,” she said. “And so, this program is going to also pay the barbers and beauticians to be peer supports in our community. This is really exciting

because it’s going to really address some of the economic stuff that we’ve been concerned about in our barbers’ and beauticians’ space.”

Training involves content delivery and testing, with a letter from the state once scores are reviewed, qualifying participants as certified peer support counselors. The domino effect? Economic power, community power, and community healing, community working together on a larger scale, cultivating more healers in the community.

Courtney anticipates a forthcoming project and art exhibit in the near future to showcase this endeavor.

ANDERSON

Continued from 1

activism, Anderson shares that she was held to high standards; the impact of people looking out for each other was felt.

“The power of community is integral to success,” Anderson said. “The thing that breaks my heart is that that has been forgotten. That is not what is being promoted right now. Individualism. Let me get mine. How do I (become) a single influencer? This idea of, like, one-to-many, as opposed to many-to-many has been deprioritized.

“So, a lot of the whole ethos of why I wrote my book and this idea of how we build a rested rebel community, (is) because part of the reason why this has happened is because we’ve been going too fast.”

Reaching the apex of career success, the most valuable experience may have come to her in the form of a health crisis; it forced Anderson to slow down. This pivot shifted her focus and the personal and professional collided into a new mission: healing. Her message is simple. Rest.

Anderson redefines what rest feels like and talks a lot about how taking necessary pauses in life can give us the clarity and peace we not only need but deserve. In a society that evokes competition, such a message seems counterculture. But Anderson believes that this is where real success lies.

“I’ve been really honing in on my work around pause and rest as I’ve become the master of the pivot,” Anderson said.

Understanding that



COURTESY

Kibi Anderson, right, visits with Spokane community leaders and entrepreneurs to talk in depth about what healing in Black families looks like. At left, Spokane City Council President Betsy Wilkerson talks with Anderson.

there is often fear attached to change, Anderson says that fear is also an indicator that we are still alive. Her health crisis brought her to a crossroads. Enter the power of the pause. Anderson had to pause to find proper alignment.

“The only way that I was ultimately able to reconcile that fear is that it was a reminder that I was still alive. And then each day I had to thank God that my legs are still working, even though I can’t walk. It means that there’s still life,” Anderson said. “I always tell people, if you can sit in that fear and embrace it, and not stop though – once you feel it, everything you want is on the other side of it.”

She unpacks the idea behind the purpose of negative emotions and how we are taught that they are bad.

“So, to admit that we’re afraid is to admit that it’s a bad thing, when the truth is, fear is literally an indicator that something has to change,” Anderson said. “There is a positive purpose for a negative emotion.”

In the hot stove test, she continues, we take our hand off immediately because it burns. Negative emotions operate the same way.

So, what does rest look like? Even the way we have been taught to rest should be challenged; it wasn’t always modeled by our ancestors, she reflects. Anderson encourages us to find pockets of joy, sharing these four steps as integral in developing a rest routine: micro-inspiration, micro-action, micro-share and micro-reward.

“The minute I gave myself permission to do that (rest), the resilience started to matter,” she said.

She talks about how the journey back to healing is like swimming in the ocean.

“It takes faith to rest,” Anderson said. “It takes courage to decide that you are going to do something that has never been done before.”

The Rest Rebel Community is a paradigm shift, one where generations can learn from each other. Anderson is here to lead the charge.

ELECTION

Continued from 1

of public lands is expected to be Dave Upthegrove; the Insurance Commissioner is Patty Kuderer; the secretary of state is Steve Hobbs; the state auditor is Pat McCarthy; the state treasurer is Mike Pellicciotti; and the superintendent of public instruction

is Chris Reykdal.

Michael Baumgartner became the U.S. representative for Congressional District 5, defeating Carmela Conroy and replacing longtime incumbent Cathy Morris Rodgers. In Congressional District 4, Dan Newhouse beat out Jerrod Sessler in a heated race.

Marcus Riccelli was voted to become senator

and represent central Spokane’s Legislative District 3, while Leonard Christian will represent Spokane Valley’s Legislative District 4 as senator.

Sal Mungia was named state Supreme Court Justice No. 2.

The measure intended to enshrine natural gas usage in Washington was the only statewide initiative to pass.

WELLNESS

DEEP ROOTS, STRONG WOMEN

BRINGING BACK JOY TO BLACK CHILDREN

Black children in America face a unique and heavy burden. The innocence of childhood is often overshadowed by the pervasive effects of systemic racism, which can strip away their sense of wonder and security. From an early age, many Black children encounter the harsh realities of bias, discrimination, and societal pressures that foster anxiety, depression, and an overwhelming loss of joy. But the community has the power – and the responsibility – to do something about it.

In November, Black Babies Awareness Month served as a rallying cry for change. In Spokane, the Shades of Motherhood Network is leading the charge with their “Jump for Joy” event, a celebration of Black and Brown children’s resilience and the enduring beauty of their spirits. On Nov. 25 at Get Air Trampoline Park, a gathering was planned to be more than just an after-



By Stephanie Courtney
SHADES OF MOTHERHOOD NETWORK



noon of fun; it served as a beacon of hope and a bold declaration that every Black child deserves a future free from the burdens of systemic inequities.

The weight of racism
Racism doesn’t just affect

Black adults; it starts early, seeping into the lives of Black children in insidious ways. A 2019 study by the Washington Department of Commerce revealed that Black American students in Spokane are some of the most underserved in the state regarding early childhood education. The lack of culturally relevant resources, combined with the pressures of navigating a world riddled with prejudice, leaves many Black children vulnerable to mental health challenges.

The consequences are stark. Anxiety and depression are rising among Black youth as they grapple with the expectations to conform, perform, and endure in spaces that often don’t value their full humanity. The cumulative impact of these experiences can rob children of their joy, creativity, and self-confidence—qualities that should define their childhoods, not be casualties of systemic oppression.

