

THE BLACK LENSTM

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

THE SILENCE IS DEAFENING

As Americans "March For Our Lives" We Can No Longer Ignore Black Children

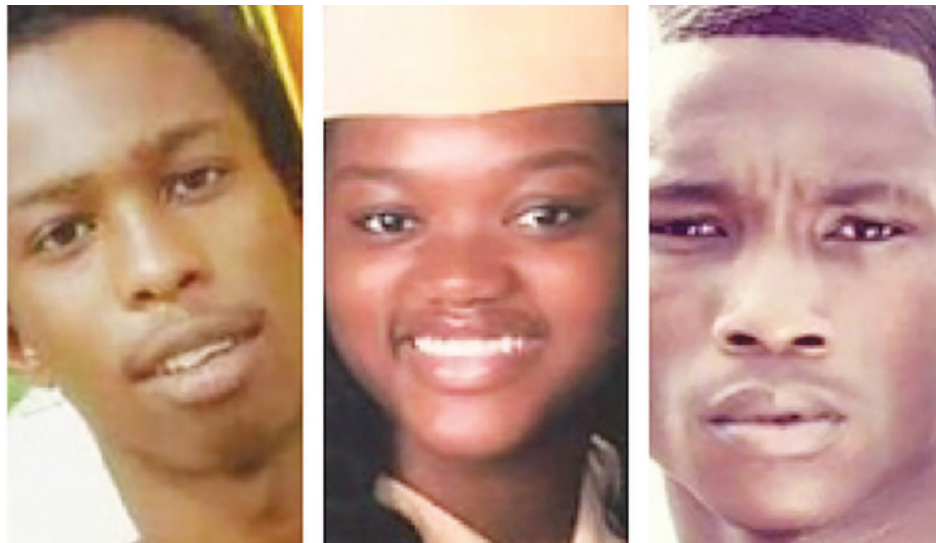
NEWS ANALYSIS

By Sharon L. McDaniel & Leonard Burton,
Black Administrators in Child Welfare

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - It's happened again—another mass school shooting in America. The images of horror-struck teens at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. continue to grip our thoughts, weeks after the Valentine's Day murders. And the toll: 17 killed, 15 wounded and thousands emotionally scarred, lingers like a bad taste in our mouths.

Another group of youngsters has been gunned down by weapons of war in what was supposed to be their safe place, school. Parkland's survivors, like the rest of the nation's children must bear witness to an administration that fails them, and law makers who have the power to protect them from gun violence, but don't have the political will.

But the choice of the nation's leaders to protect guns, not America's children, has ignited a fervent chorus and wave of activism. They are made up of new, young voices, spearheaded by Parkland high school students who are asking why and rallying to prevent gun violence. Their cause is



Jontae Hunt, 17, Chicago; Bianca Nikol Roberson, 18, Philadelphia, Ledajrick Rajae Cox, 18, Dallas, are among thousands of Black youth killed by gun violence over the past year.

"Sadly, there is no national outcry voiced against the gun violence that easily ensnares and frequently destroys our Black children and youth where they live—in poor, segregated neighborhoods with little political clout."

commendable, their movement is needed and their voices are impactful.

As these mostly white teens push back and speak truth to power, The New York Times, CNN and The Ellen DeGeneres Show have been among the ready media platforms;

and Oprah Winfrey and George Clooney among their celebrity financial backers.

At the same time, the silence that shrouds the lives of Black children and youth who are losing their lives daily to gun violence is deafening. Aren't they also victims?

But sadly, there is no national outcry voiced against the gun violence that easily ensnares and frequently destroys our Black children and youth where they live—in poor, segregated neighborhoods with little political clout. As an organization of advocates for Black children, working to safeguard their lives and ensure that they thrive, we hear the clock ticking as a child or teen dies from gunfire every 2 hours and 48 minutes in the United States. The number of youngsters in 2016 who died from guns (3,128) could have filled 156 school classrooms.

Not surprisingly, mass shootings dominate the news and drive the national debate on gun violence. But as senseless and horrific as these killings have been, they represent less than 1 percent of all gun violence among young people under age 19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These students, the CDC found, were 40 times more likely to be killed outside of school than at school.

Not much has changed, especially for our school-aged children in Baltimore, Chicago and other urban and high-crime cities where they are often counted among the carnage.

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Spokane Still Has Racial Covenants

Center for Justice Sues to Have Racist Language Removed

In December 2016, Spokesman Review columnist Shawn Vestal wrote a column titled, "Whites-only covenants still exist in many mid-century Spokane neighborhoods."

The article chronicled the research that 27-year old Eastern Washington University graduate student, Logan Camporeale, had been doing to uncover one of Spokane's unspoken secrets.

Spokane, "the City of Choice", was dotted with neighborhoods

that had whites-only restrictions still embedded in their original property documents.

An example of one such covenant listed on a property in a Comstock Park neighborhood:

"No race or nationality other than the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race or nationality employed by an owner or tenant."

Rick Eichstaedt, Executive Director of The Center for Justice, saw the article. "Logan did the research and really called out the scope and extent of this in the community. I direct the Environmental and Land use law clinic at Gonzaga University and I thought what a great project for students to actually work with landowners who are interested in using the state law that allows you to go to court and get an order to have the covenant removed."

Continued on Page 8



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ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

Stepping Out of My Own Box

I had my St. Patrick's Day already planned. I was going to avoid everybody in the world and spend the day laying horizontally on the couch. January and February were particularly busy months for me, so I felt I had earned a day of solitude.

But before I had a chance to savor that long awaited snoozing and possible snoring that awaited me, a friend, who had suggested that The Black Lens should be a part of this year's St. Patrick's Day parade and had signed up to go represent the paper in the parade, called to invite me to join him.

I told him that I had to think about it. Hmmmmmm.

What came up for me, besides my fatigue, was the discomfort that I felt about the prospect of attending a St. Patrick's Day Parade, which is probably why I had never done it before. To be honest, sometimes I just get tired of standing out all of the time, and being



so overwhelmingly visible. After some nudging from my mom, the way that only mothers can do, I sighed, took a deep breath, and relented.

And let me tell you, I had a blast. Yes, I stood out. Yes, some of the Black folks acted scared and practically ducked when they saw our car drive by (go figure) but the folks at the parade were overwhelming happy to see the Black Lens there. They smiled. Waved. Applauded. Gave us their thumbs ups. One women even ran up to the car to get a paper.

So, this St. Patrick's Day I stepped out of my own box, like I'm always encouraging everybody else to do. Thanks Curtis!



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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BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Two Die in Houston Serial Bombings

Assistant Chief Initially Questions Whether First Blast was Self-Inflicted

(Source: Alex Horton, Eva Ruth Moravec and Eli Rosenberg, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/breanna-edwards>, <https://www.theroot.com>)

A twenty-three year old white man, who police say was the suspect in a series of deadly bombings in Austin, Texas during the month of March, killed himself by setting off an explosion in his car as officers moved in to make an arrest.

The suspect was believed to have been behind several bombs that killed two people and wounded five others in explosions throughout Austin. Three bombs were in packages that had been left for unsuspecting victims, one bomb was triggered by a trip wire that injured bicyclists as they cycled down a residential street and the last bomb, which is believed to have been headed for Austin as well, exploded in a FedEx facility in Schertz, Texas.

Initially police thought the first bombing was an isolated event and according to the Washington Post, pursued the possibility that the blast that killed thirty-nine year old



father Anthony Stephan House, was a “botched retaliation after a recent drug raid on the street,” or Assistant Chief Joseph Chacon even said, “We can’t rule out that Mr. House didn’t construct this himself and accidentally detonate it, in which case it would be an accidental death.”

Police Chief Brian Manley later apologized that his assistant chief had suggested that House’s bombing death was self-inflicted.

By the time seventeen year old musician, Draylen Mason, was murdered and Esperanza Herrera (75) critically wounded eight days later in a pair of explosions within hours of each other, at homes

several miles apart, the police announced that the bombings were connected.

According to the Washington Post, there was speculation that the initial victims were targeted because of their connection. Anthony Stephan House’s stepfather is friends with Draylen Mason’s grandfather, and both are prominent members of a local black church. Officials, however, have said that the motive for the bombings is unknown.

Sacramento Marchers Protest Police Shooting of Unarmed 22 Year Old



(Source: Jazzi Johnson, thegrio.com; Laurel Wamsley, <https://www.npr.org>)

Two Sacramento police officers (one Black and one white) shot and killed 22-year-old Stephon Clark in the backyard of his grandparents’ home on March 18. Clark, the father of two small children, was unarmed. Initial reports indicated that officers were responding to a call of vandalism when they encountered Clark in the backyard.

In a statement, the police said they saw an object in Clark’s hand and the officers “believed the suspect was pointing a firearm at them. After an exhaustive search, scene investigators did not locate any firearms. The only item found near the suspect was a cell phone.”

On March 21, The Sacramento Police Department released two audio and three video recordings from the shooting. Video shows the encounter which took place in a dark backyard, with one of the officers giving the command, “Show me your hands-- gun!”, before twenty shots are fired.

Clark lay motionless on the ground as officers talked about the shooting. Six minutes after the shooting, one of the officers says “mute” and the sound from the recording goes silent.

The two officers have been placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation. Angry Sacramento community members took to the streets in protest, some chanting “cell phones up, don’t shoot.”

U.S. Supreme Court Allows Flint Water Contamination Lawsuits to go Forward



(Source: Lawrence Hurley, Barbara Grzincic and Ben Klayman; Editing by Will Dunham; <https://www.reuters.com>)

In March, the U.S. Supreme Court gave the green light to two class-action lawsuits that were filed by residents of Flint, Michigan. The residents are pursuing Civil Rights claims against local and state officials over lead contamination in the city’s water supply. The justices left in place a July 2017 ruling by the Cincinnati, Ohio-based 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that revived the litigation after the lawsuits were thrown out by a lower court.

In April, 2014, officials in Flint, which is a predominantly Black city, switched the public water source from Lake Huron to the Flint River, a move designed to cut costs. The polluted river water caused lead to leach from pipes. The city switched back to Lake Huron water in October 2015, but lead levels remained above federal standards until early 2017.

Several lawsuits were filed against the city, state, Republican Governor Rick Snyder and several individual city and state officials. Two of those suits, one filed in 2015 and the other in 2016, were the subject of the Supreme Court appeals.

In June 2017, six current and former state and city officials were charged criminally - including five accused of involuntary manslaughter - for their roles in the crisis, which also was linked to a Legionnaires’ disease outbreak that caused at least 12 deaths.

Robotics Entrepreneur Lands Dream Deal With Apple



(Source: Samara Lynn, <http://www.blackenterprise.com>; <https://mekamon.com>)

Reach Robotics’ CEO and co-founder Silas Adekunle announced an exclusive deal with Apple to sell a line of real-life gaming robots called MekaMons in Apple’s flagship U.S. and United Kingdom stores.

Reach Robotics is an augmented reality gaming company headquartered in Bristol, UK, that creates robots for both fun and STEM education. MekaMon, Reach Robotics’ first product, are four-legged, battling robots that pair robotics and augmented reality. They are controlled via a smartphone app and can connect to each other via infrared signals and Bluetooth, allowing for co-op gaming.

In a press release, Adekunle said, “MekaMon straddles both the real and virtual worlds while taking the gaming experience beyond a player’s screen and turning their sitting room into a limitless robotic battle zone. MekaMon represents a quantum leap forward in the leveraging of augmented reality. Players can whip out their iPhone to battle their multi-functional, connected battlebots in the physical and virtual worlds at the same time.”

Adekunle, British-Nigerian, is an engineer who graduated with First Class Honors from the University of the West of England, with a Bachelor of Science in robotics technology, who was recently named as one of Forbes 30 Under 30 in Europe.

Comedian Byron Allen’s Company Buys the Weather Channel for \$300 Million



(Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles>; <http://www.imdb.com>; <https://bijog.com>)

Byron Allen, comedian and media entrepreneur, who heads Entertainment Studios Inc. and Allen Media LLC, struck a deal through Allen Media to acquire the Weather Channel from Comcast Corp. and private-equity firms Blackstone Group LP and Bain Capital for \$300 million.

