

THE BLACK LENS SPOKANE NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

The Biden/Harris Administration: What's in It for Black America?



President Joe Biden, First Lady Jill Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and First Gentleman Doug Emhoff prepared to enter the Capitol after the inauguration. PHOTO: Anthony Tilghman/Trice Edney News Wire

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - "We have also come to this hal- lowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment." - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

America has what it voted for. Trump is gone; though Trump- ism must be dealt with in another forum. Despite the failed coup d'état on January 6th, President Biden and Vice Presi- dent Harris have been sworn in. The Biden/Harris adminis- tration is now a reality.

The majority of Americans are ready for the country to move forward but where does it go and how does it get there? The "empire" of America must now come to grips with a number of structural problems:

Across the United States, voter suppression policies continue to disenfranchise the poor and voters of color. In the aftermath of the George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbury murders too many Americans do not feel safe in their own communities. Twenty-four million American's have died from COVID-19 as the government struggles with the logistics of vaccine dis- tribution and inoculation.

Continued on Page 32

The Hill We Climb

By Amanda Gorman

"Mr. President, Dr. Biden, Madam Vice President, Mr. Emhoff, Americans and the world:

When day comes we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this never-ending shade, the loss we carry, a sea we must wade?

We've braved the belly of the beast, we've learned that quiet isn't always peace. And the norms and notions of what just is isn't always justice. And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it, somehow we do it. Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished.

We, the successors of a country and a time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president only to find herself reciting for one.

And yes, we are far from polished, far from pristine, but that doesn't mean we are striving to form a union that is perfect. We are striving to forge our union with purpose. To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and conditions of man.

And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us, but what stands before us. We close the divide, be- cause we know to put our future first, we must first put our differences aside. We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another. We seek harm to none and harmony for all.

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true: that even as we grieved, we grew; that even as we hurt, we hoped; that even as we tired, we tried; that we'll forever be tied together victorious, not because we will never again know defeat but because we will never again sow division.

Scripture tells us to envision that 'everyone shall sit un- der their own vine and fig tree and no one shall make them afraid.' If we're to live up to our own time, then victory won't lie in the blade but in all the bridges we've made.

That is the promise to glade, the hill we climb if only we dare it, because being American is more than a pride we inherit - it's the past we step into and how we repair it.

We've seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it, would destroy our country if it meant de- laying democracy. And this effort very nearly succeed- ed. But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated.



Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate, recites "The Hill We Climb" at the Presidential Inauguration.

In this truth, in this faith we trust for while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us. This is the era of just redemption we feared at its inception.

We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of such a terri- fying hour, but within it we found the power to author a new chapter, to offer hope and laughter to ourselves. So while once we asked 'how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe,' now we assert: 'how could catastro- phe possibly prevail over us?'

We will not march back to what was, but move to what shall be: a country that is bruised but whole, benevolent but bold, fierce and free. We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation because we know our enaction and inertia will be the inheritance of the next generation.

Our blunders become their burdens but one thing is cer- tain: If we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy in change, our chil- dren's birthright.

So let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left. With every breath from my bronze-pounded chest, we will raise this wounded world into a won- drous one. We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west, we will rise from the winds swept north, east where our forefathers first realized revolution. We will rise from the lake-rinsed cities of the midwestern states. We will rise from the sun-baked South. We will rebuild, reconcile, and recover in every known nook of our na- tion and every corner called our country, our people di- verse and beautiful will emerge battered and beautiful.

When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it."

Visit: theamandagorman.com for more information.

ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

No Reconciliation without Truth. No Unity without Accountability!

I don't think Joe Biden had the chance to even utter the final syllable from his oath of office as the 46th President of the United States before the choruses of "unity" and "the need to reach across the aisle" started echoing across the capital grounds.

Never mind that the grounds on which the Presidential inauguration took place had only days earlier been the site of an attempted coup d'état carried out by a crowd that had absolutely no intention of uniting with anybody-- except themselves.

It's like a de ja vu, actually. It seems that every time the folks who have gone out of their way to misuse and abuse their privilege and power, find themselves without the shield of invincibility that comes from that privelege and power, they suddenly want to be besties with the ones that they have been stomping on for years, "for the good of the country."

No impeachment "for the good of the country." No focus on punishment "for the good of the country." No rooting out the men and women sitting in this country's highest seats of power who coluded with the thugs and criminals that were hell bent on capture and possibly execution of American citizens "for the good of the country."

Well, read my lips. For the good of this county- No reconciliation without TRUTH. No unity without ACCOUNTABILITY.

The truth is we have a problem with white supremacy in this country. I'm not talking about your run of the mill bigot or racist, even though we have lots of those. I'm talking about white supremacy, which is different.

According to my good friend Miriam Webster, a white supremacist is a person who believes that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races. That's what I'm talking about.

The truth is that Black folks have been saying forever that police departments in this country have been infiltrated by white supremacists. Certainly not every police officer, but enough of them.

Black folks have been saying forever that our armed forces have been infiltrated by white supremacists. Certainly not every person in the military, but enough of them.

Black folks have been saying forever that our government, from the local municipalities in the smallest of backwater towns, all the way up to the hallowed halls of congress have been infiltrated by white supremacists. Certainly, not all of our elected officials, but enough of them to almost overthrow our government.

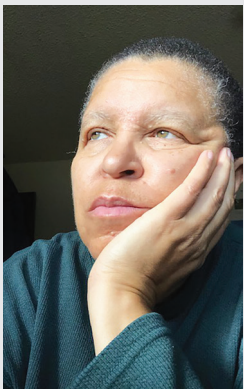
We've said it. We've shouted it. We've marched about it. We've protested over it. We've even called some of them out by name. But in response. Crickets.

It seems that as long as those white supremacists were only focusing their attention, their fury, their hatred, on us, you know killing us, the most we could get in response, with few exceptions, was a shrug of the shoulder, a pat on the head, and an admonishment for being "too sensitive" and "playing the race card."

But then a funny thing happened. On January 6, it seems the whole country in unison realized that we have white supremacists in America. Lots of them. There they were, in living color. Police officers. Veterans. State representatives. Teachers. CEOs. Even an Olympic athlete. Many of us are thinking that some of our neighbors might have been there too, if they could have been, and many of the people that we work with.

To be honest, I find myself looking at folks a little sideways these days.

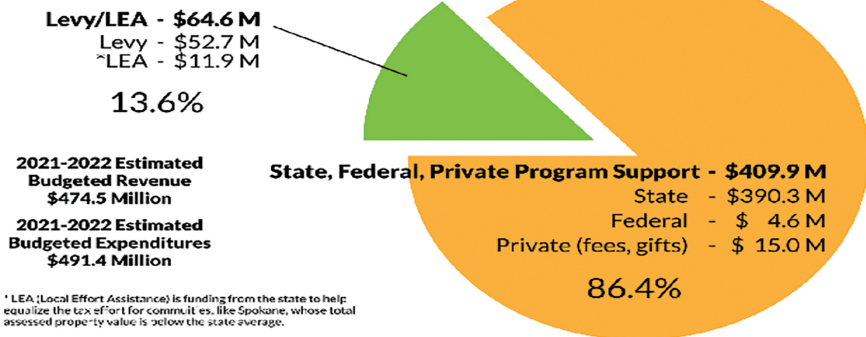
The instinct to put bad things behind us is natural. And certainly putting the past four years behind us as fast as possible would help relieve a good deal of collective stress, but if you're like me, you're tired of our country circling back to this same exact place every few decades. Ignoring a festering sore doesn't make it go away. Truth does. Accountability does. Next time we might not be so lucky.



Spokane Public Schools Levy

Beginning on Jan. 22, 2021, Spokane residents will be voting on a replacement school levy for Spokane Public School (SPS). The educational program and operation levy is a way for the Spokane community to support SPS students and families by funding extracurricular activities, support for students with special needs, and critical health and wellness services. The 2021 levy **replaces** the expiring 2018 levy and is **not a new tax**. Levies support programs and services, such as: Nurses, Counselors, Behavior specialists, Student intervention programs, Special education services, Technology support, Smaller class sizes, Advanced placement courses, Athletics, Arts, music, and drama. Please submit your online and mail registrations, and voter updates, by February 1, 2021. For more information please visit: <https://www.spokaneschools.org>.

SPS Annual Budget Funding Sources



Year	Amount	Estimated Tax Rate*
2022	\$65,700,000	\$2.40
2023	\$73,800,000	\$2.45
2024	\$82,100,000	\$2.50

*per \$1,000 of Assessed Property Value

Replacement Levy Amounts and Estimated Tax Rates

Remember . . .

- The replacement levy provides funds to enrich and support essential educational programs for Spokane's youth.
- The total estimated tax rate for schools will be less than in 2018 and prior years.

Please vote by February 9!

Find more information at spokaneschools.org/levy



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THE BLACK LENS NEWS

The Black Lens is an independent community newspaper, based in Spokane, WA, that it is focused on the news, events, issues, people and information that is important to Spokane's African American/Black Community and beyond. The paper is published on the first of each month.

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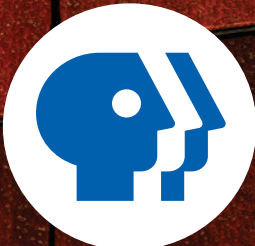
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THIS IS OUR SONG.**



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YOU SHOULD KNOW

(Or Things You Probably Didn't Learn In School)

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey

The Confederate Flag 21'

The Confederate Flag is the battle flag for General Robert E. Lee's Army of North Virginia. While the flag is a symbol of evil and hate to the descendants of slaves, and a symbol of domestic treason to those who supported the union, its current supporters claim the flag represents "heritage, not hate".

Southern heritage, however, was economically dependent on chattel slavery, a system in direct violation of what was considered God's "basic laws of freedom". Chattel slavery was also in violation of the Declaration of Independence – "...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness".

This is in contrast to the words of the designer of the "Stainless Confederate Banner", William T. Thompson – "As a people we are fighting to maintain the heavenly ordained supremacy of the white man over the inferior or colored race; a white flag would thus be emblematical of our cause."

Or the words of Alexander Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederacy – "...Our new government is founded ... upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition."

Some Southern Confederate leaders didn't hold the same cultural fervor for the flag or its heritage, for example President Jefferson Davis: "My pride is that that flag shall not set between contending brothers; and that, when it shall no longer be the common flag of the country, it shall be folded up and laid away like a vesture no longer used."

And commander of the Confederate Armed Forces, General Robert E. Lee – "Furl this flag and store it in your attics for the rest of your lives."

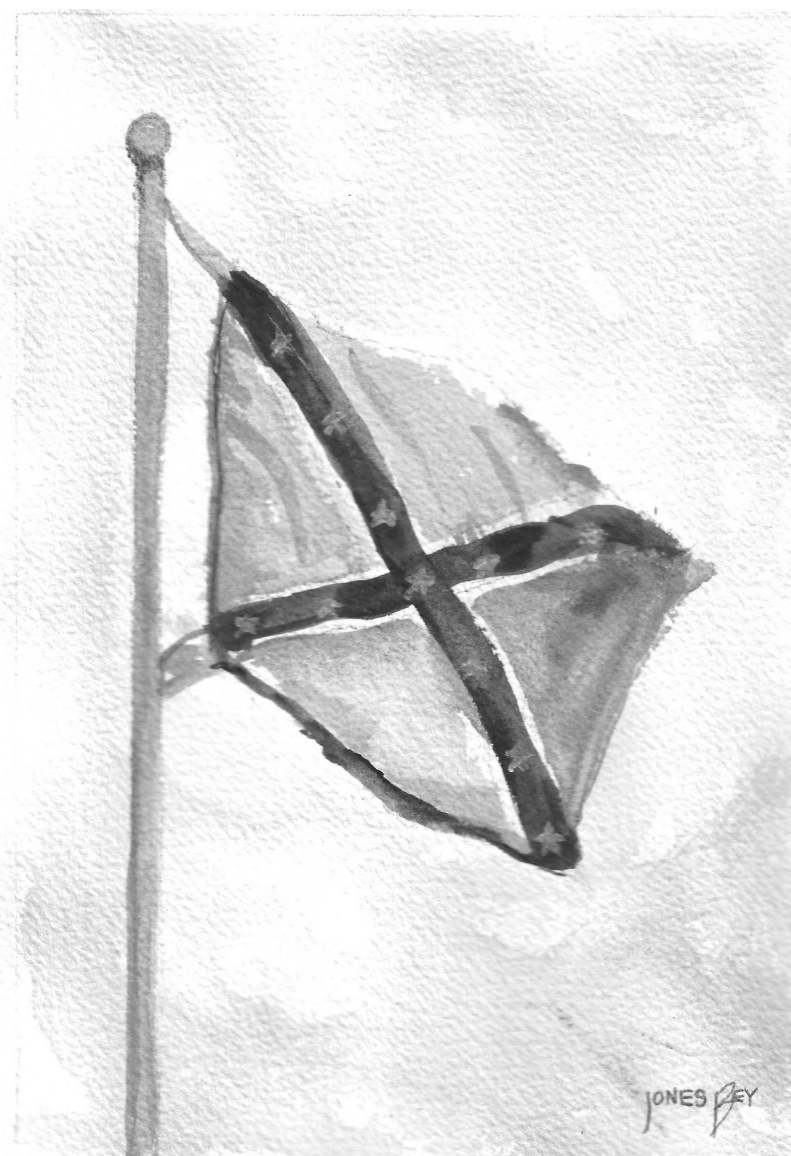
On April 12, 1861, South Carolina Militia forces under General P.G.T. Beauregard initiated a bombing campaign against the Union's Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Though none died, after the 34-hour artillery assault, Fort General Robert Anderson and 86 Union troops surrendered, beginning America's bloodiest domestic war.

When any force fires upon American military installations, jeopardizing American troops, in uniform, on American soil, those forces are immediately classed as foreign, not domestic, invaders and enemies of the state.

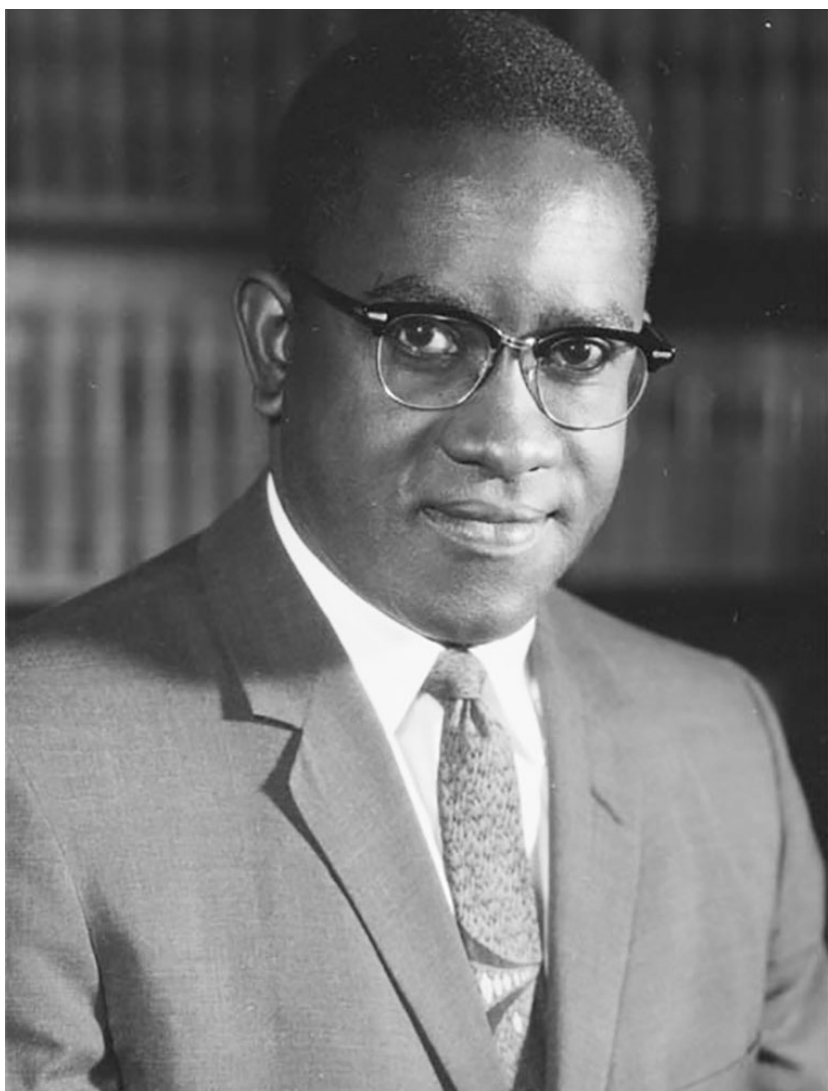
For that reason the Confederate flag symbolizes the bloodiest instance of treason in American history.

Sources:

The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government 1881 (Appendix H, page 612) – Jefferson Davis; Black Heritage Day III – Confederate Flag (1861-) – Jamiyo Mack; thedailybeast.com/even-robert-e-lee-wanted-the-confederate-flag-gone;medium.com/history-of-yesterday/the-true-history-of-the-confederate-flag-cbbf119a2Co2.



Andrew Brimmer: US Federal Reserve



A writer, an economist and an advocate for affirmative action, Andrew Felton Brimmer is best known as the first African American to hold a governorship on the United States Federal Reserve Bank.

Born in Newellton, Louisiana on September 13, 1926, Brimmer moved to Bremerton, Washington in 1944 and enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served in the Army two years, rising to the rank of staff sergeant. Upon his return, he enrolled at the University of Washington where he received his B.A. in Economics in 1950 and M.A. shortly thereafter in 1951. Brimmer then studied at the University of Bombay for a year and completed a Ph.D. in Economics at Harvard University in 1957.

First and foremost an economist, Brimmer promoted a monetary policy that sought to alleviate unemployment and reduce the national deficit. He also argued that racial discrimination hurt the U.S. economy by marginalizing potentially productive workers.

Before assuming his post as Federal Reserve Bank Governor, Brimmer served as an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in 1955 and in 1956. During that period he was dispatched to Sudan to help that newly independent nation establish a central bank. A teaching position followed in 1958 at Michigan State University and at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business in 1961. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy appointed Brimmer

as deputy assistant secretary of commerce for economic policy and then assistant secretary for economic affairs. In 1966, he was appointed to the Board of Governors for the Federal Reserve Bank by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

In 1974 Brimmer took a teaching position at the Harvard Graduate School of Business, and in 1976 founded his own consulting firm, Brimmer & Company, Inc. based in Washington, D.C. In 1995, Brimmer was named by President Bill Clinton to head a financial control board which helped the District of Columbia avoid a financial crisis.

As an author, his writings reflect a deep dissatisfaction with racial discrimination particularly in black education which he blames for income disparity in relation to whites. He has promoted strategies that couple Affirmative Action with African American self-help.

Andrew F. Brimmer's numerous organizations include president of the Association for the Study of Afro American Life and History (ASALH) and co-chairman of the Interracial Council for Business Opportunity. Among his many accolades are awards from the National Economic Association, One Hundred Black Men and the New York Urban Coalition. He was also a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity.

Dr. Andrew Felton Brimmer died in Washington, D.C. on October 7, 2012. He was 86 at the time of his death.

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Community Superstars

By Lisa Gardner



Black History Month is a time to reflect and acknowledge the achievements of Black Americans who, despite the obstacles, have made lasting impressions in our culture and American History. Inventors, philosophers, writers, activists, poets, politicians and more. And while we celebrate the path they’ve paved, it is equally significant to recognize and celebrate our current trailblazers who are often unsung, go without notice or simply fall through the cracks.