A community’s response

In the face of these challenges, Spokane’s advocates are fighting back. Organizations like the Shades of Motherhood Network, SWAG (Successful Women Achieving Greatness), and Raze Early Learning exemplify the power of collective action to restore joy, dignity, and opportunity to Black children.

The Shades of Motherhood Network empowers families through education, support, and culturally relevant programming, creating safe spaces for Black mothers and their children to thrive. SWAG fosters mentorship and defies stereotypes by helping women embrace their identities, define their futures, and uplift their communities. Raze Early Learning and Development Center addresses disparities in education by opening facilities in childcare deserts,

creating opportunities to break the preschool-to-prison pipeline and close the achievement gap.

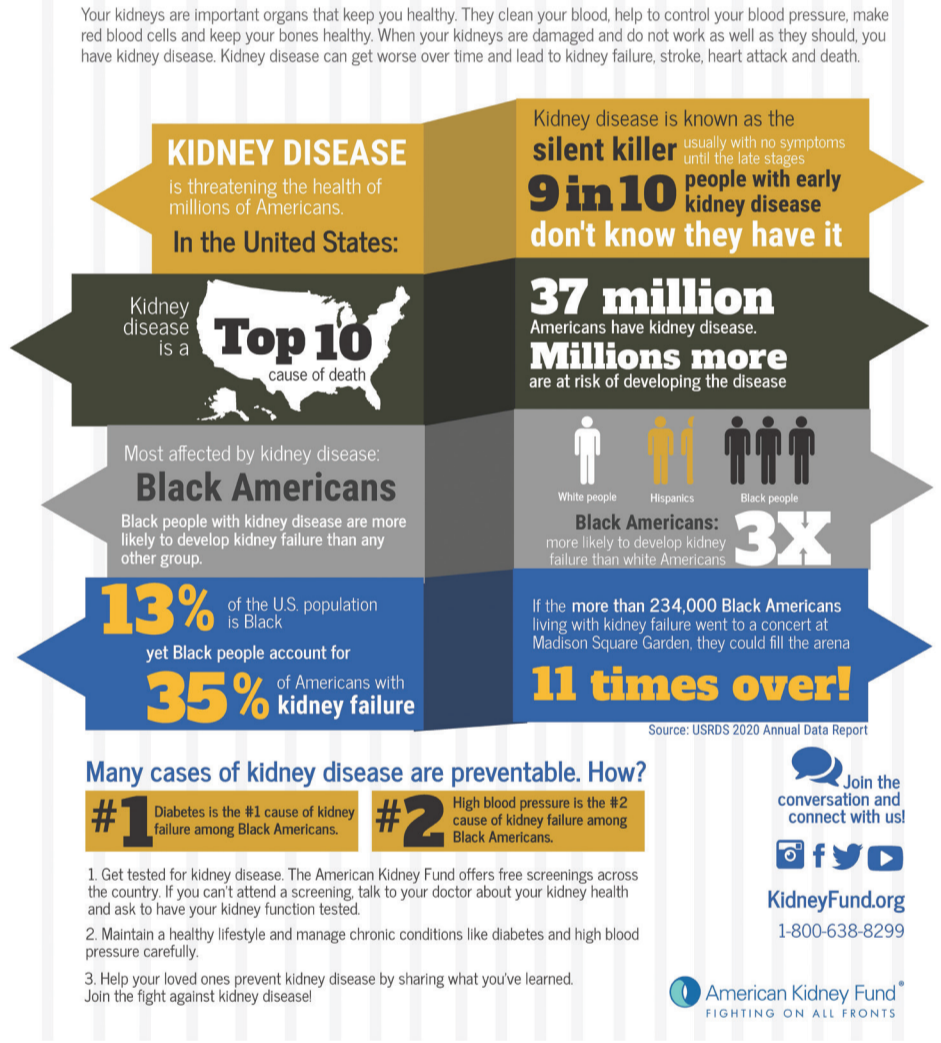
Restoring joy, reclaiming futures

The Jump for Joy event represents a larger movement to combat the effects of racism on Black children. It’s a moment to remind them – and their families – that they are loved, valued, and deserving of boundless joy. Through collective efforts, Spokane’s community is showing that the scars of racism don’t have to define the future.

Black Babies Awareness Month is a time to reflect on the work needed and celebrate the progress being made. It’s a chance to prove that with intention and unity, we can reclaim the innocence and joy that every child deserves. Join us in this transformative effort, and let’s bring back the light to our children’s lives.

How kidney disease disproportionately affects African Americans

Kidney Disease: A Silent Killer Affecting Black Americans



By Anyla McDonald
THE BLACK LENS

Kidney disease is a serious health issue that affects millions of people worldwide. Among those disproportionately affected by this condition are African Americans, who are at higher risk of developing kidney disease compared to other racial and ethnic groups. There are several factors that contribute to the increased risk of kidney disease among African Americans, including genetic predisposition, high rates of diabetes and hypertension, and socioeconomic disparities.

One key factor that contributes to the higher risk of kidney disease among African Americans is genetic predisposition. Research has shown that African Americans are more likely to carry genetic variations that increase their susceptibility to kidney disease. For example, African Americans are more likely to have gene variations that are associated with hypertension and other risk factors for kidney disease. These genetic factors can increase the likelihood of developing kidney disease in this population.

In addition to genetic predisposition, African Americans are more likely to develop kidney disease due to the high rates of diabetes and hypertension within this population. Diabetes and hypertension are two major risk factors for kidney disease, and African Americans have higher rates of both of these conditions compared to other racial and ethnic groups. This increased prevalence of diabetes and hypertension among African Americans contributes to their higher risk of developing kidney disease.

Socioeconomic factors also play a significant role in the increased risk of kidney disease among African Americans. African Americans are more likely to experience socioeconomic disparities such as poverty, lack of access to health care and limited resources for managing chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension. These socioeconomic factors can make it more difficult to receive timely and appropriate treatment for kidney disease, leading to poorer outcomes and higher rates of kidney disease

More Information

Learn more about kidney health in the Black community by visiting the National Kidney Foundation's website at www.kidney.org or by scanning the accompanying QR code.

within this population.