Allen, who was born in 1961 in Detroit, Michigan, moved to L.A. when he was a teenager and started doing stand-up comedy in clubs in Los Angeles. That was where comedian Jimmie Walker, who discovered him, offered him a job as a writer and paying him 25 dollars a joke. Allen worked alongside David Letterman and Jay Leno and was eventually mentored by Al Masini, a TV executive, who steered him towards a path in television.

Allen struggled for years as he pitched his own tv ideas to networks, going in and out of bankruptcy. But in 1992 he began hosting several syndicated tv programs and in 1993 launched Entertainment Studios, which currently has more than 40 shows on television, many low-cost and housed on his HD networks, both on network and in syndication. and is now the largest independent production company of TV programs.

Allen says in addition to the weather channel he plans to acquire other independent media assets to better position his company.

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Marielle Franco

Afro-Brazilian Politician Assassinated in Rio

(Source: Antoinette Isama, <http://www.okayafrika.com>; Raphael Tsavkko Garcia, <https://www.aljazeera.com>)

Marielle Franco, a popular 38 year old, Afro-Brazilian human rights activist, feminist, leading voice in the black rights movement in Brazil and city council member, serving her first term in office, was assassinated on March 14 by two attackers on a downtown street in Rio de Janeiro, The Guardian News-paper reported.

Franco was an outspoken critic of police violence in the favelas (slums) where she grew up. Al Jazeera reports that Franco was leaving an event called 'Black Women Changing Power Structures', "when an unidentified vehicle approached the car she was in and opened fire, killing her and her driver Anderson Pedro Gomes. Nine shots were fired in total. Marielle was shot four times in the head. A press officer sitting in the back seat of the car was also injured, but survived."

Franco was an underdog in Rio politics, according to OkayAfrica.com, but she won the fifth highest vote count among council members when she was elected in 2016. She was a police violence expert and the Guardian reported that she had



recently accused officers of being overly aggressive when searching homes in the gang-controlled favelas.

Two weeks before she was murdered, Franco became head of a commission tasked with monitoring potential abuses associated with Federal Military Intervention in Rio, and according to Al Jazeera, three days before her death, Franco criticized the military police for terrorizing residents of the Acari favela.

Following Franco's death, thousands took to the streets all over the country in a series of demonstrations demanding justice, respect and a deep change on the Brazilian political landscape.

Robert "Bob" James Minnix

February 1, 1950 – November 3, 2017

Robert "Bob" James Minnix passed away suddenly on Friday, November 3, 2017, in Pullman, Washington. He was born on February 1, 1950, to the late Samuel and Hortense Minnix in Spokane, Washington and is survived by his wife, Genny, and two sons, Brennan and Blair.

Bob attended Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane and starred in football, earning First Team All-City and Associated Press First Team All-State honors in both his junior and senior years. An outstanding student Bob earned a scholarship to attend the University of Notre Dame, where he lettered three years in football.

After graduation, he declined professional opportunities with the NFL and the CFL to enroll in the University of Washington law school where he earned his Juris Doctorate degree.

Bob worked for 20 years with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), serving the last seven years as Director of Enforcement, where he was known as a champion for the fair treatment of the student athlete. In 1995 he left the NCAA to become an Associate Athletics Director at Florida State University (FSU) in Tallahassee, where he developed mentoring programs for college athletes and taught in both the



undergraduate and law schools. Following his tenure at FSU, he accepted a position at WSU to become Senior Associate Athletics Director, a job from which he recently retired.

He was a distinguished lecturer nationally for many years at numerous conferences and seminars., was the past president of the National Black Coaches Association and received the Frank Kara National Leadership Award from the National Association for Athletics.

A public celebration was held on February 17, 2018 at Lewis & Clark High School in Spokane. Memorial donations may be made to the Robert J. Minnix Endowed Scholarship, University of Notre Dame, % Donor Services, 1100 Grace Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556.

Obituary reprinted from the Spokesman Review.

Ex-WSU Football Player Files Suit Against Mike Leach



(Source: Wilson Criscione, <https://www.inlander.com/Bloglander>; Stefanie Loh, <https://www.seattletimes.com/sports>; Photo Credit: WSU Cougars)

Zaire Webb, a former Defensive Back for the Washington State University Cougars football team has filed a lawsuit against WSU football coach Mike Leach and Washington State University for "selective enforcement of team rules."

Webb, who is from Jacksonville, Florida, was arrested on October 4, 2014, with teammate Anthony White. Both were accused of shoplifting at the Pullman Walmart. White pled guilty to third degree theft. He served a day in jail and was ordered to pay fines. Webb, on the other hand, pled not guilty and the charge against him was dismissed "due to insufficient evidence." Both Webb and White were let go from the team.

Coach Leach's team rules, as reported in the Inlander are clear: don't do drugs, don't steal and don't abuse women, and Leach referenced those rules when responding to Webb's appeal of his dismissal from the team. "It is our 'consistent policy to dismiss' members who violate the rules."

Webb, however, in the suit which was filed on March, 2 in Whitman County Court, points to multiple examples when Webb says players accused of more serious crimes were not immediately kicked off the team.

The full complaint is available online here: https://www.scribd.com/document/373416096/Leach-lawsuit#from_embed

Kobe Bryant Becomes First Black Person To Win Oscar For Best Animated Short



(Source: Tonja Renee Stidum, <https://blavity.com>; <http://www.espn.com/nba>)

On Sunday, March 4, as a part of the 90th annual Academy Awards, retired Los Angeles Lakers basketball star, Kobe Bryant, won an Oscar in the animated short category. Bryant received the award for the animated short "Dear Basketball," written and narrated by Kobe Bryant himself and based on a poem that Bryant wrote in 2015 announcing his retirement from basketball. The hand-drawn animated film was directed by acclaimed Disney animator, Glen Keane, and scored by Oscar Award-winning composer, John Williams.

Bryant's poem begins, "Dear Basketball, from the moment I started rolling my dad's tube socks and shooting imaginary game-winning shots in the Great Western Forum I knew one thing was real: I fell in love with you. A love so deep I gave you my all — From my mind & body to my spirit & soul."

I'm ready to let you go. I want you to know now so we both can savor every moment we have left together. The good and the bad. We have given each other all that we have. And we both know, no matter what I do next I'll always be that kid with the rolled up socks, garbage can in the corner, :05 seconds on the clock, ball in my hands. 5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1, Love you always, Kobe

After receiving the award, Bryant told reporters "I feel better than winning a championship, to be honest with you. I swear I do."

The Black Press Honors Senator Kamala Harris with 2018 Newsmaker of the Year Award



(Source: Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Contributor, <http://www.blackpressusa.com>)

United States Senator Kamala D. Harris (D-Calif.) received the National Newspaper Publishers Association's (NNPA) 2018 Newsmaker of the Year Award, during a recent ceremony on Capitol Hill. The NNPA is a trade group that represents more than 200 Black-owned media companies that reach more than 20 million readers in print and online every week. Dozens of NNPA member publishers traveled to Washington, D.C. to celebrate Black Press Week, March 14 – 16, 2018.

"The theme of this year's Black Press Week was 'Celebrating 191 Years of the Black Press of America: Publishing Truth to Empower'," according to a press release about the gathering. "Black publishers, media professionals, civil rights leaders and lawmakers from across the country attended the annual event."

Harris, who took office in 2017, is a graduate of Howard University and the University of California Hastings College of Law, and she is the second African American woman Senator in U.S. history.

According to the NNPA newswire, the Senator said she believes in America and that Americans can do better. "Charlottesville made it obvious that racism is real in this country. We have inequities based on race, gender and socio-economic standing. Let's speak the truth." Harris continued, "I can't think of a moment in time when it's been more important than ever to support the Black Press. Especially, in the face of powerful voices trying to sow hate and dissension in this country."

YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey (jbaguart@yahoo.com)

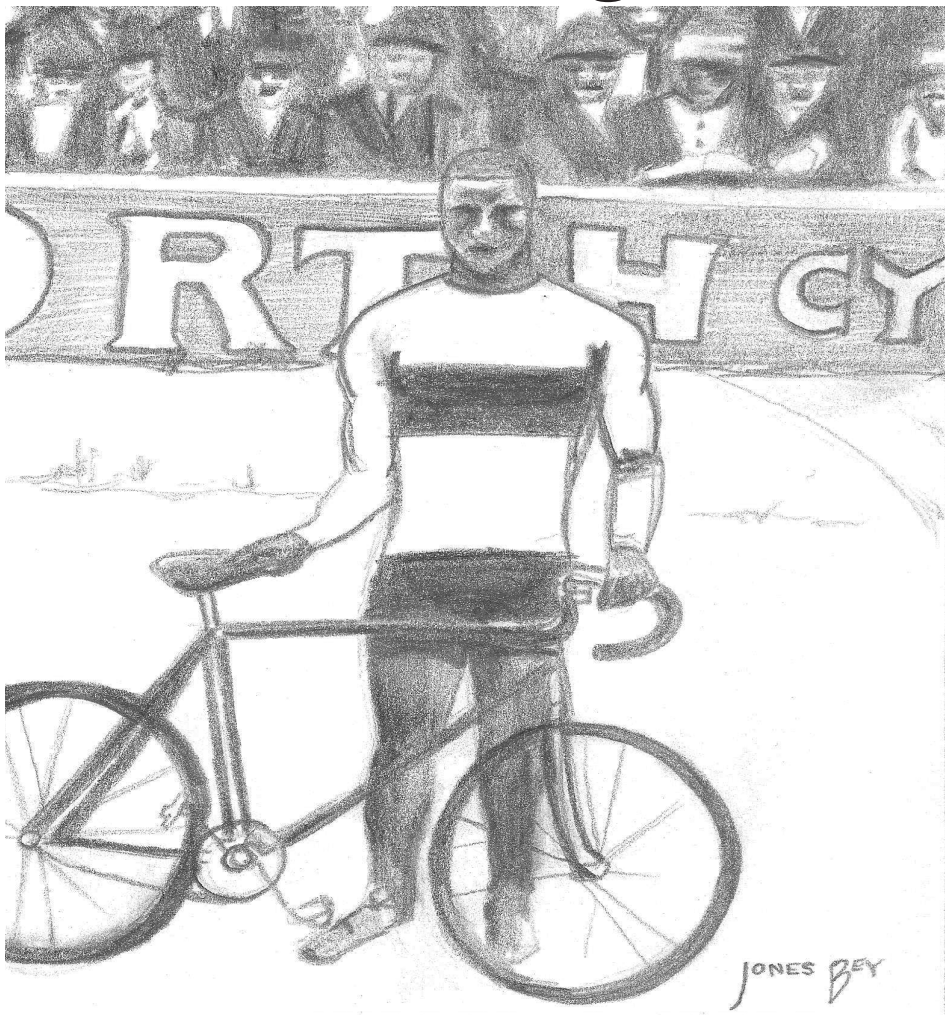
Marshall “Major” Taylor

Marshall “Major” Taylor was a professional bicyclist born November 26, 1878 in Indianapolis, Indiana. One of eight children, his father Gilbert Taylor was an ex-Kentucky slave and Union Army veteran. Gilbert Taylor drove for a wealthy Indiana family named the Southards who gave Marshall the same treatment as their own son, Dan, from privilege to private tutors. The family moved to Chicago, but before leaving the Southards gave Marshall a gift – his own bicycle.

Within months, Taylor went from the heights of luxury in Indianapolis to being a common kid on the streets of Chicago, earning money as a newspaper carrier while perfecting his cycling skills barefooted. His skills were so unique that a local bicycle shop (Hay and Willits bicycle shop) hired him to wear a military uniform and do stunts and tricks to attract customers. From his uniform he was nicknamed “Major”.

