

THE BLACK LENSTM

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

REMEMBERING CAIDEN JAMES HENRY

On The First Anniversary of Baby Caiden's Death His Family Is Still Waiting For Justice

The morning of February 26, 2017, Crystal Henry did what she had done many times before. She left her nine month old son Caiden James Henry in the care of someone that she trusted and went to work.

The man Crystal Henry trusted that morning was twenty-eight year old Joshua Mobley, father of three young children and the husband of a woman that Crystal worked with. Everything appeared to be like any other day.

But within twenty-four hours Caiden would be dead and Mobley would be under arrest for second degree murder.

News reports indicate that police discovered bruising on Caiden's cheeks, forehead and stomach. Doctors, additionally, discovered internal bleeding and brain hemorrhaging, according to court documents. The Medical Exam-

iner determined that baby Caiden died from blunt force trauma.

A year later, Mobley is out on bail and back home with his wife and kids, while Crystal Henry and her family are trying to put the pieces back together and still searching for answers.

Still visibly grieving, Crystal and her family gathered at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church on February 26 to mark the solemn anniversary of Caiden's death, to remember and honor his short life through stories, music, and video, and to continue their quest for justice.

They were joined by members of the Spokane community in an emotional and tear-filled service that was officiated by Rev. Walter Kendricks, who fought back tears as he told those gathered, "I'm not worried about baby Caiden, baby Caiden is in



the presence of God. I'm worried about us. We are better than this."

Speaking on behalf of the family, Caiden's Aunt, Kitara Johnson was overcome with emotion as she shared, "my body does not want to move, my heart does not want to speak, but if I don't, who will?" She continued, "I wish I

could hear Caiden cry. I know he cried that day. I know he cried for help that day. We were not there, but we are here now. His life might have been short, but it was not in vain. On behalf of Caiden, on behalf of the children, do something!"

The trial of Joshua Mobley is scheduled to begin May 14th.



Statement from Caiden's Mother

Good Evening,

As you all know I am the mother of Caiden James Henry. I am not going to make this about the person who killed my son. This is about the life he lived, no matter how short it was. It's also about the love and joy he brought to so many lives.

Caiden was not just the dead baby (as the media refers to him). He was so much more. He was a happy baby, always smiling, looking at me with his big brown eyes. Always eating so much. I remember waking Caiden up, just so I could play with him. Kissing him every minute.

Before I had Caiden, I felt like something was missing in my life. Then when I had him, I finally felt complete. I had my little girl Alexia and my baby boy Caiden. My heart felt whole.

I didn't know what a broken heart was until Caiden passed away on February 26, 2017. Today marks a year since Caiden was killed. He has been gone longer than he was alive. My heart is actually broken into pieces. It's like there's a hole in my heart. I did not think I would make it until today. I felt like I needed to be with my baby boy. I knew I had to fight for justice.

Caiden James Henry was not just the face of a dead child. He was not just a number added to the list of kids that died due to abuse. He is not just a statistic. He was my son. A brother. A nephew. He brought light to a dark world. His name was Caiden.

Instead of planning his 1st birthday party, I had to plan a funeral. Instead of shopping for Christmas gifts for him to open and see the excitement on his face. I had to shop for gifts to put on his grave.

No parent should ever have to choose between a casket or cremating.

Caiden I miss you every day. There is not a day that goes by that I don't wake up looking for you, hoping this was just a really bad awful dream. If I could trade my life to bring you back, I would. I love you and miss you. Until we meet again.

Mommy loves you.
Crystal Henry

ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Black Lens Anniversary Party

In this day and age, with everything appearing to move at lightening speed and the attraction of all things social media minimizing the interest that young folk, or anybody else for that matter, have in sitting still long enough to focus their undivided attention on an object that is as stationary as a newspaper, it does not escape me that it is no small feat of accomplishment that The Black Lens is still standing after three years. And not only standing, but giving the impression, at least, that it might just be thriving.

So, the Black Lens Third Year Anniversary Party was a big deal for me, to say the least. A time to celebrate. To have fun. To relax and let my hair down, so to speak.

Last year's party, held at Chkn-N- Mo, was so crowded that we needed a bigger venue, so this year we moved to the new place-to-be in Spokane, The House of Soul.

I arrived early with my set up crew and decided to put a sign and some balloons outside for people who might not have been familiar with the location. When I went outside, I noticed that a young woman from parking enforcement was in the process of ticketing one of the cars that was parked out front, unloading things for the band. A woman raced inside to warn the guys, so I continued doing what I was doing.

What transpired next, quickly, and needlessly in my opinion, escalated from three guys (who happened to be Black) trying to explain to the parking enforcement woman (who happened to be white) why they shouldn't get a ticket, to the woman feeling "threatened" to the degree that she called the police.

The woman claimed that she was "intentionally spit on" by one of the men and was "being prevented from doing her job". I didn't see either of those behaviors, nor did I see



any actions from the men that would have warranted a call to the police, but what I did hear was one of the men remark loudly, "you just called me an idiot," something that was substantiated.

The next thing you know, there were four, count 'em, four, police cars parked in front of the club or passing by in response to the threatening Black males, so I pulled out my phone, because history has taught Black folks that this is the time when bad things happen to us.

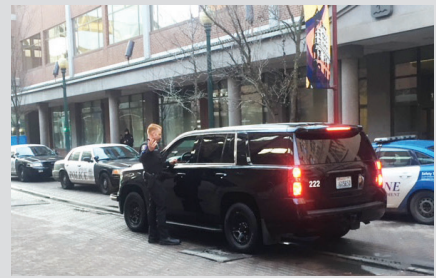
Fortunately, for the Black men, this time there were witnesses, and there was a crowd that had gathered as they were arriving for the Black Lens party. There was also Pastor Walter Kendricks, who acted as a mediator in an effort to de-escalate a situation that should never have escalated in the first place. It was a parking ticket for pete's sake.

The police spoke to all parties involved and eventually left without arresting anyone, and we all gradually made our way inside the club to enjoy the remainder of the party. And we did enjoy the party, because we are nothing if we are not resilient.

But I am still angry about what happened. And I am angrier still about what could easily have happened if things had gone even a little bit differently.

A funny thing happened on the way to the Black Lens Anniversary Party, I was reminded that it doesn't matter how hard you work or how much good you try to accomplish, when push comes to shove, you are still Black, first and foremost, in the United States, and in downtown Spokane.

Note: A formal complaint was filed with the City and we have been in communication with City Staff. They have taken the complaint very seriously and for that I am grateful.



THE BLACK LENS NEWS

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

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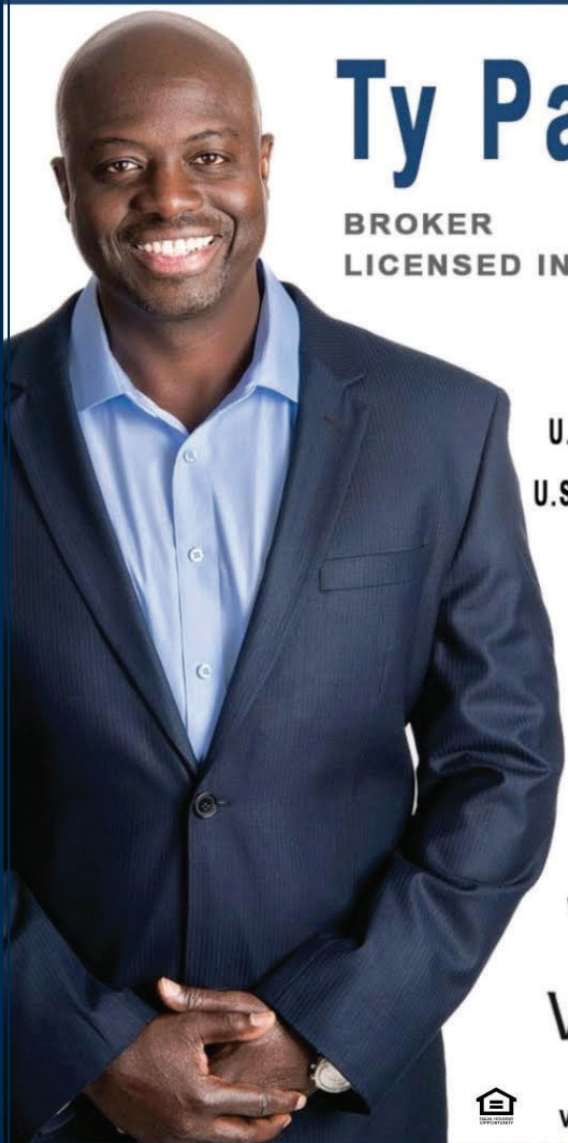
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Black Panther Breaks Box Office Records

Black Lens Hosts Screening and Discussion Opening Weekend

Black Panther, the epic mega-hit from Disney-Marvel Studios spent its opening weekend smashing records at the box office. The movie raked in an estimated \$242 million in domestic sales, making it the second-highest four-day domestic opening of all time, according to Variety magazine. The movie is also expected to break records internationally as well.

The excitement surrounding the first Hollywood Blockbuster that not only features a Black superhero, but an African-American director and a predominantly Black cast was not lost on Spokane.

The Black Lens hosted a private screening on February 16 at the Riverpark Square AMC theater. Students from Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane Community College, Eastern Washington University, Whitworth University, Gonzaga University, Washington State University-Spokane, North Central High School and a handful of members from the larger Spokane community filled the theater and then gathered afterwards for a thought provoking discussion, facilitated by Jac Archer, about the many themes brought up by the movie.



My Review of Black Panther

By Arianna Jennings

On Friday evening, February 16th, 2018, my African-American Literature class from North Central High School was honored to be invited by The Black Lens to be a part of the Spokane premiere of “The Black Panther.”



Before getting into my thoughts on the movie, I would like to thank my African-American Literature teacher, Mr. Joseph Kraus, for continually reminding us to sign up to go see the film. But the biggest thank you must be directed at the Law Office of DC Cronin for giving us the tickets because without them, we all would not have been able to join in this amazing experience.

This movie was not what I imagined it would be. I thought the Black Panther movie would be like the original “Black Panther” with Angela Davis, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Black Panther that we saw shed a light on two African-American boys who were brought up from different lifestyles and households. First, you would see one of the

boys who grew up on the rough side of California (Oakland) living with his father, and the other one who grew up in royalty.

By representing each boy’s livelihood, the Director, Ryan Coogler, showed a contrast between the two, from the clothes they wore to the dialects they spoke.

People who lived in Wakanda wore fancy head wraps. Women wore fancy dresses with different colors. Men and women wore sandals, beads etc.... But on the flip side, the African-American people who lived in California wore ripped jeans, gold chains, gold teeth, Nike or Jordan shoes, baggy pants, basketball shorts, and plain or designer tank-tops.

Also, a major difference that I saw between them was their dialect. People from Wakanda spoke in more of a proper, upper-class tone, where they would say “Mr. or Mrs.” or “My Queen or King.” On the other hand, Californian dialect was more urban, like “What’s up ma?” or, as character Erik, played by Michael B. Jordan, said “Hey Auntie,” It was clear that they had their own slang.

Another thing that I liked about the movie is that it kind of reminded me of “Lion King.” In the storyline that “Lion King” had Mufasa was the King of the Land, and in “Black Panther” T’Challa, became the king of Wakanda. In “Lion King,” Scar was the angry, bitter brother, and even though Erik from “Black Panther” wasn’t T’Challa’s brother, he was his bitter cousin who wanted to overthrow T’Challa and become the new powerful king of Wakanda.

One of my favorite parts in the movie was when the war was on in Wakanda and W’Kabi and Okoye were against each other. W’Kabi said, “You would kill me, my love?” and Okoye said, “For Wakanda, yes”, with her big gun gadget in her hand pointing at W’Kabi. He dropped his weapon and just bowed down to her. That really showed true love in my opinion. He treats his woman RIGHT!

Another favorite part was when Erik (T’Challa’s cousin) first met his family in Wakanda and he said to Ramonda (played by Angela Bassett) “Hey Auntie!” I almost about fell out of my chair because he said it like in an arrogant, goofy way. He’s like one of those family members where the older adults are like “Oh God...”

I think the reason why Black people were so excited that Black Panther was coming out is because we finally are getting a superhero who is Black himself, and also because we never see any African-Americans playing a superhero. Usually they are either in violent movies with drugs or people think Black people can’t be a superhero. But we finally get to have something so big to call our own.

I think that it’s important for younger African-Americans to see this movie because it gives you a different side of what African-Americans can be like. We’re not all broke and living in the projects. We can also live the life of royalty.

Friday night was a night that I will not forgot. Again, I would like to thank my teacher and The Black Lens for giving me this opportunity to watch a five-star film and writing about my lovely experience.