NAACP President, Kiantha Duncan said, “in addition to highlighting our past, let’s acknowledge and celebrate some of our present and often unsung community leaders—we have superstars right here in Spo-

kane that are paving the way for generations to come.”

Our fearless leader has a point, it is imperative that we pay homage and uplift our current community leaders. During Black History Month on behalf of NAACP we celebrate these Community Superstars.

1. **Adell Whitehead** — MLK Food Bank: Food insecurity is something that is sensitive and should be handled with delicate care, and that is what Adell does at the MLK Food Bank at East Central Community Center. Over the years, Adell has seen many people from all walks of life come through her doors in a situation of despair, and it is with understanding and empathy that Adell serves each one. It takes a certain heart and character to care for a community that is vulnerable, overlooked and at times written off, but like a pillar in a storm, Adell remains unmoved, yet a symbol of stability in our community. It’s more than just handing out food, it’s her special way of delivering service with love, care and respect.

2. **Brianna Rollins** — Carl Maxey Center: Brianna is young, bright, intuitive and determined. Carl Maxey’s legacy in Spokane as a Civil Rights attorney symbolized strength, intelligence and justice, and Brianna upholds those ideals as the center’s administrator. Coordinating Spokane’s Black Business Alliance—she literally pulls all Black business owners and Black professionals together to move them forward, even in our city’s economic instability, she is finding ways to uplift Black businesses and we strongly value her work.

3. **Alethea Dumas** — Better Health Together: The granddaughter of Betty Dumas, affectionally named “momma Dumas” and one of Spokane’s “Woman of the Year”, it is no surprise that Alethea is a future trailblazer in Spokane. Alethea comes from a family that has had roots in Spokane for over 3 generations. Alethea symbolizes legacy in how she is dedicated to her community. With the Dumas name on her back, Alethea soars as the Program Coordinator for Equity & Engagement for Better Health

Together. Young, beautiful, talented and inspiring, Alethea is a young superstar in our community.

4. **Dr. Shari Clarke** — Eastern Washington University: Dynamic is too weak of a word to define what Dr. Clarke embodies. Dr. Clarke leaves a lasting impression on everyone she meets and ensures that you’re walking away with a bit more knowledge than you had before you met her. At EWU, Dr. Clarke is the Vice President for Diversity and Chief Diversity Officer.

5. **Dr. Oscar Harris** — Spokane Public Schools & Ready to Serve Ministries: As Chief Family & Community Engagement Officer, thoughtful, consistent and integrity are the three words that define Dr. Harris and his commitment to education and community wellbeing. Dr. Harris supports children, families and the educational workforce in his professional role while also supporting spiritual growth and wellbeing in his vocation as Senior Pastor of Ready to Serve Ministries.

We Have Come This Far By Faith

By Sherri Noble Jones

How far have we really come?" That question comes to mind when I look at the little girl on the cover of this pamphlet.

Standing on the stairs outside of Grant Elementary is a young girl embarking on a historical journey.

When you are young you don't always realize how you can become the face of change.

Take a look back at this particular moment in time. Segregation may have ended in 1954 due to Brown vs. The Board of Education, but this little girl and her peers would be the first to really invoke that change at Spokane's Grant Elementary in 1968.

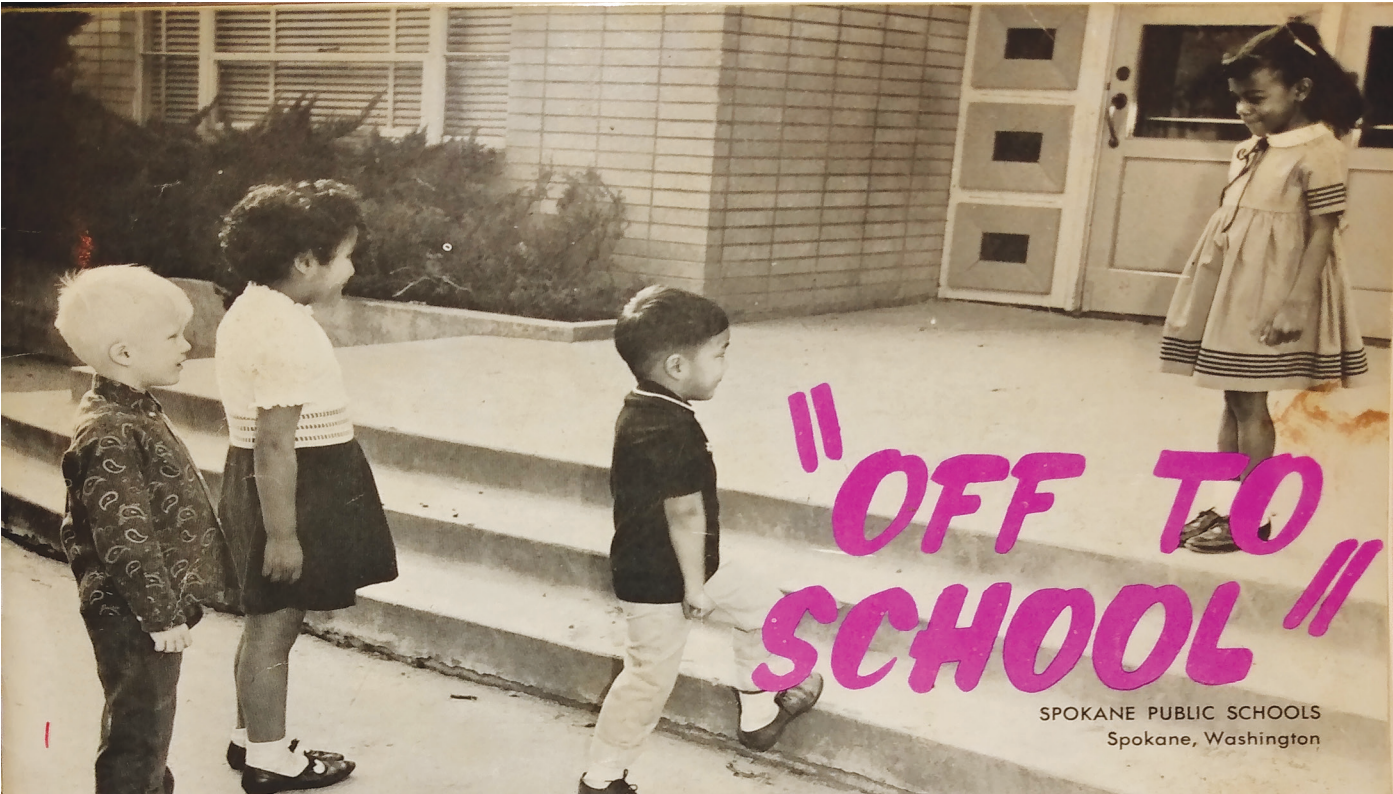
To be apart of desegregation is a remarkable moment. Being placed on the front cover of a pamphlet that was then shared to every elementary student in Spokane about this remarkable moment was a dream coming to fruition.

Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of this dream on April 4th 1968. A speech that would continue to ignite a dream in so many throughout time. A dream calling for equality, change, and opportunities for all people of color.

Jumping ahead, we see that same little girl standing on the same staircase as an adult. She is standing with her brother, Ivan Corley who is currently the principal of Grant Elementary. History coming full circle! Who was that little girl you ask?

That little girl was me. I'm grateful to be apart of a dream and history that I never really understood until now. So I ask you "How far have we really come?" Far, but not far enough!

Let's keep Dr. King's Dream alive. "I have a Dream".



BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Former Michigan Governor Rick Snyder Faces Charges Over Flint Water Crisis

(Source: Joe Jurado, *theroot.com*; Photo: Mark Wilson, Getty Images)

Prosecutors in Michigan announced on January 14 that former Governor Rick Snyder and several others will face charges for their role in the Flint water crisis.

According to CNN, Snyder faces two counts of willful neglect of duty and has already pleaded not guilty to the charges. Charges were also filed against eight others who were either members of Snyder’s staff, Flint city officials, or state public officials.

Among those charged include Nicholas Lyon, the former director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, who faces nine counts of involuntary manslaughter and one count of willful neglect of duty. Each felony manslaughter charge is punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

“The Flint water crisis is not some relic of the past,” Michigan Solicitor General Fadwa Hammoud, one of the prosecutors leading the investigation, said during a news conference. “At this very moment, the people of Flint continue to suffer from the categorical failure of public officials at all levels of government who trampled upon their trust and evaded accountability for far too long.”

Michigan law prohibits prosecutors from providing details about the evidence that resulted in the charges, though Wayne County prosecutor Kym Worthy told reporters that her team is “confident” in the charges.

“Like any other case, we charge cases that we can prove beyond a reasonable doubt,” Worthy said. “We do not



charge cases that we cannot prove beyond a reasonable doubt, so we are confident in all charges that we have meted out today.”

From CNN:

Flint has been exposed to extremely high levels of lead since 2014 when city and state officials switched the city’s water supply from the Detroit Water System to the contaminated Flint River in an effort to cut costs.

The switch was supposed to be temporary while a new supply line to Lake Huron was completed. When the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality failed to

treat the corrosive water, it ate into the city’s iron and lead water pipes and leached into the drinking water.

The contaminated water led to two outbreaks of Legionnaires’ disease, a serious type of pneumonia caused by bacteria.

Snyder’s attorney Brian Lennon released a statement calling the charges “wholly without merit,” and added that he was confident that Snyder would be “fully exonerated if this flimsy case goes to trial.”

“Today’s charges do nothing to bring justice to the people of Flint,” Lennon said. “These unjustified allegations do nothing to resolve a painful chapter in the history of our state. Today’s actions merely perpetrate an outrageous political persecution.”

I mean, the incompetence of Snyder and his team resulted in the deaths of 12 people and 80 more being sickened. I might be out of my element here, but I don’t think it’s a stretch to think the people of Flint would like to see the people whose decisions led to their pain be held to account.

Granted, these are white men we’re talking about, so I understand that accountability isn’t a word in their vocabulary.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, who ended a prior probe in favor of launching a new one last year, released a statement praising the prosecution team. “I trust today’s announcement reflects their professional responsibilities and ethical obligations as the prosecuting authorities in this matter, and that their decisions are based solely on the facts, the law, and the evidence,” Nessel wrote.

Breonna Taylor Grand Jurors File Impeachment Petition Against Attorney General Daniel Cameron

By Celine Castronuovo
(Reprinted from *The Hill*, *thehill.com*)

Three grand jurors from the investigation into the police raid that killed 26-year-old Breonna Taylor are now calling for Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron (R) to be impeached over allegations that he mishandled the case.

The jurors on Friday filed a petition with the state House of Representatives, arguing that Cameron breached the public’s trust and also misrepresented key grand jury findings, according to the Louisville Courier Journal, which first reported the complaint.

A press release from the attorney representing the grand jurors, who remained anonymous to protect their identities, said of the jurors, “it is truly a testament to the Kentucky Constitution that they are able to be here today and to expose injustice and demand public accountability.”

Attorney Kevin Glogower added, “I am honored and humbled to serve them.”

“The Grand Jurors did not choose this battle,” Glogower said. “This battle chose them. These are randomly selected citizens who were compelled to sit on a grand jury and were terribly misused by the most powerful law enforcement official in Kentucky.”

According to Louisville, Ky., public radio station WFPL, Friday’s petition states, “Attorney General Cameron deceived the American people and the citizens of this Commonwealth with regard to his office’s handling and involvement in the Breonna Taylor investigation and the resulting legal actions.”

The petition also reportedly claims that Cameron improperly used public funds by joining a lawsuit against



Pennsylvania’s 2020 election results, and also supported unlawful actions as a member of the National Association of Attorneys General’s executive committee, which helped fund robocalls telling people to participate in the Jan. 6 pro-Trump march on the Capitol.

Cameron’s office did not immediately respond to The Hill’s request for comment on the impeachment petition.

The grand jury had investigated Louisville police’s execution of a no-knock search warrant at Taylor’s apartment in March 2020, during which several shots were fired, some of which hit and killed Taylor. Cameron announced in September that the grand jury only levied three charges of wanton endangerment against one of the officers, with none of the officers faced with charges specifically related to Taylor’s death.

Since the grand jury ruling, however, multiple jurors in the case have come forward saying their findings were misrepresented.

In a press conference, Cameron had claimed there were six possible homicide charges brought before the grand jury in their investigation. But multiple grand jurors have claimed they weren’t given the opportunity to deliberate on additional charges outside of the counts of wanton endangerment.

Attorney Ben Crump, who is representing Taylor’s family and previously called the grand jury’s September decision “outrageous and offensive,” said in a statement shared with The Hill Friday that the impeachment petition from the grand jurors “is an extremely courageous and admirable action.”

“They should be applauded for taking a valiant stand for justice and transparency within our institutions, along with reclaiming their voices that AG Cameron attempted to stifle during the grand jury proceedings,” said the statement from Crump, along with co-counsels Sam Aguiar and Lonita Baker.

The attorneys argue that Cameron “placed an impossible burden on these citizens when he skewed the circumstances of Bre’s death and failed to present the possibility of homicide charges.”

“We hope at the very least, this sends the message that no one has the right to take the law into their own hands and manipulate our processes for their own devious purposes,” they added.

Daniel Jay Cameron is the 51st Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. He is the first African American independently elected to statewide office in Kentucky’s history and the first Republican elected to the Attorney General’s office since 1948. As legal counsel to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Cameron participated in the successful confirmation of conservative federal judges, including Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch.

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Henry Louis “Hank” Aaron Passes Away at 86

(blackpast.org) Legendary baseball player Henry Louis Aaron was born February 5, 1934, in Mobile, Alabama, the third of eight children to Herbert Aaron, a shipyard worker at Alabama Drydock and Shipbuilding Company, and his wife, Estella. Aaron decided he wanted to be a major league baseball player after hearing a speech by the Brooklyn Dodgers’ Jackie Robinson while visiting Mobile on April 3, 1950, during spring training.

While in high school, Aaron began playing for the Mobile Black Bears, a semi-pro team, and in 1952 began a season with the Indianapolis, Indiana Clowns. Aaron was the last player to come from the Negro Leagues and achieve success in Major League Baseball.

In 1954, Aaron was brought up to the Milwaukee Braves to replace an injured outfielder. Aaron hit a home run in his first major league at-bat. He continued to hit home runs in remarkable fashion for the next two decades. Aaron was the only major league player to hit at least twenty home runs in every season for twenty consecutive years, at least thirty for fifteen years, or at least forty for eight years. He was the first player to record more than 3,000 hits and 500 home runs.

The Milwaukee Braves became the Atlanta Braves in 1966, and Aaron moved south with the team. On April 8, 1974, Aaron hit his 715th career home run, breaking the record held by Babe Ruth since 1935. His achievement came before a crowd of 53,775, the largest ever at Atlanta-Fulton County

Stadium and was off a 4th inning pitch by Los Angeles Dodger Al Downing.

In the period when Aaron was closing in on Ruth’s home run record, he grew angry and disillusioned by the hate mail and physical threats he and his family received on a daily basis. When asked if he threw out the hate mail, Aaron replied that “No, I didn’t. That will never be thrown away... We still have to be reminded that things are not as good as we think they are.”

Although he will be remembered as the player who broke Babe Ruth’s home run record, “Hammerin’ Hank” Aaron set a number of other records in Major League Baseball. He holds the record for most career home runs (755), most runs batted in (2,297), and most games played (3,298). Aaron also won three consecutive Gold Glove awards from 1958 through 1960, played in a record-tying twenty-four All-Star games and was named National League MVP in 1957.

Hank Aaron was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1982. The Hank Aaron Award is given annually to the best overall hitter in each league. In 2002, Henry Aaron was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush, the highest honor given to a civilian by the American government.

Henry Louis “Hank” Aaron passed away in Atlanta, Georgia on January 22, 2021 at the age of 86.



Black Capitol Police Officers Warned about Racism Prior to Insurgency

by Keka Araújo

(Reprinted from Black Enterprise, black-enterprise.com)

Black Capitol police officers are very aware of the racism they say has been prevalent for years at the government building. The insurgency at the Capitol on Jan. 6 reinforced what they’ve known all along.

According to a ProPublica report, hundreds of Black officers have filed racial discrimination suits against the law enforcement agency since 2001. The agents alleged they endured significant abuse, like white colleagues calling some Black officers the n-word, hanging nooses in an officer’s locker and white officers, who had Black colleagues as friends, were called “FOGs,” or “friends of gangsters.”

These issues were also prominent during the Obama administration. Attorneys for the agency denied any wrongdoing occurred.

Black police officers were subjected to “unprovoked stops” from coworkers. One Capitol cop alleged a white officer audaciously told someone, “Obama monkey, go back to Africa.”

According to the report, a former chief attempted to bring some semblance of justice to the department. Kim Dine, who retired from the department after a three-year stint, inherited the bigoted department in 2012.

In the interview, Dine spoke of having to address the department’s racially-charged environment. Dine implemented many firsts in the department, including hiring a Black woman to lead the diversity office, promoting a Black officer to the assistant chief position and creating a disciplinary panel with a Black female lead.



Yogananda Pittman appointed acting Capitol Police Chief following insurrection.

“There is a problem with racism in this country, in pretty much every establishment that exists,” said Dine told ProPublica. “You can always do more in retrospect.”

Although he made significant strides in the department, they didn’t help end racism in the agency.

As more information regarding the insurrection at the Capitol surfaces, Black officers are bravely coming forward to share their stories about what they feel was abandonment by the agency.

Former Capitol police officer Sharon Blackmon-Malloy was a 25-year veteran with the agency. She claimed she spent “decades trying to raise the alarm about what she saw as endemic racism within the force.”

“Nothing ever really was resolved. Congress turned a blind eye to racism on the Hill,” Blackmon-Malloy told ProPublica. “We got Jan. 6 because no one took us seriously.”

She retired as a lieutenant in 2007 and lead her own complaint against the department in 2001. The veteran officer now serves as the U.S. Capitol Black Police Association vice president, which held 16 demonstrations protesting alleged discrimination between 2013 and 2018.

According to BuzzFeed, two Black police officers alleged higher-ups left law enforcement agents unprepared and unguided for the deadly riot. They remained anonymous in fear of retaliation from the department.

A veteran on the force told BuzzFeed he received a tip from an acquaintance.

“I found out what they were planning when a friend of mine screenshot sent me an Instagram story from the Proud Boys saying, ‘We’re breaching the Capitol today, guys. I hope y’all ready,’” the officer told the publication.

The agent acknowledged that upper management told them to prepare for protesting, but they failed to warn them about the gravity of the insurgency brought on by Trump’s instigation.

One of the anonymous officers admitted thinking that Black protestors would not have been met with the same grace as the MAGA insurgents.

“If you’re going to treat a group of demonstrators for Black Lives Matter one way, then you should treat this group the same goddamn way. With this group, you were being kind and nice and letting them walk back out,” the officer shared with BuzzFeed. “Some of them got arrested, but a lot of them didn’t. Everyone who came into that Capitol should have been arrested regardless if they didn’t take anything.”

The older of the two officers explained to BuzzFeed that he was exasperated and angry over the deadly insurgence. The Capitol Police department’s lack of urgency and response to the situation didn’t help. The devastated agent sobbed in the Rotunda of the Capitol.

“I sat down with one of my buddies, another Black guy, and tears just started streaming down my face,” he said. “I said, ‘What the f**k, man? Is this America? What the f**k

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

Amnesty International Accuses Nigeria of Covering up Protest killings

By Rédaction Africanews with AFP
(Reprinted from Africanews; Photo Credit: Reuters/Temilade Adelaja)

Amnesty International accused the Nigerian government on Thursday of attempting to cover up the killing of a dozen citizens during peaceful protests in Lagos last October.