Later on, Taylor was hired full-time repairing bikes and teaching riding lessons to new customers. At this time in history bicycle racing was one of the most popular sports in America attracting crowds as large as horseracing and professional boxing. Though he’d never raced before, Taylor’s employer Tom Hay believed in his skills so much that he entered him into a local ten-mile race, which he won by six seconds, partly out of fear

Though Taylor was, “allowed” to compete, most local riding clubs wouldn’t admit him as a member and most Caucasian riders resented his presence on the track. Then in August of 1896, a mentor named Luis Munger (Worcester Cycle Manufacturing Company) snuck Marshall into the line-up of a “whites only” race at the Capitol City Cycling Club in Indianapolis. He crossed the finish line in first place and beat the world record time of professional rider Ray MacDonald by two-fifths of a second.



As an amateur and non-member of the club Taylor’s time wasn’t recognized and he was banned from the track, yet people saw something special in this young man’s skills. Taylor moved to Worcester, Massachusetts with his new mentor and before he turned twenty he was a professional rider who had broken seven world records – giving him the new title “The Black Cyclone”.

But as Taylor’s fame and success grew, so too did the resentment of Caucasians. He

was completely barred from competing anywhere in the South and more than once riders used dirty tricks to try to make him crash while spectators threw ice and nails at him. The behavior he endured on his home soil became so intolerable that Taylor’s team decided he’d have a better chance racing in Europe.

By 1902 Taylor became the most dominant racer in Europe’s racing history, winning the overwhelming majority of his races. That

same year he married Daisy Morris and had a daughter Rita Sydney.

Throughout the first decade of the nineteen-hundreds Marshall Taylor was earning more than thirty-thousand dollars a year, no athlete of any complexion from any sport earned as much. But along with a worn body and tired legs, Taylor’s downfall was cycling’s downfall – the invention of the automobile.

In 1910, at age thirty-two, Taylor retired from professional racing and focused on financial investments, which fell apart, followed by divorce and the 1929 Wall Street crash. He wrote his autobiography, *The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World* and sold his book door-to-door just to make ends meet. He died June 28, 1932 at the age of fifty-three and sadly lay unclaimed in a Chicago morgue before being solemnized to a pauper’s grave in Mount Glenwood Cemetery, Chicago. Later Frank Schwinn, founder of Schwinn Bicycle Company, had Taylor exhumed and moved to a proper site - Memorial Garden of the Good Shepherd.

In his lifetime Marshall Taylor raced in 167 races worldwide with 117 - 1st place wins and 32 - 2nd place finishes. He was the American Sprint Champion for three consecutive years (1898, 1899, and 1900), had Indianapolis’ greatest racing venue named after him – The Major Taylor Velodrome, and was posthumously inducted into the Bicycling Hall of Fame as the greatest professional cyclist in bicycling history.

Sources:

Black Heritage Day III – Jamiyo Mack.

Smithsonianmag.com/history/the-unknown-story-of-the-black-cyclone-the-cycling-champion-who-broke-the-color-barrier-33465698/ - Gilbert King.

Blackthen.com/marshall-w-taylor-the-black-cyclone-cycling-champion-who-broke-color-barriers

Nathan “Nearest” Green & Jack Daniel’s

Jack Daniel’s has become the most famous brand of whiskey in the world and the Jack Daniel’s distillery is America’s oldest registered distillery. However, few people had heard about Nearest Green, the Black man behind the famous whiskey, until a book published in 1967, “Jack Daniel’s Legacy”, revealed him to be the slave who taught Jack Daniel how to make Tennessee whiskey.

Five years later, a publication of the Tennessee Historical Quarterly (Spring 1972) shared the history of Jack Daniel’s Distillery and listed Nearest Green as their first head stiller (what is now commonly referred to as master distiller).

Fawn Weaver, who became the co-founder of the Nearest Green Foundation, began researching Green’s story and discovered that not only was Nathan “Nearest” Green the first master distiller for Jack Daniel’s Distillery, he was the person who taught Jack Daniel how to make Tennessee whiskey, and he was also the first African-American master distiller on record in the United States.



Born a slave around the early 1820s, Nathan “Nearest” Green (spelled incorrectly by the 1880 census as “Nearis” Green) is believed to have lived in Tennessee throughout his life. In the 1850s, he was purchased by slave owner Reverend Dan Call to work on his residence.

Jack Daniel left home at an early age and eventually came to live and work on Rev-

erend Call’s farm. On his farm, Call had a whiskey still and Daniel took an interest in distilling. The still was under the watch and care of Call’s slave Nearest Green.

Whiskey distilling was an arduous and labor-intensive process, and Daniel was said to have learned from and effectively acted as an apprentice to Green, who was a master in the craft.

After the Civil War ended in 1865, Reverend Call sold the whiskey business to Jack Daniel. Now a free man, Nearest Green, was hired by Daniel, becoming the very first head distiller of the Jack Daniel Distillery, or what we’d call a master distiller today.

When Daniel moved the business to a new location, Green did not follow along, however records show that Green’s descendants would continue being involved with the Jack Daniel’s Company to present day.

There is much that is not known about Nathan “Nearest” Green, but what is known is that Green was the first African-American master distiller on record in the United States and he is thought to be responsible for helping perfect the Lincoln County Process, which a step used in producing almost all Tennessee whiskey.

For more information visit the Nearest Green Foundation at <http://nearestgreen.com>.

Sources: nearestgreen.com, jackdaniels.com, blackpast.org

NAACP UPDATE: SPOKANE

http://www.SpokaneNAACP.com

Eliminating Racism Empowering Members

By Elizabeth Porter & Imani Warden

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or NAACP was built on the shoulders of giants, sustained by its members through advocacy, political and social movements. Youth and adults both have a personal stake in their community, especially in the Inland Northwest. We, at the Spokane NAACP believe in the power of its members. Membership voice is what keeps and gives the unique perspective towards the powerful issues that affect our society today. Youth have been the back bone to movements from Selma to Parkland. How does this affect the elimination of racism in the Spokane NAACP?

The Spokane NAACP decided to launch a pilot program, “Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation,” to empower and engage this generation to be future leaders. We need this generation of members. This program is used as a facilitation tool to introduce terminology like; structural racism, economic racism, and cultural competency to high school students. In addition, this program provides students a safe space to discuss multi-cultural differences and how to voice their perspective. Students who participate will leave with the ability to engage in critical conversation about race and the power of voice in community activism to make change for social injustices. This program is in progress at North Central High School and being facilitated by Devon Wilson and Shamerica Nakamura.

To keep our youth initiatives sustainable and progressive, we have the Youth Council and Youth Works Committees. The Youth Council, is an independent chapter of the Spokane NAACP. The mission of the Youth Council is to locate opportunities through educational programs and activities that foster diversity and inclusivity with equality. In this branch, youth are defined as 25 and under, including high school, middle school, and elementary.



The Youth Works Committee, which is housed under the Spokane NAACP branch, is for members 25 and older. The goals of this committee are to bring forth youth events, coordinate volunteers, and mentorship in the community to support for youth of color.

Meetings for both the Youth Council and the Youth Works Committee are held on Saturdays. For more information please contact Imani J. Warden at imani.janice@gmail.com. We are accepting new members!

The Spokane NAACP would like to encourage the community to get involved in the various committees: Criminal Justice, Education, Healthcare, Economic, Membership, and Political Action Committee. To do so please renew your membership or become a member! We need your experience and expertise which is welcome. Every voice counts.

Questions about membership please contact Elizabeth Porter membershipsokanenaacp@gmail.com, naacp-spokane.org, or (509) 209-2425 EX 1141.

Mass Incarceration and its Impact on Communities of Color



The NAACP’s March focused on Mass Incarceration and its impact on communities of color. The well-attended meeting, which is a part of the NAACP’s efforts to better connect with and engage the Spokane community, was held at Gonzaga University on March 19.

Heads Up (Spokane)

By Kiantha Duncan

“You Can Have Whatever You Like” (says God & T.I. the rapper)

According to Wikipedia, it seems the Atlanta “General of Trap Music” T.I. (Clifford Harris) had the same line of thinking as God and the Universe, which happens to always be conspiring for our good. “Whatever You Like” is a song by American rapper T.I., released as the lead single (second overall) from his sixth studio album, Paper Trail (2008). It just so happened that the song peaked at number one on the US Billboard Hot 100, giving T.I. his second US number one. It topped the chart for seven non-consecutive weeks and remained in the top 3 of the charts for over 12 non-consecutive weeks. It was named the 16th most successful song from 2000 to 2009, on the Billboard Hot 100 Songs of the Decade.

Now if you are anything like me, what makes a great song is a good hook. One I can relate to, not just because of the catchy beat, but more so because of the meaning of the hook.

The lyrics to the hook from T.I.’s Hit are as follows.

“Stacks on deck, Patrón on ice
And we can pop bottles all night
Baby, you could have whatever you like

I said, you could have whatever you like.”

Here’s a little background. In the hook, T.I. was speaking to a woman he was interested in and cared for. He wanted her to know in an “urban rap” sort of way that as the object of his affection, she could have whatever she likes. The song further goes to say (in my translation) that there is nothing that this woman could ask for that she can’t have, nothing that he will not provide.

So, I started to think about the words to that song, my mind actually began to think about all of the things that we as people want in our everyday lives. The fact is, we face so many challenges every day, around the world. It’s easy to lose hope.

We all face challenges daily. Some of which make it hard to believe that things will ever get better. The very things that we want sometimes seem out of reach. That new job or promotion you’ve wanted, the ability to be able to provide for your family just to name a few.

Not all the things that we are in search of are materialistic. Some of us have emotional things that we desire. Maybe something happened to you that you need to be men-

tally or spiritually freed from. Maybe you are not able to live a life in your full truth. Our hearts can carry heavy emotional loads which can impact the quality of our lives.

Let me tell you from personal experience, holding on to things from your past can be like a weight anchored to the bottom of the sea. But here is the magic. This is what I believe. God wants us to have exactly what we want, he cares for each of our cares. Like T.I., God wants to give us what we need and want. “God/the Universe” or “God and the Universe” however, you want to say it or understand it, is really always conspiring for our good. Even when it seems like there is no possible light at the end of the tunnel and you’ve exhausted every measure.

Not everything in our lives is going to always go right or as we planned. Sometimes we will feel pain and heart broken. We will be disappointed at times, we will disappoint others. We will fail, and we will fall but, that doesn’t change the fact that God’s love and affection for us runs deep.

“God/the Universe” wants the best for us and wants to give us our hearts desires. Unfortunately, because we have struggled in



our lives, many of us need to be reminded that anything is possible. Although there seems to be more want than plenty, more dark days than sunshine, there is still hope.

Now with that being said, I am not speaking about the same “Patrón on Ice” that T.I. offers. I am talking about the true desires of our hearts, the things that make us better human beings. If what you long for is a life full of love, success, comfort and peace, it can be yours, Because God shares the same belief that T.I. sang about and you can have whatever you like.

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

SHOW US THE MONEY AND THE DATA!

Coalition of Community Groups Requests Data and Budget Breakdown from the Spokane Regional Law & Justice Council



Spokane Community Against Racism
Working to end racism in Spokane, WA

March 26, 2018

An Open Letter to the Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council,

In April 2016, Spokane County was awarded a \$1.75 Million MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Grant. The grant application was spearheaded by the Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council (SRLJC). Prior to receiving the grant, members of the Spokane community were invited, recruited actually, to participate in community forums and meetings where we heard about the SRLJC's proposed commitment to reducing the county's jail population and the over-representation of people of color, and their desire to have community members actively engaged with them in the process.

The diverse group of community members that participated in the lead up to the grant application was enthusiastically supportive of the SRLJC's efforts. In fact, it was this high level of engagement by the Spokane community, initially prized by the SRLJC and recognized in their grant application, that was touted by the MacArthur Foundation as one of the factors behind its decision to award the highly competitive grant to Spokane.

However, in the two years that have passed since Spokane received the MacArthur Foundation grant, the enthusiasm from many of the community members who were initially engaged with the SRLJC has been replaced with frustration, dissatisfaction and disappointment.