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Two Spokane Women Honored

Chrissy Davis Jones

Susan Poindexter

NASPA Community College Professional of the Year

KHQ/EWU Teacher of the Month - November 2017



Spokane Falls Community College’s Acting Vice President of Student Services Chrissy Davis Jones has been named NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) Community College Professional of the Year. The award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated continued leadership and a commitment to NASPA and/or the profession in relation to community colleges.



Shadle Park High School teacher Susan Poindexter was named KHQ Television and Eastern Washington University Teacher of the month for November 2017. Teachers are honored for their excellence. Mrs. Poindexter was nominated by one of her students, Shymaar Crease, who said, “Miss P shows every single one of us every day that if you put in your time and you work hard, good things will come to you.”

Melissa Harville-Lebron Becomes First Black Woman to Own Nascar Team



(Source: Selena Hill, <http://www.blackenterprise.com>; J. K. Schmid, <http://www.afro.com>)

Melissa Harville-Lebron, a 47-year-old single mother who is raising three biological children, as well as her siblings’ four kids, is CEO of W. M. Stone Enterprises, an entertainment company, and owner of E2 Northeast Motorsports. She is also the first Black woman to own a NASCAR team.

Haarville-Lebron and her team completed their first official race on Feb. 18 of this year, with a debut at Daytona as part of the Camping World Truck Series. Harville-Lebron’s truck, number 83, finished in 15th place. The owner was pleased with the finish, stating “15th is EXCELLENT For a 1st run and no damage!” The E2 Northeast Motorsports team became the first multicultural team to race competitively in NASCAR, with four Black and Latino drivers



Teacher Creates ‘Wakanda’ Curriculum To Engage Middle School Students



(Source: Lilly Workneh, <https://blavity.com>)

Tess Raser, a twenty-eight year old sixth grade teacher at the Dulles School of Excellence on the south side of Chicago, told Blavity.com in an exclusive interview that she was so moved by the Black Panther movie that she created a special ‘Wakanda Curriculum’ to “better engage and teach her students about the themes explored in the film.” Raser said the film touched on important topics, like African history and Afrofuturism, and she wanted to have discussions with her students about the topics.

Raser told Blavity that she developed the curriculum from resources that she has used or created before, as well as from outside sources. The curriculum includes a series of lessons, some are “pre-viewing” lessons that touch on topics like colonialism, global anti-blackness and the African cultural representation in the film and others are “post-viewing” lessons that do things like dissect individual characters from the film and discuss the role of women in Wakanda.

Raser said the curriculum is designed for students between the fifth and eighth grade levels, but added that it works for high school students, too. “This curriculum is designed for students who are seeing ‘Black Panther,’ as a means to having them engage more critically and thoughtfully with the film. I want to push black kids to critically engage with media and literature, especially when black bodies are centered,” she said.

The curriculum is available online: https://docs.google.com/document/d/19wRga_SppkMxLazphLE4B9G-GUtoufGHNSrSavEjXbs/edit

Michelle Obama to Release Memoir in November



(Source: <https://www.becomingmichelleobama.com>)

Michelle Obama announced on social media that her first memoir, titled “Becoming”, will be published on November 13. “Writing BECOMING has been a deeply personal experience,” Obama is quoted as saying. “I talk about my roots and how a girl from the South Side found her voice. I hope my journey inspires readers to find the courage to become whoever they aspire to be. I can’t wait to share my story.”

Obama’s publisher, Penguin Random House, describes the book as “a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling,” in which “Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world’s most famous address. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it—in her own words and on her own terms. Warm, wise, and revelatory, ‘Becoming’ is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations—and whose story inspires us to do the same.”

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Nigerian Parents Plead With Officials to Speed Up Rescue of Abducted Girls

(TriceEdneyWire.com/GIN) – Parents of young teenage girls are pleading with Nigerian officials to speed up rescue efforts for their children kidnapped by Boko Haram.

“We don’t want these girls to stay long with those militants. Anything can happen to them,” said Kachalla Bukar, father of a 14 year old girl, one of 110 abducted by Boko Haram from the Government Science and Technical College in northeastern Yobe state.

Mr Bukar says his wife cannot stop crying and he cannot sleep since their “brilliant” daughter Aisha disappeared.

But even as he begged for action, officials were still disputing the details of the kidnapping.

Initially, after the attack last Monday, the governor’s office claimed that 50 girls were unaccounted for.

They later released another statement to say the missing girls had been rescued by the Nigerian army, although they didn’t specify the number rescued.

Soon, the state government did another about face, admitting that the girls had not actually been found or rescued.

Officials apologized in the retraction for the “erroneous” statement and said it was based on inaccurate information.

Faced with apparent government inaction and contradictory statements about the whereabouts of their children, the girls’ parents have joined forces, tracking their own list of missing girls and forming an association.

Of the Dapchi students who survived, thirteen-year-old Hassanah Mohammed recounted the terrifying moment when gunmen wearing military uniforms burst into the school.

“We were about to start evening prayers when we heard gunshots outside the school. Everybody was terrified and we rushed to the gates and frantically scrambled to jump over the fence. I, my younger sister and two classmates managed to jump over the fence,” she said. “I lost grip of my sister’s hand in the confusion. I managed to return home with my two classmates but my sister has not been seen since then. I believe she was among the girls taken by the gunmen.”

President Muhammadu Buhari has promised the families of the missing girls that they’ll be found and their attackers brought to justice.

“We are sorry that it happened; we share your pain. Let me assure that our gallant armed forces will locate and safely return all the missing girls,” Buhari said in a Twitter statement.

In a similar incident, Boko Haram militants kidnapped nearly 300 girls from a school in Chibok in April 2014, setting off global outrage.

Many of the Chibok girls were freed after negotiations, but more than 100 remain in captivity, their whereabouts unknown.



Report: Black Women in the U.S. 2017

Moving Our Agenda Forward in a Post-Obama Era

By Avis A. Jones-DeWeever, Ph.D.

Black Women in the United States, 2017, is the Fourth Annual Report by the Black Women’s Roundtable (BWR) meant to provide an in-depth analysis of the needs and condition of Black women throughout the nation.

This year’s report, however, is positioned somewhat differently than previous publications. At the dawn of a new political era, we thought it wise to not just describe how Black women are faring, but instead, examine their challenges and needs through a prescriptive lens. As such, in this year’s report, we don’t merely highlight a variety of indicators related to the Black woman’s experience, instead we very purposefully lay out a path forward towards continued action on those issues that are most critical to our needs, even in the face of a very different political landscape.

As such, this year’s report is focused around five pillars: Black Women’s Health & Humanity; Black Women and Education; Black Women’s Politics and Perspectives; Entrepreneurship & Technology; and finally, Challenges and Change Agents—Telling Our Stories. Included herein are the voices of scholars, advocates and practitioners; each with deep expertise and involvement in the issue-areas covered throughout the report.

What follows is well beyond theory. It is a practical sharing of not only where Black women are today, but how we move forward to create a better tomorrow.

Some of the Key findings from the report:

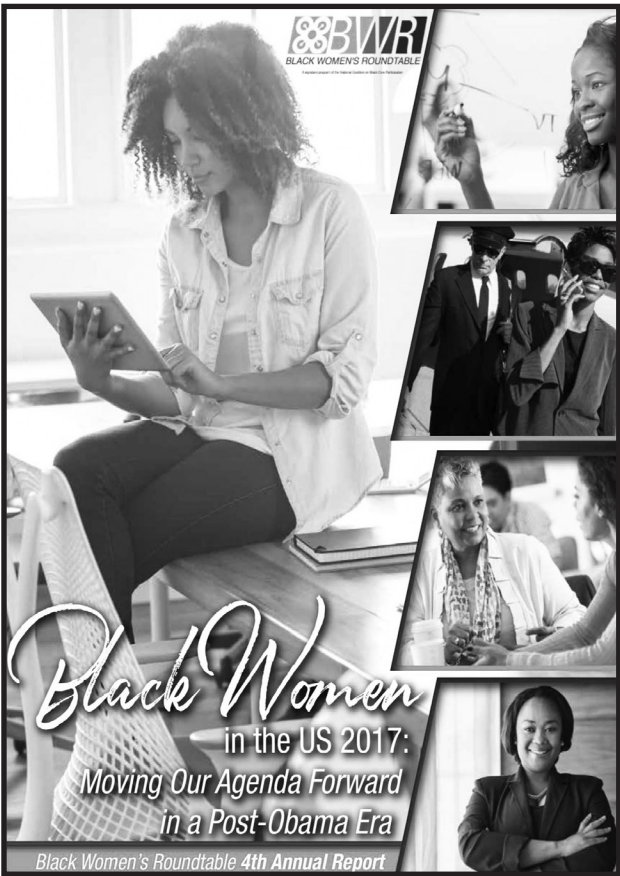
A Sense of Responsibility and the Importance of Jobs Drove Voters to the Polls

NCBCP Exit Polls in Charlotte, North Carolina and Cleveland, Ohio following the 2016 Presidential Election. Survey results found that Black voters were drawn to the polls less in support or even against any particular candidate, but rather, because of a strong sense of responsibility to vote.

Overall, the top issues for Black voters in Ohio and North Carolina in the Presidential election were jobs/employment, followed by quality education and affordable healthcare.

Black Women Expanding Political Power

In both 2008 and 2012, Black women redefined voting history by becoming the largest demographic group to cast ballots in an election. In 2016, not only did Black women continue to vote at high levels, they also expand-



ed their grasp on political power. Black women increased their numbers in Congress (from 20 to 21 women) and for the first time in 18 years, a Black woman, Kamala Harris was elected U.S. Senator.

Two of three African Americans elected Mayor in a top 100 city were women, and smaller jurisdictions in Arizona, Arkansas and Florida, each elected their first Black woman mayor.

Several cities that witnessed high-profile police killings (Orange County, Florida; Chicago, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri) each elected Black woman prosecutors. The state of Texas elected its first Black woman Sheriff, Zena Stephens. Jefferson County, Alabama elected nine Black women to the judicial bench. In the state of Georgia, a key battleground that is demographically shifting rapidly, 29 counties have an absolute majority of Black women as registered voters.

In an effort to further expand political power in the future, a new Initiative is poised to be launched which aims to

leverage the power of Black women in ministry to provide civics education to the next generation of Black voters.

Black Women and Girls Are Caught in the Crosshairs of Human Trafficking

According to the Justice Department, just over 40% of sex trafficking victims are Black, far outpacing White (25.6%), Hispanic (23.9%), Asian (4.3%) and Other (5.8%) victims.

Black Women’s Health Still in Peril

Although the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act survived political threat and remains the law of the land, Black women are still disproportionately effected as part of the 24 million Americans negatively impacted by states that refused to accept Medicaid expansion.

Black women continue to face a wide range of alarming health disparities, including heart disease, breast cancer, HIV, maternal mortality and exposure to violence.

Over a third of Black women in the workforce still have no access to paid sick days

In the face of challenges, Black women must prioritize and engage in radical and intentional self-care. This includes creating safe and inclusive spaces to learn from one another, while also continuing to hold elected officials accountable for policies that help to improve overall health and well-being.

Black Girls Ensnarled in the Juvenile Justice System for Non-Criminal Acts

Black girls are 2.7 times more likely than White girls to be referred to the juvenile justice system from other social service agencies such as schools, mental health facilities or the child welfare system. They are often accused of committing “technical” violations such as truancy, running away, underage drinking and being “hard to control.” Such violations make up nearly a third (31%) of the offenses that are responsible for Black girls being incarcerated.

Black Women Excel in Higher Education, but Still Have Room to Grow in STEM

Black women earned 67% of Associate Degrees and 65% of Bachelor Degrees earned among Blacks. And while all women across race are more likely to complete higher education than their male counterparts, Black women outpace their male peers by more than any other group.

Continued on Page 19

YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey

(jbaguart@yahoo.com)

Egyptian Goddess Neith

Ancient Kemet (Egypt) was home to a pantheon of gods and goddesses. Modern education has marginalized the Kemetic Spiritual system and instead focused mostly on classical Greek and Roman examples of god/goddess development. Yet minimal study of the Kemetic model will prove how sophisticated their system of worship really was before the existence of Greeks or Romans.

The Kemetians lived under a matriarchal system – where there was a male god, you must have a female goddess compliment. To possess a god without a goddess was to have a sun and no moon, day with no night. Yet one goddess was a bit of an exception to that rule, due to her ancient and enduring creative and regenerative powers. It was the Goddess Neith, who represented the primordial entity who created then became the manifestation of herself before time began.

According to Dr. Wim van Binsbergen, we have evidence of Neith's worship in Africa as far back as seven thousand B.C., more than nine thousand years ago, making her of a pre-dynastic origin and one of the oldest known deities on earth. She was the goddess of the town of Zau (foreign name Sais) and represented the red crown of Lower Egypt. Transliterated she was Nt, in the Mdu Ntr.