Youth-led demonstrations in Nigeria began against police abuse, quickly spiraling into broader calls for reform.

But they ended weeks later when security forces shot at demonstrators in Lagos – killing at least 12 people, according to the rights group.

At a judicial panel, the army denied using live rounds but the government promised to disband the much-hated police unit, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), which had been the main target of protests over brutality.

“Nigerian authorities have failed to bring to justice those suspected to be responsible for the brutal crackdown by security forces on peaceful #EndSARS protesters at Lekki toll gate and Alausa in Lagos in October 2020 and have brazenly attempted to cover up the violence,” Amnesty said.

“Since the assault by security forces, which killed at least 12 people, Nigerian authorities

have targeted supporters of the protests against police brutality by the disbanded SARS,” Amnesty’s country director Osai Ojigho said in the statement, released to mark 100 days since the shootings.

She said some of the movement’s supporters have had their bank accounts frozen.

The London-based rights body challenged the Nigerian government to suspend accused officials, pending investigations, and to ensure victims access to justice.

In November, the Lagos State government set up a panel of inquiry to investigate the bloodshed and wider allegations of abuses by SARS featuring testimony by the army that presented videos to back its claims.

The government has promised a string of reforms in response to the protests, and disbanded SARS, replacing it with Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) forces.

Nigeria, where the median age is 18, is a tinderbox of deep economic and social grievances, and the demonstrations snowballed from anger over police violence to broader demands.



DR Congo Parliament Votes to Remove Prime Minister Ilunga

(Reprinted from aljazeera.com/news)

Legislators in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have voted to remove Prime Minister Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, collapsing the government and handing President Felix Tshisekedi a chance to appoint loyalists to key ministries.

The vote marks the latest episode in a power struggle that has roiled sub-Saharan Africa’s biggest nation for months, pitching Tshisekedi against loyalists to former president Joseph Kabila, who ruled the DRC for 18 years.

Last month Tshisekedi moved to end a coalition formed with Kabila that has constrained his authority since he took office in January 2019.

This culminated in Wednesday’s no-confidence vote against the prime minister, one of the last vestiges of Kabila’s hold on government. It passed with 367 of 377 votes.

Under the DRC’s constitution, parliamentary censure requires the prime minister to step down within 24 hours.

“One of my missions is to control the executive which, if it does not



meet the concerns of the people, must be removed,” member of parliament and author of the no-confidence motion, Cherubin Okende, told Reuters news agency.

Kabila’s allies, including Ilunga, boycotted the vote, saying the interim speaker of parliament did not have the constitutional authority to oversee a motion of no confidence.

Tshisekedi’s new political alliance, known as the Sacred Union, is yet to be officially formed, but is likely to be comprised of more

than 20 parties, giving him an overwhelming majority to pass legislation.

However, political analysts say Tshisekedi may also find it difficult to juggle the diverging interests of his coalition.

Tshisekedi won a controversial presidential election in December 2018 on a platform vowing to fight corruption, reduce inequalities and improve government.

But he says his campaign of reform has been thwarted by Kabila’s lieutenants, who account for two-thirds of the vast 65-member coalition government.

Still only 49 years old despite his 18 years in office, Kabila retains clout through allies in politics, the military and business.

He took the helm of the DRC in 2001, succeeding his father, Laurent-Desire Kabila, who was assassinated by a bodyguard.

The younger Kabila’s rule was fiercely criticised for corruption and poor governance.

But it ended peacefully when he stepped down, in the DRC’s first-ever bloodless transition since gaining independence from Belgium in 1960.

Young African Entrepreneurs to Watch



Vanessa Zommi, 21, is one of Cameroon’s brightest young minds. She was just 17 when she started her venture Emerald Moringa Tea, a product aimed at fighting diabetes by reducing blood sugar levels.

After her mother was diagnosed with the diabetes, Vanessa set out to find an inexpensive but effective remedy, and she discovered it in the Moringa tree. This remarkable tree is known for its medicinal benefits, with its leaf containing antioxidants that enable it to treat various types of diabetes and boost the immune system.

Vanessa started processing the leaf and packaging it in the form of tea for easier and enjoyable consumption. What motivates her to expand her business is that her product keeps her community healthy, and tackles her country’s chronic diabetes problem.

To read the full article "10 Young African Entrepreneurs to Watch" visit: africa.com/top-young-african-entrepreneurs.

A Different View

with 



Photo Credit: Maddie Pearson

Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane City Council

So much has happened since the last edition of the Black Lens: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly. We have seen so many images on TV, in print and on the Internet from our country that were unbelievable, surreal and historic. But the one I want to celebrate and highlight is the Inauguration of President Biden and Vice-President Harris. To me, it felt like America was holding its collective breath and waiting to exhale. We were witness to the second most powerful person in our government, a "sista" being sworn in! Take that glass ceiling!

Kamala is an inspiration to the young but she is also an inspiration to the women and people of color who have stepped up or even thought about public service.. Ya'll know in our faith we believe, "All things are possible if you only believe." So when preparation meets opportunity, LOOK OUT!

In this historic moment and in celebration of Black History Month, I want to remind us of the Black Leaders of the Spokane Region who made significant contributions:

Peter Barrow Sr. arrived in 1889 from Mississippi, established an irrigated apple orchard north of Spokane (approximately where Northtown is now) and hired more than 100 African American workers. He then helped establish Calvary Baptist Church, the city's first African American Baptist church and became its first Pastor. It was also the home of the first African American community Center named after the famed entrepreneur Booker T Washington, who made a stop in Spokane during his grand tour to raise funds for the Tuskegee Institute.

In 1888, **Emmett Hercules Holmes** brought his family to Spokane from Mississippi and found work as a rail-

road porter, bellhop, and butler. He eventually became Spokane County's deputy treasurer. In 1890, Holmes established the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

These two churches would become the twin centers of Spokane's small Black community and their pastors would become the community's earliest activists. Spokane's Black population ticked upward in the decades following World War II and a new set of leaders emerged.

Brought up in an orphanage, **Carl Maxey** graduated from Gonzaga University as the first African American to pass the Bar Exam in Eastern Washington in 1951. He made national news in the case known as the "Haircut Uproar" in which a Gonzaga University student from Liberia was refused service at a barbershop. Maxey won that case easily and many other civil rights cases, like the time he sued the Spokane Club for refusing him membership despite working there for years.

Jim Chase was elected Spokane's Mayor in 1981. It was called a night of history! Chase with just a high school diploma was elected nine years before Norm Rice was elected Mayor of Seattle. Chase arrived in Spokane in a boxcar in 1934 and built up an auto repair business. He went on to become the President of the Spokane NAACP. He married his wife Eleanor in 1942, who was a part of a long lineage of Spokanites. Historic in her own right, **Eleanor Chase** would go on to become a social worker, a member of EWU and Whitworth Board of Trustees and a top operatic singer. I discovered that Chase was the second Black city council member (D.K. Oliver served in the late 1890s and was listed as "m" for

mulatto in some census documents).

Spokane went on to elect its first African American councilwoman, my mentor and District 2 predecessor, former City Council Member **Roberta Greene**, who served two terms on the city council from 1996 to 2003. She also owned a car lot with her husband and was a tireless advocate for our District. Her name was even floated around as Spokane's first "strong mayor" when we switched to the current "mayor-council" form of government during her time on Council.

In 2020, after Council President Breean Beggs left a vacancy upon his election to that post, I filled his shoes and celebrated my one year anniversary last month. As Council President Beggs said at my appointment, they chose me "for this particular time in history." Little did I know that 2020 would be a year filled with conversations about racial justice and equity, economic strife within communities of color and disparities in healthcare along lines of race and income.

I talked to the Council President about some of these topics after listening to all of you, whether it was on the phone, through email, marching with you in a protest or even at the grocery store! After that conversation, I took on some new roles this year. New leadership roles as Finance Chair, which oversees the city's budget of almost a billion dollars, the Visit Spokane Board which is charged with promoting Spokane through tourism and a seat with the Downtown Spokane Partnership, which drives the conversation and programs which we enjoy in our Downtown Core.

Continued on Page 32

1890

2021

Calvary Baptist Church

Reverend Dr. C.W. Andrews Sr., Pastor

Virtual Celebration

131ST ANNIVERSARY

Sunday

February 14, 2021

10:00 AM

Theme: Still Standing





The Oldest African American Baptist Church in Washington State.

Our Speaker:



Reverend Dr. Chester W. Andrews Jr.
Assistant Pastor of
Freeman Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
Moulton, AL

THIS EVENT WILL ONLY BE HELD ON ZOOM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT calvarybaptistchurchspokane.com to join zoom link

Hope to see you there!

For Quick Access
Join us on Zoom
8431645000

Calvary Baptist Church ~ 203 E 3rd Ave, Spokane, WA 99202 ~ (509) 747-8793



The Origins of Black History Month

The story of Black History Month begins in Chicago during the summer of 1915. An alumnus of the University of Chicago with many friends in the city, Carter G. Woodson traveled from Washington, D.C. to participate in a national celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of emancipation sponsored by the state of Illinois.

Thousands of African Americans travelled from across the country to see exhibits highlighting the progress their people had made since the destruction of slavery. Awarded a doctorate in Harvard three years earlier, Woodson joined the other exhibitors with a Black history display.

Despite being held at the Coliseum, the site of the 1912 Republican convention, an overflow crowd of six to twelve thousand waited outside for their turn to view the exhibits.

Inspired by the three-week celebration, Woodson decided to form an organization to promote the scientific study of Black life and history before leaving town. On September 9th, Woodson met at the Wabash YMCA with A.L. Jackson and three others and formed the *Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH)*.

He hoped that others would popularize the findings that he and other Black intellectuals would publish in *The Journal of Negro History*, which he established in 1916.

As early as 1920, Woodson urged Black civic organizations to promote the achievements that researchers were uncovering. A graduate member of Omega Psi Phi, he urged his fraternity brothers to take up the work. In 1924, they responded with the creation of Negro History and Literature Week, which they renamed Negro Achievement Week.

Their outreach was significant, but Woodson desired greater impact. As he told an audience of Hampton Institute students, “We are going back to that beautiful history and it is going to inspire us to greater achievements.” In 1925, he decided that the Association had to shoulder the responsibility. Going forward it would both create and popularize knowledge about the Black past. He sent out a press release announcing Negro History Week in February, 1926.

Woodson chose February for reasons of tradition and reform. It is commonly said that Woodson selected February to encompass the birthdays of two great Americans who played a prominent role in shaping Black history, namely Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, whose birthdays are the 12th and the 14th, respectively.

More importantly, he chose them for reasons of tradition. Since Lincoln’s assassination in 1865, the Black community, along with other Republicans, had been celebrating the fallen President’s birthday. And since the late 1890s, Black communities across the country had been celebrating Douglass’. Well aware of the pre-existing celebrations, Woodson built Negro History Week around traditional days of commemorating the Black past. He was asking the public to extend their study of Black history, not to create a new tradition. In doing so, he increased his chances for success.

Yet Woodson was up to something more than building on tradition. Without saying so, he aimed to reform it from the study of two great men to a great race. Though he admired both men, Woodson had never been fond of the celebrations held in their honor. He railed against the “ignorant spellbinders” who addressed large, convivial gatherings and displayed their lack of knowledge about the men and their contributions to history.

More importantly, Woodson believed that history was made by the people, not simply or primarily by great men. He envisioned the study and celebration of the Negro as a race, not simply as the producers of a great man. And Lincoln, however great, had not freed the slaves—the Union Army, including hundreds of thousands of Black soldiers and sailors, had done that. Rather than focusing on two men, the Black community, he believed, should focus on the countless Black men and women who had contributed to the advance of human civilization.



Photo Courtesy: W Virginia State Archives, Ancella Bickley Collection

Carter G. Woodson

From the beginning, Woodson was overwhelmed by the response to his call. Negro History Week appeared across the country in schools and before the public. The 1920s was the decade of the New Negro, a name given to the Post-War I generation because of its rising racial pride and consciousness. Urbanization and industrialization had brought over a million African Americans from the rural South into big cities of the nation. The expanding Black middle class became participants in and consumers of Black literature and culture. Black history clubs sprang up, teachers demanded materials to instruct their pupils, and progressive whites stepped and endorsed the efforts.

Woodson and the Association scrambled to meet the demand. They set a theme for the annual celebration, and provided study materials—pictures, lessons for teachers, plays for historical performances, and posters of important dates and people. Provisioned with a steady flow of knowledge, high schools in progressive communities formed Negro History Clubs. To serve the desire of history buffs to participate in the re-education of Black folks and the nation, ASNLH formed branches that stretched from coast to coast.

In 1937, at the urging of Mary McLeod Bethune, Woodson established the Negro History Bulletin, which focused on the annual theme. As Black populations grew, mayors issued Negro History Week proclamations, and in cities like Syracuse, progressive whites joined Negro History Week with National Brotherhood Week.

Like most ideas that resonate with the spirit of the times, Negro History Week proved to be more dynamic than Woodson or the Association could control. By the 1930s, Woodson complained about the intellectual charlatans, Black and white, popping up everywhere seeking to take advantage of the public interest in Black history. He warned teachers not to invite speakers who had less knowledge than the students themselves.

Increasingly publishing houses that had previously ignored Black topics and authors rushed to put books on the market and in the schools. Instant experts appeared everywhere, and non-scholarly works appeared from “mushroom presses.” In America, nothing popular escapes either commercialization or eventual trivialization, and so Woodson, the constant reformer, had his hands full in promoting celebrations worthy of the people who had made the history.

Well before his death in 1950, Woodson believed that the weekly celebrations—not the study or celebration of Black history—would eventually come to an end. In fact, Woodson never viewed Black history as a one-week affair. He pressed for schools to use Negro History Week to demonstrate what students learned all year. In the same vein, he established a Black studies extension program to reach adults throughout the year. It was in this sense that Blacks would learn of their past on a daily basis that he looked forward to the time when an annual celebration would no longer be necessary.

Generations before Morgan Freeman and other advocates of all-year commemorations, Woodson believed that Black history was too important to America and the world to be crammed into a limited time frame. He spoke of a shift from Negro History Week to Negro History Year.

In the 1940s, efforts began slowly within the Black community to expand the study of Black history in the schools and Black history celebrations before the public. In the South, Black teachers often taught Negro History as a supplement to United States history. One early beneficiary of the movement reported that his teacher would hide Woodson’s textbook beneath his desk to avoid drawing the wrath of the principal.

During the Civil Rights Movement in the South, the Freedom Schools incorporated Black history into the curriculum to advance social change. The Negro History movement was an intellectual insurgency that was part of every larger effort to transform race relations.

The 1960s had a dramatic effect on the study and celebration of Black history. Before the decade was over, Negro History Week would be well on its way to becoming Black History Month. The shift to a month-long celebration began even before Dr. Woodson death. As early as the 1940s, Blacks in West Virginia, a state where Woodson often spoke, began to celebrate February as Negro History Month.

In Chicago, a now forgotten cultural activist, Fredrick H. Hammaurabi, started celebrating Negro History Month in the mid-1960s. Having taken an African name in the 1930s, Hammaurabi used his cultural center, the House of Knowledge, to fuse African consciousness with the study of the Black past. By the late 1960s, as young Blacks on college campuses became increasingly conscious of links with Africa, Black History Month replaced Negro History Week at a quickening pace.

Within the Association, younger intellectuals, part of the awakening, prodded Woodson’s organization to change with the times. They succeeded. In 1976, fifty years after the first celebration, the Association used its influence to institutionalize the shifts from a week to a month and from Negro history to Black history. Since the mid-1970s, every American president, Democrat and Republican, has issued proclamations endorsing the Association’s annual theme.

What Carter G. Woodson would say about the continued celebrations is unknown, but he would smile on all honest efforts to make Black history a field of serious study and provide the public with thoughtful celebrations.

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The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (EIN: 53-0219640) is a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization. The mission of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH®) is to promote, research, preserve, interpret and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community.



ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE AND HISTORY®

THE 2021 BLACK HISTORY MONTH VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING THE 95TH ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY THEME
The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity

Monday, February 1, 2021, 6:00 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
Announcement of the Black History theme and Introduction of ASALH's Inaugural Virtual Black History Month Festival

Wednesday, February 3, 2021, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
A Celebration of African American Life and History: Trailblazer featuring an Author Talk with Mae Jemison

Saturday, February 6, 2021, 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
From the Continent to the Americas: Foodways, Culture and Traditions in the African American Family

Sunday, February 7, 2021, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
Manhattan Branch, Panel Discussion "How African American Families Have Been Portrayed in the Media"

Wednesday, February 10, 2021, 1:30 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
Presentation of the Inaugural ASALH Book Prize

Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 6:30 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
Diving with a Purpose: Recovering and Reexamining Our Roots

Sunday, February 28, 2021, 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
Prince George's County Truth Branch and Maple Springs Baptist Church Cultural Education Experience Ministry (CEEM) host a joint ASALH Branch program featuring Charlene Dukes on the Black Family and Education

Sunday, February 28, 2021, 7:00 p.m. EST
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT - OPEN TO PUBLIC
ASALH and PBS Books Present: A Conversation with Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Sundiata Cha-Jua, and Nubia Kai

In partnership with the 105 Voices of History, the Festival will feature music from the Black experience performed by choirs from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The performance of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by HBCU students and choirs will also be aired during the Festival.

Marquee Event

Saturday, February 20, 2021, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. EST
(TICKETED EVENT: \$50.00, \$125.00, \$150.00)

Finding Our Roots in African American History
A Conversation with Henry Louis Gates and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham



Henry Louis Gates, Jr.



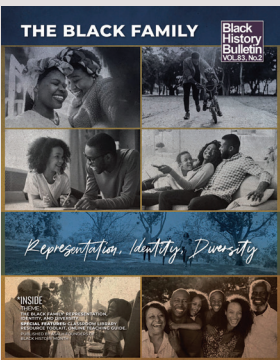
Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham

Acclaimed for his scholarship, his documentary films about African, Afro-Latin, and African American History, and his popular television series, "Finding Your Roots," Henry Louis Gates, Jr., has brought fascinating African American family stories to the wider public. The Black History Month Festival in 2021 is proud to feature a conversation between ASALH's national president Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who will share his thoughts and motivations in popularizing Black History through the heritage of African American families and communities and their search for roots. Joe Madison, legendary voice in radio, and a recognized human and civil rights activist will serve as the host for this event. Rev. William H. Lamar IV, Pastor of the historic Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, DC will offer the traditional invocation on behalf of the new Festival.

THESE PROGRAMS WILL BE SHOWN ON ASALHTV WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/ASALHTV

ASALH BRANCHES WILL HOST VIRTUAL PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE MONTH. THESE EVENTS CAN BE FOUND AT ASALH.ORG/BRANCH-EVENTS

WWW.ASALH.ORG/FESTIVAL | 202-238-5910 | #ASALH #ASALHFAMILY #ASALHFESTIVAL



2021 Black History Month Theme- The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity

The black family has been a topic of study in many disciplines—history, literature, the visual arts and film studies, sociology, anthropology, and social policy. Its representation, identity, and diversity have been revered, stereotyped, and vilified from the days of slavery to our own time. The black family knows no single location, since family reunions and genetic-ancestry searches testify to the spread of family members across states, nations, and continents. Not only are individual black families diasporic, but Africa and the diaspora itself have been long portrayed as the black family at large. While the role of the black family has been described by some as a microcosm of the entire race, its complexity as the “foundation” of African American life and history can be seen in numerous debates over how to represent its meaning and typicality from a historical perspective—as slave or free, as patriarchal or matriarchal/matrifocal, as single-headed or dual-headed household, as extended or nuclear, as fictive kin or blood lineage, as legal or common law, and as black or interracial, etc. Variation appears, as well, in discussions on the nature and impact of parenting, childhood, marriage, gender norms, sexuality, and incarceration. The family offers a rich tapestry of images for exploring the African American past and present. To purchase the Black History Bulletin - Family Issue visit: <https://asalh.org/document/the-black-history-bulletin>

Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears

The Dawn is Ours

Aaahhh – yes! I remember now. This is what it feels like to breathe; to have air actually fill my lungs to capacity. It’s an unfamiliar sensation after four years of shallow, rapid breath brought on by the stress, worry and fear that comes when the body and mind are faced with ever-present crisis and ever-threatening danger.