One of the primary frustrations has been the community's perception that there is a lack of transparency and accountability from the SRLJC regarding its work in general, and the MacArthur Foundation grant in particular, and that the community's desire to be collaborative partners in the jail reform process has been met with resistance, deflection, avoidance, and at times with what has appeared to be outright hostility.

Among other things, community members have been repeatedly making the same two requests of the SRLJC. To no avail.

1) Disaggregated data

The MacArthur Foundation grant application stated the following:

"Embracing a data driven approach, we will continue collection of race/ethnicity data across all decision points, and will expand beyond current collection points as well. Using Phase I baseline data, we will collect and provide data on a quarterly basis to the following committees for review, feedback and solutions: RED subcommittee; Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council (SRLJC); Smart Justice Spokane, Spokane Alliance*, and the local NAACP. Training will be*

provided to departments at major data entry points (e.g. law enforcement, jail booking) to ensure proper race/ethnicity data is collected."

We are not aware that this has taken place and as a result we are asking again for data across all decision points, that is disaggregated (by race, ethnicity, gender, and age), and we are specifically asking for disaggregated data from all judges in the city of Spokane and the County, from the year 2000-Present regarding the following: Crimes, Judgments, Assigned Amount of Legal Financial Obligations (LFO's), Set Bail and Length of Sentence.

2) Grant Spending Breakdown (Budget)

In the interest of transparency and accountability, members of the community have repeatedly asked for a record of how the \$1.75 Million MacArthur Foundation grant funds have been spent to date. How does that spending compare to the grant application and how has that spending impacted Spokane's jail population?

We, the undersigned, are publicly making these same requests again and we encourage others in the community to do the same. Our intention is not to be combative or adversarial, but as was stated in the SRLJC MacArthur Foundation grant application, "continuing to work with our active community groups should allow us to make significant progress in reducing racial/ethnic disparities." However, successfully working with the Spokane community is not a given. It requires mutual respect, meaningful participation, transparency and accountability. We are requesting all four.

For more information about the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge Grant and the Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council, including dates and times of monthly meetings, visit: <https://www.spokanecounty.org/872/Spokane-Regional-Law-Justice-Council>.

Sincerely,

Annemarie Frohnhoefer
Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR)

Rev. Walter Kendricks
Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church
Spokane Ministers' Fellowship

Kurtis Robinson
Spokane NAACP

Layne Pavey
I Did The Time

Sandra Williams
Washington State Commission
On African American Affairs

Autumn Reed
Spokane Area NOW
National Organization for Women

Liz Moore
Peace and Justice Action League

Terri Anderson
Tenants Union of Washington

Cam Zorozua
Center for Justice

Smart Justice Spokane

Spokane's Racial Covenants

Continued from Page 1

The Center for Justice put out some feelers, and let Logan know that if he came across anybody that was interested, they were ready to help. They didn't hear from anyone until this year.

Then along came Alex, who recently bought a home and realized that a racial covenant was attached to the property. He did some research, talked to Logan and was directed to the Center for Justice.

The Center for Justice, in turn, filed an action in Spokane Superior Court, seeking an order to strike the language from the records, which is something that the Washington law allows.

"It would order the county to actually remove the language from the property records," Eichstaedt said.

Interestingly enough, when Eichstaedt spoke with the county attorney, the response he received gave him pause.

"I spoke with the county attorney and they are not comfortable with the action we are taking. They don't like the idea of removing 'historic language' from a property record."

If the covenants are legally invalid and unenforceable, the attorney questioned, "then why do you need to get rid of it?"

Eichstaedt's response, "because they are wrong. They

are morally reprehensible. How offensive would it be to look at a document like this and realize, wow, I shouldn't be living here. If we want to maintain an inclusive, welcoming community, we need to get rid of this last vestige of blatant racism and redlining."

"If the county would like to maintain the covenants as a historic document, put it in an archive or something," Eichstaedt continued, "don't leave it on somebody's property records."

Since the covenants are not enforceable, title companies don't typically give out the information. As a result, it is difficult to know which properties still have the covenant language attached

to them without a good deal of research.

This is why the Center for Justice is hoping to put together a workshop. Eichstaedt's hope, is to have Logan Camporeale, who got the whole conversation started, talk about how homeowners or community members can do the research, as well as offering general information about where the covenants are located and how people can find them, as well as information about recently passed legislation making it easier for have the covenant language removed.

For more information contact Rick Eichstaedt at Center for Justice, 509-835-5211 or ricke@cforjustice.com.

The Silence is Deafening

Continued from Page 1

While many view these inner-city shootings involving Black people as an intractable, or hard to control or deal with problem, how many in our nation are calling the litany of mass shootings what they are—White-on-White crime and acts of domestic terrorism?

As Black administrators in child welfare, we fear the toll that relentless gun violence and political avoidance is having on Black children. The cumulative effect is a wartime mentality. It's shifting the focus of Black children further away from education, opportunities to learn and to just have fun and play—and toward aggression, early death, violence and depression.

What our Black children need are caring adults in their corner who are willing to protect them from gun violence and march with them. They need schools armed with mental health and guidance counselors; not teachers armed with guns. They need an arsenal of wrap-around support services to equip them for the journey.

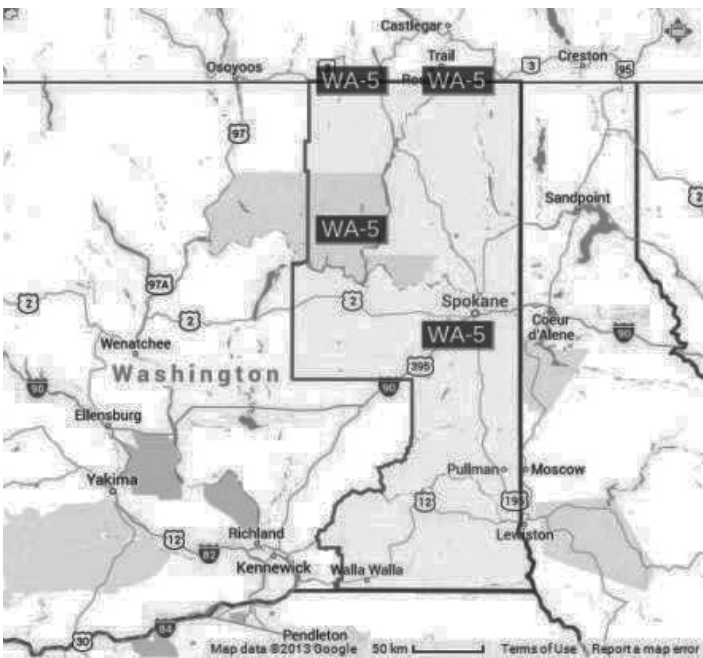
And they need opportunities to learn, graduate, land jobs and thrive. We can no longer ignore that our Black children are dying too.

Sharon L. McDaniel, MPA, Ed.D., is president of Black Administrators in Child Welfare (BACW). Leonard Burton, MSW, is a BACW board member. Contact: B. Denise Hawkins (571) 228-9926 or bdwrite@gmail.com.

WA 5th Congressional District NOVEMBER ELECTION

Meet Your Congressional Candidates

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 April Questions

Topic: Criminal Justice - The NAACP Criminal Justice Fact Sheet includes the following troubling information about racial disparities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System: Between 1980 and 2015, the number of people incarcerated in America increased from roughly 500,000 to over 2.2 million; 1 in every 37 adults in the United States, or 2.7% of the adult population, is under some form of correctional supervision; In 2014, African Americans constituted 2.3 million, or 34%, of the total 6.8 million correctional population; African Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of whites; The imprisonment rate for African American women is twice that of white women. Nationwide, African American children represent 32% of children who are arrested, 42% of children who are detained, and 52% of children whose cases are judicially waived to criminal court. African Americans and whites use drugs at similar rates, but the imprisonment rate of African Americans for drug charges is almost 6 times that of whites. If African Americans and Hispanics were incarcerated at the same rates as whites, prison and jail populations would decline by almost 40%.

Questions: What could congress be doing on a national level that it is not currently doing to address the racial disparities that exist in the United States criminal justice system? What is your understanding of the racial disparities that currently exist in Spokane’s criminal justice system and what role could you as a representative of the 5th Congressional District play in addressing the disparities that currently exist in our local criminal justice system?

Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Q.: What could congress be doing on a national level that it is not currently doing to address the racial disparities that exist in the United States criminal justice system? What is your understanding of the racial disparities that currently exist in Spokane’s criminal justice system and what role could you as a representative of the 5th Congressional District play in addressing the disparities that currently exist in our local criminal justice system?



A responsible criminal justice system is integral to a safe society. But with incarceration rates at an all time high, and people of color and their families disproportionately impacted under our current penal system, it’s clear we’re in need of an overhaul.

One of the primary reasons why incarceration rates remain high is the propensity for nonviolent criminals to reoffend. As mothers and fathers, these individuals face obstacles to provide for their families when they’re released from prison. With few resources available to help them secure a job and reintegrate into society, they often reoffend.

Providing these men and women with the tools and resources to rejoin our community and be productive citizens – for themselves and their families – is a critical first step.

For this reason, I joined Congressman Doug Collins from Georgia last year in co-sponsoring the Prison Reform and Redemption Act. This bipartisan legislation would provide support systems, mental health counseling, workforce development programs, substance abuse programs, faith-based intervention, and help transition people back into the community by allowing prisoners to end their sentences in halfway houses or home confinement.

Building on this momentum, last fall I invited Congressman Collins to join me in Spokane to discuss the necessity of criminal justice reform at a Peaceful Community Roundtable. Together, with local leaders in the field, we heard stories from people who’ve experienced these challenges firsthand.

Leading these discussions and bridging divides within our community is just the first step. To accomplish thoughtful and meaningful reform, we must remain warriors for human dignity and respect. We must listen to each other, hear from people in the community, and continue having courageous conversations.

Ultimately, criminal justice reform is pro-family policy. And while we need to be tough on crime and work to create a more safe and secure community, we also have to think about the impact of mass incarceration on families. When we work to rehabilitate instead of incarcerate, we can reunite families and rebuild communities, helping break the cycle of incarceration and alleviating poverty for a stronger Eastern Washington.

Lisa Brown

Q: What could Congress be doing on a national level that it is not currently doing to address the racial disparities that exist in the United States criminal justice system?



Our criminal justice system needs reform at the national, state, and local levels. We incarcerate more of our population than other countries with racial disproportionality occurring from police stops to sentencing. There are several important bills that have been introduced in Congress and unfortunately, this legislation is not moving forward under the current congressional leadership.

Examples of proposed legislation include the Safe Justice Act. This bill would enact evidence-based reform and reinvest the savings in strategies to reduce recidivism and crime. The Dignity for Incarcerated Women Act, sponsored by Sen. Cory Booker and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, would improve the treatment of federal prisoners who are primary caretakers and parents. We started down a similar path when I was in the state Senate, receiving bipartisan support, and saw savings for taxpayers and reduced recidivism.

In Congress, I would advocate for policies and laws that keep communities safe while implementing sentencing training programs and sentencing reform to reduce racial disproportionality within the system- including reforms within the juvenile justice system. In Congress, I will work with the Congressional Black Caucus to identify priority criminal justice reform legislation.

Q: What is your understanding of the racial disparities that currently exist in Spokane’s criminal justice system and what role could you as a representative of the 5th Congressional District play in addressing the disparities that currently exist in our local criminal justice system?

There exists disparity in pre-trial detention with regard to both the frequency at which people are detained and the average number of days spent in pretrial detention. African American and Native

American adults are detained approximately 6 times more than white adults. White adults remain in detention an average of 16 days but African American adults are detained for an average of 25 days and Native American adults spend an average of 21 days in pretrial detention.

Local groups, such as the Spokane Public Schools Task Force, work to reduce disparities in suspensions. Along with fellow board members on the Empire Health Foundation, I supported work being done within the Spokane Public Schools to reduce racial disparities in suspension and school discipline policies. The Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council is also tasked with developing processes that will reduce racial disparity in our local justice system.