In Kemetic society Neith was honored with the festival of lamps. People of the city would hold a festival in her honor lighting lamps at night and giving thanks. The weaver's loom symbolized her power of formation and creation. She represented war and hunting as most of her images show her holding a bow, arrows, and harpoon in the left hand and the symbol of life, the ankh, in her right. Her powers were not earth-bound. She represented universal birth and

life. But what made her most unusual was that she represented the creator goddess and eternal virgin, never uniting with man yet regenerating herself and countless children of human and godly form.

In all of human civilization, she represents the first model of a Virgin Mother recorded anywhere on earth. It is proclaimed that she "was the first to give birth to anything, and that she had done so when nothing else had been born, and that she had herself never been born." On a statue in her honor in Zau she exclaimed "I came into existence out of myself" ... "The present and the future and the past, I am. My undergarment (peplos) no one has uncovered. The fruit I brought forth, the sun came into being."

Neith was revealing that her peplos, or dress, no man had lifted in consummation of a union and that all of her creative powers were made manifest through the self, in harmony with the universal concept that all of manifestation/creation is of a feminine origin and energy. This concept is furthered through the Virgin Goddess Auset (Isis), mother of Heru (Horus), who is linked to the constellation of Virgo the Virgin. And much later the Greeks formulated their version of Neith with the Goddess Mother Athena – All giving proper natural due to divine feminine creative energy before the coming of the patriarchal religions in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam who demoted female goddesses from their spiritual pedestals.

Sources:

Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt – J. H. Breasted; *Black Athena Volume 1: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* – Martin Bernal; *When Egypt Ruled the East* – George Steindorff/Keith Seele; "Skulls and tears" – Dr. Wim van Binsbergen; *Neith notes* pgs. 13, 14, 21, 22; truthbeknown.com/neith.html



Gladys West: Mathematician, Engineer, Helped Develop the GPS

Source: Cathy Dyson, *The Freelance-Star*; <http://www.fredericksburg.com>; <https://www.militarytimes.com>

Gladys Mae Brown decided as a young girl growing up in Dinwiddie County, south of Richmond, Virginia, that she did not want to work in the fields, picking tobacco, corn and cotton, or in a nearby factory, beating tobacco leaves into pieces small enough for cigarettes and pipes, like her parents had done.



When Brown discovered that the valedictorian and salutatorian from her high school would earn a scholarship to Virginia State College, she set her mind on achieving that goal, studied hard and graduated at the top her class. She majored in math, taught for two years and then eventually earned her master's degree.

In 1956, Brown became the second Black woman to be hired at Dahlgren Naval base and one of only four Black employees there. One of the other Black employees was a mathematician named Ira West. The two dated for 18 months before they married in 1957.

Ira spent most of his career developing computer programs, the work that Gladys did focused on collecting information from satellites, focusing on information that helped to determine their exact location as they transmitted from around the world.

In a 2017 message about Black History Month, Capt. Godfrey Weekes, then-commanding officer at the Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, described the "integral role" played by West.

"She rose through the ranks, worked on the satellite geodesy [science that measures the size and shape of Earth] and contributed to the accuracy of GPS and the measurement of satellite data," he wrote. "As Gladys West started her



career as a mathematician at Dahlgren in 1956, she likely had no idea that her work would impact the world for decades to come."

Both Wests retired from Dahlgren in the late 90s, he is 1997 and she one year later in 1998. They celebrated their retirement by traveling to New Zealand and Australia.

The Wests, who have three children and seven grandchildren, use GPS when they travel, but she prefers a paper map. Gladys West also still does her own calculations.

NAACP UPDATE:



http://www.SpokaneNAACP.com

By Stacey Wells
Political Action Committee Chair

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the significance of the January general membership meeting of the Spokane NAACP, which was hosted by the Native Project, and featured panelists from a multitude of first nation tribes. This was the first general membership meeting to step out of our usual location in the Community Building, and into our community, a practice which will be repeated for many meetings to come, as the NAACP works to engage more deeply in building strong relationships in all of our neighborhoods.

We were so warmly welcomed by members of the Native Project, who taught us what it means to offer, and receive “Sacred Hospitality”. From the extraordinary range of available services to the intensely personal and moving stories of members and their work, it was an enlightening night. I will speak only for myself, but I know I am not alone in my sincere gratitude for this alliance.

This spirit of friendship and collaboration has been especially significant in the work of the NAACP Political Action Committee. Recognizing a need for diverse representation in community decision-making, members from the Spokane NAACP, along with the Hispanic Business Professional Association of Spokane (HBPA), and the Spokane Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) joined together in July 2017, to form the Spokane Coalition of Color (SCOC).

Members of each coalition organization collaboratively held two candidate forums ahead of the November 2017 General Elections in Spokane and the Spokane Valley, one for Spokane City Council and School Board candidates, and another for Spokane Valley City Council and Spokane Superior Court Judicial candidates. The forums were held at Spokane Community College and each forum included an educational component. Attendees were provided the opportunity to register to vote at both events.

The SCOC is committed to continuing its work together, partnering with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington at the next NAACP general membership meeting on March 19. A collaborative “Bites & Rights” event

will be held with Gonzaga’s Black Student Union and will feature a performance by Power 2 the Poetry, as well as a panel discussion on the topic of “Mass Incarceration and its Impact on Communities of Color”, and a light dinner and beverages will also be provided.

We ARE the village, and we need everyone’s participation to fulfill our mission of ensuring the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination in Spokane.

We hope to see you on March 19 for the NAACP Bites and Rights Events at 7pm in the Hemmingson Center Auditorium on the Gonzaga campus, 702 E Desmet Avenue.



“Mass Incarceration and its Impact on Communities of Color.”

March 19 - 7pm - Hemmingson Center Auditorium - Gonzaga University



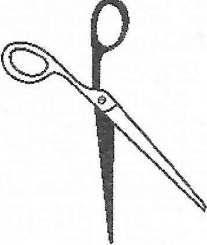








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FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn

Part Two

Editor’s Note: I originally interviewed Commissioner Clyburn in December 2017. Excerpts from that interview appeared in the January 2018 issue. I had more questions and Commissioner Clyburn graciously agreed to a follow-up interview in February. This is part 2.

We talked extensively last time about the FCC Ruling on Net Neutrality, I wanted to start with any updates that you might have on what’s happening with Net Neutrality.

So you probably know that about 22 attorney generals have weighed in promising to challenge the FCC Ruling. There are a number of states who have levied their own challenges saying to providers and other people who do business in their states that they are expecting the principles of net neutrality to be a part of any contract or that they engage in. So that’s been a part of the reaction. My advisers and I are still waiting for the ruling to be published in The Federal Register, which is an important occurrence because once you get published, everyone has almost a green light to go to the next steps for what promises to be a very lively and engaged court presence by those who have taken issue with the ruling.*

(*Note: On Thursday, February 22, 2018, the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, published the Restoring Internet Freedom Order in the Federal Register, which is significant because it triggers deadlines for challenges, both in the courts and in Congress. Litigants have ten days to file petitions for review in federal courts of appeals).

You said last time when it comes to the African-American community the FCC has the opportunity to be either an enabler or a stifler of opportunities and I was really struck by that statement, could you speak to that for a little bit.

I’ll give you a couple of examples that I think will be pro and con for people of color or communities of color, and for those who are on the other side of the economic opportunities divide, and of course they’re not necessarily the same, even though a lot of people would make you think it’s the same.

You might have heard me talk about the Lifeline program, which is one that is targeted to provide an economic means or opportunity for an individual to get nine dollars and twenty-five cents per month from the federal government, if you economically qualify, that would go towards the provider of voice service and as of last December it was supposed to go toward voice or broadband service. It’s your choice.

What is happening now under the current majority leadership is that program is at a very significant crossroads. They did not allow nine providers that could have offered more competitive options to go forward with their business models. They have slowed down one of the key reforms when it comes to this program, to put what we call a national verifier in place, that would allow for a much needed check and balance to ensure that everyone who signed up for service is legitimately qualified for the service. They also proposed in a November proceeding to cap the budget, which would mean that if we reach that cap no one else needs apply or the current people who are getting services might be slashed if they decide to lessen the amount of subsidies that go towards those individuals.



The other key thing in the proposed new path forward (or backwards I think) is that they’re saying that the only providers who would qualify to offer services to those who are in economic need would have to be a facility based service. What that means is just what it sounds like, you cannot be a re-seller. You might be a scrappy re-seller that wants to go into a particular area, but you will no longer have the ability to be a part of this program unless you have facilities on the ground. You and I both know that it is expensive to do that. There are people who have facilities who are more than willing to lease or have an arrangement with you where you could be a re-seller and you can quickly offer services to individuals. Now the majority says that’s not going to be a part of the qualification process.

So what does that mean? You’re going to have a handful of providers with no other options and no competitive opportunities, and I’m afraid that it’s basically going to kill the program. Over 70 percent of the people whose companies take part in the program today are what we call re-sellers. So, you do the math in terms of what that will mean.

That’s where I’m saying a change of policy can enable or stifle the opportunities.

The other glaring example is inmate calling. The federal government, meaning Congress and state authorities, could almost in a regulatory and legislative instant bring just, reasonable and fair rates to inmates and their families in a relatively short period of time if it were their priority.

It would be the cleanest, most efficient way to bring about justice, but it never seems to reach any one of those entities priority list, with the exception of about 10 or so carve outs, by way of states and some jurisdictions.

So, to me this agency could have very well been the catalyst, taken the lead where it could on interstate rate reform. I think it interpreted wrongly what it could have done on intrastate reform. And I think it is doing a disservice

when it comes to now a new element, a new ripple, when it comes to inmate calling services, which is something called video visitation, where there’s a sort of a gray area as to where the jurisdiction begins or ends. The FCC could have very much been a clarifier or a conduit for having that conversation, but it continuously fails to do so.

So on those two extremes where you’re addressing individuals who are economically and socially vulnerable, we have punted the ball over and over again, not addressing needs and people who are already vulnerable are running the risk of becoming even more so because of inaction or bad policy.

What are you focusing on now? What is your priority?

The two issues I just teed up. I will go before some state commissioners tomorrow to talk about the lifeline program and to thank the few of them who have been active on inmate calling because those two areas, I think, illustrate vividly for me some of the economic drags in communities, where you see moneys just being extracted away from the most economically vulnerable and going to places where they’ll never see it again.

What if I were to say to you that I had this elixir that could reduce recidivism, keep marriages intact, keep families together, reduce inmate violence when they’re serving and ensure that a loved one that is not perpetually taxed or penalized for their loved one’s crime. What if I said to you that I had this elixir that could solve and address all of those issues. What would you say? Well, I say we have that if we were to put in common sense inmate calling services reform. If these rates were just, reasonable and equitable across this nation, we would see all kinds of economic up-ticks in benefits.

The number is about 36 or 38 percent of people’s families keeping in touch with a loved one on a regular basis because these costs are too high. We would see that number go up over night because they’re able to do so. We would see suspensions and expulsions rates go down in school if a young one has at least one parent incarcerated but they can’t speak to them and there’s that disconnect in terms of interaction. We could see so many positive societal benefits from this simple reform, but no one is connecting the dots and that’s why it is so important for me to talk to people like you that not only report the news but they’re out there in the community bringing attention and hopefully spurring action.

Because sometimes it’s a simple fix. I think people sit back and they accept the negatives. They accept perpetual poverty. They accept these high incarceration rates. They accept these high expulsion rates in key communities. They accept this, but they don’t say is there a solution to the problem.

This one fix can have so many ripple effects in terms of a lot of the negative outcomes that we see in our society, but we refuse to do so and our refusal to do so is continuing to cause harm. So that’s why, no matter where I am, I’m going to continue to talk about this issue, until I’m unable to physically or mentally, because it is just so important and there’s so many fixes that could result from just, reasonable and fair rates, that I just don’t think people are connecting the dots and I will continue to be the voice and I will refine that message until they get it as much as I do.

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Washington’s 5th Congressional District Election

How much do you know about the candidates that will be running for office in the upcoming November 2018 election? The decisions that members of Congress are currently making and will make in the future stand to have a significant impact on our community. Due to the importance of the upcoming November election for the 5th Congressional District, The Black Lens will be running a monthly column featuring the two primary candidates. I encourage you to read their answers, educate yourself, and vote like your life and your community depends on it. Because it does!

Black Lens March Questions

In February 2018, a bill that was introduced by Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers to “Extend the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program” became law and was funded under the President’s bipartisan budget. This indicates an understanding that there is a critical shortage of doctors working in Eastern Washington. However, there is also a fundamental shortage of doctors of color. What do you see as the value, if any, in increasing the number of doctors of color working in Eastern Washington? What do you view as the current barriers to increasing the number of doctors of color in this area and if elected, what specific actions will you take, if any, that will have a positive impact on increasing the number of doctors of color in the 5th Congressional District?

Cathy McMorris Rodgers

The Spokane Teaching Health Center’s Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program has become a national model for educating doctors. I worked hard to help secure its initial funding and am honored to have sponsored the recent law expanding that funding.