I didn’t think there would be such a bright line of visceral relief on January 20, 2021 when Joseph R. Biden took the oath of office, officially becoming President of the United States. But I was overwhelmed with a feeling of liberation!

I didn’t know how much unbridled pride and joy I would feel watching Kamala Harris raise her right hand and pledge to defend the Constitution of the United States as the first woman, moreover the first Black and South Asian woman to be elected Vice President of the Nation.

I’ve never in my life become emotional at the singing of the National Anthem, but Lady Gaga had me in tears. I couldn’t have imagined being awestruck by the recitation of The Hill We Climb, the Inaugural Poem, written by the youngest known Inaugural Poet in American history. An extraordinary young Black woman, Amanda Gorman’s words were so powerfully and passionately delivered, so honest, brave, wise and hopeful, they must surely have resonated in all but the most hardened of hearts and most closed of minds. CNN’s Anderson Cooper was so transfixed by her presence that in an interview with the poet, he was rendered literally speechless. Ms. Gorman told Mr. Cooper, "Whenever I perform — and I definitely did it this time — I close my eyes and I say ‘I’m the daughter of Black writers. We’re descended from freedom fighters who broke their chains and changed the world.’”

I couldn’t have imagined how touched I would be by the sight of three former Presidents of the United States, two Democrats and one Republican, gathered together in

mutual respect, admiration and support of President Biden as he laid a wreath at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington cemetery later that afternoon.

It was a glorious Inaugural event, from the moving remembrance and tribute for the over 400,000 souls lost to the COVID 19 viral pandemic the night before; to the noontime inaugural ceremony on the steps of the Capitol; to the evening’s nationally televised virtual celebration; to the grandeur of the dazzling spectacle of fireworks that burst into the night sky over the towering obelisk of the Washington Monument.

As we were periodically reminded by commentators and pundits all throughout day, this peaceful transfer of power and the celebration thereof came perilously close to not being. It’s still hard for me to wrap my mind around the hours-long attack and siege on the Capitol, mounted by a delusional, conspiracy-crazed, lie-fueled mob of Donald Trump supporters seeking to overturn our democratic republic at the urging of the outgoing President of the United States. As investigations go on, it is becoming apparent that it was a siege in some part methodically planned and executed.

It was a reminder that as dysfunctional and imperfect as this country is, it is a country that must be preserved and defended, "...against all enemies foreign and domestic." Donald Trump’s name was never said aloud by any of the Inaugural speakers. There was no need to name him. The very site of the ceremony was a visual reminder of the carnage he wrought and the ultimate triumph of Democracy.

As forward looking, hopeful and healing a day as January 20th was, President Biden kept it real. In his remarks he said: “Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth and there are lies, lies told for power and for profit. And each of us has a duty and responsibility, as citizens, as Americans, and especially as

leaders, leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our nation, to defend the truth and defeat the lies.”

Even as he assured us that unity was not a “foolish fantasy,” he was painfully honest about the enormity of the challenges we face: “Few people in our nation’s history have been more challenged or found a time more challenging or difficult than the time we’re in now. A once-in-a-century virus that silently stalks the country. It’s taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II. Millions of jobs have been lost. Hundreds of thousands of businesses closed. A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer. The cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can’t be any more desperate or any more clear. And now a rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront, and we will defeat.”

Sister Amanda Gorman brought the Spirit, the strength and the power needed in this hour:

*We’ve seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically delayed
it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth
in this faith we trust...*

*So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole, benevolent but bold, fierce and free
We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation...*

America can be great. It is an ideal worth striving for under a form of governance



worth saving. But America is not superior to every other nation, nor are we as inherently different as we believe ourselves to be. The events of the last four years have proven that American Exceptionalism is a false theory. It took a crippling viral pandemic to humble us, and a Donald Trump to force this country to finally peer into its own soul and recoil from what it sees there.

The refrain in the song America the Beautiful says, “America, America, God shed his grace on thee.” God’s grace is indeed shed on America, but God’s grace shines on the rest of the world as well. So often when I hear people say God Bless America, I believe what they’re really praying is for God to bless America and no place else. God bless my tribe and no other tribe. God bless my cause and no other cause. God’s on my side, not your side. These are the lies we tell ourselves. These are the lies the violent mob who stormed the Capitol believe.

God’s Grace is always freely given, and God’s light is always shining on everyone, everywhere. But we’ll never see that light through lenses of hate and fear, mistrust and injustice, greed, and hubris. Divine Light is always ours to receive, but we can’t take it into our hearts unless we make room for it.

Breath is life. Yes, I am breathing again; breathing in renewed life; breathing out gratitude, healing, hope, resolve. Amanda Gorman ended her poem with these words.

*The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we’re brave enough to see it
If only we’re brave enough to be it*

May we take them to heart.

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Rev. Beverly Spears is an ordained American Baptist minister, teacher and preacher of Evolutionary Christianity.



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WHEN	Applications are due FEBRUARY 1, JUNE 1, and OCTOBER 1 every year.

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Your child may qualify for free or low-cost health coverage through Medicaid or CHIP.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Children in a family of four earning up to \$50,000 annually may qualify for free medical coverage. Families of four earning up to \$80,000 annually may be eligible for low-cost coverage with premiums of \$20 or \$30 each month for each child (no copays or deductibles).

MOST UNINSURED CHILDREN ARE ELIGIBLE FOR COVERAGE

Children with Medicaid and CHIP have access to immunizations, check-ups, eye exams, dental visits, mental health care, and prescriptions.

CONTACT US TODAY!

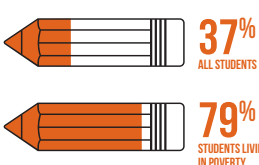
-  (509) 340-9008
-  healthykids@betterhealthtogether.org
-  @BetterHealthTogether



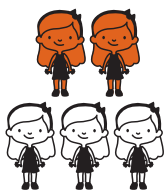
WHO USES MEDICAID AND CHIP?



Nearly 87% of all eligible uninsured children are school-aged.



Percentage of school-aged students (ages 6-18) who receive health coverage through Medicaid and CHIP.



Almost 2 out of 5 school-aged children received health coverage through Medicaid and CHIP in 2016.



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We created an online form to collect data on incidents of hate and bias, which happen often to people who are: LGBTQ+, of various religious affiliations, people of color, people with disabilities, and any other targeted communities.

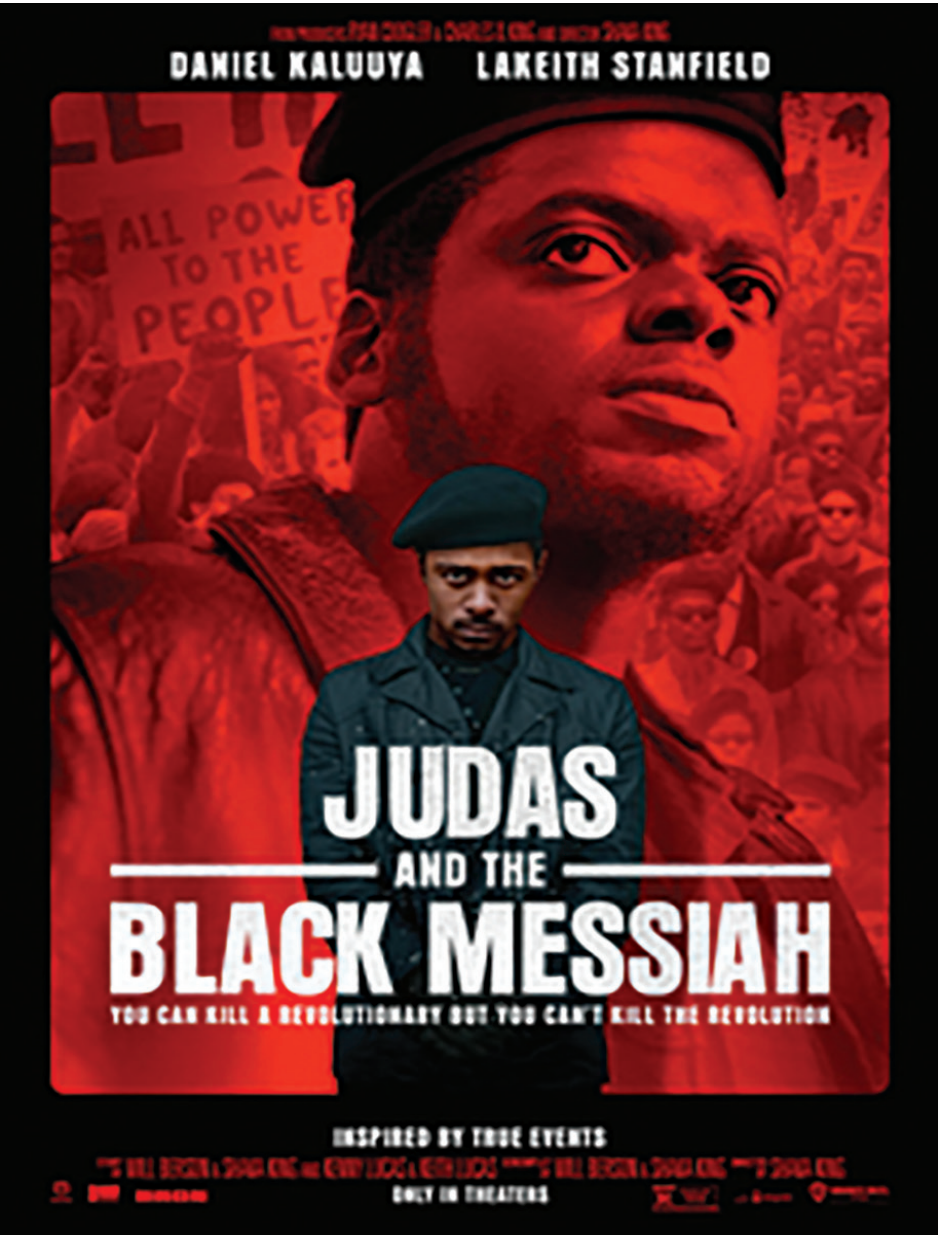
To report an incident visit **ReportHateBias.org**. These reports are not connected to law enforcement; if you are a victim of a hate crime and need the police to respond, call 911.

information@schrthf.org
PO Box 4552, Spokane WA 99220
SpokaneCountyHumanRightsTaskForce.org



ReportHateBias.org

Release Date February 12



Judas and the Black Messiah is the story of Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and his betrayal in the late 1960s by FBI informant William O'Neal. The film stars Daniel Kaluuya and Lakeith Stanfield as Hampton and O'Neal, respectively, with Jesse Plemons, Dominique Fishback, Ashton Sanders, and Martin Sheen also starring. The film can be viewed in Theaters and digitally on HBO Max. (Note: Working on a Black Lens virtual screening and discussion. Stay tuned).

SPEAK
UP!

Do you have ideas for how to make our community healthier?
Join the Community Voices Council.

The Community Voices Council believes no one should experience a difference in care as a result of their identity, income, or ability. The Community Voices Council makes recommendations to local health care leaders on improvements that will support this vision.

The Community Voices Council is looking for people who:

- Are on Medicaid (Apple Health)
- Have experience using health care or social services, and are comfortable talking to others about it
- Like to talk to their neighbors and community about what issues are affecting them
- Enjoy coming up with ideas that help their community
- Have the time to attend the monthly meetings (3rd Tuesday of every month at noon – \$75 paid monthly for participation)

Two ways to apply:
Visit: <https://bit.ly/2VrfhdU>
Email: Reese@betterhealthtogether.org

better
healthtogether

“Black Love”
A Poem by Bethany 'B.Lyte' Montgomery
Founder & President of Power 2 The Poetry

What is Black Love?

Black Love is the most beautiful thing on earth

Black Love transcends all barriers

Black Love is pure and sublime

Black Love only gets better over time

Black love overcomes all obstacles

Black love is proving anything is possible

And when I say Black Love
I do not mean just the romantic love connection
shared between
A Black Man & Black Woman
Black Man & Black Man
Black Woman & Black Woman

The Black Love I’m talking about is strictly platonic
Purely spiritual free from any sensual desires
The Black Love I’m talking about
Forever burns bright like an eternal fire

See society does not promote this kind of Black Love
Society hates us and wants us to destroy ourselves
Society understands if we come together
The results will be catastrophic
We would transform the world and not a soul could stop it

Black Love is so powerful it could initiate a wave of change
Never leaving our society the same
They are afraid because they know
We are powerful beyond measure
They know we are capable of things
They are too fearful to imagine

They tried to break our spirits with slavery
But we rose against that adversity
And even though we are still not free
They know when we drop all our pride and truly unify
We will be the ones with limits past the sky
Black Love together we rise

Power 2 The Poetry
Sending vibrations of Love,
Lyte & Peace

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More poems at power2thepoetry.com



Imagine Jazz Keeping the Music Playing

February Workshops & Concert

Despite the pandemic, Imagine Jazz is still bringing premium content to Spokane in the virtual form of livestream concerts and zoom webinars. Recent presentations this winter included Carl Allen, Jaleel Shaw, Marcus Strickland, EJ Strickland, Greta Matassa and Jason Palmer. These events were made possible from grant support by Spokane Arts.

Imagine Jazz founder Rachel Bade-McMurphy recognizes that the virtual events are met with different feelings and levels of engagement. She states, “It feels like we are working underground. We are still working very hard and doing very important work. But a lot of it is unseen, and the experiences are personal

victories rather than social endeavors.” The last in-person presentation was in March of 2020.

Coming up on **February 5th**, Imagine will air a concert that was recorded exclusively for them by Legendary pianist George Cables, with trumpet sensation Jeremy Pelt. Cables is a national treasure who toured and recorded with such historic legends as Sonny Rollins, Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Dexter Gordon, Sarah Vaughn, Dizzy Gillespie and more. Jeremy Pelt is one of Imagines’ most frequent collaborators, appearing in Spokane six times in four years, each time with a different band and format including the Black Art Jazz Collective in 2019.



The Cables/Pelt footage was shot on Jan 19th in Cable’s beautiful living room using three angles and high-quality microphones. The concert will air virtually on Feb 5th, staying available for 48 hours so that as many people can enjoy the concert as possible. Bade-McMurphy is scheduled to interview Cables prior to the show and the footage will be streamed via youtube and facebook.

February presentations also include a Virtual workshop day on **February 20th**. Three artists will be featured that day including saxophonist Todd Delguidice presenting “finding your voice as a soloist”; drummer Christopher Brown “Using Jazz as a Lens to reference the Gravity of Communication” and Grammy-nominated vocalist Rene Marie presenting a vocal jazz topic. The webinars are made available to all ages and levels. Community members are encouraged to attend. The webinars include lecture and demonstration by the artist as well as question and answer sessions. Those who cannot be present, can still receive access to the video afterwards for a limited time.

Tickets to the virtual concert and workshops are available at www.imaginejazz.org



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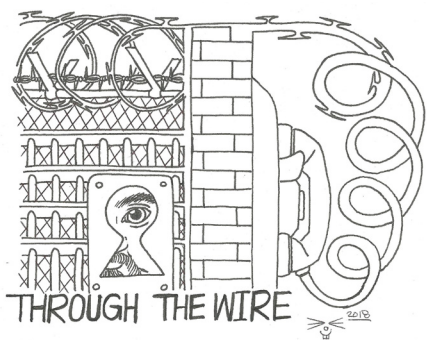


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THE BLACK PRISONERS CAUCUS

Airway Heights

Elements of a Successful Reentry: A Letter From a Confused Child Entering Prison and Leaving a Changed Man

By Gregory Torres

As for me, I'm up to the same old stuff, just working on self. It is actually fascinating to consciously peel back and analyze the many layers of my own character.

I try to set small goals for myself, to have something to strive towards as a means to account for each day in the aspect of growth and productivity as an individual. In doing so, I've come to a realization that initially upon my incarceration I had the farfetched notion that, how you start, how you finish and reputation is everything, based on the hype and recognition acquired in the wake of violence.

It served its purpose at that time of my adolescence but forced me into a paradigm whereas such acts are a way of life, a means of survival, and the very norm.

In mastering your craft you become consumed, inspired and driven in establishing, maintaining and securing the rigid structure of this paradigm in the confines of these four walls.

In doing so, you become a seasoned, well rounded "Soldado". Which is the furthest thing from a simple label, but instead a walk of life. As you are in the forefront and representation of an entire people.

With seasoning comes wisdom and understanding and at the end of the day no

matter how you define such a Soldado it is infantry meant for the front lines. To engage in battles with the hopes of coming out victorious. Although in reality it is generals who from behind a desk with the assistance of their advisors and to the extent of their intelligence who win wars.

As I now strive to conquer the war within myself for the knowledge of understanding, is empowering. At this point in time in my life I frown upon the treachery oh search violence and the engagement of hand to hand combat not only is it counterproductive it is in my journey to freedom but even more so it doesn't align with my values.

I now see no great achievement in physically dominating an opponent because whether you win or lose when you engage with another it plants the seeds of animosity creating an enemy. Because of a lack of communication cobra misunderstanding and an inability to connect in a meaningful way results in the consequences of our actions being detrimental to all parties involved.

I pride myself in and value the ability to control emotion, communicate and connect with others. For me, this is a challenge and small goal I have set for myself do not only achieve but master. I also now believe it to be the most appropriate way of dealing with adversity.

The Freedom Project Comes East

By Edmundo M. Aguilar

Less than one year ago today, Jermaine Williams was a ward of the state. Prison was an unpleasant reality for him since he was a teenager.

"For any individual who has spent any amount of time being incarcerated, being told what they can and can't do, when they can and can't eat, your opinion doesn't matter. If you do decide to exercise your opinion, it comes with consequences," Williams said.

Today, that reality is no longer the case. Freshly out from what was his home for most of his adult life, Williams is still very much connected to those impacted by prison. Now, the director of a new non-profit in Spokane called Freedom Project East, Williams is doing more than just sharing his opinion by addressing the systemic causes and impacts of mass incarceration and the ways it decimates communities of color.

Williams states, "It's important for me to do this work because I know how difficult it was for me from an emotional and psychological standpoint when I was first released from confinement and now I think of people who suffer a similar plight. I want to do everything possible to make their transition a more humane one."

Freedom Project East strictly focuses on supporting Black, Indigenous and People of Color in Eastern Washington and the Spokane area. The non-profit is a grassroots project that works to serve and support those most marginalized and one of the most glaring manifestation of racial inequity – mass incarceration. Freedom Project East offers both short-and long-term programs such as trauma intervention activities, providing basic needs (resources, housing, etc.), and Anti-Oppression training.

Black people are disproportionately arrested in Spokane: while they make up 2.5% of the population but are arrested over 7.5 times more than people who identify as white. A white person in Spokane has a 1 in 30 chance of being arrested, but if you are Black, your chances are 1 in 5 of being arrested.