A Department of Justice initiative was canceled under the current administration resulting in the Spokane Police Department not receiving the final report on what they had been doing.

My role will be to meet with members of the community, support identified solutions, request baseline data and progress reports- and work with Federal agencies to identify funding sources for training and community initiatives.

Gene Aikens: Done with Smoking

Gene Aikens, a native of Chicago, Illinois, is the new face of the Spokane Regional Health District’s anti-smoking campaign, “Done My Way.” Gene’s introduction to the campaign began at a Black Lens screening of the film “Black Lives Black Lungs”, which took place at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in November of last year. I spent a few minutes talking to Gene about how he got involved in the campaign and why.

What prompted you to smoke that first cigarette?

I was 16 and a sophomore at Chicago Vocational High School when I smoked my first cigarette in 1965. Smoking was ingrained in the culture. It was a part of my life. My mother smoked. All of her friends smoked. Smoking was what you did as a right of passage, going from a young teenager to your adult mode. As a kid, I never realized how influential it was. Smoking was so prevalent that it was easy to get into it.

What did you connect to in the film Black Lives Black Lungs?

One of the things that stood out the most was the fact that they had these young ladies on the corners in the downtown district of Chicago. On State street, the great street. It was where Marshall Fields and all of the high end department stores were and we would go down there and window shop. The cigarette ladies were a lot like the spritzer women you see in the department stores, like at Nordstrom, that give you samples. It really stood out because you didn’t interact that much with white people in those days. And it was free. They would give us these little packs that had two or three cigarettes in them and that pretty much was all you needed.

Then there were the vans that you saw in the film giving out cigarettes. That was a true thing. I lived in the housing project and the vans would be parked over by the

grocery store. They would show up sporadically and hand out free cigarettes. When you are living in the housing project and you don’t hardly have anything to eat half the time, any time anything was free, when somebody is giving something away for free, a lot of times you just take advantage of it.

When did you stop smoking? Why?

Because of my daughter’s health and second hand smoke. My daughter contracted meningitis. She was in a coma for six months and wasn’t expected to make it. I am a 24/7 caregiver for her. My sister-in-law talked to me about my smoking. My daughter’s health is very important to me. That was a part of the inspiration. Outside of that, the other fact was the financial aspect of it. It was so cheap when I first started smoking. I was doing the math in my head and stricken by how much it amounted to on a monthly basis. So between my daughter’s health and the financial aspect, I decided to give it a go.

What do you hope people get out of the Done My Way ad campaign?

I want them to realize that everybody doesn’t have to follow the standard practice as far as trying to quit smoking. The way I did it worked for me and what ever a person has to do to get it to work for them, I encourage them to do that. Whatever works best. There are different ways to quit and there are triggers that can inspire you to move passed it. It takes a lot of will power, but if I can help one person, as far as quitting the habit, well then I feel good about that.

Done My Way is a campaign through the Spokane Regional Health District that supports people in Spokane in their attempts to quit smoking and encourages their use of cessation methods that work best for them. The site contains resources for quitting and testimonials. Visit <https://srhd.org/done-my-way> to see Gene’s video.



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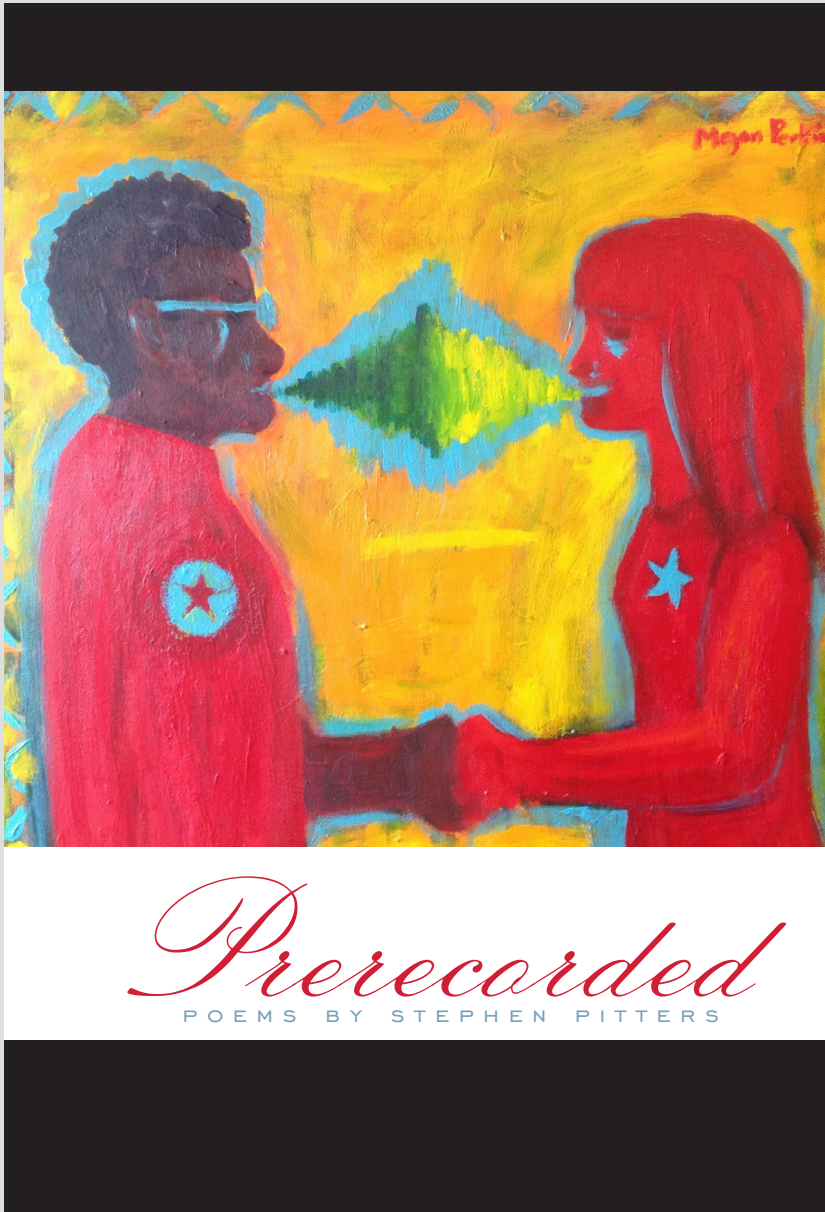


Stephen Pitters: Author, Poet, Releases Fifth Book



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Music presentation will start at 5:30pm.

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14th Annual Diversity Luncheon Celebrating Black History Month

Sponsored by the Spokane County Bar Association & SCBA Diversity Section



Photos Courtesy Robert Lloyd, <http://4comculture.com>

IN THE SPIRIT

Mona Martin: Transforming Lives Through Dance

Tell me about your background?

I'm from Los Angeles California, I came to Spokane my sophomore year in high school. My sister and I moved here to stay with our grandparents andnd they pretty much raised us. I graduated from Ferris high school in 1987 and then after high school, I had the option to go back, but I decided to stay.

Were you always a creative kid?

I have always been a dancer because my mother was a dancer. I wanted to go to dance school, ballet school, but that was out of the question because we didn't have money for that. That wasn't a mindset that they were in. We were not so much in a survival mindset, but in a I'm getting through mindset. So anything like that was out of the question. It was not even thought of. But my cousin, her parents were functional and stable, and their mindset was broader. They had put her in ballet and we lived down the street from each other in L.A. I had to have been about 9 or 10. My cousin was doing ballet classes and she left her book accidentally at grandma's house. I noticed the book was there and I opened up the book, and I remember to this day, the pictures that were in the book. They had the positions, first position, second position. They had pictures



and they had the instructions. I remember looking at the pictures and trying to follow the instructions. This was this is my first introduction to dance.

What did that feel like. I mean like what was your emotion around that?

It was almost like a natural feeling. Like this was normal, even though it wasn't normal, it was normal.

What came next so, how did that lead you in this direction....?

I'm gifted at dance, because my mother was a dancer. So dancing came natural and I was always good at it, but I wasn't trained. I would dance at home, I would go to the club and dance. I wasn't a drinker. I was more of a dancer. That was my outlet.

I gave my life to the Lord around 24. I've always been in church, but I had never seen dancing in the church. I didn't even know you could do that, but when I was leading the choir, I would always be moving. I believe it was in 2003. I had maybe been at Solid Rock Christian Church for about a year when they had I guest speaker. It was their church anniversary and the guest speaker was Prophetess Carol Cartwright from Texas. I worked as an usher, so I was in the back folding something or doing something, and she called me from the back up to the front of the church and begin to prophesy over me for 45 minutes about dancing, about the gift of dance, the ability to dance, the ministry of dance. She didn't know, and no one knew, that I had already been dancing in the house with Christian music and I didn't even know why, I was just drawn to it, I would just dance to it, in the bathroom, in the living room, in the kitchen, in the bedroom,

I really believe this, I believe what God was doing was purifying and adjusting me privately and the prophetic word shifted me into that spiritual place or that spiritual position of a Miriam. Miriam was Moses' sister. She was a prophetic dancer. After they crossed over to the Red Sea, Miriam took her tambourine and a group of women and they began to dance for victory.



How did that lead to you starting the Christian Dance Academy?

So now, I've got this prophetic word over my life, but I still don't step out into it until 2-3 years later. I started dancing in the back of the church. Remember that I had never seen dancing in the church before, Well you can't do something that has never been exemplified before you. So after that prophetic word, God takes me back into the privacy of my own home and begins to train me and develop me from there. Then 2-3 years later God brought Beth Moore from Arizona. She was a dancer and a flagger, and she came to our church to do a conference. I ended up being her armor-bearer.

That was the first time that I saw dancing in action. I had a picture to it and an experience to it. I knew that's what it was supposed to look like. I was already in it, but I didn't know how to convey it. When Beth danced, she was conveying. She was demonstrating. She was exemplifying what dance looks in its fullness as a minister of dance. I just broke down and cried. That's it. That's what it looks like.

Continued on Page 16



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&
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April 20th at 6:30
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Where Healing Begins and Support Never Ends

Written by Karen Boone
*Senior Advisor for the Women United
Against Sexual Molestation*

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, otherwise known as SAAM. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) has announced that the theme for the 2018 Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign is “Embrace Your Voice!”

During this month, people across the United States raise awareness about sexual violence, how to prevent it, and how to support those who are affected by it. We all have a unique role to play in prevention and changing the culture. When we reflect on and change how we think and talk about the issue of sexual violence and consent, we can create a culture of respect, equality, and safety. All of our voices have power. It’s time for everyone to find that voice and embrace it.

Spokane native Sherri Noble Jones is the Founder/CEO of the non-profit Women United Against Sexual Molestation (WUASM). She currently lives in Jacksonville, Florida and is a sexual assault survivor.

On the morning of April 25, 2015, Sherri says, “As I was walking down a street a man, appeared out of nowhere, grabbed me tightly from the rear and began to drag me toward a wooded area. Frightened for my life, while being overpowered by this stranger, I raised my voice and began to scream for help. A car pulled over and the driver got out. My assailant loosened his tight grip, dropped me to the ground and ran, attempting to get away. He was caught by the police and jailed for two weeks. No formal charges were brought against him and he was released without punishment. A month later he broke into a home and sexually assaulted another woman.”



Although the definition of sexual assault can vary from state to state, The National Center for Victims of Crime states that sexual assault can take many forms. Rape, attempted rape or any unwanted sexual contact and/or threats are defined as sexual assault. As a result of such crimes, most victims are left to suffer with the long term emotional effects of such assaults.

The U.S. Department of Justice states that on average there are 237,868 victims of sexual assault and rape each year. This staggering statistic is only the start of what then becomes a bigger detriment to society. Sexual assault not only hurts its victims.

Victims of sexual assault are:

- 3 times more likely to suffer from depression
- 6 times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder
- 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol
- 26 times more likely to abuse drugs
- 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide

Whether its denial, anxiety, depression, or other more complicated emotional disorders, victims of sexual assault and their family members often don’t believe there is a safe place to turn for assistance.