By bringing doctors here for their residency, we encourage them to stay and practice here.

Recruiting doctors of color is vital to serving people of color in Spokane and throughout the district. Today’s team-based approach to healthcare means we also need healthcare practitioners of color at all levels, including pharmacists, psychiatrists, social workers, nurses, physicians’ assistants, and more.

Practitioners of color will build stronger relationships with patients of color, serve as role models, and ultimately increase the number of patients who seek preventative care rather than taking costly trips to the emergency room.

Two hurdles stand in the way: one cultural and one financial.

Many people of color will wonder whether our community, which is 90 percent white, welcomes diversity. That’s why I made it a point to speak at the MLK rally and condemn racism, and to bring people together at Peaceful Community Roundtables and Unity Dinners.

I hope that my actions are setting an example and sending a message.



The second significant barrier to people of color entering medicine is cost. From 2009-2012, as a State Senator, my opponent voted for budgets that led to dramatic tuition increases at WSU and UW. Fortunately, after she left, the Legislature led the nation in decreasing tuition.

Helping students of color will require scholarships, financial aid, and research grants. And some of that work is already underway. My bill added more residency positions and increased funding for each resident to \$157,000 per year.

More needs to be done, but all students of color should know they are welcome in Spokane.

Lisa Brown

As chancellor of WSU Spokane, I was a co-founder of a new residency program, and we built a teaching health clinic on campus to train residents, nurse practitioners and pharmacists, and other health-care providers. Interestingly, this program, called the Teaching Health Center program, was originally part of the Affordable Care Act, which Rep. McMorris Rodgers voted dozens of times to repeal.

Although the program was extended for two more years in the recent budget agreement, the cycle of a residency is three to four years. So this does not provide the certainty the congresswoman touts. I would work to get consistent, reliable funding that doesn’t lapse.

Expanding teaching health centers in underserved parts of the country, including communities of color, would be a top-priority budget item for me. More diversity among health-care providers is important because it can help bridge cultural differences that affect care.

Because there now exists a second public medical school in Washington state, thanks largely to the leadership and tenacity of the late Dr. Elson Floyd, more practitioners will be available for underserved communities. That was a crucial selling point in persuading legislators to fund it.

But the barriers to people of color



go beyond the THCGME program. A medical school education - all of higher education - must be more accessible. I would work to expand financial aid and ease the burden of student loan debt. When doctors of color return to underserved communities, they could be granted loan forgiveness or other debt relief options.

The problem begins long before medical school. It goes to the lack of access to high quality preschools and the struggle to close the achievement gap in public schools.

The solution has many factors, and I would continue to work on the issue as a member of Congress.

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A stylized illustration featuring three characters from the movie Black Panther. On the left is T'Challa (Chadwick Boseman) in his vibranium suit. In the center is Shuri (Letitia Wright) in her vibranium suit. On the right is Okoye (Danai Gurira) in her vibranium armor. The background is dark with some geometric patterns.

Hair that Defies Gravity Skin that Absorbs Light



By Jaeylin Snyder

Being a woman in America can be tough. We are looked upon as an inferior species, shunned if we don't embrace what others may think is "normal," and even laughed at when we try to be different and express those differences. Being a woman of color in America is no better. We are stereotyped. We are victims of prejudice.

I am tired of being considered under statistics, about how likely I am to not graduate college or end up successful. I'm tired of the sideways comments and the double takes. I'm tired of being pretty "for a Black girl." No more of the "Wow, she's not like other 'Black girls.'" What exactly is a Black girl? We are not "loud". Nor are we "sassy." We are not ONLY "independent," or "strong." We are Melanin Queens. Emphasis on the Q word.

When I say queen, I do not mean a female sovereign or a "trap" queen. No, honey... I mean bold, beautiful, intelligent, hard-working, and unafraid. Our Melanin Sistas are all of these adjectives. Now, when I do say that Black women are merely just evidence that God is a show off, I also consider the women that may not check the black box on a questionnaire. All women are amazing, whether they be Black, White, Latina, Asian, poor, rich, educated or not. All women are gifts from the good Lord himself. But given as this article is being written for a newspaper produced to shine a light on the Black community, and March is Women's Month, this article IS for my Melanin Sistas.

I'm sure many people do not know who Alexa Irene Canady is, or Patricia Bath. Might I mention that Dr. Alexa Canady was the first African-American woman to become a neurosurgeon in the United States. Or that Dr. Patricia Bath invented the device that removes cataracts from the eye.

Success comes in many forms. Musical success, where we may find Alicia Keys, whose song Fallin' won her five Grammy



Awards in 2002. Physical success, where Vonetta Flowers became the first Black woman to win gold at the Winter Olympics. Business and Career success, where Cathy Hughes founded Radio One in 1980. Of course, there are many women out there that do and did amazing things for others and themselves. Daisy Bates, the woman behind the Little Rock Nine, or Harriet Tubman and The Underground Railroad. These amazing women of history helped integrate and free communities, and broke colorism and bias stereotypes.

But, you don't have to be famous or rich to help others in your community. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Peggie Troutt is neither of these.

Mrs. Troutt came from a poor family, with a hard working mother and 8 younger siblings. Her mother worked cleaning houses, while Troutt watched and took care of her siblings. As she got older, Troutt went with her mother on the weekends and after school to work, while her next sister took care of the little ones.

After graduation from high school at age 17, Troutt began working for the District of Columbia Civil Service Commission to continue helping her mother with the family income. Troutt planned to attend college

later. At age 22, she married Air Force Sergeant James Troutt (with whom she's been married to for 46 years). Shortly after their marriage, they moved to Alabama, and then to the Philippines five years later, where she attended college in between children. At the end of their tour in the Philippines, the Troutt's moved to Spokane, Washington where they currently reside.

Mrs. Troutt became very active in community service and joined organizations that expressed a deep love for God and concern for all people. After she joined Calvary Baptist Church, Troutt became actively involved in being a servant of God. This is when she discovered her passion for those less fortunate.

Growing up poor gave her a deeper appreciation for those on the streets. Troutt remembers, "It made me take a closer look at all the people standing on the corner... hungry, being discriminated against because of who they were and how they looked. They didn't have what other people had. They're poor!" Troutt strongly believes that discrimination isn't fair. "You don't know why they are the way they are."

Through her church, Troutt began her adventures to help the less fortunate by start-

ing a Soup Kitchen in 2009 with Calvary's approval and support. Her "Honored Guests" get to come to her kitchen and be "treated with dignity." Everyone is welcome to eat, and everybody is welcome to volunteer. The kitchen runs from 11a.m. to 1p.m. on Saturdays, where Betty Dumas helps Troutt by making "the most outstanding, most delicious soups."

Troutt says "It was finally time to retire, but I didn't know how to be retired". She had so much to do, so many people to help. After 36 years, Mrs. Troutt retired in December 2005 from the government and started working for the Spokane Public Schools district in January 2006. She has a miraculous love of learning, and if given the opportunity, she would've been a teacher. Even though it didn't happen that way, when asked if she is okay that she didn't get to be a famous celebrity or movie star, Troutt responded with "Yes, because I am happy with my life. I look at a lot of those people who did rise to stardom, and a lot of them are not happy. Being wealthy doesn't always make you happy." Troutt is blessed to have a husband who takes good care of her, and she believes it's important to take care of each other. She is very happy, and very content with her life. She lives a full life with her three adult children, 11 grandchildren and good friends.

Mrs. Peggie Troutt has blessed my life since I first met her in 2014. She treated me with the utmost respect, and provided a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on. When I came back to On Track Academy three years later, I made sure I paid Mrs. Troutt a visit. I was excited that she had remembered exactly who I was. She takes great pride in her mission and loves the world and everyone in it.

As a woman of color, Mrs. Troutt makes me take great pride in my race, and she is a prime example of a woman who made the best out of a hard situation.

Georgetown Memory Project

Patricia Bayonne-Johnson and the Butler Slave Research team traced Spokane resident Patricia Bayonne-Johnson's maternal ancestors who were enslaved by the Jesuits of Georgetown University. They presented their research and the process behind their discover at the Shadle Library on February 6, as a part of the Spokane Library Black History Month Programs.

Bayonne-Johnson and the other members of the Butler research team are members of the Eastern Washington Genealogical Society. For more information about the society visit: <https://ewgsi.org>. For more information about the Georgetown Memory Project visit: <http://www.georgetownmemoryproject.org>.



Pierce County’s Judge Whitener To Keynote 2018 Black Women Rise Conference

Judge Helen Whitener has been a member of the Pierce County Superior Court Bench since her appointment by Governor Jay Inslee on Jan. 13, 2015. Prior to her position with the Superior Court, Judge Whitener was an Industrial Insurance Appeals Judge in Washington State for two 2 years and a Managing Partner at Whitener Rainey Writt PS for eight years.

Judge Whitener was previously an attorney with Pierce County’s Department of Assigned Counsel, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney with Pierce County and Island County, and an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney with the City of Olympia. Judge Whitener is a member of the Washington State Minority and Justice Committee and is also Co-Chair for the Superior Court Judges Association, Equality and Fairness Committee. She is a member of the International Association of Women Judges, the International Association of LGBT Judges and the National Association of Women Judges. Judge Whitener is a graduate of Baruch College, City University in New York with a B.B.A. and holds a Juris Doctor from Seattle University School of Law.

Can you tell me a little about your background?

I was born in Trinidad and Tobago. So I’m an immigrant. I came to the U.S. at 16 for my undergraduate degree in New York. Both of my parents were educators. My father (deceased) was a principal. My mother is a retired school teacher. Everyone in my family is in Trinidad except for my youngest brother. He is an engineer in New Jersey.

What made you decide to stay in the United States as opposed to going back?

Well my background was international marketing and trade and after graduating I worked in New York for a little bit in the field and then I went to Alaska. From Alaska I moved to Washington state. I actually was on my way back to Trinidad and a friend said you should check out Seattle Washington. I decided, ok I will try Washington state and the rest is history. I ended up going to law school.

I was working for an accounting firm in Bellevue and I did an assignment for one of the partners in the accounting firm. He happened to be a CPA and a lawyer, and he thought I had good reasoning skills, so he said, you should consider law school. I said, that’s funny because my mother wanted me to be a lawyer. I wanted to be a teacher. I applied, got admitted and went to Seattle University.

What is it about the law that you like? What is it about the law that you think would be attractive particularly to people of color?

I think it’s the third branch of government that most of us, people of color, tend not to think about, and we should, because you can pass as many laws as you like, but the law is open to interpretation and interpretation comes from your experiences. We bring different experiences to the bench and if people of color are not represented there but we’re represented in the criminal justice system disproportionately, represented in other aspects of society disproportionately, yet when it comes to the law, we’re not represented there, that’s an issue.

We call it the gavel gap, and that’s what I thought about when I was asked last year to put on the Color of Justice

Program for the National Association of Women Judges. It’s a program for minority children. But I changed that. I made it a program for marginalized girls, because of all of the things that were happening to females last year, I thought we needed to be empowered and inspired. Especially that subset. Let them see that the judiciary is not only something they can aspire to, but it’s really possible.

It actually went quite well and we’re going to be in three locations throughout the state this year. But it didn’t come easily. I got some backlash from a white supremacist group that placed me on their website using the N-word. I apparently struck a nerve, so I thought, I must be doing something right.

What’s been the best part of being a judge and the most challenging part of being a judge.

I think the best part is being able to reach out to the underserved communities, our communities, because the system impacts us in such a very harsh and real way. Pierce County is the second largest county in the state, yet I’m the only Black female on any bench here, and you know in this county I’m also the first immigrant born judge in this county, and I’m the first openly gay Black female judge in the entire state. So all of the different subsets of me are not represented. And yet those subsets come before the court quite often. So the best part is reaching out into the community and letting them see that it’s possible. Trying to inspire and empower them to participate, because when you have jury duty and you don’t show up you really have no reason to be complaining. I’m trying to change the perceptions we have of the legal system in regards to the judiciary.

The most challenging part of it is overcoming the stereotypes and the microaggressions that I face daily. You know people have this perception of what a judge looks like or what a judge does and I don’t fit into any of those categories. So, I guess I wanted to be a teacher, well I’m teaching. I’m using me to make a point.

Can you give an example of a microaggression?

I was putting on the color justice program and I had gone to speak to about 400 women the day before. I was coming back into the court building. It was just after closing and I used my ID badge to get in. The only reason I could be in the building, my wife and I, was because I had the code. You have a have the code to get in. But there was a security guard that stopped me. We were stopped because we didn’t look like we fit in and he wanted us to go through processing. I said, I’m not doing that. Get your supervisor down here. When a supervisor came down, the supervisor immediately recognized me and said, aren’t you a judge. I said yes, my picture is on the wall right behind you. My courtroom is right around the corner.