According to a Spokesman-Review analysis of recently released data, "Of those who were arrested in the last five years, Black people were also about twice as likely to experience police use of force. These findings come from arrest data and use-of-force records released by the Spokane Police Department and 2019 census estimates."

These disproportionate rates of arrest have their roots in systemic racism and impact families, children, and entire communities. Freedom Project East seeks to address these



systemic impacts while also providing support to families and the community dealing with the trauma of racism and incarceration.

Not even a year out from being incarcerated, Jermaine Williams has hit the ground running since being released, and he has not slowed his efforts in trying to create positive change in a community that desperately needs it.

Williams has a message for those directly impacted by mass incarceration, "for those people who are formally incarcerated, and you're out here in the community trying to establish yourself, believe that you can and that you will... understand that you have value, you have worth and you have something amazing to contribute to this community."

For more information contact Jermaine Williams at jermaine@freedomprojectwa.org or visit <https://freedomprojectwa.org>.



The 'Rona: COVID-19 Resources & Information

Tyler Perry & BET to Air COVID-19 Vaccine Special

(Source: Shanelle Genai, <https://thegrapevine.theroot.com>)

BET & media mogul Tyler Perry are teaming up for a news special to help address COVID-19 vaccine concerns and fears within the Black community.

Per a press release sent to The Root, Perry plans to sit down with top medical experts from the Grady Health System for one-on-one interviews in a half-hour program entitled *COVID-19 Vaccine and the Black Community: A Tyler Perry Special*.

Executive produced by Perry for Tyler Perry Studios, the special will provide helpful and factual information for viewers looking to protect themselves and their families from this unprecedented crisis. Executive Associate Dean at the Emory School of Medicine at Grady Health System Carlos del Rio, MD and Professor of Medicine at Grady Health System Kimberly Dyan



Photo: Tyler Perry Studios/BET

Manning, MD will be answering the tough questions on what families should and need to know when it comes to the vaccine.

Deadline also reports that ahead of the broadcast, Perry spoke to CBS This Morn-

ing's Gayle King where he spoke on his intent behind the special and touched on the skepticism concerning the vaccine, specifically as it relates to the Black community. Admitting to initially being hesitant himself, Perry cited Henrietta Lacks and the

Tuskegee experiment as historic and particularly horrendous circumstances that often "raise flags for us as African American people" and make it harder to trust what's really inside the vial.

But overall, Perry still asserts that a lack of trust or doubt isn't worth skipping out on getting the vaccine—and that's exactly why he went to hear the experts and got the vaccine shot for himself.

"I'm not taking this vaccine because I want you to take it, I want to give you the information so you make your own choices. I think that's what it's about, education and information. I think that it's just important that people know that, if you take your chances with Covid you never know how it's going to affect you and it could affect your long-term health."

COVID-19 Vaccine and the Black Community: A Tyler Perry Special will premiere Thursday, January 28 at 9pm ET, on BET and BETHer.

Protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Your actions can help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Avoid gatherings

Limit close contact to a small group of people and avoid crowds.

Stay six feet apart

Physically distance from people who don't live in your household.

Stay home if you're sick

Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms of COVID-19.

Wear a mask

Use a face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.

Wash your hands

Wash for 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

Get tested

Get tested if you have symptoms or were exposed to COVID-19.

coronavirus.wa.gov

When should I get tested for COVID-19?

Get tested if you are showing symptoms or have been near someone else who tested positive.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.



COVID-19 symptoms may include:

- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Fever
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat

What if I don't have symptoms?

Even if you aren't showing symptoms, you can still transmit the virus to others! Self-isolate until you know your results.

Where do I get tested?



Health care providers



Community clinics, health centers and pharmacies



Drive thru and walk-up testing sites

Is the vaccine safe? Should I get it?

Yes. The vaccines available today were only approved after a rigorous, multi-step testing process.

1. Each vaccine goes through multiple clinical trials, first with a small group of volunteers, then hundreds, then thousands.
2. Thousands of people from all backgrounds participate in clinical trials.
3. Independent review verifies the efficacy and safety for all approved vaccines.

Find when and where locally you can get the vaccine:

coronavirus.wa.gov

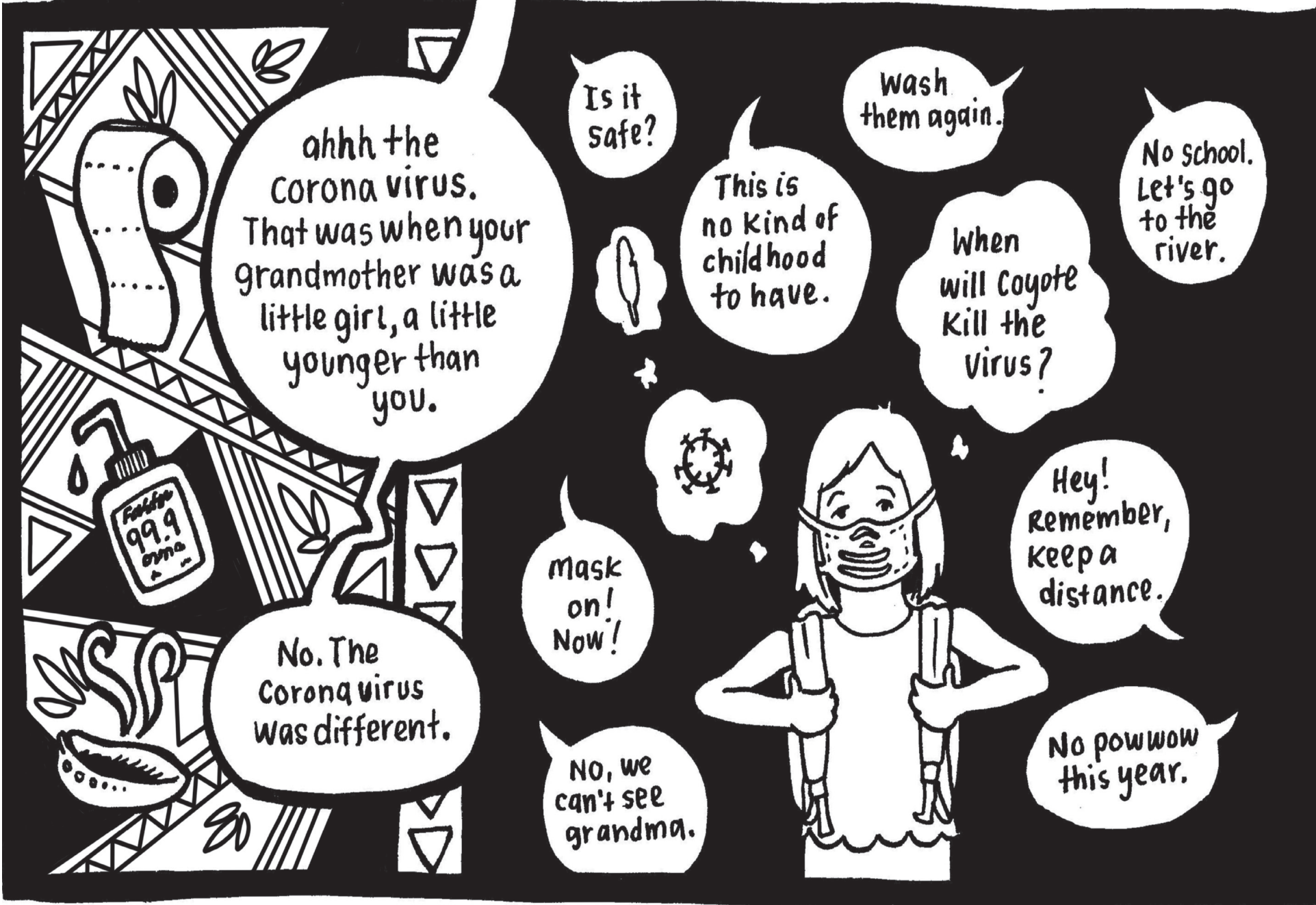


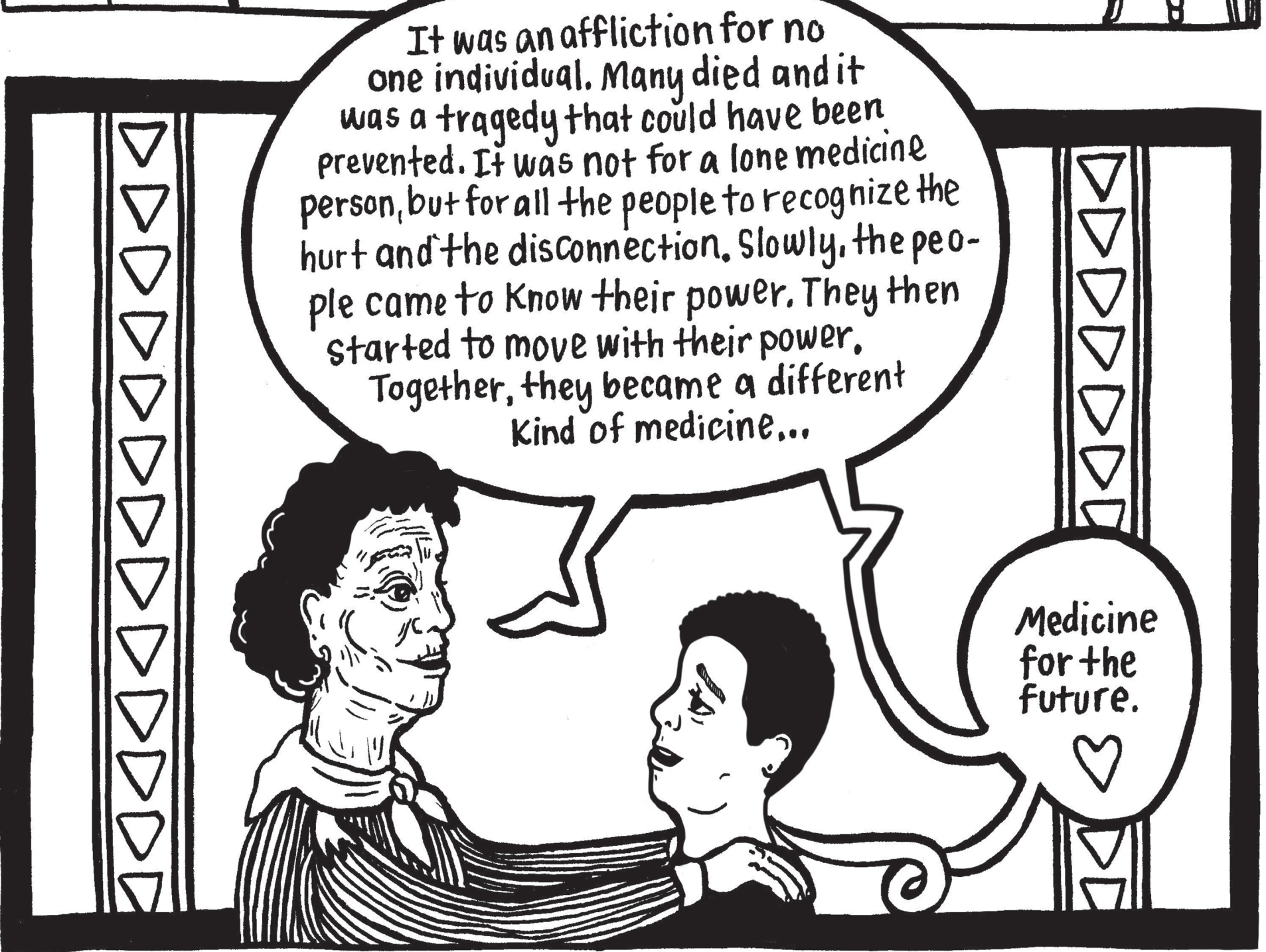
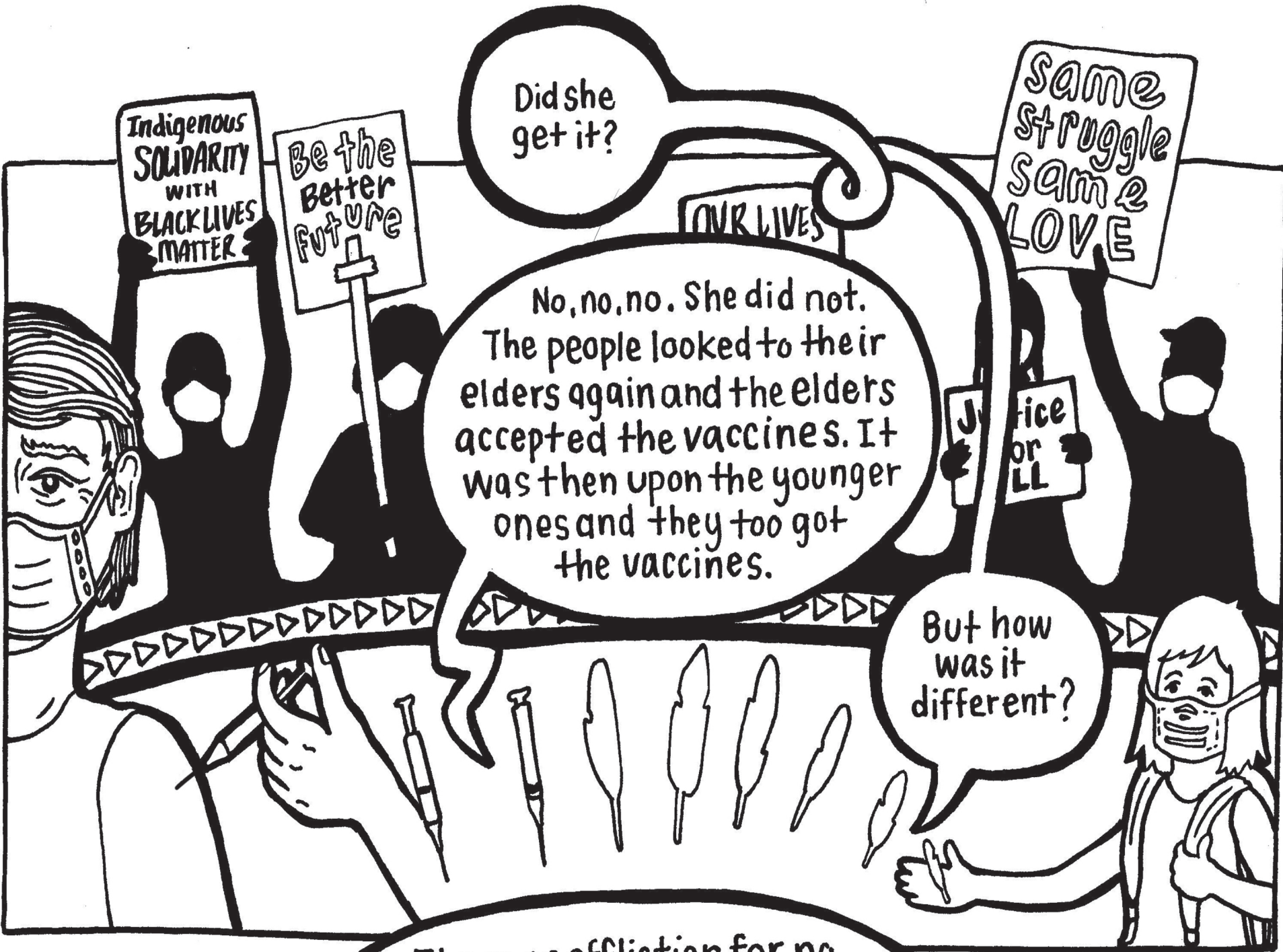
But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise
By Jiemei Lin



FUTURE ^{is} OURS TO TELL

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Viewing the Pandemic Museum’s
Room of Masks:

The Smithsonian, Washington, DC, in the Year 2051

Cy-Docent No.16-C guided the guests through the labyrinth of corridors and the museum’s suites of galleries, their voice undulated like a spoken word poem. “Had there been conflict? Oh, yes, there’d been tension, in the planning stages of the Pandemic Museum, before ground had broken for its place, its own space, on the National Mall.”

They stopped momentarily to survey an expanse of wall within the rotunda; an installation of N-95 PPE appeared. At first the masks seemed to be apparitions, like holograms from a Disney’s theme park. But then it became obvious that they were actual—that the masks had been concealed within the wall, that the masks were the wall. An optical illusion. Each mask, hundreds, perhaps thousands of them, lifted off from the achromatic wall and took flight like a kaleidoscope of silver butterflies heading into the dome of the rotunda. The visitors let out a collected gasp.

“Each mask has been specially fitted with a motorized set of wings and its own power source. They will evacuate through the opened dome and are programmed to gather in the cherry trees on the museum grounds. But don’t worry, the masks are organic-friendly, and will not harm any bird or living thing.”

The Cy-Docent paused and went on.

“The installation you just witnessed is called The Living and the Dead. And it is a kinetic assemblage in homage to those who perished, and the loved ones of those who perished, during the 2019-2021 Covid Pandemic.”

Several, if not most of the guests, recalled those times, some thirty years ago, when the world had been plunged into crisis. And so many lives had been lost. Following an attempted siege of the Capitol, and after a new administration took power, a shift of consciousness and intention was enacted, ushering in greater equality and prosperity for the people, and a healing of the earth, including deadly contagions.

The last of the butterfly masks fluttered through the top of the dome. Blue sky and sunshine shimmered beyond.

Cy-Docent No.16-C shuttled the visitors to the opposite side of the gallery where a Cy-Harpist played a spirited interlude. The guests took up the live wicks offered and alit the rows upon rows of candles—a ruminative mood enshrined the chambers.

Cy-Docent No.16-C continued leading the guests down to the end of the hall that led to another ornate gallery. And beyond that room was another. And then another.

~Tiffany Midge



QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COVID VACCINE?

DID YOU KNOW?

Black community members are suffering higher rates of Covid-19 and more hospitalizations, as well as death rates.

WE MUST PROTECT OURSELVES.

The vaccine is safe and is the next step to reversing those numbers and saving ourselves.

It is your turn to get the vaccine if:

- You are 65 and older
- You are 50 and older and living with multiple family members
- You are a health care worker or first responder
- You live in a long-term care facility

If you are included in the above, there are two steps to take:

1. Fill out this online form: form.findyourphaseswa.org and take a screenshot of, or print, the results.
2. Make your **appointment**:
 - If you have a doctor, contact their office and ask where you get vaccinated.
 - If you do not have a doctor, make an appointment **starting February 1** for the Spokane Arena mass vaccination site by visiting this link: <https://chas.org/services/healthalerts/vaccine> or call Washington COVID Helpline at 1-800-525-0127 or 1-888-856-5816, then press #.

Note, there are more people who are eligible to be vaccinated right now than there is vaccine. **BE PATIENT** and keep trying!



Have an Appointment, But Need Transportation?

If you already have Paratransit bus card or are over the age of 60, Paratransit door-to-door service is available. If you do not have a Paratransit bus card, it is \$2 each way, \$4 for round trip. Cash only. Call 509.328.1552 to schedule a Paratransit ride at least one day in advance of your appointment.

In conjunction with Black Lens, Spokane NAACP, Carl Maxey Center and Spokane Ministers Fellowship



HOW DO BLACK FOLKS REALLY FEEL ABOUT THE VACCINE?