Furthermore, disparities in health care access and quality can contribute to the higher risk of kidney disease among African Americans. Studies have shown African Americans are less likely to receive early detection and treatment for kidney disease compared to other groups. This lack of access to quality health care can result in delayed diagnosis and treatment, leading to more advanced stages of the disease and poorer outcomes for African Americans.

It is important to recognize and address the factors that contribute to the higher risk of kidney disease among African Americans. Efforts to raise awareness about the importance of kidney health, promote regular screening for diabetes and hypertension, and improve access to quality healthcare are essential in addressing this health disparity. By addressing these factors, we can help reduce the burden of kidney disease among African Americans and improve health outcomes within this population.

In conclusion, African Americans are at higher risk of kidney disease due to a combination of genetic predisposition, high rates of diabetes and hypertension, socioeconomic disparities, and disparities in healthcare access and quality. It is crucial to address these factors through targeted interventions and policies that promote early detection and treatment of kidney disease, improve access to quality healthcare, and reduce socioeconomic disparities within this population. By addressing these factors, we can help reduce the burden of kidney disease among African Americans and improve health outcomes for all.

Loneliness epidemic

Reclaiming connection in a disconnected world



By Jasmine Kazuko
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



GETTY IMAGES

The disease of disconnection is permeating every corner of American life.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Begin.

Take a moment and bring into your awareness, one person that you can and do rely on. Someone you share feelings, hardships and celebrations with. Once you have that person in mind, take an intentional inhale deep into the body and hold their face, their energy, their heart in yours. Exhale to send a breath of gratitude their way. If multiple people come to mind, pause and repeat this practice for each of them.

Go slow. Breathe deep. Begin again.

If that exercise feels difficult, take a breath of grace for yourself. Ironically, you’re not alone. Perhaps you’ve heard the news; the U.S. Surgeon General released an advisory reporting that we, the American people, are in an epidemic of loneliness and isolation. We are suffering, gravely, from a lack of connection. According to the advisory, “Social connection – the structure, function, and quality of our relationships with others – is a critical and underappreciated contributor to individual and population health, community safety, resilience, and prosperity. However, far too many Americans lack social connection in one or more ways, compromising these benefits and leading to poor health and other negative outcomes,” the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported last year.

We see the symptoms of this everywhere – since the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic – even more. From shifting behaviors and sense of belonging for children in school, to drops in productivity and passion in the workplace, to the growing divide within our political environment. This disease of disconnection is permeating every corner of American life.

Either for yourself or someone you know, let us expand into feeling the connective tissue that exists in our communities.

Starting from your home and flowing through your place of work, what do relationships in those places feel like for you? Perhaps a greater exploration is needed. Ray Oldenburg, an American sociologist coined the term, “Third Space” to describe the places that are not the home (first place) or school or work (second place), where people exist for connection, for pleasure, for exploration. Third spaces include coffee shops, clubs, gyms, churches, places of learning by choice, and so many more. They provide an opportunity of belonging, exposure to diverse perspectives, a break from the stressors of home and work balance, and help us feel like we are part of a larger society – a smaller, more accessible world.

If we are all feeling alone – then we are united in that feeling. We are connected in a sensation that exists in our bodies that ultimately proves our connection above all else as humans. Energy is shared. It is felt from one to another and beyond. If I am filled to the brim with ecstatic joy, you will feel it. If I feel heartbreak, shame, anger, or fear, you will feel that too. So what if this epidemic of loneliness is spreading because we are sharing feelings of solitude at such a rate that we are manifesting loneliness as a normal state of existence. With thoughts occupying the mind like: “I have to muscle the weight of life on my own” or “If I disappeared tomorrow, no one would notice.”

What if when those words float through our awareness, we could speak them out loud to at least one person. Finding one point of connection may be the key to allowing the weight of those thoughts and feelings to dissolve in a shared ocean of “hey, I have those thoughts sometimes too – but they are not true” or “I would notice.” What if we took a moment to pause, breathe an inhale deep into our bodies and feel – then, with a full

exhale, look around and find one thing we are grateful for. What vibration would that send to those near. Could we start exploring our sensations of loneliness with one another and alchemize that energy into love and gratitude?

What if taking hold of our loneliness becomes the gateway into community, to deeper relationships, to gratitude.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Connect.

One-minute wellness invitation: Reflection activity

Rapid check-in – Don’t think, just reflect (or journal!)

- How’s your heart right now?
- What is one thing you are grateful for?
- What are you proud of yourself for?
- What is one thing you want/ want to work toward/manifest?
- What is one thing you are grateful for?
- Who is one person you can connect with today?
- If you’re experiencing feelings of loneliness, please reach out to a mental health professional for support. You are loved and needed here.

Jasmine Linane-Booe of Kazuko Wellness is a Somatic Energy Guide. She holds two certificates in Reiki (Paris, France and Spokane, WA), over 10 years experience as a certified yoga and meditation guide (Goa, India), a certification as a Somatic Energy Practitioner (Spokane, WA), and is a trained Psilocybin guide and wellness coach. Contact: hello@kazukowellness.com | www.kazukowellness.com

Sources: “Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community,” from the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG); and Washington (DC): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2023.

WELLNESS

Black, Brown anglers gather in Spokane, leave impression

FROM THE WATER’S EDGE

In mid-October the city of Spokane experienced a slight uptick in its number of Black and Brown folks. These visitors were different from the usual ones who come to participate in or watch a sporting event. They were a small group of black and brown fly anglers and environmental activists from across the country. How unlikely! These folks fish with rods that cast an otherwise weightless lure called a fly. Flies are meant to resemble naturally occurring fish food. They practice “catch and release” fishing and prefer to fish places where mostly trout live and few people visit. Each one is a strong advocate for the environment. Collectively they are a power to be reckoned with.