The security guard looked at me and he said, oh I didn’t know that, you should have told me. I said no, it should not have mattered. The way you treat me just because you know I’m a judge should not be any different than the way you treat me not knowing I’m a judge. I had a right to be here. So that’s a very blatant thing, but it’s a day to day



thing for me, which some of my colleagues never have to face. I come out on the bench and litigants, or even individuals in the courtroom, question whether or not I’m the judge or why am I there.

But that’s why I have to be visible. It comes with the job. It’s the responsibility I’ve taken on. I have to be vocal about some of the things that need to be changed in the system, so that everyone has a fair playing field and I have to be vigilant about it.

For folks like me who are struggling make the criminal justice system more fair and equitable from the outside, do you have any thoughts on what you see could be opportunities that could be helpful in terms of impacting the system?

One of the biggest things I think is getting folks registered to vote. It is a right that our ancestors fought hard for that many of us in that community are no longer participating in and we’re becoming more disenfranchised. That’s why I say, you can’t really complain about it if you don’t participate in it because that’s our voice as elected officials. You can vote us in or vote us out if we’re not doing what you need to have done. We get disenfranchised by the disproportionate number of us that come through the criminal justice system, that get carted off to prison. But what a number of us don’t realize is you can get your voting rights back. It’s not indefinite because it’s a felony. So educating folks and letting them know you need to get involved. You cannot be complaining from the sidelines. Those days are gone.

Black Women Rise Conference

Judge Whitener has been asked to be the keynote speaker at the 2018 Black Women Rise Conference in West Palm Beach, Florida. The Black Women Rise Conference, which takes place March 16-17, 2018, is one of many projects coordinated by a coalition of female activists, academics, dreamers, and doers who are committed to the empowerment of women/girls, the elimination of racism, and the building of sustainable networks and coalitions.



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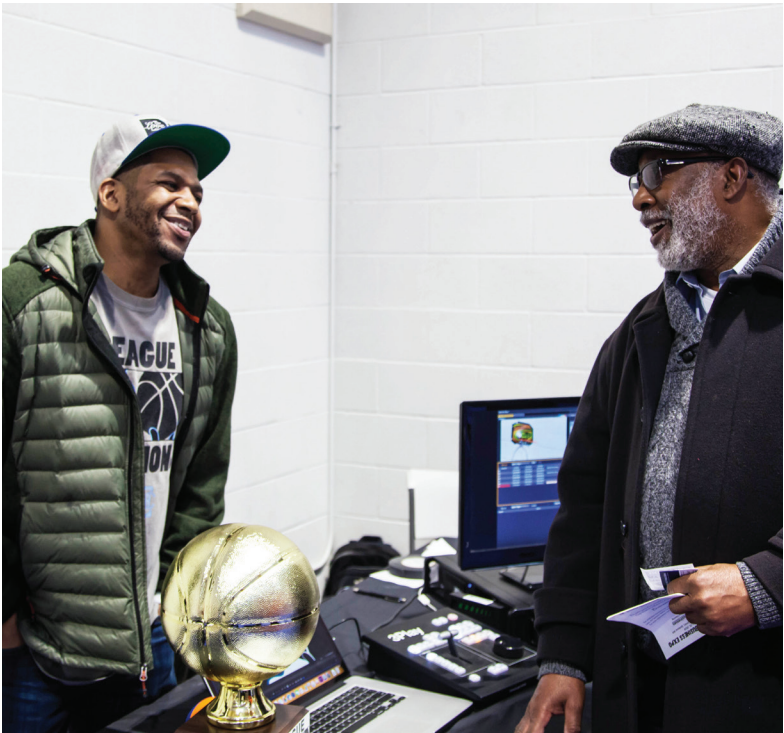
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call 509-924-6504 if you have additional questions.

Health Notes

By Faith Washington, BSN, RN



Beware! This Season’s Flu Virus is a Beast!

COLD

A cold is an upper respiratory infection that can be caused by many different viruses.

A cold is contagious during the first 3 days of illness, and usually lasts about a week.

A cold usually comes on more “gradually”. You may have a low-grade fever but not high fevers. You may have a sore throat and runny nose.

A cold can also cause cough but does not have shortness of breath.

FLU

The flu is a highly contagious viral infection that affects the lungs and sinuses.

You can be contagious with the flu for 1 day prior to and 5 days after becoming ill.

The flu usually comes on “suddenly,” with fevers, body aches, sore throat, coughs, and then other symptoms, such as extreme exhaustion and shortness of breath.

You can feel dehydrated, meaning you may be dizzy and you may be a little bit confused.

This year is a reminder of how unpredictable and serious the flu can be. Every flu season is different based on many factors including the circulating viruses and how well the flu shot protects against those circulating viruses.

Effectiveness of current flu vaccine?

At the time of submitting this article, the 3rd week of February, Flu Vaccine effectiveness estimates released last week in Olympia WA: Preliminary data gauges the 2017-2018 flu vaccine to be 36% overall effective at preventing flu illness.

Is some protection better than no protection?

It’s been noted that the vaccine may also reduce the severity of symptoms if you catch the flu despite getting vaccinated. The low protection level is probably why we are seeing unusually high flu hospitalizations rates, especially among people ages of 50-64 this year, and no signs of hospitalizations leveling off.

Who is the most vulnerable?

Flu usually kills the elderly by leading to pneumonia and other complications of the flu. An estimated 34 million Americans got sick with the flu this season. In addition, 10 more flu related deaths were reported in children as of the week ending February 3, bringing the total number of children who have died of flu-related causes to 63 for the season, which began in October.

How does this Flu season compare with others?

The acting director of the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. Anne Schuchat, stated that the levels of illness, based on

outpatient visits and visits to emergency rooms, are “now as high as we observed at the peak of the 2009 H1N1 pandemic season.” Although the current rates do not mean we’re having a pandemic, this is “a signal of how very intense this season has been,” according to Dr. Schuchat.

If I’ve been vaccinated, should I still be worried?

Because of the low overall effectiveness of this year’s flu vaccine, those of us that have been vaccinated should not consider ourselves invincible against the Flu Virus. We must still be cautious, wise and watchful. That means getting early medical care, antiviral, Tamiflu, (oseltamivir phosphate) treatment for those that are at high risk of Flu complications, for example the very young, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems (i.e. Cancer patients, AIDS patients, organ transplant patients). Remember, Tamiflu does NOT prevent the Flu, it only shortens the duration of symptoms once you’ve been diagnosed.

What if I have egg allergies?

Yes it’s true, the Flu Vaccine is grown in eggs, so therefore some say if you’re allergic to eggs stay away from the vaccine. Talk to your Health Care Provider first.

All though the Flu Vaccine provided for us this year, has less protection than expected, it is still your best defense against the Influenza Virus. It may be the month of March, but we are still in Flu Season Folks! Flu season can continue into May. Consider getting another Flu Shot (a booster shot) if you are able. Ask your Health Care Provider.

Tips for Preventing Colds and Flu

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze, cough or blow our nose. Throw away used tissues, then wash or sanitize your hands.
- If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow – not into your hands.
- Regularly clean surfaces in your home that are touched often like light switches, doorknobs, faucets and appliance handles.
- Don’t share food utensils, beverages, towels, lipstick, toys, cigarettes, or anything else that might be contaminates with germs.
- If you are eating at a Buffet Restaurant, use a clean napkin or clean tissue to handle the serving utensils to dish up your food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can spread by touching them.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay at home if you have a fever of 100° For more or a severe cough with a fever, or a sore throat with a fever, or symptoms of Strep Throat. Stay home if you have Diarrhea or Vomiting.
- Wear a mask in a medical office, if asked. Follow your Health Care Providers instructions.

AND DON’T TOUCH ANYTHING WITH YOUR BARE HANDS IN PUBLIC PLACES.

Use your shirt/coat sleeve, your scarf, your handkerchief, a clean paper towel or clean tissue. Use one of your knuckles instead of your finger to push the elevator button..... Never your bare hands

Resources: WA State Dept of Health, Spokane Regional Health District, Health Statnews, CNN, CDC, The Advisory Board Company

Sistah’s Taking Care of Ourselves

Inland Imaging and the Spokane Chapter of the Links, Inc. Annual Mammogram Party A Success!



The American Cancer Society has reported that breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States. African American women have the highest death rate from breast cancer of all racial and ethnic groups (ACS, 2016). These rates likely reflect a combination of factors, including timely access to screening, diagnostic and treatment services. The Spokane Regional Health District’s Breast, Cervical and Colon Health Program (BCCHP) is a wonderful resource and can assist individuals who are eligible to pay for medical services such as; screening, diagnostics, and treatment. For more information or to see if you are eligible you can visit <https://srhd.org/programs-and-services/breast-cervical-colon-health-program-bcchp> or call (509)324-1553. For information on how you can participate in the next Mammogram Party contact Faith Washington at 509-363-7833 or e-mail fwashington@inland-imaging.com.

Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears



Soul Food at the Cinema

The Black Panther movie! Yes, yes, yes! Good for the soul on so many levels. This movie made February the second best Black History month ever for me. (The first being February 2009, after Barack Obama was sworn in as President of the United States.)

Spoiler Alert! If you haven’t seen the movie you might want to save reading this column until after you do. Black Panther is the rarest of mainstream Hollywood films: a record smashing, block buster movie about Black people, starring Black people, written and directed by Black people. It’s a film of hope, pride, wisdom and triumph over adversity. Its themes are mythic, its message universal, and for me it was a spiritual experience.

The movie is drawn from the Marvel comic book Black Panther. The Black Panther was the first superhero of African descent in mainstream American comics, first appearing in 1966. Black Panther is one of the pantheon of Marvel superheroes that include Iron Man, The Hulk, Thor and Captain America.

The backstory of the comic book and movie is that centuries ago, a meteorite containing the alien metal vibranium fell to the earth in Africa. Five African tribes warred over possession of the meteorite and the land onto which it fell. A warrior from one of the tribes ate a glowing heart-shaped herb, that was affected by the properties of the metal. After eating the herb, the warrior gained superhuman abilities. He became the first Black Panther and united the tribes to form the fictional nation of Wakanda, though one tribe chose not to follow the Black Panther’s rule. Over time, the Wakandans used the vibranium to develop highly-advanced technologies and chose to isolate themselves from the rest of the world by posing as a Third World country.

The majority of the movie takes place in present time as Prince T’Challa becomes King of Wakanda (aka Black Panther), after his Father’s death. The tension comes when T’Challa discovers that the secret of Wakanda has been leaked, and some of its vibranium has fallen into the hands of outsiders who want to use it for evil purposes. The reason the secret was discovered forms the deep subtext of the movie.

Black Panther is above all great storytelling. Storytelling has been integral to human identity, development and evolution throughout history. These stories are master narratives that help us make sense of our lives. Traditionally stories provided us with a sense of belonging to our

tribes, our families, our communities, our world, and even established our identities in the Cosmos. Divine wisdom and connection to Spirit was always integral in our stories. Through these master narratives the wisdom of the elders was passed to new generations. Stories continue to give meaning to our experiences and can serve as guiding forces that determine communal and individual morality. Black Panther is a master narrative par excellence.

My overwhelming first response to this movie was pure pride — Black woman pride! The fictitious African country of Wakanda has within it an awe-inspiring city, eons more technologically advanced than any other metropolis on the planet, and the genius mind behind the cutting-edge technology is a feisty young Black woman, named Shuri, who is also T’Challa’s sister. The King of Wakanda (aka Black Panther) is protected by an elite guard of boldly bald, proud and fierce Black women who fight with Amazonian strength. I could barely sit still during the fight scenes. Clearly the time to mess with these women is never! In hindsight, I realized I wasn’t just watching the movie, I’d projected myself into those scenes. I was feeling it! (The time to mess with me is never!) The King’s/Black Panther’s love interest is a brilliant, courageous, independent woman dedicated to secretly helping oppressed African women outside Wakanda. As I said, I was proud!

When I think of my deep connections with tradition and the past, it does not lead me to Africa. It leads me to my grandparents, great grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins, decades past in the rural South where I had my beginnings on a small farm in northeastern North Carolina. I think of myself as a child of that time and place, and of those people.

I heard stories from the elders, but these stories — as interesting as they were — were decades old, not centuries or millennia. African blood runs through my veins, but so does Native American and Irish. The African in me began to be watered down three hundred years ago, with the rape of one of my distant slave grandmothers by her master. I am not African, and Africa has never beacons. And yet as a Black American woman watching this film, I felt a deep sense of hidden identity and pride rising from within me; a sense of belonging to something much older, deeper, and vaster; as vast as the cosmos from which fell the meteor that brought life in abundance to Wakanda.

Master narratives are frequently cautionary tales, no less so Black Panther. Heroes and heroines are flawed human beings. Villains are not always beyond redemption. Whenever possible, mercy should always be shown. In Black

Panther the wisdom of the ancestors is evident, but the mistakes of the ancestors had grave consequences for their children as well. In Black Panther we are shown that tradition must to be honored, but when the time comes, it must also be transcended.