Women United Against Sexual Molestation offers free no cost services to victims of assault. Their mission is to bring light to the tragedies of sexual molestation and assault while uniting lives through healing, acceptance and movement forward beyond their demise. The focus is to provide victims and their family the counseling, support and referral services needed to get back on track with their lives. Victims are offered confidential individual and group services along with the resources necessary to tackle what may seem unsurmountable and programs aimed to help rebuild and find hope.

Sherri has committed her life to learning about this crime and helping victims like herself cope with the residual impact of their circumstances. Each day she is motivated by her knowledge that WUASM is providing a much needed service to the women and the families they serve. She believes victims don’t have to let the crime erode what is theirs to reclaim.

As in many cases, Sherri’s assailant was not formally charged or punished for his crime. She raised her voice on April 25, 2015 for the purpose of saving her own life. Raped twice when she was 15, she believes, if she had said something then, it may have saved the next person. This is what encouraged her after the last attack, in April, to start her nonprofit. She has learned the strength of embracing her voice and uses it today to influence hope, healing, and change.

WUASM 501(c) (3) non-profit located in Jacksonville, Florida. Its services are provided through the generosity of local partners, sponsors, foundation grants and donors who believe in the work and the mission of the organization.

For more information about WUASM call 904- 288-1585 or e-mail Sherri Noble Jones at sherri.jones@wuasm.org.

FOODS FOR THE SOUL

Recipes for a Balanced Life By Faye McMillan



Spring is my favorite time of the year! Seeing the endless beauty of God through His creation, and the intricate, thoughtful detail He puts into the plants and animals is amazing to me.

Gazing out of my window just thinking, I noticed a young deer in the thickets near my fence. It walked back and forth coming closer to the edge of the thickets that leads to the meadow. I wasn't sure at first if it was a male or female. But noticed the way it held its head up and straight back, full of confidence as it entered the meadow, each step carefully made with a pause, watching both ways as it slowly approached the sweet grass in the middle of the meadows.

The young stag tasted the sweet grass and then looked over its shoulders and nodded for a doe to come and join him. He carefully watched, looking in both directions, as the doe entered the meadows and started to eat. Again he looked towards the thickets and nodded, another doe entered the meadows to partake of the sweet grass.

The deers finished eating, then proceeded to leave the meadows, with confidence and caution the stag led the way as they left the meadow in a single file. One of my favorite scriptures came to me!

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you.”
Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV



Reflecting on the many life lessons I have encountered during my walk as a Christian, like many of you I've had my share of life's ups and downs, disappointments, setbacks, heartaches and pain.

Believe me I have had my share of failures as well. But through it all! Like the young stag, I had to step out on faith, believing that whatever I was going through, God is with me and it was for my good and for His glory.

In fact, even as you're reading this, He's there with you. I encourage you to take a few moments right now and pray. Surrendering the all of life's discomfort and pain, I believe you can truly trust Him to give you hope and confidence that He is not only with you, but He will see you through.

And just like the stag you will be able to overcome the pains of yesterday. God will make all things new as you begin step out in faith.

Cornbeef Brisket

- 1 Corn beef brisket (about 4 pounds) with spice packet
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 1/2 pounds potatoes peeled
- 8 medium carrots, halved crosswise
- 1 medium head cabbage, cut into wedges

Directions:

Place brisket, contents of seasoning packet, brown sugar and bay leaves in a large Dutch oven or stockpot; cover with water. Bring to a boil.

Add potatoes and carrots; return to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, cover, just until beef and vegetables are tender, 30-40 minutes. (if pot is full remove potatoes and carrots before adding cabbage; re-heat before serving.)

Add cabbage to pot; return to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, covered, until cabbage is tender, about 15 minutes.

Remove vegetables and corn beef; keep warm. Cut corn beef across the grain into slices. Serve with vegetables.
*Add salt and pepper to taste.

Happy Easter!

Give it a try and let me know if you like it. If you don't, please share why not. If you have an idea for a healthy dish, let me know that too. I can be reached through the Black Lens by sending an e-mail to sandy@blacklensnews.com. Put Foods for the Soul in the subject line.

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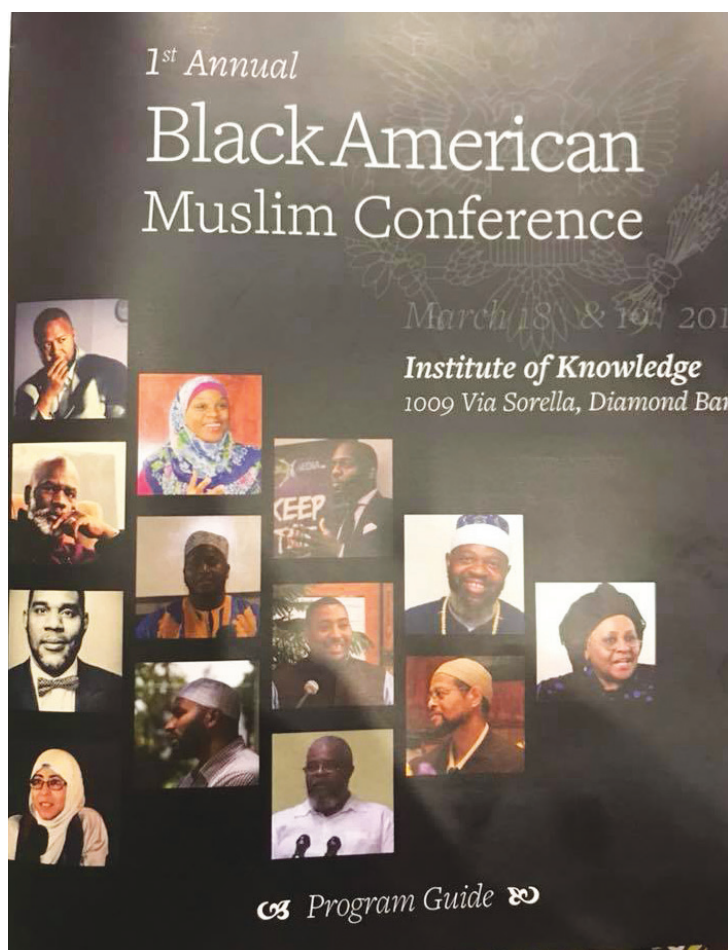
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2018 Black American Muslim Conference



By Dora “Duaa Rahemaah” Williams

I have been residing in Spokane for about a year and a half and the only time I’m around other people is either at a meeting, a conference, or a community event. I have no one to hangout with and I miss being around my Muslim sisters in Seattle, hanging out and having fun.

I wanted and needed to be around Black Muslims. People that look like me, believe like me, and that understand me. I went to the Black American Muslim Conference to see my sisters from Seattle. I went to experience Islam through a Black Lens. I went to get information on how to deal with issues that effect the Black Muslim/Black community in an Islamic way, also to meet new people and to gain a sisterhood across the states.

The conference was soooooo amazing and peaceful. I felt like I was at home. Since I converted three years ago, this was the first time that I have been in the same room where the majority of Muslims were African Americans/Black. To see so many beautiful sisters rocking their hijabs, the sense of community and being accepted was refreshing.

Alhamduallah, at the conference I learned about the foundation and history of the Black Muslim community and the Black masjid. I learned that we as Black Muslims need a special criteria for spirituality.



We talked about racism inside of Islam and the masjids and in the communities. We also talked about mass incarceration. We know about mass incarceration and the impact it has on our community, but what is not talked about is that those men and women that are incarcerated are converting to Islam and they will be released as Muslims. As a Black Muslim, I wonder why we are not invited to be at the table in this community to address issues that have an impact on us being African American/Black People.

Alhamduallah, everything about the conference impacted me in one way or another. It made me think about the community here in Spokane and how I can make an impact here without losing who I am. But what impacted me the most was the sense of community, which I am missing. What we face as Black Muslims, as Black people, is different from those from other cultures/countries. Our struggles are different, our issues are different, so our solutions will have to be different as well.

The Lamppost Education Initiative and ISLAH-LA launched of the First Annual Black American Muslim Conference (BAMC) the weekend of March 17-18, 2018 at the Institute of Knowledge in Diamond Bar, CA (30 minutes from Los Angeles, CA). The aim of the conference was to focus on the concerns, plight, and future of Islam in Black America. Special panel discussions and lectures addressed issues of primary concern to the African American Muslim community as well as issues that all Muslims face together. For information visit: <https://www.lamppost-productions.com>



Brothers Keep it Real: The Vet Life

Reality TV Show Review

By Jackie McCowen-Rose

Too often so-called “reality” shows on TV show Black folks as one-dimensional stereotypes. Now in its third season on the Animal Planet network, “The Vet Life” is a different take on who we are.

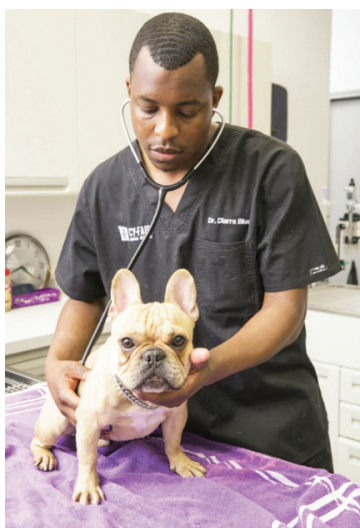
If you haven’t seen the program – which runs on Saturday evenings – it follows the work and family lives of three young veterinarians at the animal hospital they founded in Cypress, TX, near Houston. The practice is called Cy-Fair, after the two adjoining neighborhoods. The three, Drs. Blue, Ross and Levigne, met while attending Tuskegee Institute’s college of veterinary medicine. They became best friends, their families became close, and they decided to move everyone to Houston and open their own animal hospital.

Dr. Diarra Blue, Dr. Aubrey “A.J.” Ross, and Dr. Michael Levigne don’t just treat dogs and cats. You will see them caring for every kind of animal, from bulls to bo



constrictors, goats to chinchillas, bunnies to birds; you never know what will come through the door next. Watching these vets one sees clearly that they love animals, are knowledgeable, have empathy with the animals’ owners, and they also love their families and each other.

Every show takes time to visit with the vets’ wives and children and the two grandmothers who figure large in their lives (Dr. Ross loves his mom’s gumbo!). While always professional in the front office and in exam and surgery rooms, these guys joke and carry on – “you know how we do” – and keep it real among themselves, which is very refreshing.



Grillin’ and chillin’ (the big BBQ cook-off), Date Night, good family times in general; the vibe is a wonderful combination of making it in the larger world and yet never forgetting who you are.

The vets give back to the community every chance they have. Cy-Fair has a 5th-wheel trailer which serves as a mobile vet clinic. They offer free vaccines, inexpensive spay/neuter, and always strive to educate the public – especially children – about all animals and how we honor and care for



them because they give so much. They have partnered with a local veteran who runs a rescue ranch to bring a petting zoo event to the public that included not only small animals, but farm animals, and even a couple of baby kangaroos (in diapers, yet!) to further their aim of educating.

As with anyone who puts it out there on television, there have been complaints against the practice. However, the records of the Texas Board of Medical Examiners show no disciplinary action against the Cy-Fair veterinarians, and reviews of Cy-Fair and the three vets are overwhelmingly positive. I encourage readers to do their own investigating and

draw their own conclusions, preferably after watching “The Vet Life” a couple of times.

Good Black male role models are so difficult to find in the world of “reality” television, and television in general. Role models who demonstrate the diversity of what Black folks do professionally are even scarcer. I recommend “The Vet Life” for a show you can enjoy with your kids, or just by yourself for a refreshing hour of tears, laughter, and general “wow, I did not know that!”

If you like it, go to www.animalplanet.com/tv-shows/the-vet-life and let the network know. You can also find biographies of the Cy-Fair vets at www.facebook.com/TheVetLife; their histories are fascinating, because though not all grew up around animals, all have loved animals all their life. Let’s support this show and hope for more!