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

A {VIRTUAL} COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM A PANEL OF BLACK MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

ON ZOOM
SAT. FEBRUARY 20TH
10 AM



Kiantha Duncan
Moderator



Dr. Okechukwu Ojogho
Providence Sacred Heart



Anna Franklin
Providence Health Care



Faith Washington
RN, Inland Imaging



Betsy Wilkerson
Spokane City Council



Walter Kendricks
President Ministers Fellowship



Daphne Davis
Onyx Catering Company



Jada Richardson
Senior, Innovation High School



Jermaine Williams
Freedom Project East

Visit CarlMaxeyCenter.org for Zoom Link

Amid COVID and Racial Unrest, Black Churches Put Faith in Mental Health

By Aneri Pattani

Reprinted from Kaiser Family Foundation
(khn.org/news)

Wilma Mayfield used to visit a senior center in Durham, North Carolina, four days a week and attend Lincoln Memorial Baptist Church on Sundays, a ritual she's maintained for nearly half a century. But over the past 10 months, she's seen only the inside of her home, the grocery store and the pharmacy. Most of her days are spent worrying about COVID-19 and watching TV.

It's isolating, but she doesn't talk about it much.

When Mayfield's church invited a psychologist to give a virtual presentation on mental health during the pandemic, she decided to tune in.

The hourlong discussion covered COVID's disproportionate toll on communities of color, rising rates of depression and anxiety, and the trauma caused by police killings of Black Americans. What stuck with Mayfield were the tools to improve her own mental health.

"They said to get up and get out," she said. "So I did."

The next morning, Mayfield, 67, got into her car and drove around town, listening to 103.9 gospel radio and noting new businesses that had opened and old ones that had closed. She felt so energized that she bought chicken, squash and greens, and began her Thanksgiving cooking early.

"It was wonderful," she said. "The stuff that lady talked about [in the presentation], it opened up doors for me."

As Black people face an onslaught of grief, stress and isolation triggered by a devastating pandemic and repeated instances of racial injustice, churches play a crucial role in addressing the mental health of their members and the greater community. Religious institutions have long been havens for emotional support. But faith leaders say the challenges of this year have catapulted mental health efforts to the forefront of their mission.

Some are preaching about mental health from the pulpit for the first time. Others are inviting mental health professionals to speak to their congregations, undergoing mental health training themselves or adding more therapists to the church staff.

"COVID undoubtedly has escalated this



conversation in great ways," said Keon Gerow, senior pastor at Catalyst Church in West Philadelphia. "It has forced Black churches — some of which have been older, traditional and did not want to have this conversation — to actually now have this conversation in a very real way."

At Lincoln Memorial Baptist, leaders who organized the virtual presentation with the psychologist knew that people like Mayfield were struggling but might be reluctant to seek help. They thought members might be more open to sensitive discussions if they took place in a safe, comfortable setting like church.

It's a trend that psychologist Alfiee Breland-Noble, who gave the presentation, has noticed for years.

Through her nonprofit organization, the AAKOMA Project, Breland-Noble and her colleagues often speak to church groups about depression, recognizing it as one of the best ways to reach a diverse segment of the Black community and raise mental health awareness.

This year, the AAKOMA Project has received clergy requests that are increasingly urgent, asking to focus on coping skills and tools people can use immediately, Breland-Noble said.

"After George Floyd's death, it became: 'Please talk to us about exposure to racial trauma and how we can help congregations deal with this,'" she said. "'Because this is a lot.'"

Across the country, mental health needs are soaring. And Black Americans are experiencing significant strain: A study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this summer found 15% of non-Hispanic Black adults had seriously considered suicide in the past 30 days and 18% had started or increased their use of substances to cope with pandemic-related stress.

Yet national data shows Blacks are less likely to receive mental health treatment than the overall population. A memo released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration this spring lists engaging faith leaders as one way to close this gap.

The Potter's House in Dallas has been trying to do that for years. A megachurch with more than 30,000 members, it runs a counseling center with eight licensed clinicians, open to congregants and the local community to receive counseling at no cost, though donations are accepted.

Since the pandemic began, the center has seen a 30% increase in monthly appointments compared with previous years, said center director Natasha Stewart. During the summer, when protests over race and policing were at their height, more Black men came to therapy for the first time, she said.

Recently, there's been a surge in families seeking services. Staying home together has brought up conflicts previously ignored, Stewart said.

"Before, people had ways to escape," she said, referring to work or school. "With some of those escapes not available anymore, counseling has become a more viable option."

To meet the growing demand, Stewart is adding a new counselor position for the first time in eight years.

At smaller churches, where funding a counseling center is unrealistic, clergy are instead turning to members of the congregation to address growing mental health needs.

At Catalyst Church, a member with a background in crisis management has begun leading monthly COVID conversations online. A deacon has been sharing his own experience getting therapy to encourage others to do the same. And Gerow, the senior pastor, talks openly about mental health.

Recognizing his power as a pastor, Gerow hopes his words on Sunday morning and in one-on-one conversations will help congregants seek the help they need. Doing so could reduce substance use and gun violence in the community, he said. Perhaps it would even lower the number of mental health crises that lead to police involvement, like the October death of Walter Wallace Jr., whose family said he was struggling with mental health issues when Philadelphia police shot him.

"If folks had the proper tools, they'd be able to deal with their grief and stress in different ways," Gerow said. "Prayer alone is not always enough."

Laverne Williams recognized that back in the '90s. She believed prayer was powerful, but as an employee of the Mental Health Association in New Jersey, she knew there was a need for treatment too.

When she heard pastors tell people they could pray away mental illness or use blessed oil to cure what seemed like symptoms of schizophrenia, she worried. And she knew many people of color were not seeing professionals, often due to barriers of cost, transportation, stigma and distrust of the medical system.

To address this disconnect, Williams created a video and PowerPoint presentation and tried to educate faith leaders.

At first, many clergy turned her away. People thought seeking mental health treatment meant your faith wasn't strong enough, Williams said.

But over time, some members of the clergy have come to realize the two can coexist, said Williams, adding that being a deacon herself has helped her gain their trust. This year alone, she's trained 20 faith leaders in mental health topics.

A program run by the Behavioral Health Network of Greater St. Louis is taking a similar approach. The Bridges to Care and Recovery program trains faith leaders in "mental health first aid," suicide prevention, substance use and more, through a 20-hour course.

The training builds on the work faith leaders are already doing to support their communities, said senior program manager Rose Jackson-Beavers. In addition to the tools of faith and prayer, clergy can now offer resources, education and awareness, and refer people to professional therapists in the network.

Since 2015, the program has trained 261 people from 78 churches, Jackson-Beavers said.

Among them is Carl Lucas, pastor of God First Church in northern St. Louis County who graduated this July — just in time, by his account.

Since the start of the pandemic, he has encountered two congregants who expressed suicidal thoughts. In one case, church leaders referred the person to counseling and followed up to ensure they attended therapy sessions. In the other, the root concern was isolation, so the person was paired with church members who could touch base regularly, Lucas said.

"The pandemic has definitely put us in a place where we're looking for answers and looking for other avenues to help our members," he said. "It has opened our eyes to the reality of mental health needs."



COVID-19 & Mental Health

Events over the last year have caused many people, especially young people, to feel more depressed and anxious than usual. This is normal and if you feel this way, you are not the only one. Here are ways to support yourself or others when things feel overwhelming.

Look for Signs

Changes in mood, sleep, appetite, or the ability to concentrate are all things that could signal that somebody needs support.



Check-In

It is OK to ask somebody if they are struggling. You could even set up a weekly check-in with your kids or other loved ones to make sure everybody is feeling supported.

Listen

Listen. Listen. Listen. It is important for a person who is struggling to feel heard. Let them know it is normal to feel sad or anxious and that it is OK to ask for help.



Five Tips to Set Your Business Up for Success in 2021

Published by BlackPressUSA
Wells Fargo Bank, NA

The challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic hardships can make 2020 a difficult year to look back on. 46% of small business owners surveyed in the Q4 Wells Fargo Small Business Index reported decreases in revenues, while the prospect of closing their business was most frequently ranked as the top concern. Nonetheless, even the most challenging times can yield opportunities for the future. 2020 provided hard truths, but also valuable insights that small business owners can use at the outset of 2021 to move forward.

Get online

Nearly one third (29%) of businesses planned to start using a website in 2020.¹ Luckily for those that followed through on that plan, 2020 showed that having a strong online presence, user experience and functionality can not only be a competitive advantage in the marketplace, but also critical to a business’s survival. 86% of consumers rely on the internet to find a local business.² With a well-rounded digital strategy, including a website and social media, business owners can build awareness and leverage how people are searching for information online. Further, ensuring a positive user experience with these channels can help set up an environment for business growth.

Key questions:
Is my website mobile friendly?
Can customers place orders or make payments online?
Are my hours and contact information up to date?

Take advantage of digital banking

Online and mobile banking can help business owners monitor and manage their accounts from anywhere and make analyzing cash flow easier. In fact, 73% of small businesses utilize these services, according to Barlow Research. What 2020 exhibited is the ability of this functionality to help in preparing for uncertain circumstances, such as not being able to visit a physical bank branch for an extended period. Utilizing tools



like these can provide extra insurance against potential challenges that may arise.

Key Questions:
Am I using all of the available features for my online banking service?
Is my accounting software up to date and synced with my bank accounts?
Have I downloaded any requisite applications so I can use tools like mobile deposit?

Check your tech

Almost one third (29%) of business owners said in November 2020 that the closure of their business was their top concern, while 57% said they did not anticipate recovery for businesses like theirs until at least the second half of 2021.

With recent surges in COVID-19 cases, one key thing business owners can do to withstand these challenges and to help safeguard negative impacts to the business down the line is to ensure the right technology is fully utilized to serve operations, including sufficient internet bandwidth and wireless capabilities.

Key Questions:
Can I use accounting software to better analyze sales, costs, and opportunities in 2021?

Is my accounting software synced to my bank accounts?
Can I use social media or a client-relationship manager to get to know my customers better?

Join a professional organization

Networking can help small business owners through crises like COVID-19 and help facilitate a potential reset or even rebuilding of a business in the coming year. Whether it’s a traditional chamber of commerce or networking group or an online or social media-based community, networking groups can provide ideas and resources for growth, and may also help with recruiting talent, finding vendors, or even generating sales.

Key Questions:
Could I join my local chamber of commerce?
Are there trade groups or industry organizations in my area?
Could I start an informal network of business owners?

Create a plan B and a plan C

The possibility of not seeing economic or business recovery until at least mid-2021 highlights the importance of planning for multiple scenarios. Having a backup plan for each area of your business, from sales to operations to marketing, will help mitigate potential negative impacts of unforeseen circumstances.

Key Questions:
What happens if there’s another shutdown in 2021?
What happens if 2021 sales return to 2019 levels?
What happens if costs increase?

One key thing to remember is the lesson that permeates all of the others listed here: flexibility is key. Planning is as important as ever, but the ability to shift those plans based on the realities of a situation could make the difference between continuing toward recovery or facing a business closing.

As the New Year is upon us, it is important for business owners to reflect on the past year and plan for success in 2021.

1 “2020 Small Business Marketing Stats,” Visual Objects, 2020.
2 “Thinking about Updating Your Business Website? Here are 5 reasons You Should,” Small Business Trends, 2019.

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If you are an African American professional or a business that is at least 51% Black owned and would like to be included in the directory, please contact the Carl Maxey Center at carlmaxeycenter@gmail.com.

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20 Years of Student Loan Repayments Still Leave Black Borrowers Owing 95 Percent

By Charlene Crowell

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Although the year 2020 has been dominated by continuing news coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic’s rising death toll that has now claimed the lives of nearly 300,000 Americans, it is not the only challenge facing the nation. Amid rising unemployment and food insecurity, an estimated 45 million Americans struggle at the same time with the crushing weight of more than \$1.7 trillion in student debt.

A disproportionate amount of this financial burden is carried by Blacks and other borrowers of color. These racial disparities in student debt cannot be ignore: massive debts delay, if not if deny, wealth-building opportunities for Blacks and others who believe that higher education remains the bridge to a financially secure future.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting recession one of every four student loan borrowers was in either default or serious delinquency. Black student experience default at a much higher rate (37.5%) than their peers who are Latino (20%), or White (12.4%), according to an independent report by the Brookings Institution. Even after 20 years of loan repayments, the typical Black borrower still owes 95% of the original cumulative balance.

A new research report, jointly released by the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC) and the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL), outlines the financial toll taken by this unsustainable debt and pin-



The Four Milestones

- 1 Cancel the Debt**
- 2 Clear the Books of Bad Debt**
- 3 Restore Limitations on Collections**
- 4 Make Repayment Affordable & Budget-Conscious**

**1. Across-the-board debt cancellation.** All federal student loan borrowers (including PLUS loan borrowers and those with commercially- or institutionally-held loans) should have their balances reduced. This ensures that the benefits of cancellation reach all of the most vulnerable borrowers and will spur economic recovery.

**2. Clearing the books of bad debts.** After cancellation, the federal government should clear the books of debts currently held by borrowers that have been in repayment for longer than 15 years, debts that have been in default for three or more years, and debts held by borrowers who have been receiving some federal means-tested benefits for three or more years.

**3. Restoring limitations on collections.** Federal student loans should have common-sense consumer protection standards. Guardrails should include a statute of limitations, preventing the seizure of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Social Security benefits, limitations on the amount that can be seized, and limits on how long creditors can involuntarily collect. Student loans should also be dischargeable in bankruptcy.

**4. Making repayment truly affordable and budget-conscious.** All borrowers on an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan or more than 30 days delinquent at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic should be auto-enrolled in a new IDR plan, the Affordable Budget-Conscious (ABC) repayment plan, that sets monthly payments based on no more than 8% of discretionary income above 250% of the poverty line.



Road to Relief | 4

points remedies to systematically address the crisis.

In part, the report states: “Pursuit of education in America should not be such a high stakes gamble...Borrowers who took out loans to access an education should not have those debts follow them to the grave.”

Entitled, Road to Relief: Supporting Federal Student Loan Borrowers During the COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond, the report encourages President-Elect Biden to keep his campaign promise to cancel significant amounts of student debt among his first executive actions taken on his first day of office, and specifically recommends:

Across-the-board debt cancellation. All federal student loan borrowers (including PLUS loan borrowers and those with commercially- or institutionally held loans) should have their balances reduced. This ensures that the benefits of cancellation reach the most vulnerable borrowers and spurs economic recovery;

Clearing the books of bad debts. After cancellation, the federal government should clear the books of debts currently held by borrowers that have been in repayment for longer than 15 years, debts that have been in default for 3 or more years, and debts held by borrowers who have been receiving federal means-tested benefits for 3 or more years;

Restoring limitations on collections. Federal student loans should have common-sense consumer protection standards.

Continued on Page 30





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Structural Racism & Black Health

I am glad Covid has “laid bare” structural racism and inequalities in healthcare and health for some folks. Welcome. We are happy to have you join us in the fight of our lives.

-Dr. Robin Stevens

By Glenn Ellis

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Throughout modern U.S. medical history, official reports and statistics have documented, and confirmed, the disproportionate burden of health carried by the Black community. Now, COVID-19 has not only brought incredible attention to myriad of chronic diseases and social determinants that lead to those health outcomes but has made clear and indisputable how systemic racism works.

For all of us in the United States, the phrase “health disparities” or “health inequities” has never been made clearer than what are seeing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black communities. For what is arguably the first time in this nation’s history, the entire country is witnessing exactly what has been historically denied the Blacks in healthcare. For generations, health disparities were thrust on us as though it was something “biologically wrong” with us.

Many of us, and the rest of America, actually believed that we were supposed to have higher rates of high blood pressure; diabetes; obesity; asthma; and many other chronic diseases. that had led to societal acceptance of the rate with which we die so prematurely; without any true medical or public health intervention.

High blood pressure is one of those “Black” diseases that is not only a chronic condition itself, but also is linked to heart attacks and strokes. For Blacks, the risk of being diagnosed with diabetes is 77 percent higher than for whites. A similar gap, with poor outcomes in equity, follows with all other chronic conditions.

It was an acceptable fact that mistrust in Blacks is something we are boing with that gets triggered by a memory or experience of an event or incident that we should “get over it, that was a long time ago!” Blacks, and mistrust were thought to be as inseparable as hand in glove. It was accepted as “fact” by many of us, and the entire healthcare system. Finally, because of COVID-19, all of America is feeling (and seeing) our pain!

For Blacks, the good news is that there is an underlying factor in these inequities that is seldom, if ever, mentioned in the scientific and medical reports that we get consistently in the media that “normalize” the notion of Blacks having higher rates of chronic diseases.

Turns out, we are the victims of an absence of a piece of vital information when it comes to understanding why we are “cursed” with so many chronic diseases that seem to affect generation after generation! Studies have shown that a term, first coined in 1993, called allostatic load is a huge factor in the unequal prevalence of chronic diseases between whites and Blacks in this country. Allostatic load is "the wear and tear on the body" which accumulates as an individual is exposed to repeated or chronic stress.

Your brain interprets and responds to environmental challenges that we all face in our lives. It manifests as anxiety disorders, depressive illness, hostile and aggressive states, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). There is growing evidence that depression and hostility are both associ-



ated with chronic diseases. this plays out as a product of the risk factors associated with early childhood experiences of abuse and neglect, which in turn increases their allostatic load later in life and lead many people into social isolation, hostility, depression, and subsequently to higher rates of chronic conditions than others.

Those individuals with a history of childhood abuse suffer greater early death and sickness from a range of chronic diseases. We find the same principle in those elderly who have had a lifetime of economic hardship ending up experiencing a more rapid decline of physical and mental functioning.

All of this previously unknown information is a clarion call for Blacks to be vigilant in chronic disease management and pay close attention to diet, lifestyle, and primary healthcare. We all know that, “when America catches a cold, Black people get pneumonia. Whether it’s COVID-19; chronic diseases, HIV/AIDS, or any of the other health issues that wreak havoc on us, we’ve got to realize that only we can save ourselves, and live healthy, productive lives.

Chronic diseases represent 75% of all health care costs in the United States and are 60 percent of all Americans have at least one chronic disease, representing 70% of all deaths. By 2030 that the total number of Americans will exceed 170 million.

Chronic diseases are linked strongly to the effects of structural racism on Blacks, but we don’t have the luxury of waiting for the system to change. We are not capable, on our own, of eliminating structural racism in our society; particularly in healthcare and medicine. What we can do is take care of ourselves as best of our abilities. Diet; lifestyle; stress management; and physical activity are things that help us all people protect their health, particularly from chronic diseases. It is even more important to be behaviors that Blacks have to pay even closer attention. There is much more to be done, as great disparities in this country in wealth, income, and education continue to plague our community.

Remember, I’m not a doctor. I just sound like one! Take good care of yourself and live the best life possible!

The information included in this column is for educational purposes only. I do not dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a replacement form of treatment for physical, mental or medical problems by your doctor either directly or indirectly. Glenn Ellis, MPH is a Visiting Scholar at The National Bioethics Center at Tuskegee University and a Harvard Medical School Research Bioethics Fellow. He is author of Which Doctor? and Information is the Best Medicine. Ellis is an active media contributor on Health Equity and Medical Ethics. For more good health information visit: www.glennellis.com



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Student Loan Repayments

Continued From 28

Guardrails should include a statute of limitations, preventing the seizure of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Social Security benefits, limitations on the amount that can be seized, and limits on how long creditors can involuntarily collect. Student loans should also be dischargeable in bankruptcy; and

Making repayment truly affordable and budget-conscious. All borrowers on an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan or more than 30 days delinquent at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic should be auto-enrolled in a new IDR plan, the Affordable Budget-Conscious (ABC) repayment plan, that sets monthly payments based on no more than 8% of discretionary income above 250% of the poverty line.

“Taken together, these steps will ensure that all federal borrowers, accounting for over 90% of the outstanding student loan balances, receive substantial relief...Public investment, not reliance on loans, should once again be the foundation of how we pay for higher education,” states the report.