Over my many years as a fly angler it is extremely rare to meet another black or brown person streamside or as a member of an environmental group like Trout Unlimited. Fly anglers are overwhelmingly white; they fish overwhelmingly white places and they belong to overwhelmingly white environmental organizations. Black and Brown fly anglers tend to be as rare as “hen’s teeth.”

In 2023, I decided to be intentional in searching for other black and brown fly anglers located in the United States. With the help of Instagram, I found and formed a nonprofit group known as the Ubuntu Fly Anglers Network. We established a leadership team who joined me in Spokane for four days in October.

While here, we fished the Spokane River, hosted a donor and friends’ appreciation dinner, did some strategic planning and spent time in Corbin Park putting fly rods into the hands of black and brown kids for their first time.

Our time together as a leadership team was like a black family reunion! Here’s who came:

Emma Brown, of Longmont, Colorado, is a horse and rider trainer, professional fly-fishing and backcountry guide and



By Dr. Robert L. “Bob” Bartlett
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



Scot Simmons, of Bloomington, Minnesota, is a professional fly-fishing guide. He claims that fly fishing and creek time help him find and maintain his equilibrium. Scot enjoys chasing fish even in the dead of winter fishing through the ice. Scot serves on the board of the Twin Cities chapter of Trout Unlimited where he focuses on youth outreach.

Jamie Lander, of Bozeman, Montana, was born and raised in eastern Washington knowing only fly rods and fly fishing. She advanced from fishing the area’s lakes in a belly boat to walk and wade fishing high mountain streams in Idaho and Montana. Jamie and her family live near the Gallatin and Yellowstone Rivers.

Carl Crawford, of Diamond Bar, California, claims he was “tricked” into fly fishing by the first guide he ever hired. He is a member of the Pasadena Casting Club. He serves on the Board of the Southwest Council of Fly Fishers International. Since 2017 he coordinates activities that exposes hundreds of children to flyfishing across

lead wrangler for Wanderland Outdoors in Denver, Colorado (you should look them up). She is the founder of EB Outdoors which focuses on creating access for the BIPOC community to equestrian sports. Emma’s favorite thing is venturing into the wilderness and being there for others during their first outdoor experience. Guiding, she says, is truly a gift.



COURTESY

Bob Bartlett, center in red, is surrounded by other Black and Brown anglers.

Southern California. Carl fishes the surf near L.A. and the Sierra Nevada’s. His goal is to empower access to fly fishing and remove the mystery of the outdoors for potential anglers of color.

Dr. Loleta Robinson, M.D. MBA, of Wilmington, North Carolina, considers herself a globe-trotting aficionado by day, a fiction devourer by night and a nomadic maverick who dances to the beat of her own drum. She found herself in Omaha, Nebraska, where she took her first ‘Fly Fishing 101’ course. She later joined United Women on the Fly and continues to evolve from a novice to confident solo angler.

Erin Lipsker, of Spokane, was born in Colorado. Her first introduction to fishing was catching sunfish with a Snoopy pole, a red and white bobber and a live worm. Erin’s family moved to Eastern Washington when she was three. Casting a fly rod was a natural progression for her because she already had the fishing bug. These days she can be found passing her love for fly fishing and for the great outdoors on to her children.

Angelica Talen, of Washington, D.C., is a brand ambassador for Take Me Fishing and FisheWear. She is a social media influencer and a digital content creator located in D.C.

Angelica served on the United Women on The Fly leadership team for three and half years and has written several articles published in DUN Magazine. She has had professional partnerships with several outdoor businesses. Her favorite things to do are travel, fishing and introducing new people to the sport.

And, yours truly of Spokane – a published author, a fly-fishing instructor, host of a live Instagram show titled On the REAL, serve on the board of iFishiBelong, on the board of directors for the Spokane Riverkeeper, a life member of Trout Unlimited and a regular outdoor columnist for this paper.

This gathering, although small, was a first for Spokane. It did leave a lasting impression on all those who met them and would not have happened without the financial help, love and support of so many. The entire gathering was a Spokane happening! You can follow the Ubuntu Fly Anglers on Instagram @ubuntuflyanglers and on Facebook @ubuntuflyanglers. Hope to see you on the water’s edge.

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

BLACK GENEALOGY

WHO ARE WE? Embark on a Journey of Self-Discovery by Exploring Your Heritage with Black Genealogy and History. Understanding our heritage is not just a matter of curiosity; it is a fundamental part of our identity.

The 1870 Census

One of the most challenging goals of African American genealogy is to go beyond the 1870 U.S. Federal Census. Some call it the “1870 Brick Wall,” while others call it the “1870 Divide.” The 1870 census was the first taken after the Civil War and after the passage of the 13th Amendment, which made slavery illegal, and was ratified on Dec. 6, 1865.

African American genealogists face unique problems tracing their ancestors. The most important of these problems is that enslaved people were considered property; they were not citizens of the United States. They were prohibited from engaging in legal transactions, even a marriage contract. Because enslaved people had no legal status and were unable to read or write, there is a lack of records initiated by them; records of the enslaved are found among the business records of the enslaver.

The 1870 census was the first federal census to enumerate formerly enslaved African Americans by surname. Start by looking for an individual in the 1950 Federal Census, using the details from it to search for your family in the 1940 census, using details from the 1940 census to find family in the 1930s, and so on until you get to the 1870 census. If your ancestor was not alive during the 1950 census, work backward until you locate the ancestor in an earlier census. Continue working backward until you reach the 1870 census.

Was your ancestor free or enslaved? The response to that question determines your next step. Review the 1860 Slave Schedule; if your ancestor was enumerated by his or her full name, then he/she was free. Continue to go back and find your free ancestor in the 1840 census, then 1830, etc., until you have exhausted the search. Enslaved men, women, and children were not



By Patricia Bayonne-Johnson
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



enumerated by names. If you cannot find your ancestors listed by name in the Slave Schedules, then they were probably enslaved like the majority of African Americans in the United States. Your journey to find an enslaved ancestor just got a lot more complicated. However, the absence of an ancestor’s surname on the 1860 Census does not necessarily mean your ancestor was enslaved.