Note: The show is now on summer hiatus, and the new season not yet announced. If you want it back after seeing episodes on the website, contact Animal Planet network.

Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears



Black Holes, America and The Mind of God

Science and religion have been formally at odds with each other in classic duality since the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century. But since the advent of the scientific theory known as quantum physics, the intersection between science and spirituality is undeniable to me, and to an increasing number of scientists. Albert Einstein himself said, “Everyone who is seriously committed to the cultivation of science becomes convinced that in all the laws of the universe is manifest a spirit vastly superior to [humankind] and to which we with our powers must feel humble.”

The world recently lost one of the most brilliant scientific minds of our time. What I don’t know or understand about physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking’s theories and discoveries is vast -- as vast as a black hole in space, the subject and study of which gave rise to Hawking’s most groundbreaking theory called Hawking Radiation. The science surrounding black holes is very complex, but let me offer my extremely simplified, layperson understanding.

Black holes are believed to form when stars die and their massive bulk collapses inward, creating an intense gravitational field, a field so intense that it pulls in anything and everything that passes close to its boundaries. Vast amounts of matter and energy of all kinds -- gasses, planets, and even light itself -- circle the vortex, powerless against the unimaginable force that pulls it toward oblivion. For a while it was believed that black holes were indestructible, and that any substance pulled into them was destroyed forever.

However, as a result of Hawking’s theory, it seems that black holes are not the cosmic exterminators they were once believed to be. Hawking theorized that some, or perhaps all of the substance that gets sucked into a black hole may in fact not be destroyed, but rather it is radically transformed from whatever it once was into radiation. It is this radiant energy that escapes the hole. As a result, a black hole will eventually shrink and evaporate. Its final demise comes as a massive explosion of radiant energy! Steven Hawking himself said, “If you feel you are trapped in a black hole, don’t give up. There is a way out.”

Black holes are popular metaphors for circumstances into which we find ourselves drawn against our will; a destructive situation from which there is no escape. Our suffering is assured, our fate is sealed. Like matter and energy in space, the people of this country circle the black hole that is consuming America. Some of us try with all our might to resist the powerful energy that threatens to annihilate our humanity on so many levels. Some of us choose to deny or willfully ignore the danger. Some of us become cynical and pessimistic. Others retreat into nihilism. Most of us find ourselves continuously cycling in and out of one or another of these numbing or oppressive states of mind.

The intense gravitational pull of America’s black hole threatens compassion, justice, liberty, and our very democracy. It steals away our hope via every form of media at our disposal in a daily barrage of sensational headlines – in the never-ending “breaking news story,” and in self-obsessed reporting from both the political right and left. Some of it is fake, some of it isn’t. All of it is depressing.

We circle the black hole of a rising police state (ICE) that terrorizes immigrant communities with impunity – snatching mothers and fathers away from their terrified, screaming children as they walk down the street. These raids have become indiscriminate dragnets, capturing and detaining predominantly brown and black people, young and old, many without any criminal record whatsoever.

America is a black hole of increasingly unabashed and unchallenged corporate totalitarianism, of institutions corrupt beyond all accountability, and of morally bankrupt political leaders. America is becoming a black hole of sanctified hate – a force willing to sacrifice the lives of its children rather than ban the sale and ownership of personal rapid-fire military assault guns.

But when we apply the Hawking Radiation theory, we know that a black hole is not inescapable. The black hole of America will not devour us, it will empower us! With fierce new resolve, we shoot up from the abyss in brilliant, radiant en-

ergy as we take to the streets to proclaim that Black lives matter, and that women’s rights are human rights. The energy builds as Latino youth brought to this country as children by undocumented parents march to preserve President Barack Obama’s executive order protecting them from deportation, while lawmakers work toward comprehensive, and compassionate immigration reform. The radiation grows stronger as our youth rise up against the unbridled power and tyranny of the National Rifle Association (NRA), and the cowering and cowardly political leaders it controls, declaring we will not stand by and allow you to enable our slaughter!

In our transformed, energetic state, we liberate ourselves from the self-interest and hyperbole of the news media, and harness mass communications to proclaim #metoo, and #enoughisenough! We are fired up, and organizing from the ground up to replace self-serving, ill-willed lawmakers, and to prove that money is not the only influence in electing people to public office.

In the Christian faith tradition, the tradition I now call The Way of Jesus, it is the season of Easter; the season of dying to what we once were and being born again into glorious Spirit. As a follower of The Way of Jesus, I have come to understand death as a transformation from the physical, psychological, emotional and even spiritual constructs of what we have been, into the essence of what we truly are: A divine spark, born of the Mind of God. Stephen Hawking once said that “to know the Cosmos is to know the mind of God.” I might instead say, to know the Cosmos is to experience God. To experience God, is to be radically and radiantly transformed!

In the here and now of life in America, people of conscience, compassion, and a thirst for justice and inclusivity, are being pulled into a vast, tormentous hole. But both science and Faith tell us that there is a way out—a radical, radiant way out.

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

Mona Martin: Christian Dance Academy and Empowerment Center

Continued From Page 12

Beth Moore took me under her wing. She made my first dance garment. Sewed it and mailed it to me, so I had the proper attire to wear while I was ministering. So now we’re walking in this and this thing is growing and I’m developing and I’m learning how to do it and God begins to say, okay, I need you to teach others.

October 31, 2011, I was sitting at my desk and the Lord dropped into my spirit the Dance studio. Remember, I’ve not been in a studio. I think the first time I stepped my foot in the studio when I was 38 years old. I went home and started to write the business plan. The holy spirit gave it to me and I began to write it. The next day, I called a meeting with my pastor, my spiritual father, and I shared with them the business plan and they prayed over it and then they blessed me. I brought together a group of women around me. We met in my living room and we began to put together the concept of the Christian Dance Academy. That was November 2011. January 2, 2012 is when we opened the academy.

Tell me about that first class?

We did an open house in December to pre-register students. Our first class, we did a ballet class and prophetic class. We had the women come in, we didn’t have the children yet, and they were elated. They were excited. Some of them had taken ballet class before, but most of them had not. It was a wonderful experience for them. I think there were eight of us in that first class.

During the process of getting the Academy opened, God was dealing with me about going full time. I was in the medical field. I was making good money. I had a home. I had a mortgage. I had a son that was a senior in high school. Full time? I wouldn’t. I just wouldn’t do it. But finally, I was so troubled. I said, okay, I’ll do it. So February 2, 2012 I put in my two

weeks notice to go full time in to the business. Two hours after I put my two weeks notice in, I got a phone call from somebody I know and the play Seven Sisters Seven Stools was coming to Spokane and they were looking for a dancer. My name came up, so I got a contract working the play two hours after I quit my job.

Describe how things were when the Dance Academy was at its height?

At our height, we were doing energy movement. We were doing intercessory movement. We were teaching other people that had a call on their life to be dancer ministers like me, I was training and developing them. We were helping churches organize and put in place a dance team. We were doing classes at different churches. We were helping organizations and churches open up their own dance studios. On top of that, we were traveling and doing ministry dancing at conferences and retreat events. I was juggling the studio. I was juggling mentoring. I was juggling traveling as a minister and on top of that we shifted into coaching. So not only were we a dance instructor, but we were a coach. We were using dancing to allow people to relinquish blockage so that they could live their fullest life. Now I’m coaching. I’m empowering and I’m using movement to do that.

How has the studio evolved to where you are at now?

It’s time to let go of the studio, the teaching, the private classes and move on to ministry. So I closed the door of the studio in October 2017 and from that I began to evolve. I’m evolving into different aspects of what dance means in the community.

I still do the dancing. I still do groups if they call me. As a matter of fact, I’m working with a church, with their youth department. They call me in and I’ll do classes with them. I will also go and travel, as a matter of fact. I was in Idaho and I’m all around the Pacific Northwest. I’ll be in Tennessee

doing a workshop. Seattle. I do workshops and seminars on flagging and dancing, but I also do workshops and seminars for entrepreneurs who want to start their own business.

What’s your vision? What’s been given to you in terms of where you’re headed?

You know that’s a good question. I’m sort of kind of feeling my way in this new season that I’m in. I am now working back in the medical field and also doing what I do dance-wise. I’m not quite sure. I know that God has allowed me to start making money, because we weren’t making very much money. We were running like a 501c3 even though we weren’t a 501c3. So I wasn’t really making a lot of money, but now that I’m back in the work force I’m able to have the resources that I need to invest, because this is an expensive ministry. Now I’m able to get what I need so that I am able to present Kingdom through movement in a more excellent way. Different venues are opening up for me. Different platforms are opening up for me. Bigger opportunities are opening, not just for the aspect of dance, but also in speaking, so I’m moving more to that realm.

What have you learned about yourself in this process from when you left LA to doing all the work with dance?

I learned that dance is not just dance. Dance is a tool that God uses to transform our lives. It challenges us. It reveals to us. It breaks down the walls. It has given me hope. It has also walked me through inner healing. Danced helped me to allow those wounded broken areas in me to be processed into a healthier whole person. Just dancing. Always with God’s presence. Always with the Holy spirit guiding and leading us.

For more information on the Christian Dance Academy and Empowerment Center contact Mona Martin at cdaspo-kane@yahoo.com.

Meet Nikki Lockwood:

ACLU Parent and Student Organizer

Addressing Disparities in School Student Discipline and Arrests

The ACLU is part of the Every Student Counts Alliance, a Spokane-based coalition, formed around discipline reform in Spokane Public Schools that includes many community organizational partners.

My role as Parent and Student Organizer for the ACLU is to build engagement of impacted families, parents, caregivers and students, in the policy work around exclusionary discipline reform, especially those groups disproportionately impacted, including those families with students of color, students receiving free and reduced lunch and students with special needs.

Inviting folks to advocacy opportunities, building skills for advocacy, helping parents and students see their role in making change from the themselves and the common good, that's what I'm doing.

Other parents and I have moved from our family's isolated struggles to join with others, building power, to address needed change in school discipline and related issues. We have moved from being frustrated and feeling like victims to being active participants in the change we see that is needed.

When grass roots work is done in improving systems, the goal is to hear from impacted families about what they see their students needing. What are we missing in the system. What do the families see as priorities in helping keep their students in school when they are struggling with unwanted behaviors?

It's hard as there is a certain shame that comes along with having your kid suspended, which can make it hard to see yourself in the advocate role. I have dealt with that myself. But to know my child shouldn't have been suspended, and that it was an inappropriate and honestly, illegal reaction to her special needs issues, I was mad.



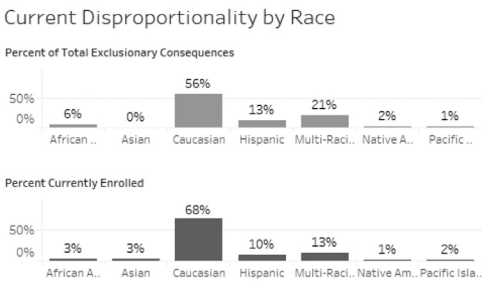
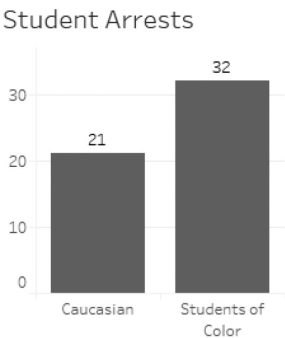
trainings, informed directly from student focus groups, to all the area administrators.

Our school district is home to some kids with very challenging behaviors, reflecting the many challenges our community faces and that's no easy task. There is still work to do.

Students of color and students on free and reduced lunch continue to be disproportionately affected by exclusionary discipline and arrests from school, but those same students are often missing from the conversations. Those voices are needed to inform the work.

One common sentiment I hear from all the students and parents/caregivers when we talk about the issues around discipline reform is that they don't want others to go through what they have gone through.

Nikki Lockwood
ACLU Parent
& Student Organizer
Every Student
Counts Alliance
509-638-7555



Do You Have Questions or Concerns About a Student?