Good stories are instructive, illuminating and enlightening, not prescriptive. Jesus told stories in the form of parables to impart deeply divine truths, using common language, and illustrating with familiar things, so that people could better understand the meaning (bread, salt, seeds, sheep). In the Islamic tradition, the Mullah Nasruddin told stories of deep meaning and wisdom but made them humorous. There are also many wisdom stories from the Buddha. It is striking how universal the wisdom teachings in these stories are across faith traditions.

Often the more advanced a civilization becomes, the more protective, nationalistic and even isolated it becomes. The more we think we have to protect, the less empathetic toward others we are. It was so for the fictional Wakanda. Today in America, our nationalism and self-protection have resulted in more overt acts of hate, racism, xenophobia, and gender identity discrimination than America has seen in decades. Our differences carry more weight than our commonalities. Almost gone are the grand master narratives, the stories that guide us toward justice, peace and the common good. We tell less stories and the ones we do tell have little meaning beyond our own personal pursuits — how to make ourselves more successful, to feel better, to live longer. The ancestors play no part in our stories, and the Spirit is shunned.

More than ever, we need a return to the master narrative: the universal story. We need stories with deep meaning; stories that connect us to each other and help us sustain healthy relationships—stories that connect us to the earth and strengthen our resolve to save it. We need stories that guide us through life’s transitions; stories that are inspiring and redemptive; stories that are bigger than we are! We need stories that give us hope and move us to action. We need stories that remind us of our place in the universe. We need stories that help us evolve in wisdom and not just knowledge.

Black Panther nourished my soul, and I am so grateful!
Namaste

Rev. Beverly Spears is an ordained American Baptist minister, teacher and preacher of Evolutionary Christianity who currently lives in Northern California.

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Heads Up (Spokane)

By Kiantha Duncan

Does HIPPA Apply in Cocoa’s Case?

I’m wondering does the HIPPA Law apply in this case. Not sure if I am required to protect her privacy or identity and since I am not sure, I will seek forgiveness instead of permission. There was something different about her. When I looked in her eyes they seemed glassy and sometimes even appeared as if she had been crying. It seemed as if she was withdrawn and despondent.

Although Cocoa was able to maintain most of her daily habits such as grooming herself, eating twice daily, there was something in her eyes. She was often caught staring out of the window as if she was waiting for someone, something to save her. For me it was difficult to pin point what the problem was because I would become so furious with her when she did the things and behaved in ways I had deemed as “bad” or “disobedient”.

I have to be honest, she irritated me. Cocoa didn’t just get on my nerves, there were times that I’d wished we could just send her away. My patience grew thin. At times, I even ignored her because I just didn’t have the mental capacity to deal with her shit.

I didn’t care that she was young, after all it’s not like she was a toddler, she was approaching middle age. She was too old to be acting out and being destructive. I didn’t trust Cocoa. I never knew what she would do next. We would leave her home (as we had done many times before) and would always find ourselves in the middle of our outing questioning each other as to what she might be home doing. Then suddenly things took a turn for the worst. She started self-harming. Cocoa would pick at her skin until you could see down to the white meat. Over and over again, tearing at the already tender area. At times she would pick at it until it bled. Same place, same tender spot.

Something was wrong, really wrong. After moving past anger, I was frustrated but my frustration quickly was replaced with a need to know. I could tell, she was sick. Really sick, the kind of sick where behavior could no longer be ignored. It was time to see a doctor. We had



to find out what was going on with her. This could not wait any longer. We had to see someone fast. It didn’t matter that she didn’t have medical insurance or that there would likely be a hefty bill from her medical care. She was sick and something needed to be done. The self-harming had gotten so bad it had to be addressed. I asked Cocoa over and over again, why was she hurting herself. She had no answer yet she could not stop.

Fast forward to the day of Cocoa’s appointment. After sharing with the doctor Cocoa’s recent behavior at home -the withdrawal, her not wanting to interact with us, the sad faces and watery eyes, once the doctor had added up the symptoms and examined where Cocoa has repeatedly self-harmed, the doctor suggested that Cocoa be prescribed a low dosage of Prozac to address what he diagnosed as her anxiety and obsessive compulsive behavior. Suddenly there was some relief, we at least knew what was wrong. There was a diagnosis and an explanation.

The doctor explained that these disorders are not un-common and that Cocoa would need to be medicated the rest of her life. Then it hit me, she was really sick.

Cocoa suffered from a form of mental illness and while I had allowed myself to get angry with her on so many instances, she now needed me. She needed us to understand her illness and care for her with more compassion and most of all forgiveness. What we learned was that her harming herself was just a symptom, an outward expression of her illness.

Fast forward three months and Cocoa is doing much better. She is still withdrawn at times and is easily agitated when we have company but she is no longer harming herself. We are no longer getting upset with the behaviors that she exhibits because we understand that she suffers from mental illness.

Many people around us suffer from mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, schizophrenia and other mental disorders like Bi-polar Syndrome. It is so important that we find a way to support those who are struggling with both physical and/or mental illness. Of course it’s hard when you are the one always having to be understanding or clean up the mess that the person who is sick has made. Trust me, I understand, no one likes to clean up someone else’s shit but when you love someone who needs you, you find a way to show them compassion and empathy in spite of their mental illness and how it shows up.

We have to take it day by day, celebrate the good days and small accomplishments as we continue to love and support them daily. No one in their “right mind” wants to harm themselves or others.

We all have friends and family who suffer from mental illness. Mental illness affects 10 out of 10 black families. Although it is still the most taboo subject discussed. Some of us have even hit the “Jackpot” and have multiple people in our friends and family circles who suffer from mental illness. If I can find it in my heart to still love and care for Cocoa, surely we can all do the same for those we know who need our support.

Quick question... Does the HIPPA privacy law apply in Cocoa’s case? Does HIPPA cover 12lb. Min-Pin pups?

Kiantha Duncan is a Principal Development Strategist with The Duncan Brown Group. She can be reached at 206-225-4736.

THOUGHTS FROM A GRANDMOTHER

Stay Connected!

By Evelyn Anderton

The recent school shooting in Florida on February 14th, that killed seventeen people, really shook the average person to their core. My heart was entirely broken as I heard family after family share their grief. No parent should ever have to worry about their child being killed at school by a gunman.

How to solve this problem about guns in the United States is as close as the East is from West. Wishing “never again” is a hard sell and not a reality in this climate of hiding behind the 2nd Amendment. Unfortunately, enormous amounts of guns are in homes and easy access to purchase weapons will keep the cycle of gun violence in present our society.

Even though an imminent solution about guns laws may not be readily available, we can address how we feel about our loved ones who are dying in the streets and in the schools due to gun violence.

Now, more than ever is the time to talk about how to stay connected as a family. We must never take one second, minute, hour, or day for granted. Tomorrow is not promised to anyone and no one knows the hour nor the date of their final moment.



Starting today, I implore everyone to set a daily routine for your family and friends. Take the time to tell your loved ones how much you love them as often as possible, and wish your friends, extended family and strangers a blessed day. For those of you who already have a routine keep up the good work and stay connected.

If you are married, don’t let the sun go down with anger in your hearts, if you go to bed angry, you wake up angry, and your sleep can be restless. If you have a significant other keep your relationship real and share your thoughts. No one can read your mind.

If you have children, don’t just say you love them, show them how much you love them daily. Remember you can’t buy love. If your kids are grown and living with you or have a place of their own, don’t forget them. Just because they are grown, they still need your love and support.

If you are grandparent, keep in touch with your grand-kids. Sometimes they can share with you things they can’t share with their parents. On many occasions grandparents are that rock that will make sure the family stays connected.

To all the immediate family, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, cousins and extended families, always take the time to stay in touch with each other. There is nothing like family. If you have not talked to any of your family lately, give them a call, your prayers are always welcome. Keeping a strong family support system will help the family stay connected.

Yes, we all agree something needs to be done with our gun laws, but most of all keeping our family safe, strong and connected will always be the utmost of importance.

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The Fuzz: SPD Is Hiring

Informational Workshops in March

The Spokane Police Department (SPD) is hiring and will be holding four workshops for anyone interested in a career as a police officer.

“It is important that we have an agency that is as diverse as the community we serve,” says Police Chief Craig Meidl. “We hope these workshops will provide another avenue for people to connect with members of our department, ask questions, learn more about the hiring process, and sign up for a ride-along.”

The upcoming workshops will be held at:

- **Spokane Public Library (Hill-yard)** at 4005 N. Cook St. on **Tuesday, March 6 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.**
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center (formerly East Central Community Center)** at 500 S. Stone St. on **Thursday, March 8 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.**

Recruiting efforts were increased in 2017 with a concerted effort to improve diversity of individuals taking the Public Safety Test to become police officers.



“It is important that we have an agency that is as diverse as the community we serve.”
-Police Chief Craig Meidl.

Efforts included several workshops held throughout the city at different community centers at varying hours to present information to interested applicants in regards to the process of becoming a police officer. The department remains focused on developing and improving re-

lationships with local universities and colleges along with expanding recruitment efforts to other majors outside of the standard Criminal Justice colleges including athletic teams.

“As a result of last year’s efforts, more diverse individuals did take the Public Safety Test, but it is definitely not as many as we would like to see,” adds Meidl. “The goal of diversifying the department will take some time, but we have definitely embarked upon the path to do so and are committed to making this a reality.”

For more information about becoming a Spokane Police Officer and the Public Safety Testing, Inc. exam visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/spokanecity/jobs/1264025/police-officer>.

The Spokane Police Department is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism to serve its community and help make Spokane the safest city of its size. SPD is always looking for the best and brightest who are willing to answer the call to serve to join this amazing team.

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DOWN SIDE
TO QUITTING”



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Black Lives Matter

By Bethany Montgomery

Just know
I am a visionary
I am a revolutionary
which means that pretty soon I will be in the
obituary
but I will not let my dream die
my vision for the future will become alive;
black, white, and all in between
with their fist’s held high
all in recognition of black pride

black lives matter
and yes we do understand that all lives matter too
but obviously there are still too many people
confused
because black men, women, and children are being
killed in the streets
murdered in cold blood by the crooked police
so you see too many do not understand what this
thing black lives matter means
because obviously society does not value
black lives
we must use #BlackLivesMatter just to drill the
concept in their minds
too many forget that black lives are not something
that can just be thrown away
there is no justice
murderers walk free instead of being locked away

black lives matter
but don’t get it messed up
no one deserves to be murdered in cold blood
Black, White, Asian, Mexican, Indian
whatever the color of your skin
at the end of the day we’re all human
and we all deserve the preservation of life
but don’t get it twisted
black people should not be afraid to drive
because if they get pulled over by a cop
they might get shot and die

black lives matter
and you could say that I am biased because I am
one of those black lives
but am I wrong for caring about my own kind
for caring about my own kin
for caring about people with my same skin
if we don’t support our own then who will
make America great again
please America was founded on degradation and sin

black lives matter
and that’s a concrete fact

so if any of you want to belittle this movement
then you can go back
you can go back to wherever it is
that you came from
because as I recall
this isn’t your native land either
we didn’t ask to come here we were forced
but guess what we are not leaving
because our ancestors literally put their blood,
sweat, and tears into this soil
this is our home now and it is our duty to
make them proud
we must support our own
because no one else will

black lives matter
it’s either kill or be killed

and I don’t condone violence
there are plenty of other ways
so please comprehend the metaphors
I am attempting to convey
survival of the fittest
social Darwinism
do I even need to explain
if we do not evolve to the environment
then we will decay
because year after year
they are killing us at a higher rate

but you want to know something even worse
we kill our own people even faster
which makes it even sadder
when we say black lives matter
so do black lives actually matter
as a matter of fact they do
but until we lead by example
they will keep killing us just as examples
to prove that this country never really changed
that black people still remain slaves

black lives matter
and the solution is not in evolution
throughout history the only way to
bring forth change is
through revolution
and as I stated previously
I AM A REVOLUTIONARY
so the revolution has begun
and I hope you all will join me

black lives matter
Power 2 the Poetry

23 @ War

By Lynn’Marie White

(I’m 23 and I shouldn’t have to feel
like this)

“Ain’t no daddy’s where I’m from it’s
just mad mother’s and Eyes that can’t
seem to look past color.
why am i disrespected by someone i
should call brother? and why girls feel
unpretty and constantly hate
each other?
Bad air in my lungs man i can’t breath
my eyes burning from all the dirt in the
debris it’s third degree
emotionless on the scene it’s like a
disease the way ya’ll killing me.”

I’m 23 @ War

Born and raised in Detroit City where,
when shots are popping off the end
results are never pretty,
another body we’ve got to bury,
another friend man this shit is scary.

I’m 23 @ War

Working three Jobs just to
make a living,
all my money to bills i’m giving.
Going to school full time I never sleep
with empty pockets I never Eat.
Got a family that I never see.