The last enslaver

Your goal at this point is to find your ancestor’s last enslaver. Reexamine the 1870 census carefully. Pay attention to the birthplace written in the 1870 census. If your ancestors were living in Louisiana but their birthplace is Maryland, try to determine how they got to Louisiana. Pay attention to the neighbors who are enumerated alongside your ancestor. Are there people with the same surname? Is there a plantation or white land-owning families in the same enumeration district? If you have problems locating the enslaver, examine the pages surrounding your ancestor’s residence in the 1870 census. Many formerly enslaved people stayed near the plantations where they were enslaved, and some may have adopted their enslaver’s surname.

Check the 1860 federal census and the 1860 Slave Schedules for potential enslavers. After locating a potential enslaver, the next step is to search for his property and probate records at the county/parish courthouse. Enslaved people were usually identified by their first names in those records.

Repeat this process for every ancestor on your pedigree chart. You may be searching for one person in the 1870 Census but could find a family. Although it may seem tedious, I promise you will soon be doing the Happy Dance when your efforts start to pay off.

Dear Ancestors,

I understand the assignment.
The Great Migration was indeed a relocation
From Albany to Pittsburgh
Escaping Jim Crow’s degradation
Fleeing humiliation
Circumventing subjugation
I see you striving betwixt progress and hesitation
Quiet revolutionaries
Creating slow and steady transformation
As we become you in new iterations
The Great Migration
From South to North to West
Building up new generations

Poem by April Eberhardt, as read as part of Pivot event in Spokane



DEMETRIUS FREEMAN/WASHINGTON POST

Supporters of Kamala Harris embrace after the vice president delivered her concession speech at Howard University in D.C. on Nov. 6.

IN HER WORDS

PRESERVING MENTAL HEALTH POST-ELECTION

The potential tanking of our economy is a specific area of alarm over the next four years for many, including myself. Some economists around the country have projected that inflation under the direction of President Elect Trump, will have a significantly negative impact. According to Forbes Magazine, a tariff on imports will create a domino effect in the American marketplace, with the consumer price index reflecting a 7.8% increase during Trump’s last presidency (1.9% annualized inflation) as compared to 5.4% during the 44 months of Biden’s presidency.



By Micaela Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS CONTRIBUTOR



The realization of exactly how bad it would be hit me around a week after election night. I’m only just now financially stabilizing myself after a series of jobs to get to the sweet spot of a decent income for a college student. Watching what is happening on the political landscape and how it will impact my life daily feels like deterioration every time I think about it. However, I realize that not everything is within my control. Finding ways to prepare mentally soothes me.

It can be really easy to lose sight of our ability to take care of ourselves as we traverse new policies and changes in society, especially when situations seem so drastic. When it feels like most of what we do in society revolves around money, knowing the long term effects of political changes and how it stifles our potential to elevate and progress is anxiety producing.

Some of the tasks that have helped me realize that there is a way to be OK while enduring all of this are:

Reading. Not only is it good for the mind and soul, it is an inexpensive hobby that I can not only use to pass the time, but also to understand how to prepare for the economic crisis that we’re about to experience. Got a library? Use it. Reading doesn’t always have to equate to going out and buying books. There are ways to inexpensively invest in your mental wellness and boost your literary

aptitude.

Staying active. It doesn’t need to be a gym membership. Walking is the best way to burn calories without expending enough energy to be hungry afterwards. Thirty minutes of sunlight can change the trajectory of your mood every day. Finding a way to move your body can regulate and/or stabilize your mood. Incorporating this into my day-to-day life can have more benefits than losing weight.

Investing in preparation. Look at the shelf life on certain day-to-day goods. White rice can last for up to two years. Canned fish like tuna and salmon can have a shelf life of up to five years. Having backup food in light of the higher taxes that most of us are going to pay brings me mental peace. What about my health? How can I make sure my body is healthy? Physical and mental health are linked. Planning to shift my birth control from the pill into something a bit more long term is already in the works. Consideration of appointments for vaccines or a general health checkup is another step forward in preparation.

Lastly, just taking it easy in general. Right now, even though tensions are high across the country, there is some mental peace I hold within knowing the timeline of how processes will unfold. Be sure you’re taking steps towards preparation, but be sure to rest as well. Enjoy small periods of peace in the interim of the chaos. Create personal normalcy and routines of rest and relaxation for yourself.

Trusting in our local politicians to keep us safe can be hard. However, Governor-elect Bob Ferguson and Attorney General-elect Nick Brown have both stated that they’re working to defy corruption ahead of inauguration, protect legal processes, and defend the rights of Washingtonians. Things will be different, and they won’t be easy, but there is still hope.

Take care of yourself.

REST IN POWER

REST IN POWER
in Memoriam



QUINCY JONES
(NOV. 3, 2024)

Quincy Jones was a record producer, composer, arranger, conductor, trumpeter and bandleader. He received 28 Grammy Awards, an Emmy Award and a Tony Award, as well as nominations for many more.



JUDITH JAMISON
(NOV. 9, 2024)

Judith Jamison was a dance star and former artistic director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. She was best known for "Cry," a 17-minute solo dedicated to "all Black women everywhere," especially mothers.



ROY HAYNES
(NOV. 12, 2024)

Roy Haynes was a Grammy Award-winning jazz drummer whose career spanned more than 70 years. He played alongside Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Sarah Vaughan, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Dave Brubeck and many others.



TONY TODD
(NOV. 6, 2024)

Tony Todd was an actor best known for his starring roles in the "Candyman" and "Final Destination" film franchises. Though Todd was a legend of horror, he was theatrically trained, and made appearances on Broadway over the years.