“The federal government must stop borrowers from continuing to drown in student debt by a system that has been inequitable and broken for decades,” continued Yu. “Abusive debt collection practices seize critical funds, such as Social Security and the Earned Income Tax Credit, and with no time limit on collection these practices can follow borrowers to the grave.”

Ashley Harrington, CRL’s Federal Advocacy Director and Senior Counsel spoke directly to the racial equity implications.

“For many, especially Black and Latino borrowers, repayment has been too onerous and too long, preventing them from achieving financial security even under normal circumstances,” noted Harrington. “Short-term payment suspension alone will not help struggling borrowers who have lost their jobs or who were already in default or serious delinquency before the public health crisis started.”

“To address our current recession and stimulate economic recovery, we urge President-Elect Biden to immediately follow these simple steps and prevent further financial devastation for vulnerable borrowers and communities,” added Harrington. “The time to cancel student debt and provide student borrowers with significant relief is now.”

While student loan debt cancellation and the other proposed reforms would provide much-needed relief to borrowers, it would also bring the opportunity to redirect these dollars to better participate in the nation’s economy. Starting a business or transitioning from renters to homeowners are but two examples of ways to build wealth and financial security.

Other major research reports have also connected lengthy student debt and its restrictions to economic mobility and lifetime wealth-building. Research has established that student debt can prevent borrowers from buying homes, starting



businesses, going to graduate school, and even starting families.

For example, a 2019 research report by Brandeis University’s Institute on Assets and Social Policy found that after 20 years of student loan repayments, the median debt of White borrowing students has been reduced by 94 percent— with almost half holding no student debt—whereas Black borrowers at the median still owe 95 percent of their cumulative borrowing total.

“It is clear that in the context of existing inequalities in wealth and assets by race/ethnicity, the privatized system of higher education financing serves to further exacerbate the racial wealth gap among young people,” states the Brandeis report. “It has saddled young borrowers of color, particularly Black borrowers, with debt that creates economic insecurity for decades and limits new wealth-generating opportunities such as homeownership.”

Despite noble contributions and achievements, there is no doubt that as a people we continue to be financially short-changed. Now as we approach a New Year and a new White House, systemic changes are both needed and possible.

Cancelling student debt and reforming the repayment system are vital for Black borrowers and communities.

But targeted actions in other areas of concern are also necessary before this and future Black Americans can secure financial stability or build wealth. An even longer road map to relief – beyond student debt – must address other root causes of the racial wealth gap. Access to affordable credit - including safe and responsible mortgage loans- and an end to all forms of predatory lending are representative of these ‘other’ reforms.

Lifting the trillion-dollar debt of student loans is an important first step to financial equality.

Charlene Crowell is a Senior Fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.



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Jac Archer: EWU Activist in Residence

The Gender, Women’s & Sexuality Studies Program and the Women’s and Gender Education Center are the lead organizers of the Activist In Residence (AIR) program on the EWU campus in Cheney, WA.

For an eighth year, AIR will bring an activist to campus to work with EWU students, staff, faculty and community members during winter quarter of 2021.

The 2021 Activist In Residence is Jac Archer.

Jac Archer (they/them/theirs) is an activist in the Inland Northwest. Archer moved to the Spokane area in 2013 where they work as an activist, community organizer and educator in the fields of diversity, equity, civic engagement and sexuality. Archer has delivered lectures and training workshops throughout the community, including Whitworth University, and has previously served on panels at Eastern Washington University and Gonzaga.

While earning their bachelor’s degree from Eastern Washington University, Archer served on the Multicultural Coalition from 2015-2017, where they represented the Black Student Union and Scary Feminist Club. Archer currently serves on the Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR) Steering Committee, the Peace and Justice Action League (PJALS) board, Spokane Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Washington State LGBTQ Commission.

Archer has a passion for organizing, institutional policy, and making difficult concepts easily accessible. They also enjoy writing, singing, performance and podcasts.

Activist in Residence Workshops and Panels

All workshops and panels will occur via Zoom on Wednesdays from 3:30-5 p.m., starting on Jan. 20. Sessions are free and open to the public, however registration is required. One registration will cover all Activist in Residence events you attend virtually. Those who attend four



or more workshops or panels will receive an Activist in Residence certificate. All workshops are highly participatory and interactive, with an emphasis on active practice and story sharing.

Wednesday, Jan. 20 — The Activism Ecosystem: Defining the Terrain of the Fight

What is activism? What makes an activist, and who is doing activism in Spokane? Learn about Spokane’s activist ecosystem, and hear from local Black leaders doing key work in the electoral sphere.

Wednesday, Jan. 27 — Noticing Work: Finding Your Place in the Activist Ecosystem

Learn tools to discover what activist work is already being done in your community, and how to find your place in it.

Add skills to your activist toolbox that will improve your approach to community work, no matter your job or professional focus.

Wednesday, Feb. 3 — Black Activism: Our Local Ecosystem

Activism isn’t just signing petitions or holding signs in the street, but includes a broad variety of tactics and experiences for every type of movement-maker. Hear from local Black leaders who each take a slightly different approach to making change in Spokane.

Wednesday, Feb. 10 — Planning the Fight: The Basics of an Activist Campaign

Check out the big picture and discover how petitions and protest actions in the street relate to long term change in communities and government. Explore the basics of campaign planning, what it is, and how to do it.

Wednesday, Feb. 17 — Zooming In: Exploring Activist Campaigns in Spokane

Learn about activist campaigns in Spokane, and hear from members of the Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR) steering committee as they discuss the tactics they’ve used individually and as a group to affect local policy.

Wednesday, Feb. 24 — Campaign Tactics: How to Plan an Action

Every campaign is made up of actions. Discover the strategy, planning, and detail behind the most visible part of activism, and learn how to plan an action for yourself.

Questions about the Activist in Residence Program? Reach out to Lisa Logan at 509.359.2898 or llogan83@ewu.edu. To register visit: ewu.edu/air2021. Registration is Free.

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The Biden/Harris Administration

Continued From Page 1

COVID-19 also continues to ravage the American economy. According to the Department of Labor, the 4-week moving average of first-time filings for unemployment insurance claims was 834,250, an increase of 18,250 from the previous week's revised average. Also, 30 to 40 million Americans are on the verge of being evicted from their homes in the dead of winter and in the midst of a pandemic. The world also knows as W.E.B Du Bois wrote, that the problem of the 20th century is "the problem of the color line." In 1967 The Kerner Commission warned, "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal" and COVID-19 has highlighted deep-rooted systemic racial disparities in health care; highlighting the adage, when America catches a cold, Black America gets pneumonia.

As the Biden administration implements its COVID, economic, social justice, education and other programs; African-Americans must be at the forefront of articulating the needs of and for the African American community. "This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy." It will be fatal for the community if it overlooks the urgency of the moment.

How quickly Biden appeared to set aside the fact that Black voters saved his candidacy and put him in the White House. He was about to drop out of the race until African-American voters in South Carolina delivered him a resounding win.

Yet, in December, civil rights leaders had to demand a meeting with the then President-elect in order to express their concerns about a lack of focus on racial equity, social justice, and increased diversity in the Biden-Harris cabinet. South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn is on record saying, not enough Black Americans have been nominated to join the incoming Biden administration. "I want to see where the process leads to...But so far it's not good."

Biden has confused gender diversity and diversity of phenotype and pigmentation with the diversity of perspective and policy. Look at the names and records of his cabinet selections and nominees. For the most part it's "Clinton/Obama retreats" - the same people and perspectives that have given us the neoliberal and imperialists policies that have driven the country into the ditch. Republicans have contributed to this as well. But right now, the focus is on President Biden and Vice President Harris.

Frederick Douglas told us, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them...The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

What is the African-American community willing to demand?

We need a Marshall Plan for the African-American community. If the U.S. could spend \$15B to rebuild Europe after the devastation of WWII and pass a \$740B Defense Authorization Act, the U.S. can invest the needed dollars to rebuild the American communities of color that it devastated with the Tulsa race riot, the Red Summer of 1919 and the gutting of urban centers with the building of the highway system of the 50's, 60's and 70's.

The African-American community saved Biden's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination and put him in the White House. The African-American community saved the Senate for the Democrats with its successful efforts in Georgia.

The question is not what rewards the Black community will be given for its efforts. Instead, the Black community must decide what it is willing to demand.

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Betsy Wilkerson

Continued from Page 9

Some of these are a continuation of the work I am already doing, like with the Spokane Regional Health District and the Spokane Human Rights Commission. These committees play a significant role in our city and how they directly impact our community.

Council has also established a "first 100 days plan" which includes important things like investing into East 5th Avenue, working with STA for youth summer bus passes, working with our Native partners on a Land Acknowledgement before Council Meetings, Housing and Zoning reforms, Community Conversations with SPD on reimagining Public Safety, and creating and filling a job position for the new Civil Rights Office, and so much more.

These assignments and goals to me are important and personally validate one thing that we have been saying in the community for years. Members of traditionally marginalized communities, especially those of color, need to not only have a voice at the table, but we need to be at the table. We need to be as they say in Hamilton, "in the room where it happens." The days of us being invited at the last minute are gone. What needs to be asked of us is the same thing that President Biden has asked of Vice President Harris, we need to be among the first to be invited to the table and the last ones out as the decisions that are pivotal to our livelihoods are being made.

Although I am District 2's Council Representative, I leave you with a continued commitment to serve all Spokane residents, and that means working with my fellow Council Members to get things done. Spokane, there is room enough at our community table for everyone, Social Justice, All Faiths, Economic Growth, Businesses large and small, Cultural and ethnic inclusion. A house divided against itself cannot stand, neither can a city.

In solidarity,



Council Member Betsy Wilkerson
Spokane City Council District 2, Position 2
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OUR VOICES

Capitol Insurrection Reveals 'Cancer' Of Racism Within Law Enforcement Establishment

By Marc H. Morial
(TriceEdneyWire.com)

"The Capitol coup is the mirror we needed to overcome our warped sense of American exceptionalism. Becoming a truly equitable democracy requires work. It requires actively working against ideological forces that try to make America great for only a few. It means realizing that the American Civil War and Nazi Germany began just like this. It means being courageous to admit that what happened at the Capitol is who we are as the United States. It means realizing that being silent on this issue is accepting the side of white supremacy. So, if you are worried, scared, or fearful, you should be. How will we respond to fight for the soul of America?"

-- Rashawn Ray, University of Maryland Sociology Professor and

This week I was called to testify before the Congressional Black Caucus at an emergency hearing entitled "January 6, 2021: U.S. Capitol Insurrection: White Supremacy on Display."

I used the opportunity to shine a light on the stark disparity between law enforcement response to the attack on the Capitol and the response to Black Lives Matter protests over the summer.

On June 2, 2020, racial justice protesters peacefully gathered at the Lincoln Memorial to protest the death of George Floyd and other Black Americans at the hands of police. They were met with row upon row of military police in fatigues and armor lining the Memorial's steps.

The day before, on June 1, at least nine military and police aircraft hovered in the sky. Two helicopters eventually swooped low in a tactic usually reserved for combat zones, battering the protesters with tropical storm-level winds.

We cannot heed the hollow cries for "unity" from the very collaborators who fanned the flames of insurrection and promoted racist lies. You cannot cure cancer by ignoring it. It must be cut out and burned away.

-Mark Morial

Park Police infamously unleashed tear gas and fired rubber bullets to clear a nonviolent crowd from Lafayette Park so President Trump could stage a photo-op.

D.C. Metropolitan Police arrested 316 protesters on June 1, 2020

"The FBI knew that extremists were preparing to travel to Washington to commit violence and "war" on January 6. The insurrection was openly plotted on social media. One post on the platform 8kun declared "We will storm the government buildings, kill cops, kill security guards, kill federal employees and agents."

There were no National Guard troops in riot gear awaiting them. No military helicopters. There was no tear gas deployed as the mob shoved its way past barricades. Vastly outnumbered police stepped aside and allowed the mob to storm the Capitol.

D.C. Metropolitan Police made only 61 "unrest-related" arrests on January 6. U.S. Capitol Police arrested just over a dozen.

Many Capitol Police executed their duty bravely and with honor. Officer Eugene Goodman, for example, is being hailed as a hero for luring a mob away from the Senate Chamber. However, another officer did exactly the opposite, offering the rioters directions around the building as he donned a "Make America Great Again" cap.

January 6th may have been one of the most egregious examples, but it was certainly not the first. Again and again and again: In the eyes of far too many law enforcement officers, Black people are considered

a threat simply for existing, while violent white people are cosseted, protected, pampered and indulged.

Even the author of the FBI report warning of the mob's murderous intent worried that a show of force might encroach on the rioters' free speech rights. Lt. Gen. Walter E. Piatt, director of the Army Staff, rebuffed requests for National Guard assistance because he didn't like "the visual" – a concern nowhere in evidence during Black Lives Matters protests.

In fact, much of the violence at racial justice protests over the summer was instigated by white supremacists and far-right extremists, yet this violence was used to rationalize military-level crackdowns on peaceful protests.

"Operation Relentless Pursuit" and "Operation Legend" -- cynically named for a 4-year-old killed in a shooting that had no link to racial protests, sent federal officers to override local law enforcement in Black communities.

Far from trying to contain a violent insurrection where the symbols of white supremacy were on full display, police officers are under investigation for actively participating.

On January 6, we witnessed a violent mob motivated by racial resentment, by a conspiracy theory rooted in the effort to invalidate Black votes. The mob was met with empathy and deference from a law-enforcement and military establishment that harbors white supremacists among its own ranks.



The national reckoning over racially-motivated police misconduct and brutality that began this summer cannot move forward until the institutions entrusted with public safety and national security rid themselves of the cancer within.

We cannot heed the hollow cries for "unity" from the very collaborators who fanned the flames of insurrection and promoted racist lies. You cannot cure cancer by ignoring it. It must be cut out and burned away.

Reform efforts such as the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act are a necessary step, but only one part of the solution. We must use every means at our disposal to shine a light on racial injustice and fully commit, as a nation, to a zero-tolerance policy with regard to white supremacy in law enforcement and the military.

We are truly at a crossroads in America. The precedent we set here will have a profound impact on future generations. The world is watching.

Marc H. Morial is the President and CEO of the National Urban League. Morial served as Mayor of New Orleans, from 1994 to 2002, President of the United States Conference of Mayors in 2001, and as a Louisiana State Senator from 1992 to 1994.

Trump, As President, Was Not An Aberration

By A. Peter Bailey

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - In June 2019, I wrote a column entitled "No. 45 Is Not An Aberration" that included the following: *"The American news media is deceiving the world when it consistently describes No. 45 (Donald Trump) as an aberration in the history of the United States presidency.... Rather than being an aberration he is a direct descendant of former presidents, most notably Saint George Washington and Saint Thomas Jefferson who bought, sold, owned and exploited African men, women and children."*

How can Trump be an aberration when he is a direct descendant of a president who wrote the Declaration of Independence while being an enslaver of over 200 Africans?

How can he be an aberration when he's the direct descendant of former presidents who helped write the United States Constitution that declared enslaved Africans as three-fifths of a person?

How can he be an aberration of former presidents who from the Reconstruction Era through the 1950s passively looked on as white supremacist terrorists killed several thousand Black people and viciously oppressed millions of others?



How can he be an aberration when presidents since the 1960s passed Civil Rights legislation only for foreign policy considerations?

American presidents have never voluntarily supported civil and human rights for Black people in this country. They always took the position that the federal government had no jurisdiction in those arenas. It was up to individual states, they said, to deal with the situation.

They finally were moved to action because of propaganda needs resulting from the so-called Cold War with Russia. Even then, many Black warriors were killed in the war against White supremacy. That's why there is no reason to extend gratitude to anyone or any government that do the right thing only after people have been killed.

This history documents why Donald Trump was not an aberration as an American president. He was just more outwardly flagrant with his actions than most of his predecessors.

A possible positive result of his presidency may be that more Black people than ever before during the past 50 years will now understand that we must organize ourselves economically, culturally, politically, educationally, technologically, legally, health-wise and self-defense wise in order to promote and protect our vital interests.

A. Peter Bailey is a journalist, author, lecturer and University of the District of Columbia Professor. He was a founding member of The Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), organized in 1964 by Malcolm X. A former President of the New York Association of Black Journalists, Bailey received Lifetime Achievement awards from the National Newspaper Publishers Association and the New York Association of Black Journalists.

OUR VOICES

White Allies: You Don't Get to Not Be White Right Now

By Elyse Cizek

Two weeks ago a dear white friend of mine reposted a TikTok video in her Instagram story of a clever white young man saying “I denounce my whiteness. I’m off-white, I’m beige, you can call me pink, you can call me snowflake... I don’t care what you call me just don’t call me white. Those people on the news— those are white people...”

I couldn’t formulate a complete sentence in response to that video because I was experiencing trauma in real time. How dare you.

I have wanted so badly to write about my feelings after seeing the attack at the Capitol live on television but I feel I’m out of words. I was in line at a COVID test facility, waiting in my car with 1% battery on my phone receiving countless texts from friends saying “have you seen this yet?” And I had. I had seen it. And I couldn’t stop watching.

I don’t know what I expected to see that day. I have lived as and American too long to have hope in a savior. I have lived as a Black woman in America too long to believe that this was an accident, an unfortunate event, or even anything but a predictable demonstration of the force of white supremacy. I watched that day, expressionless and cold, as the veil of “well maybe it was just...” was lifted, revealing the man behind the curtain to in fact be droves of white fear and entitlement, fighting for the perpetuation of an evil so many of them deny exists, let alone exists within them.

I felt as if I was a child terrorized by a monster that hid in my closet, my parents finally discovering it was real, but only after it had swallowed me whole.

What we witnessed was the malignant cancer of American white supremacy. You questioned, you played devil’s advocate, you referred to what Black America experienced as a kind of 4D chess game that was the source of heated conversation in Facebook threads and maybe deserved a retweet, but too many of you refused to acknowledge that it lives among you — often inside you. And yes, it has been this obvious to us the whole time.

The mob at the Capitol was made up of your uncles that you didn’t want to talk to about politics. It was your dad’s rich co-worker who came to dinners and casually threw around racial slurs. It was your step-mom who was posting conspiracy theories on Facebook so you unfriended her. It was your boss. It was the couple who owned the boat next to yours on the lake where you spent your summers. It was your classmates whose opinions on social media differed from yours — it was an embodiment of your unwillingness to teach what you’ve learned to those whom you loved because the praise of being woke felt more comfortable than facing the challenge of having empathy for the ignorant.

White people, we needed you. All I’ve wanted all along was your humility. I’ve wanted you to admit when you were wrong in order to better show up for what’s right. I’ve wanted you to admit that you had to learn about anti-racism efforts because your default is white supremacy. I’ve asked you to stop resting on your laurels and be of service to those still stuck in their addiction to white supremacy. I’m proud of you for being an ally, but that allyship does not only mean following Black people’s lead, it means being the leader for those behind you, encouraging others just like you to follow the path toward dismantling white supremacy with an empathetic knowledge of having once been ignorant, too.

What we saw was a radicalization of people so afraid of being wrong that they were willing to blindly follow the direction of a leader elected to for his inability to admit fault. “He tells it like it is,” they said — and they did not



lie. His lies were comfortable. His disillusioned ramblings of self-aggrandized valor sounded like what they believed a leader should say. In a vacuum of leadership, the voice that sounded most like their inner thoughts won their vote and their allegiance. Too many of them would never have admitted that white supremacy was the warm blanket that kept them feeling safe at night without his validation. That validation came from a white face, through white-owned media, in a white supremacist system that gave him a microphone and a platform for four years.