I’m 23 @ War

Females hate me
because I never speak,
to myself yeah my thoughts I keep,
so go ahead keep judging me.
A real friend you’ll never be, for my
struggle you’ll never understand ya see

I’m 23 @ War

Honestly I will always remember 2017
as the year that finally broke me,
but yet can something that was never
whole to even begin with
really be broken?
hoping my words no longer
go unspoken.
for my broken heart has
become just another token.

I’m 23 @ War

All my life I thought I was really living
and it never occurred to me
that i was just a black bird
with a broken wing ya see
my identity centers around my trauma

I’ve experienced throughout my life
and my fear of healin
all of my suffering I’ve been concealin

I’m 23 @ War

I was raised by a single mother of 7,
so nothing in my life ever came easy
I remember bouncing around from
house to house even a
few homeless shelters,
but my mother was always my hero
because no matter what
she did everything she was capable of
to keep us together

I’m 23 @ War

I was five the first time i came face to
face with death; I had been hit by a
drunk driver on a Sunday after church.
13 surgeries 2 scares, and learning
how to walk all over again and a case i
guess i wasn’t worth a win
things became more real I’ve got an
even deeper scar that only i can feel.

I’m 23 @ War

I was 6 the year my grandmother died
and i learned what it meant to lose
someone you loved;
Not even a year later as i slept
next to my grandfather
i got to experience as cancer took away
his last breath
and that a memory I’ve always kept.

I’m 23 @ War

I was 9 the first time i got pulled into
the counselors office at school to be
told that my best friend
i would never be able to see again
or even hold;
her and her family were in a
better place now
only to learn in a few days
on the news
that they were all murdered

I’m 23 @ War

I was 12 as i walk home from school
one day just to find my family with
tears streaming down their faces
just to hear that my 17 year old brother
had been taken away
9 bullets, and another unsolved case.

How much more need i say
I’m 23 and i’m still @ War

Report: Black Women in the U.S. 2017: Moving Our Agenda Forward in a Post-Obama Era (Continued From Page 5)

Black Women Excel in Higher Education, but Still Have Room to Grow in STEM (Continued)

Black women continue to lag behind when it comes to those enrolled in a major reflective of the STEM Fields (10.6% Black women vs. 19.3% Black men respectively).

Black Women Are Building Businesses and Breaking into Tech Entrepreneurship

Black women remain the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs. As of 2016, there were an estimated 1.9 million Black women-owned firms, employing 376,500 workers and generating \$51.4 billion in revenues.

Between 2007 and 2016, the number of Black woman-owned firms increased by 112%, more than doubling in number and far out showing the overall 45% increase among all women-owned firms.

Although for years, Black women have led the nation in business start-ups, breaking into the Tech space has typically been significantly more difficult, as the majority of tech startups led by Black women receive virtually no venture capital funding. The average amount of venture capital funds raised by Black women founders is just \$36,000. That compared to \$1.3 million in venture capital funding raised by White men for failed business ventures.

Currently, less than 20 Black women-led tech startups have raised more than \$1million of the \$28.3 billion in tech investment funds.

Despite the challenges, some Black women tech founders have broken through by raising more than \$1 million dollars to grow their companies including people like Camille Hearst, Co-Founder and CEO of Kit, who raised \$2.5 million for her social recommendation platform; Kelle James, Founder and CEO of Mercaris, who raised \$3.4 million for her organic and certified agricultural commodities exchange; and Jessica Matthews, Founder and CEO of Unchartered Play, who raised \$7 million for her renewable energy start-up.

The Black Women’s Roundtable (BWR) is the women and girls empowerment arm of The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (The National Coalition/NCBCP). The BWR promotes health and wellness, economic security & sustainability, education and global empowerment as key elements of success. BWR established its Intergenerational National Policy Network in 2008 which is comprised of a diverse group of Black women civic leaders representing international, national, regional, and state-based organizations and institutions.

For more information about the Black Women’s Roundtable and the The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, visit: <https://www.ncbcp.org>. To read the full report online or to download a pdf copy visit: <https://www.ncbcp.org/BWR2017Report4thEdition.BlackWomennintheU.S.040617final.pdf>.

OUR VOICES

4 Percent Love Guns More Than Life!

By Dr. E. Faye Williams, Esq.

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - We woke up the morning after the Douglas High School tragedy hearing that 95 percent of the American people support stronger background checks before one can buy guns. That sounds like a no brainer because only 4 percent of the people oppose these checks. That leads one to believe that most of the Senators and Representatives represent somebody other than the 95% who elected them!

As the day went by, Senator Marco Rubio said, “We need to wait for all the facts to come in.” Seventeen innocent people have just been murdered by a 19-year-old White male terrorist with a gun that should’ve been regulated. My best friend, the late Dick Gregory who was one of the smartest, most perceptive men I’ve ever known, said long ago, “This thing (meaning the destruction of our nation) may be too far gone to turn around.” These insane gun lovers seem to think they need all kinds of military style weapons to shoot rabbits and other poor little animals. I don’t get it. They yell Second Amendment rights—no matter what the cost is. They’re the same ones who call themselves right to lifers. They’re willing to cause the greatest risk to our children’s lives in order to own any gun, while innocent people continue to be mowed down all too frequently.

Imagine how many parents got up the morning after the Florida school massacre and how they felt sending their babies to school—to a place where no children are safe these days. I wonder how parents explained why their children had to go to such a scary place. Did they say, “You have to go because 4%’s of the people have more



rights than you have, so we can’t keep guns out of your school?”

Women have marched and resisted since they realized what a mistake they made in voting for #45. Isn’t it time we take unified action for our children?

Every time we hear of a tragedy like the one in Parkland, we get all riled up for a few days, and except for the parents who are directly affected, we move on to something else without resolving the last crisis. I see

the mothers of Jordan Davis, Trayvon Martin, and the babies at Sandy Hook and others who are still grieving over the loss of their children; they spend every day of their lives trying to prevent people who shouldn’t have guns in the first place from getting them so easily. These murderers get them from gun shows, the Internet and from crooks on the street with no background check. More of us need to be helping to get stronger laws passed.

Let’s expose the enablers who represent the 4% and vote them out of office. We know who those lawmakers are who are currently on a “tear down every safety measure path” and telling us now is not the time to discuss guns. Let’s assure these families that we’ll stand with them in every election. Let’s begin making sensible gun control an issue before giving up our vote in the next election.

But for the grace of God, these horrible murders could be someone we know and love. We have an obligation to send people like Charles Grassley, Marco Rubio and Paul Ryan home soon. They so easily blame all gun tragedies on mental health when they know perfectly well, they have no intention of putting more funds into legitimate mental health issues.

Let’s elect more people like Senator Chris Murphy who said these tragedies are a consequence of our inaction. Let us not be the ones who are guilty of inaction. The National Rifle Association doesn’t stand a chance against the people united on this important issue.

Dr. E. Faye Williams is National President of the National Congress of Black Women, Inc. www.nationalcongressbw.org. 202/678-6788.

Why the Shooting Will Continue

By Margaret Kimberley

(Reprinted from Freedom Rider - blackagenda.com)

Apparently there is nothing worse in America than the act of shooting white people. Ever since the latest attack at a Florida high school there has been talk of little else. The school shooting enveloped every other issue and was used to vilify Russia, the FBI, Bernie Sanders and the National Rifle Association all at once. One cannot watch a Youtube video without being subjected to the NRA’s public relations juggernaut meant to quiet a population which had forgotten about shootings for a while.

America has a unique history with firearms. The settler colonial state enshrined gun ownership into the constitution because of a determination to maintain chattel slavery and the violent enforcement which had to go with it.

More than two hundred years later that imperative remains. All the sound and fury about gun control is useless because this society demands that the slave patrol never disband. There are even arguments made to expand it. Not only must we live with armed police officers but there are new proposals to arm teachers in the classroom. These same teachers target Black students for punishments and “zero tolerance” policies made necessary by the deeds of violent white people.

Everyone from the buffoonish president to members of Congress weigh in with ridiculous proposals because the obvious solution will not be permitted in this country.

The latest shooter was diagnosed with mental illness but there are psychiatric patients all over the world. Only in this country does illness beget periodic blood baths that do nothing to change public policy. Unfortunately the Florida case is unlikely to be the last public massacre.

The mass shooting brings into high relief the grotesque nature of American violence. It far supersedes that of other nations called “free” and “advanced” and “civilized.” The terms are hyperbole but surely do not apply to this country which has little connection with any of these ideals.



While the hand wringing goes on about high body count events in public places, little is said about the 1,000 fatalities which are committed every year by the police. The police, who are now to be trusted with keeping Black children safe, kill an average of three people every day.

The white students who survived the massacre are rightly speaking out about their experience and attempting to break the institutional support for killing sprees. But Black protest against hyper policing and its inevitable death toll is dismissed. So is anyone who opposes U.S. military violence, or that of its allies, which take place in any number of places around the world.

The cause of the anomalous death toll here is not difficult to understand. This country is awash in violence because of angry, entitled white people. One would think that they

were the aggrieved party. They certainly seem to think so with their explosive anger which can be directed at anyone at any moment. It is a lethal combination in a society on the edge of financial and ecological collapse without any principle which might unify the population to struggle together.

As Glen Ford points out the opposite is true. Anti-Black racism tears even white people from one another. The past history of a racialized polity makes solidarity almost impossible and chaos all too likely.

It is sad to wonder where the next example of sick carnage will take place but mass shootings are inevitable here. The combination of racist mental illness, denial and adherence to white supremacy will ensure that firearm violence continues.

The kabuki theater of the crazed duopoly system also puts guns in the hands of dangerous people. Republicans are rightly identified with the NRA, which donated \$20 million to Donald Trump’s presidential campaign. But Democrats have passed up opportunities to make good on their supposed desire to establish some form of gun control.

Who can forget John Kerry in 2004 wearing hunting gear that made him look like cartoon character Elmer Fudd. Or that Barack Obama ended the ban on firearms in national parks. White voters in rural Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin who were courted by duplicitous Democrats ran straight to the arms of Trump and ignored the fakery.

Gun fatalities are emblematic of so much that is wrong in this country. Racism creates hypocrisy and a climbing death toll. The open lovers of white supremacy make their voices heard while two faced cowards court them in secret. The tragic public drama will go on and the bloodshed will too.

Margaret Kimberley’s Freedom Rider column appears weekly in BAR, and is widely reprinted elsewhere. She maintains a frequently updated blog as well at <http://freedomrider.blogspot.com>. Ms. Kimberley lives in New York City, and can be reached via e-Mail at Margaret.Kimberley@BlackAgendaReport.com

OUR VOICES

Black Women Show the Way Forward in 2018

By Monica Simpson

Executive Director, SisterSong

(<http://www.blackpressusa.com>) - There is a reckoning afoot in this country. On one side, Trump has emboldened and embodied a virulent and reckless hate that targets women, Black people, and immigrants (among many others). Each day brings a new outrage. On the other side, #MeToo has followed #BlackLivesMatter as a hashtag-turned-movement, led by courageous truth-tellers who are sick and tired of a violent and largely ignored status quo. The conversation about race and gender in this country has broken open, and now we must all contend with the truth of who we are as a nation.

While this may feel like scary and unfamiliar territory to some, in reality, the U.S. is just catching up to an understanding and analysis that Black women in this country have had for a long time. Black women have never had the luxury of ignorance—not to police violence, not to the rampant sexual harassment and assault that women experience at home, school, and work. In 2018, we should look to the work of Black women to see the path forward for a troubled and divided nation. In a way, Black women scholars and organizers have left breadcrumbs for us to follow to liberation, if we'll only pay attention.

In 1989, legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in her paper for the University of Chicago Legal Forum to explain how Black women’s oppression on the basis of gender combined with oppression on the basis of race to create something altogether new, an experience of discrimination did not match what either white women or Black men experience. This concept would lay the groundwork for social justice organizing that now spans the globe, and provided a vocabulary for something Black women experience on a daily basis. While intersectionality risks dilution as an increasingly popular buzzword, the analysis it provides is a crucial tool to cut through the noise and understand the Trump administration’s policies and their impact on different communities.

Take for instance the recent Jane Doe case, and similar cases, of the Trump administration blocking young immigrant women from getting reproductive healthcare. The mistreatment of the “Janes” (as they’ve come to be called) at the hands of the Trump administration targets them both as women and as immigrants, and the two identities cannot be pulled apart. “In-



tersectionality” provides an analysis that explains why their treatment is so much more extreme, and its impact so severe.

Just five years after Crenshaw’s groundbreaking work, the reproductive justice movement was founded by Black women who, like Crenshaw, saw that their perspectives and experiences were being, once again, left out of the equation. Reproductive justice brought intersectionality and a global human rights framework together with a nuanced understanding of U.S. policies of reproductive coercion. The founding mothers of reproductive justice rejected White feminism’s focus on the birth control and the legality of abortion as too narrow, and described a vision for a world, where we can all prevent pregnancy if we want to, end a pregnancy if we need to, and have and raise children in healthy environments and without fear of violence.