CLIFTON R. WHARTON JR.
(NOV. 16, 2024)

Clifton R. Wharton Jr. began his tenure as president of Michigan State University in 1970, as the first Black president of a major, predominantly white U.S. public research university, pushing past obstacles while working his way through the academic field.



TYKA NELSON
(NOV. 4, 2024)

Tyka Nelson was a Minneapolis-based singer and the lone full sibling of music legend Prince. She released four albums and had a Top 40 single in 1988 with "Marc Anthony's Tune." Her "L.O.V.E." song later reached No. 52 on the charts.



CHAUNCY GLOVER
(NOV. 5, 2024)

Chauncy Glover was a news anchor at KCAL in Los Angeles and KTRK in Houston, where he was known for his philanthropy and mentorship.



BOB LOVE
(NOV. 18, 2024)

Bob Love was a three-time All-Star forward for the Chicago Bulls who later became the team's goodwill ambassador.

Remembering to dream
ridiculous dreams

Celebration of Life honors the influential
Rev. Happy Watkins, who died in October

By April Eberhardt
THE BLACK LENS

The late pastor emeritus and Rev. Percy Happy Watkins, Jr. was memorialized at Life Center Church on Friday, Nov. 15. The local civil rights and faith leader was honored by many who partnered with him throughout the decades. Known for his work to establish the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. Throughout the years, Watkins challenged the school district and the police department to make changes in support of equity, representation, and justice. He co-founded the annual MLK March, which began in 1989. Community tributes came from retired Superintendent of District 81, Gary Livingston; president of Gonzaga Preparatory School Michael Dougherty, Spokane Mayor Lisa Brown; the executive director of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, Freda Gandy; and NAACP Spokane President Lisa Gardner. Livingston recalled how Watkins often said, that "it is always right to do the right thing" and shared how Watkins would never hesitate to question some of his decision making, unafraid to raise concerns when needed. Watkins was an endeared mentor to Gandy whose tearful reflection signified the strength of

his impact on the leader she has been over the very organization that he helped to create. She shared her early beginnings. "Happy is responsible for the leader I am today," Gandy said. "He took me under his wing, shared his knowledge, his wisdom, his time, his talents with me." Remembering her rough transition when coming to Spokane from Mississippi, Gandy recalled when Watkins told her that she was going to be the executive director of the center when she worked and volunteered there during her college years. She was doubtful, and in hindsight reflected how Watkins believed in her when she didn't even believe in herself. Before reading the NAACP resolution, Gardner shared that, as a one who was a child of the community, Watkins and the late Ivan Bush, were heavy weights who sowed seeds into the youth of Spokane, particularly the East Central community. "Not just that they were our leaders, they were our family," Gardner said. "They were our uncles, they were our daddies, they were our cousins; they were the men that we looked up to." She reflected on how, when they walked into the center, kids would stand up straight, out of respect. As three of Watkins'

grandsons joked about being their grandma's favorite, Elijah Watkins, in his remarks, solemnly shared that his grandfather was his first best friend. "He always knew how to make me laugh and could turn any moment into a comedy show," Elijah Watkins said. "It doesn't feel real sometimes. I still think he is going to call me at a random time of the day ... I wish I could get that call just one more time." The Celebration of Life ended with a powerful eulogy delivered by Watkin's son and current pastor of New Hope Baptist Church, James Watkins, who dared everyone in the room to learn from his father's life and legacy to "dream ridiculous dreams." Leading his closing James Watkins said: "I thank you today and I leave each of you with, when you begin to contemplate the issues of today, don't try to put chess pieces on a board, because you're not smart enough, you're not wise enough, you're not good enough to be on God's chess board. That guy, right there who lays in that casket, dreamed ridiculous dreams. This young boy from the Bronx who was the oldest of 10, whose daddy died when he was 15 years old, who was left in the projects of New York, couldn't even fathom raising to the heights he had been to,

but he dreamed ridiculous dreams. "When the city was opposed to MLK Way, he said he had a God who made a way, he dreamed ridiculous dreams ... not because he thought he was so good, but because he thought He was so good." James Watkins pointed up and ended his father's life celebration with a standing ovation and passionate cheers from those in attendance.



COURTESY OF ROBERT ROBINSON
The widow of Happy Watkins sits near his casket during a Celebration of Life.

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.

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 amanandatruckspokane@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 Brittney Richards (she/her). Contact (509) 795-0376 or allowingchangelc@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.

BrewCity Flash Photography – Photography services. Contact (509) 862-9057 or email alexanderlockett@icloud.com On Instagram @BrewCityflash33 and Facebook as Leon Lockett.

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.

Black London's – Barbershop. 1618 W. Second Ave., 99201, and 904 E. Wellesley Ave., 99207. (509) 537-1188 and (509) 309-7155. On Facebook as Black London's.

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.

Bummy Boss Clip's & Beauty Supply – NorthTown mall hair care. Contact (509) 315-8963 or visit bummybossclips.appointedd.com.

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.

Compassionate Catering LLC – Catering services. Contact (509) 934-1106 or compassioncatering2023@gmail.com. 1014 N. Pines Road, #120, Spokane Valley, 99216.

Dennis Mitchell Empowerment Seminars – Education services by Dennis Mitchell.

Contact (509) 981-0646 or denisspeaks@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.hear.you.sis.

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 Jacquelynne Sandoval. Contact (509) 460-8197 or JSandoval@windermere.com. 1620 E. Indiana Ave., Suite 1250, Spokane Valley, 99216. Instagram: instagram.com/the-realestateantie/.

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 ljrbarberman@aol.com. 3017 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202.

League of Women for Community Action, Non-profit, dba Southeast Day Care Center – Nonprofit Child Care Center owned by League of Women for Community Action, Non-profit and Sug Villella, Day Care Director. Contact (509) 535-4794 or lwca.gmail@hotmail.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.

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 jazzjyjackie9@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@nlhlawoffices.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@ohfspo-kane.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.