I’m proud of you for recognizing — now — that your white privilege exists. But what did you do with it? You see, for me to sit down with someone who voted for him and have a conversation about white privilege, there is a near 100% chance that my existence is going to be invalidated. My experience, my trauma, my lived interactions — “I” am up for debate to them. I have these conversations. I sit in rooms of well-intended white people and calmly but firmly explain why Black Lives Matter is not a terrorist organization. I explain what it looked like for me to understand my own white privilege, even as a light-skinned Black woman. I do my best to answer questions like “but, wait, what do you mean you’re Black if your dad is white?” I remove white fingers from my hair and explain to them why it’s not ok to just touch it. I have learned how to derail conspiracy theory speed-trains that take off when I say I voted for Biden to remove that monster from office. I do it because I have been on the wrong side of the argument before and I made my way to the right one.

The most effective way to use your white privilege is to recognize that it allows you to have the hard conversations that marginalized peoples cannot have without the threat of being completely invalidated as human beings. Your existence and relevance is assumed because you are white.

So now, if you are disgusted or horrified by what you saw on January 6th, 2021, you do not get to denounce your whiteness. You need to fucking use it.

In a perfect world there would be a TikTok challenge encouraging white people to share how they learned that they benefit from white supremacy. Or maybe a series encouraging white people to admit they’ve been racist, made incomprehensibly demoralizing comments about marginalized peoples from a place of caste entitlement, or maybe even a #ididittoo hashtag for people who didn’t stand up where they know they should have. But right now, this viral TikTok video is making a clever joke out of the very whiteness that has threatened the lives of all non-white races since the colonization of this country, and ya’ll think it’s cute to say it’s not you. It isn’t cute. This is you, too.

Yes it’s hard. Yes it feels like you’ve done a lot this summer, or maybe in the past few years. But part of the healing process that this nation is dying for is acceptance of what is. These radical insurgents are members of your community, my community. We work with them, drank with them, served them and were served by them. They are our relatives, our high school friends, our acquaintances, and our neighbors. Rather than being willing to be in acceptance of your whiteness and the violent history of your ancestor’s thirst for blood and money, you think that reading a few good articles, marching a few times with your friends, and watching a few documentaries clears your name? I’m glad you’re starting to admit that the problem exists but when do you admit you benefit from it?

I sat down with a friend the other day and I asked her what she felt her responsibility is in today’s social climate. She is a cis, white, queer femme artist with a large platform and a heart for social justice. Her answer was this: “I can never opt out of the hard conversations.”

No, we cannot change everyone’s mind. But imagine for a second that everyone who has had a personal wake-up call this year was able to simply plant a seed in someone else. Maybe sending one great link could send one of these people down a YouTube algorithm rabbit hole ending up in a sea of TED talks from Black educators and not conspiracy theories, even if just for one afternoon. Maybe instead of appropriating Black anger and trauma and playing the victim in a discussion of social justice you could have shared the story of a great Black leader, or even said “Ooh! Let’s watch this documentary together. It’s what really changed my perspective on that!” Send an article directly to someone who doesn’t seem to understand and help them understand, as others have helped you. This is a time when you could use your whiteness to get through to those unwilling to listen to me.

I know you’re tired. I know you’re disgusted. But you have no idea what your Black friends are going through. Not because you don’t care, but because we don’t have words anymore. You’ve seen it now. You’ve been to the marches. You’ve watched the videos. You’ve read the stories. You’ve done your research. Now is not the time for you to say “don’t call me white.” This is the time to use that whiteness to do what we can’t. Be the ally. Not from the outside but from within. That could have been you, but someone along the way shared their knowledge with you and you listened. So listen now, and teach. Be patient. Be the strong white ally you learned to be from the strong Black women who don’t have the fucking stones right now to fight your fight. This is no longer on us. It’s on you.

You have the tools. You have the knowledge. You have the power. You have the privilege. Use it.

Elyse Cizek is a writer, model-actress, singer-songwriter, and lash artist living in Los Angeles, California. Read more of Elyse's writing at elysecizek.medium.com.

OUR VOICES

Our System is Rigged So the Minority Can Rule

By Jesse Jackson

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - The majority does not rule in the United States. The foundation of any democracy — one person, one vote — is mocked by institutionalized impediments that allow the minority to win even when they lose at the ballot box. In this era, even when Democrats win, they lose. And the will of the majority of the people is frustrated by a system rigged to empower the minority.

Consider: Democratic candidates have won the popular vote in seven of the last eight presidential elections but have become president only five times. Trump became president four years ago despite losing the popular vote by nearly 3 million votes. Presidents who lost the majority of the votes have nominated five of the nine Supreme Court justices. The reason, of course, is the Electoral College, which tallies votes by state, not by voter.

This institution is a legacy of slavery, designed by the founders to ensure that the less populated slave states would be able to balance the free states that had nearly three times the population. In frustrating the popular vote, the Electoral College puts the democracy at risk. Because of the Electoral College, Trump's margin of defeat wasn't 7 million across the nation, but about 65,000 votes in three states and the 2nd District of Nebraska.

That helped empower him to mislead millions by claiming the election was stolen, despite Biden's landslide popular vote victory. In the Senate, Democrats and Republicans each have 50 senators (with Vice President Kamala Harris the tie-breaking vote). The 50 Democrats represent 41 million more voters than the 50 Republicans. Smaller, more rural states with few people, like Wyoming or Idaho, have as many senators as large populous states like California and New York.

To add insult to injury, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, which have more voters than several states, are denied statehood with no final vote on any legislation. That means, among other things, that three Supreme Court justices — Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney



Barrett — were all nominated by a president who lost the popular vote and confirmed by a bloc of senators who represent less than half the country.

In the House, Democrats have a small majority. But to win a majority, it is estimated that they must win 6 percent to 7 percent more votes than Republicans across the country, because Republican gerrymandering — drawing districts to pack Democratic voters in a few districts (usually disproportionately people of color) while giving Republicans an edge in many — has rigged the system against the party that represents the majority.

And worse, Supreme Court judges nominated by minority presidents have ruled that the federal courts will do nothing to protect against grotesquely distorted gerrymandering. The same distortions exist in state legislatures, where

gerrymandered districts help the party with the minority of votes gain the majority. That majority then has the power to redraw the districts to rig the system even more. More than 59 million Americans live under minority rule in a state where the party with fewer votes controls a majority of the legislative seats. In Wisconsin, 44.7% of voters cast ballots for Republican Assembly candidates, but the GOP won 64.6% of the seats. With gerrymandering, voters aren't choosing their representatives; representatives are choosing their voters.

The right-wing Supreme Court majority has ruled that money is speech and that corporations are citizens, so their ability to throw money into elections cannot be limited. The result, not surprisingly, is that American elections get more costly and big money and entrenched interests grow more powerful. The fix is in — and the results are ruinous.

Today, Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell is refusing to agree to rules to govern the Senate unless Democrats agree to sustain the filibuster. The filibuster — the requirement that virtually any legislation receive not a majority of the vote but a supermajority of 60 votes — is the instrument McConnell used to obstruct virtually everything President Obama sought to do, with the stated purpose of making him a one-term president.

The result is a Senate that is frozen in the midst of cumulating crises. Even Joe Biden's pandemic emergency rescue package is stalled. America becomes more and more dysfunctional as it becomes less and less democratic. The Democratic majority in the House has passed legislation — HR 1 in the last session of Congress — that would remedy some of these inequities.

The 51-vote majority in the new Senate wants this to be its first act. But, of course, if the filibuster is sustained the minority will block even these common-sense reforms. The sacking of the Capitol sent a message around the world that America's democracy is literally under siege. The reality is worse: our system is rigged so that the minority can rule. The disconnect — the frustration of the will of the majority — is a clear and present danger.

DC Must Have Statehood

By Dr. Julianne Malveaux

(blackcommentator.com) The District of Columbia has 715,000 residents, more than the states of Wyoming and Vermont. We pay taxes, just like citizens in all 50 states. But our citizens are second-class citizens. We have no voting representation in the House of Representatives or the United States Senate. We have taxation without representation.

Nonvoting Congressional representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D) has served in Congress since 1991. She has tirelessly fought for DC statehood, most recently introducing HR 51 on the very first day of the 117th Congress, on January 3. She has 202 cosponsors of the legislation, all Democrats. Not a single Republican thinks that the residents of the District of Columbia deserve equal rights. Norton has introduced legislation to establish DC statehood since 1991. Republicans don't support this because they think Democrats get an edge if a voting representative and two senators are Dems. Would they disenfranchise California because Democrats do better there?

The insurrection on January 6 illustrates one of the many reasons that DC deserves statehood. Mayor Muriel Bowser cannot assem-

ble the DC national guard on her own. She has to ask for federal government "permission" to get our national guard, made up of DC residents, to protect our citizens and our streets. Any other governor can ask for National Guard assistance, but the DC Mayor has to go, hat in hand, to the feds, who have been traditionally hostile to DC.

This is the most recent attack on DC sovereignty. In past years, Congress has passed laws that directly contradict laws the DC City Council has passed. Congress has offered scant respect for DC leaders. But DC voters, through charter amendment, made the DC Attorney General an elected position. Karl Racine was elected in 2014 and reelected in 2018. He has aggressively challenged the status quo, suing the Trump administration for its chicanery. He has also defended DC independence and pushed back on attacks to DC sovereignty. The blessing of having an independent Attorney General (as opposed to someone appointed by the Mayor) is that the AG can play a different kind of politics than the Mayor must.

The DC statehood issue affects you whether you live in DC or not. When you hear voter suppression, think DC. A few years ago, DC was majority Black (now it's at least 45

percent). Republicans weren't about to put a congressional voting seat and two senate seats to Black folks. Just like they will scheme and connive to keep Black voters away from the polls in North Carolina, Georgia, and other states. You can't talk about equal rights unless you are interested in the rights of DC residents. It's not a local issue; it's a national issue.

Too many, though, have been disturbingly silent about the rights of DC residents. Too many seem to think that our rights' abrogation is a remote issue that shouldn't matter to them. Too many put this on the back burner, preferring the status quo to providing DC residents with voting rights.

President-elect Joe Biden has not embraced DC statehood or put it on top of his list. That's not surprising. When President Barack Obama had both a Democratic House and Senate, the matter was not a priority. When President Bill Clinton led our nation, he somehow did not get around to the statehood issue. Republican resistance to statehood is expected. Democratic indifference is far more galling. The same party that will challenge voter suppression has never made DC voting a priority issue.



Thus, Mayor Muriel Bowser has her hands tied, as prior mayors of DC have. Congress has intruded into DC internal affairs, appointing a "Control" Board (I called it the Out of Control Board) in 1995 to oversee DC financial decisions that should have been the Mayor's purview. Congress meddles in DC in ways it could not interfere in any other jurisdiction.

DC deserves autonomy, and the debacle with the National Guard on January 6 is the most recent illustration of the reason. If you believe in equal rights, this is an issue for you whether or not you live in DC. The Biden-Harris administration must prioritize this, and you should, too.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux, PhD is the President and owner of Economic Education and the Honorary Co-Chair of the Social Action Commission of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc (JulianneMalveaux.com)

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For more information and to apply, please visit www.whitworth.edu/careers.

Whitworth has a Christ-centered commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. In that spirit, the university encourages individuals from historically underrepresented populations to apply. Successful completion of a background check required.



Habitat
for Humanity®
Spokane

now hiring!



Habitat for Humanity-Spokane brings people together to build homes, community, and hope. Our vision is a world where everyone has a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home.

We are searching for dynamic, mission driven collaborators to join our team in creating more affordable homeownership opportunities in Spokane County.

If you are have a passion for servant leadership, apply today!

Through shelter, we empower.



apply today!

<https://habitat-spokane.org/about-us/employment>

EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Join Our Team

Volunteers of America is a family, where everyone truly cares and works hard.



To us and to those we serve, all our staff are heroes and we'd love for you to join our ranks!



Health Coverage - Retirement - Flexible Schedule - Paid Vacation

For more information please visit
<https://www.voaspokane.org/jobs>

Ready for a Career in Construction?

Skilled Trades Preparation (STP) prepares you to successfully apply to apprenticeships in the construction trades. Area apprenticeships are looking for more qualified women and minorities.



STP is the first step on your way!
Tuition is only \$25
Visit: scc.spokane.edu/STP to learn more.

The Washington State Department of Transportation recognizes the importance of supporting new apprenticeships in our region and has made funding available specifically for STP students. This funding may pay for:

- Work clothes
- PPE
- Tools
- Minor car repair
- Transportation
- Program testing

Community Colleges of Spokane
Spokane Community College

Community Colleges of Spokane does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation or age in its programs, activities or employment. Direct all inquiries regarding equal opportunity compliance and/or grievances to chief administration officer, CCS, 501 N Riverpoint Blvd, PO Box 6000, MS1004, Spokane WA 99217-6000 or call 509-434-5037. Direct all inquiries or grievances regarding access and Title IX to the chief compliance officer, 2917 W. Ft. George Wright Drive, MS 3027, Spokane WA 99224 or call 509-279-6012. Marketing and Public Relations. November 2020. 20-178 C

Contact us now to
determine your eligibility.

(509) 533-4600
ABEnquiry@scc.spokane.edu

“Diversity Dialogues:”

“I see you. I hear you. I feel you.”

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE AND EQUITY



January
20
Marlon James
5:00pm



January
27
Daudi Abe
6:30pm



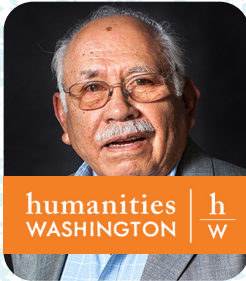
February
17
Kevin Young
5:00pm



March
03
Anu Taranath
6:30pm



March
10
Tracy K. Smith
5:00pm



April
14
Carlos Gil
6:30pm



April
27
Angie Thomas
5:30pm



May
12
Luis Rodriguez
6:30pm



June
02
Hilton Als
5:00pm



June
09
Omari Amili
6:30pm

Learn more at scc.spokane.edu/HaganCenter

Events are open to the public and available via
livestreaming on YouTube at scc.spokane.edu/live.



I, Too
By Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

FEBRUARY 10

FUSE DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

Brown Girl, Brown Stones by Paule Marshall (poetry)

The first novel by internationally recognized writer Paule Marshall, published in 1959. The somewhat autobiographical story describes the life of Barbadian immigrants in Brooklyn during the Great Depression and in WWII.

6:30pm-8pm

Virtual Discussion

Visit the Fuse Book Club Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fusediversity>

FEBRUARY 15

NAACP GENERAL MEETING

Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting. For more information please check social media at [facebook.com/spokane.naap](https://www.facebook.com/spokane.naap) or contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 or visit naacpspokane.org.

FEBRUARY 11

BIPOC AFFINITY SPACE

A virtual People of Color specific space for the BIPOC Spokane community to gather, breathe and heal.

5:30-7pm

Virtual Discussion

If you would like to attend or want more information contact: excelebratesuccess@unitedway-spokane.org.

FEBRUARY 15

SPEAK UP SCHOOL

Learn effective skills for public speaking and how to express yourself effectively in public hearings. Get information about Washington's upcoming redistricting process. Sponsored by the League of Women Voters

For more information and to register visit LWVSpokane.org

FEBRUARY 17

DIVERSITY DIALOGUES

Kevin Young

Hagan Center Speaker Series. Conversations about race and equity.

5pm

Kevin Young is the director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and poetry editor of The New Yorker. He will be the director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture starting in January 2021.

Events are open to the public and available via livestream on YouTube at scc.spokane.edu/live.

For more information visit scc.spokane.edu/HaganCenter

FEBRUARY 17

SPOKANE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

Mental Health During the COVID Pandemic. Sponsored by Better Health Together in partnership with the Spokane Regional Health District. Facilitators: LaKesha Kimbrough, Warrior for Racial and Social Justice Liberation; Heleen Dewey, SRHD Health Equity Specialist; AJ Sanders, SRHD Behavioral Health Lead for COVID-19

5:30-7pm

For information visit: betterhealthtogether.org/calendar/communitymentalhealth

FEBRUARY 20

SPEAK UP SCHOOL

Learn effective skills for public speaking and how to express yourself effectively in public hearings. Get information about Washington's upcoming redistricting process. Sponsored by the League of Women Voters

For more information and to register visit LWVSpokane.org

FEBRUARY 20

HOW DO BLACK FOLKS REALLY FEEL ABOUT THE COVID VACCINE?

The Black Lens, Spokane NAACP, Carl Maxey Center and Spokane Ministers Fellowship are hosting a virtual community discussion about the Coronavirus vaccine. Questions & answers from Black professionals and community members.

10-11:30am

See the flyer on page 23.

FEBRUARY 24

5TH AVENUE INITIATIVE MEETING

The City of Spokane wants to hear from the community about the 5th Avenue initiative.

4pm

Meeting information and link will be available the week before the meeting.

FEBRUARY 25

BIPOC AFFINITY SPACE

A virtual People of Color specific space for the BIPOC Spokane community to gather, breathe and heal.

5:30-7pm

Virtual Discussion

If you would like to attend or want more information contact: excelebratesuccess@unitedway-spokane.org.

FEBRUARY 27

SPOKANE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

Mental Health During the COVID Pandemic. Sponsored by Better Health Together and the Spokane Regional Health District. Facilitators: LaKesha Kimbrough, Warrior for Racial and Social Justice Liberation; Heleen Dewey, SRHD Health Equity Specialist; AJ Sanders, SRHD Behavioral Health Lead for COVID-19

11am - 12:30pm

For information visit: betterhealthtogether.org/calendar/communitymentalhealth

VIRTUAL GROUP

A Cup of Culture



Join Me For A Cup Of Culture

Saturdays at 12:30 PM PST

Sharing Tips & Insights About Diversity

Saturdays at 12:30pm

To join the Facebook Group: facebook.com/groups/racial-reconciliationwithdrwilburn

NOTICE

East Central 5th Avenue Initiative

Community Strategy Meeting

February 24th - 4pm

The meeting information and link will be made available a week before the meeting.

To read up more on the Initiative, please visit: my.spokanecity.org/projects/5th-avenue-initiative

Send information about upcoming community events to sandy@blacklensnews.com or call 509-795-1964 with information.



Make your voice heard

When the Washington State Redistricting Commission draws maps that impact every voter, will you be represented?

Speak your mind at upcoming hearings

Get free training
February 15 and 20, 2021

- Tools to help you express yourself effectively
- Knowledge of Washington's redistricting process
- Skills for any public speaking situation
- Safe, supportive environment

Learn more and register at LWVSpokane.org

Organized by
LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SPOKANE AREA

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

SPEAK UP SCHOOL

JOIN US!

Virtual Spaces for Healing

Spokane Community Mental Health Forum with Spokane Regional Health District

When we work together locally, we can overcome significant obstacles and find solutions to complex challenges. In partnership with the Spokane Regional Health District, Better Health Together hosts Virtual Spaces for Healing to share resources and hear from community members. These public virtual community forums are your chance to share your mental health and care experiences with health leaders in our region.

Community Forum: Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wednesday, February 17 at 5:30pm - 7:00pm

Saturday, February 27 at 11:00am - 12:30pm

Join us for ***either*** session. We are offering two sessions covering the same topic. Please register for the event that works best for your schedule.

Learn more and register:

www.bit.ly/3bHOJ3T Symetria@betterhealthtogether.org

better health together

RIDES FOR SENIORS

Socially-distanced travel to work, grocery stores, medical appointments, and all your destinations.

People age 60 and over can use STA Paratransit vans to travel to destinations without other passengers for only **\$2 each way.**



**CALL 328-1552 TO
SCHEDULE YOUR TRIP**