Reproductive justice broadened the lens of abortion rights to include low-income women and women of color “and” broadened the entire conversation to recognize the ways in which U.S. policies denied motherhood to some women even while forcing it on others against their will.

This framework is crucial to connect the dots among Trump’s reproductive policies. Trump wants to make birth control un-

affordable, push abortion out of reach, and punish women for having children. What seems inconsistent on the surface is, in fact, all part of one agenda to coerce and control a woman’s decisions about pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting.

When Trump was first elected, Black women were the least surprised. We saw Trump coming from a mile away and we already knew how deep this country’s anti-woman and anti-Black sentiment ran. Now, more than a year later, the work of Black women will help us understand and combat Trump’s agenda, with Black women leading the fight. Let 2018 be the year of the Black woman.

Let 2018 be the year Black women’s brilliance, leadership, and analysis are heeded at last. Let 2018 mark the beginning of a new era of listening to, respecting, and trusting Black women. Just stop for a moment and imagine what might happen, if we actually made those words a reality.

The day after the Alabama Senate race, the hashtag #TrustBlackWomen was all over social media. And yes, we should trust Black women voters, because they’ve kept us from the brink many times. But Black women’s wisdom and contributions have so much more to teach us all—and we’re going to need to understand that if we hope to keep Trump from dragging us backward.

Like many other Black women across the country, I was standing up in my living room cheering and clapping my hands as I watched Oprah deliver her passionate speech at the Golden Globes. The next day the media went wild with hopes for and critiques of a theoretical run for president—but they missed the point. While the thought of it made me smile, what I saw was an invitation.

I saw an invitation for Black women to take every opportunity that we are given to speak up and speak out for ourselves. I saw an invitation for Black Women to take up even more space. I saw an invitation for Black women to take the mic, to move to center stage and demand the attention and respect we have always deserved.

Monica Simpson is the executive director of SisterSong: The National Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, based in Atlanta, Ga., and the director of the Trust Black Women Partnership. For more information about SisterSong visit <http://sistersong.net> and you can follow SisterSong on Twitter at @SisterSong_WOC.

U.S. House Passes Bill Supporting Triple-Digit Predatory Lending



By Charlene Crowell

(TriceEdney-Wire.com) - The U.S. House of Representatives broke the hearts of a broad and diverse coalition of advocates af-

ter Members of Congress passed predatory lending legislation on February 14.

A bill passed the lower chamber that would render useless state laws in the majority of states, including the 15 states and the District of Columbia where state interest rate limits prevent payday lending. HR 3299, titled the Protecting Consumers’ Access to Credit Act, passed the House on a 245-171 floor vote.

If passed in the Senate and signed into law by President Donald Trump, the measure will preempt state interest rate caps that now limit the annual percentage rates (APRs) on loans to no more than 36 percent. These respective rate caps now save consumers an estimated \$2.2 billion in fees every year. If HR 3229 is enacted, these significant savings will be lost.

Additionally, the bill would also allow high-cost installment loans. Currently 34 states, now limit interest rates on a \$2,000, 2-year installment loan to no more than 36 percent, and

once again, consumers would wind up paying the higher cost.

For Congressman Patrick McHenry, who co-sponsored the bill with New York Congressman Greg Meeks, the measure “marks an important step towards modernizing our financial system and ensuring financial inclusion for all Americans.”

That’s one lawmaker’s opinion. But a California Congresswoman had a vastly different take. Minutes before the floor vote, Congressman Maxine Waters, the Ranking Member of the House Financial Services Committee spoke.

“H.R. 3299 would go much further to allow other third-parties, including payday lenders, to evade or outright disregard state-level laws, and collect debt from borrowers at unreasonably high rates of interest if they purchase loans from a national bank,” said Ms. Waters. “These arrangements are called “rent-a-bank” or “rent-a-charter” agreements, and they allow payday lenders to use banks as a front for predatory behavior and the evasion of state interest rate caps.”

More than 150 organizations spanning consumer advocates, civil rights and faith organizations across the country as well as 20 state attorneys general agree with Congresswoman Waters. Together these state officials and advocates remain determined to preserve the

ability of their respective jurisdictions to protect consumers by enforcing existing rate caps that were either enacted by voter referendum or state legislation.

Another claim by the bill’s proponents argued that the legislation would expand lending opportunities for consumers who are now underserved by financial institutions. That claim was also refuted.

“The claim that this bill will help underserved urban and rural areas by expanding access to credit is false”, said Scott Astrada, the Center for Responsible Lending’s Federal Advocacy Director. “The reality is that it will expand unchecked predatory lending and allow lenders to make high-cost loans, such as short-term and long-term payday loans and car title loans, at rates that exceed existing state interest rate limits.”

As the measure now moves to the U.S. Senate for further consideration, perhaps the upper chamber would be wise to remember that this nation was founded as a democracy – and that its actions would be by, for, and of the people. Any loan that charges triple-digit interest rates costing far more than the actual principal borrowed is predatory and could not be construed to be somehow helping anyone.

Similarly, just as mortgage rules require lenders to determine a borrower’s ability-to-repay a loan before approving an application, so

should small-dollar loans. Access to credit is one thing; but triple-digit debt traps are something else.

The sad truth is that predatory lending preys upon people with the fewest financial resources and options. Across the country, many Black and Latino neighborhoods may lack full-service grocery stores and banks; but a profusion of predatory lenders always seem to be nearby.

Even more disturbing, an updated report by the Center for Responsible Lending on payday lending in Colorado found that even in affluent communities of color, the likelihood of a nearby payday store is greater than in low-income, predominantly White areas. In 2016, high cost Colorado payday loans took nearly \$50 million in fees alone from customers. In some cases, borrowers took out two or more loans simultaneously from two or more lenders.

“There is good reason over 200 civil rights, consumer, faith-based, housing, labor and veterans’ advocacy organizations oppose this bill,” noted Congresswoman Waters. “The type of credit that this bill helps consumers access is the kind that makes it easier for vulnerable consumers to sink into insurmountable debt – like payday and other high-cost loans.”

Charlene Crowell is the Center for Responsible Lending’s Deputy Communications Director. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

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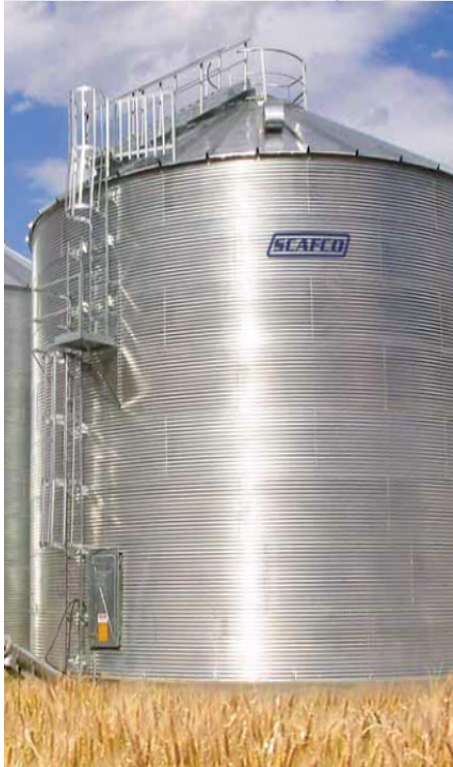
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MARCH EVENTS

MARCH 3

WORKSHOP: “SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

This workshop will look at primary violence prevention at its deepest roots, the place where it intersects with other social issues related imbalances of power: sexism, racism and classism.

8:30 am - 12:30pm
Gonzaga University
Hemmingson Auditorium
702 E Desmet Ave, Spokane

Cost: \$25 (includes breakfast)

Presented by Faith Partners

For more information call
509.998.5332 or 509.343.5032

for email Faithpartnersspokane@gmail.com

MARCH 3

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER PARENT FORUM

Practical information on how parents can better advocate for their children. Presented by Nikki Lockwood.

10:00 am - Noon
Shadle Library
2111 W. Wellesley Ave.
Spokane, WA 99205

For information contact Pui-Yan Lam at plam@ewu.edu.

MARCH 9 & 14

2017 FIG TREE BENEFIT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

“Including Everyone: We Need Each Other”

Lunch - 3/9/- 11:30-1:00

Breakfast - 3/14 -7--8:30

Gonzaga University
Cataldo Hall

1200 N Addison Ave
Spokane, WA 99202

Cost: Complimentary (guests are invited to donate to support The Fig Tree). For more information call 509.535.4112 or 509.535.1813 or visit www.thefigtree.org.

MARCH 8

JUSTICE NIGHT

Justice Night is a walk-in legal clinic, **no appointment necessary**. Free legal information in the following areas: Family law, Consumer Protection, Housing, LFO/expungement, Police & Govt Accountability.

5:30-7:00pm

Community Building Lobby
35 W. Main Street, Spokane

Questions? Center for Justice:
509-835-5211

MARCH 14

FUSE BOOK CLUB

March’s selection is So You Want to Talk about Race by Ijeoma Oluo

6:00pm -8:00pm

Spokane Public Library
(Downtown)

Level-up Classroom
(topmost floor)

906 W. Main Street, Spokane

Free, inclusive, welcoming, open to the public. Fuse book club members receive a discount at Auntie’s Bookstore. For more information contact Erin Pringle-Toungate at EJToungate@gmail.com.

MARCH 19

NAACP MONTHLY MEETING

Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting. The focus of this month’s meeting will be Mass Incarceration and its Impact on Communities of Color

7:00 - 9PM

Gonzaga University
Hemmingson Center

702 E Desmet Ave, Spokane

Light dinner and beverages will be provided.

For more information contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 (ext 1141) or visit http://spokane-NAACP.com

MARCH 20

POWER 2 THE POETRY

Women’s History Month

Open Mic

A poetry event sponsored by Power 2 the Poetry.

6:00pm -7:30pm

Sign ups 5:30-5:50

Spokane Public Library
(Downtown)

906 W. Main Street, Spokane

Visit: power2thepoetry.com for more info.

MARCH 20

“DEVIL WANNA PUT ME IN A BOW TIE: NEGOTIATING BLACK MASCULINITY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Mark Anthony Neal is professor of African-American Studies and English at Duke University. Free and open to the public.

7:00pm

Gonzaga University
Hemmingson Ballroom

702 E Desmet Ave, Spokane

For information contact Ann Ciasullo at (509) 313-5955.

MARCH 22

JUSTICE NIGHT

Justice Night is a walk-in legal clinic, **no appointment necessary**. Free legal information in the following areas: Family law, Consumer Protection, Housing, LFO/expungement, Police & Govt Accountability.

5:30-7:00pm

Habitat for Humanity
1805 E. Trent Avenue

Questions? Center for Justice:
509-835-5211

APRIL 21

2018 AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATION CELEBRATION

Saturday, April 21
1pm
Whitworth University

The 2018 Spokane African American Graduation Celebration recognizes the academic achievement of students graduating from high school, GED, college vocational, and university students by August 2018. The link for graduates to RSVP is live at http://bit.ly/2iLY4y2.

BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK AND STILL I RISE

APRIL 3-4 - 8PM

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LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

SPOKANE WOMAN’S CLUB
1428 W 9TH AVE | MARCH 10 | 1-5PM

KEYNOTE: SANDY WILLIAMS

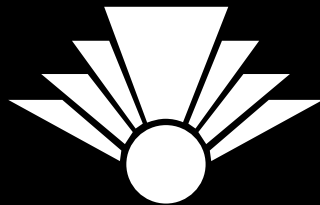
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 2018

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO PRESS FORWARD AND PROGRESS GENDER PARITY. A STRONG CALL TO MOTIVATE AND UNITE FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES AND WHOLE COMMUNITIES TO THINK, ACT AND BE GENDER INCLUSIVE. SPOKANE’S 2018 CELEBRATION WILL FOCUS ON THE POWER OF LETTING OUR VOICE BE HEARD. FEATURING POWERFUL WORKSHOPS, A RESOURCE FAIR, AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER SANDRA WILLIAMS, ACCOMPLISHED ACTIVIST AND CREATOR OF ‘THE BLACK LENS NEWS’.

WHEN: Saturday March 10th, 1 - 5pm | WHERE: Spokane Woman's Club, 1428 W 9th Ave | COST: Free | WHO: All are welcome, public, & kid friendly | ACCOMMODATIONS: Call 509.789.9290 with 10+ business day advancement | WHAT: Keynote "Hearing The Unheard Stories" by accomplished activist and founder of The Black Lens News, Sandy Williams. Also featuring resource tabling, and additional workshops. | HASHTAGS: #PressForProgress #IWD2018 #IWDSpokane | MORE INFO: facebook.com/IWDSpokane



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