Providential 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 Ainuu. 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.

The Way to Justice – Community law firm led and created by women of color. The Way to Justice is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization located in Eastern Washington. Contact (509) 822-7514.

WrightWay Beauty Supply – Contact (509) 703-7772 (call/text), wrightsbautysupply@outlook.com or visit www.wright-waybeautysupply.com. 2103 N. Division St., Spokane, 99207.

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, 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

New Hope Baptist Church, led by the Rev. James Watkins at 9021 E. Boone Ave., has a Sunday Service at 10:45 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, 99202. Sunday School is 9 a.m. Sunday Service is 10 a.m.

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

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 Christian Center – The Rev. Otis Manning. 9212 E. Montgomery Ave., Suite 202, Spokane Valley, 99206. Sunday Service is 10 a.m. Info: wordoffaith13@aol.com or (509) 919-4150.

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

Mount Zion Holiness Church – Pastor Elder Tommy Whitman and First Lady Karen Whitman. 2627 E. Fifth Ave., Spokane, 99202. Sunday Service is at noon.

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.

Refreshing Spring Church of God in Christ – The Rev. Elder Timothy B. Buchanan. 1206 E. Broad St., Spokane, 99207. Info: (509) 482-7408.

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 COMMITTEE: First Tuesday at 5 p.m.

EVENTS TO WATCH FOR

DEC. 5: A COMMUNITY PRACTICE: JOY & WONDER – This community gathering invites nonviolent, intersectional, and interfaith meditation and reflection practice. The theme for this month will be Joy & Wonder. The program adapts Cole Arthur Riley's "Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human" into a type of spiritual "liturgy" that draws quotes and insights from Black intellectuals, ancestors, authors and mentors. Riley describes her hope for the Black Liturgies event to provide safe harbor for people who have "escaped the trauma of white Christian nationalism, religious

homophobia and transphobia, biblical ableism, and ecclesial misogyny ... people "healing from spiritual spaces (and practices) that were more violent than loving, more tyrannical than liberating." Professor Rossing from Gonzaga University will be facilitating this gathering. 6-7 p.m. Dec. 5. Library Park Library, 402 S. Pittsburgh St. Free.

DEC. 15: GOSPEL CHRISTMAS CONCERT WITH SESSIONZ & FRIENDS – The seventh-annual Gospel Christmas Concert, hosted by Bethel Entertainment. 6-8 p.m. Dec. 15. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. The Gathering House, 733 W. Garland Ave. Free.

Black Lens pickup and distribution: Get on our list!

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

THE BLACK LENS Contributor Meeting

DECEMBER

11

2024

JOIN EDITOR APRIL EBERHARDT VIA A VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING TO GET ASSIGNED STORIES FOR UPCOMING ISSUES OF THE BLACK LENS.

DEC. 11, 2024

4:30 - 6 P.M.

ZOOM MEETING

EMAIL FOR LINK :
APRIL@BLACKLENS
NEWS.COM

Got Topics? Pitch Your Ideas & Become a Contributor



LEISURE AND COMICS

CURTIS • BY RAY BILLINGSLEY

NOV. 25

WILL YOU HAVE A LOT OF FAMILY OVER FOR THANKSGIVING, CHUTNEY?

NO, CURTIS, JUST MY FATHER AND ME...THE REST OF MY FAMILY LIVES FAR AWAY

WHY DON'T YOU BOTH COME OVER FOR THANKSGIVING WITH MY FAMILY?

WE WOULDN'T BE /INTRUDING?

MY COUSINS WILL BE STUFFIN' THEIR FACES SO MUCH THEY WON'T EVEN NOTICE YOU TWO!

NOV. 26

I INVITED CHUTNEY AND HER FAMILY TO THANKSGIVING DINNER!

SO IT'LL BE CHUTNEY AND HER MOTHER AND HER FATHER?

HER MOM DIED FROM CANCER YEARS AGO

OH, I'M SORRY!

UM, WOULD YA COOK ME A SEPARATE TURKEY TO EAT AFTER EVERYONE'S GONE HOME?

AGAIN, SORRY

NOV. 27

THANKSGIVING DINNER IS GOIN' GREAT -- OH, THERE'S THE DOORBELL!

THAT'S CHUTNEY AND HER DAD

HI, CHUTNEY, OH!... UM, HI, SIR

I'M DIANE WILKINS, MR. DEVOE, WELCOME

GLAD TO MEET YOU!

NOV. 28

Thanksgiving

A DAY TO HOLD DEAR

HOLD DEAR TO OTHERS RATHER THAN SELF

HOLD DEAR TO THOSE SMILES IN FRONT OF YOU, SMILES SEPARATED BY DISTANCE OR THOSE WHO SMILE IN ONLY MEMORY

KNOWING THAT SOMEONE HOLDS YOU AS DEAR AS YOU HOLD THEM DEAR.

LIVE WITH LOVE, RAY BILLINGSLEY

NOV. 29

YES, CURTIS, MY MOTHER WAS BLACK AND MY FATHER IS WHITE

I NEVER KNEW THEY WERE AN INTERRACIAL COUPLE, CHUTNEY!

WELL, IT DOESN'T COME UP IN REGULAR CONVERSATIONS

THAT MEANS YOU'RE HALF-BLACK? OR HALF-WHITE? WHAT DO I CALL YOU?

MRS. CURTIS WILKINS

QUIDDIT!

NOV. 30

WHEN I WAS LITTLE, AT TIMES, PEOPLE DIDN'T BELIEVE MY FATHER WAS MY FATHER

ONE LADY SPOTTED US AT A PLAYGROUND AND SWORE HE HAD KIDNAPPED ME !!

EVEN AFTER PROVING HIMSELF, SHE STILL CALLED THE POLICE!

SHE MADE SUCH A SCENE THAT THEY HANDCUFFED HER!

CRABGRASS • BY TAUHID BONDIA

NOV. 23

RUDY, YOU STILL HAVEN'T EXPLAINED WHY YOU NEED US TO HELP FIND SANTA. WHY NOT JUST PUT TOGETHER AN ELF SEARCH PARTY?

CHRISTMAS FOLK LIKE ME CAN USE CHRISTMAS MAGIC, BUT ONLY HUMANS LIKE SANTA CAN SENSE AND TRACK IT. UNFORTUNATELY, YOU'RE THE ONLY OTHER HUMANS I KNOW.

SO, WE'RE GLORIFIED BLOODHOUNDS, THEN.

WELL, YA DON'T HAVE TO SOUND SO INSULTED.

BUT, YEAH.

WHICH WAY?

NOV. 25

YOU NEED SOMEONE TO TRACK DOWN SANTA? I'M YOUR MAN! NO ONE BELIEVES LIKE ME!

MMM, YES, I CAN FEEL IT ALREADY. IT'S LIKE A GENTLE TUG ON MY CHRISTMAS SPIRIT...

SANTA IS... THAT WAY.

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN!

I THINK I FEEL SOMETHING, TOO!

NOV. 26

AMAZING! YOUR HAIR IS POINTING THE WAY TO SANTA!

HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW THIS?

I HAVE AN IDEA PUT THIS ON!

IT'S ONE OF SANTA'S OLD ONES!

HEY, IT'S WORKING!

A REAL SANTA HAT!

JEALOUS MALKIE? YES!!

NOV. 27

HEY, RUDY, I MEANT TO ASK, HOW COME YOU ELVES DON'T LIKE... RISE UP AND TAKE OVER SANTA'S SHOP IF YOU HATE RANDALL SO MUCH?

AFRAID? BUT HE'S JUST ONE PERSON.

YEAH, THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS OF YOU!

PFFT! WE'RE NOT AFRAID OF RANDALL...

THAT GUY'S A JOKE!

WHAT DO YOU BOYS KNOW ABOUT MRS. CLAUS?

NOV. 29

MRS. CLAUS! WE THOUGHT YOU WERE OUT LOOKING FOR SANTA!

I SEE.

AND YOU FIGURED THAT WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO MISBEHAVE.

WHAT? NO! WE JUST WANTED TO... TALK TO RANDALL! THAT'S ALL!

DON'T BE SILLY, THERE'S SO MUCH WORK TO BE DONE!

OF COURSE! RIGHT AWAY, BACK TO WORK!

YOU HEARD MOTHER! BACK TO WORK!

OH, DO HUSH, YOU IMBECILE.

NOV. 30

I HATE IT WHEN YOU UNDERMINE ME IN FRONT OF THE ELVES LIKE THAT, MOTHER

YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE SPOKEN TO FATHER THAT WAY WHEN HE WAS...

ENOUGH!

I MAY BE LETTING YOU PLAY SANTA FOR NOW, BUT YOU ARE NOT YOUR FATHER.

YOU'D DO WELL NOT TO FORGET THAT, DEARIE.

IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE SHAME IF YOU ENDED UP ON THE NAUGHTY LIST.

A KID'S COMIC • BY MJ BETHELY

PETS by: MJ

Is this a trick?

No.

CAT-in-the-Box

YOW!

HA HA HA

CAT-in-the-Box

YOW!

HA HA HA

HA HA HA

HA HA HA

LEISURE

POETRY CORNER

Troubles on my Mind

By AJ the Wordsmith

Still I'm blessed, you gave the wrong one the crown of this I must confess, yet you say we the best.

It's funny how I can see the hate in their flesh!

They only love you when they see you take your last breath, please let me express !!!

The troubles on my mind.

Know the rules, such a disappointment when your idols ain't as cool.

Or when ya love tries to play you for a fool

Troubles on my mind.

Thanks dad, you showed me the path I shouldn't take,

Built on lies of all your past mistake.

Never would be the one to call you fake,

Be glad I don't have a kid because I'm sure he wouldn't be as great.

But ... the troubles on my mind go further out than that,

Not to sound out of date but with loans creeping on my back

I feel like my life is under attack, maybe I should call Oprah, think she'll have my back?

Not simply wrong, not simply right, portrayed in both lights.

Thank you for listening and have a good night.



The Illusion of Progress

By AJ the Wordsmith

Dear Mystery,

I know we don't speak on politics, but I just wanted to send out a humble reminder to my fellow hemp heroes, cannabis citizens & humble humans alike, to be patient and present these next few days weeks and months alike...

So what's next?

Still we blessed!? you gave the wrong one the crown of this I must confess, yet you say we the best?!? It's funny how I can see the hate in their flesh!

I know we don't speak on politics, but I just wanted to send out a humble reminder to my fellow humble human heroes alike! To be patient and present these next few days weeks and months alike...

Not to fight but to feel!

say NEW YEAR SAME ME

but remember

some may feel depressed

some may feel excited,

some simply forgotten,

we all have a duty to be accountable for not only our words but our reactions,

stop subtracting hate and add some love

Let's not divide by ignorance but multiply with intelligence.

"I say heaven must be a true delight."

I feel more pain, begging and begging for the rain to never go away, it's the only thing that seems to settle my unstable brain. I'm Texan born, Seattle raised, Spokane spoken!! So you can understand, Rain was the only consistent thing that I've ever seen.

BLACK JEOPARDY

Cast your best guest at these Black historical and pop culture questions:

Madam C.J Walker is known as the first Black self-made millionaire. What product led to her success?

- A) Hair grower
- B) Ironing board
- C) Caller ID

"Soul Train" was created and hosted by which TV presenter?

- A) Montel Williams
- B) Arsenio Hall
- C) Don Cornelius

What state was Barack Obama senator of before his presidency?

- A) Hawaii
- B) Illinois
- C) Michigan

BLACK JEOPARDY ANSWERS

Walker: A) Hair grower; "Soul Train": C) Don Cornelius; Obama: B) Illinois