The Office of the Education Ombuds Works to Support K-12 Students

Isaiah* loves baseball. He knows all the stats – pro and college—and always has a baseball in his hands. He's only in the 4th grade, and already has his sights on playing in high school, like his older brother. But Isaiah has started to wonder if he'll make it to high school. He's always getting in trouble at school. It started early. He just couldn't sit still. Some teachers didn't mind – they let him move around; gave him jobs to do. Others got frustrated. They told him over and over to sit down, be still, be quiet. By third grade, he couldn't keep up academically. Reading, especially, was hard. And everything required reading. Even math, which Isaiah liked, had story problems!

His 2nd grade teacher told Isaiah's mom she thought he might have dyslexia. His mom asked if the school could do an evaluation, but then summer came. The next fall, she asked again. The teacher suggested waiting awhile to see if he caught up. He didn't. Isaiah's Grandmother helped draft a letter requesting an evaluation, and in November, the school agreed to start one. That fall, Isaiah got his first suspension – he shouted back at his teacher when she told him, again, to sit down and stop talking. He felt terrible. He wanted to do good and make his family proud. But he just wasn't getting it.



In January the school called his parents for a meeting. They said he qualified for an "IEP" (Individualized Education Program) and would start going to a class called the Resource Room for reading. The class was smaller, but a bit rowdy. Students would start talking sports and end up in the principal's office. Isaiah was suspended twice in the spring. He started to hate school and wanted to quit. His family wouldn't let him give up.

When 4th grade started, Isaiah was determined to do better. He tried to ignore other kids when they were messing around, but he still got in trouble. His family saw him trying, but still struggling. In October, he was suspended again. It was too much. They got together to talk about what they could do. They decided to appeal the suspension. They also sent an email asking for an IEP team meeting.

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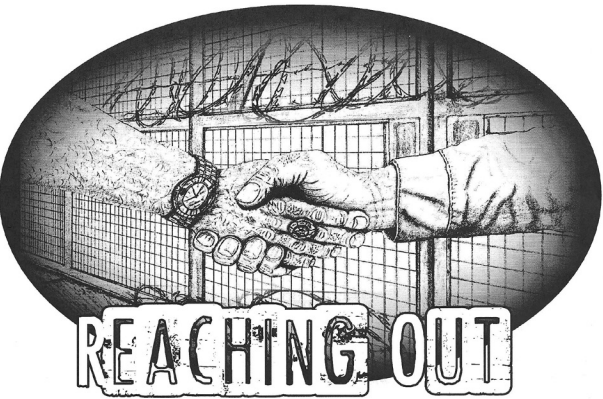
They didn't expect a quick fix, but they believed there had to be an alternative to so many suspensions.

*Isaiah is a fictional character, but the Washington State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) works daily with families, community professionals and educators supporting students like Isaiah by sharing information about our state's k-12 public schools, facilitating communication, and helping to collaboratively resolve problems.

Our services are free and confidential.

If you have questions or concerns about a K-12 public school student in Washington, feel free call us at 1-866-297-2597, email us at oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov or visit us online at www.oeo.wa.gov.

Resources:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheWAE-EdOmbudsman/>; <https://twitter.com/EdOmbuds>; <https://www.facebook.com/WAEducationOmbuds/> (English); <https://www.facebook.com/Ombuds-deEducacion/> (Spanish/español).



THE BLACK PRISONERS CAUCUS

Coyote Ridge

Reach Out and Touch Somebody’s...

By: Harry “ Brocq ” Whitman

Jesus Christ (Isa) said, “what you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me...”

The political winds of building more prisons to warehouse the human residue of society’s ills has finally changed course here in the State of Washington. The old debate, punishment v. rehabilitation, is no longer of any consequence.

Washington state lawmakers have closed prisons, are considering community citizen review committee legislation, and authorizing funding for release readiness, reentry, and recidivism reduction programs. Prosecutors are re-thinking the logic of three strikes life without parole laws for incarcerated individuals convicted of non-serious violent crimes. The legislature restored the voice of formerly incarcerated individuals when it passed the law to automatically restore the right to vote for individuals convicted of felonies who are no longer incarcerated or on community supervision, thus, adding them to the constituent class, along with all other citizens to whom politicians seeking elective office must now hear.

While the cynic in us may think this appears to be classic politics, I argue that

even politics sometimes offers an opportunity to engage people whom society sees as “not like us”, at the core of their values, their imagination and begin to offer possibilities for change, for transformation of self and of community by beginning to deal with some fundamental issues that effect the community from which we came and where will soon return.

In this unsettling historic moment, I suggest that much of the change in direction that is attributed to economic considerations is actually part of a bigger dynamic that has the potential to influence a profound correction of the assumptions and conditions that has created the crises in our communities. Numerous events in almost all of the areas are challenging the problematic elements of the old lock ‘em up and warehouse them idea of societal revitalization and criminal justice as never before.

As a result, we all face an extraordinary opportunity to stimulate the restoration of our families, our communities, our country and with it our spirit, our souls. As this new dynamic beckons, it is not only the threat of an un-rehabilitated man or woman returning to a weakened unprepared community that propels us forward. Instead I believe that it is the inspiration and value of human life that has finally prevailed as we gaze in the mirror of history and we find ourselves facing the inescapable reality

that the majority of incarcerated individuals will be released, where together with other citizens they will inhabit the community indivisible and imbued with the same responsibilities.

How we address the re-entry of these men and women to the community and the quality of that coexistence is no longer just one of the many issues. I submit that it is the context of everything. The great challenge before us is to build and nurture sustainable communities, social, cultural and physical environments in which we can satisfy our needs and aspirations without diminishing the chances of future generations.

The problems we face are simply too great to be met without our active engagement. Solutions require the ingenuity of those most affected, the creativity that emerges from diverse perspectives, and the commitment that comes only when people know they have a real stake in an outcome. It takes an active citizenry to encourage public decision making that is accountable and creative enough to address the root causes of today’s crises.

Here at CRCC (Coyote Ridge Correction Center) each year the administration provides African American incarcerated individuals with an opportunity to gather in the visiting room with family, friends, guests, entertainers and others at the African American cultural event, where a “soul

food” meal (greens, cornbread, chicken, etc.), music, speeches and other entertainment is enjoyed. This year we have planned a conference to bring together families, religious, business and community leaders, activists, Department of Corrections officials, and other state agency officials, legislators, groups and the public statewide to engage in constructive dialogue that endeavors to bridge the disconnect in an effort to finally solve the entrenched problems of crime, incarceration and recidivism and the long term corrosive effects it has on our community.

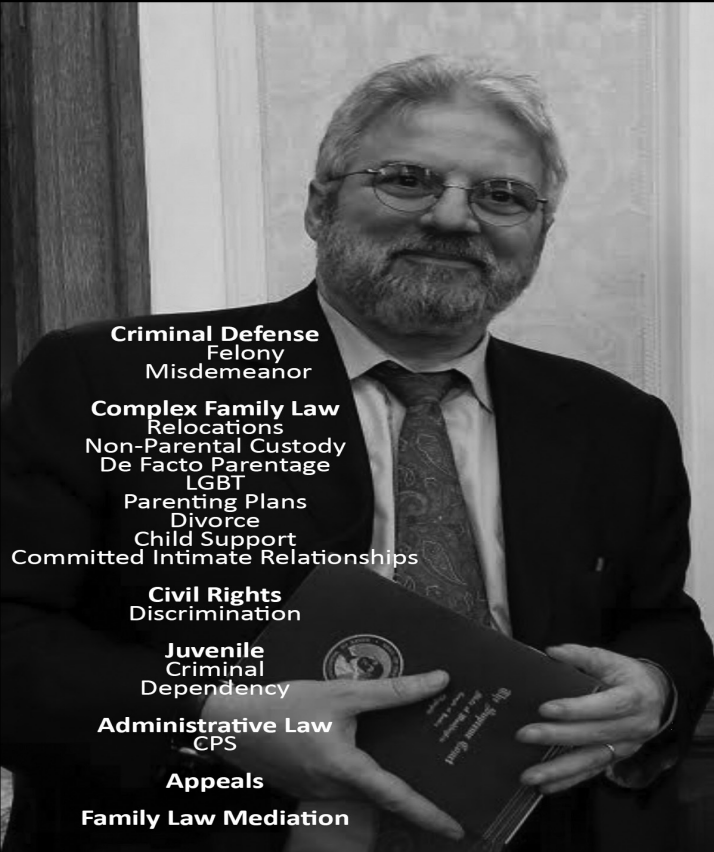
In the Black community, it has been my experience that people are transformed in the process of growing, gathering, preparing and offering food. Typically, everybody does it three times a day and if we can do it here in a way the teaches important values, it can be transformational. It can change you/us and it can change the community around us.

The BPC conference is scheduled for June 23, 2018 from 11am – 4pm at the Coyote Ridge Correctional Center.

This message, in part, endeavors to elicit the participation of community members, elected officials and others. If you would like to participate, please contact bpceast@yahoo.com as soon as possible.

Any comments or questions contact the Black Prisoner’s Caucus at: www.bpceast@gmail.com

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10 Years

By Lynn’Marie White

“Ain’t nobody worrying when the shots fly high and the sirens start to ring...
ain’t nobody praying when the kids die young and the mothers are suffering....
ain’t nobody praying when they kneel down low
all they’re doing is tying their shoe string...
cause ain’t nobody worrying no more no more no more”

10 years

Constantly running through my mind on full speed
trying to pinpoint the moment my heart no longer seemed to exist within me.
Why family no longer felt like home.

Constantly at war with myself,
trying to understand why love is not something
I can’t seem to let myself accept or feel.

Trying to block out the world from ever seeing or knowing me.....
Afraid to get too close, yet afraid to be to far?...
why do we hurt ourselves like this? Why do we hurt the people around us?...
Nothing makes sense....I don’t make sense....words flowing from my lips, but no one
can hear them. Trapped in the silence.
Walking across shattered pieces of my broken heart until my feet bleed.

10 years

And I can still remember being that 12 year old girl
listening to my mother in the other room as she cries
pouring herself just one more drink of anything that will help numb her pain.
As I pretend as if I am sleeping...
Not sure if I should comfort her because no one was ever there to comfort me,
but I don’t blame her...

I can’t tell you what it feels like to lose a son,
but I can tell you what it feels like to lose a brother.....
stay strong....I’ve gotten so good at pretending

10 years

Who would of thought that 17 year old boy
raised in a world forced to grow up too fast.
Young father figure to his six younger sibling.....
4 bullets to the front and 5 bullets to the back.....
a block away from our house
in his first & last car is where he took his last breath
and 10 years later and I’m still waiting for someone to wake me up
and tell me it was all a dream
and that everything will be okay will be okay?
It will be okay...
Because I’ve gotten so damn good at pretending.

Three Stickers

By Afaria McKinney

3 difficult stickers that won’t come off,
I never thought that would be my cost,
as if that significant emotional event was
something so easily forgotten
that even with meditation some people
refuse to let their hate soften.

I look at this situation in different regards.

3 stickers that obscure my view, as if I am
not the one who pays their dues. City code
says 5 feet away, so anything past that
means we’re allowed to feel a type of way.

We have stickers of hate and ignorance
placed on our driver side window.
And then we get lectured about not
respecting other people’s property.

3 stickers that talk about how The Driveway
between you and the idiot On the other side



kept someone’s ford truck from getting
back into their own home.
As if it was necessary for you,
to place 3 old crappy stickers
on someone else’s property.

Be the person who lives in a 3 story house,
with a metal fence,
chicken wire enclosure,
and two Security dogs
to protect your home,
and yet you feel the need to call the cops
because you don’t feel safe.

Why are your eyes filled with so much hate,
I write what I feel, and speak what I think,
I’m tired of living in a town filled with
nothing but hate.



THOUGHTS FROM A GRANDMOTHER

Bring Prayer Back

By Evelyn Anderton

In two landmark decisions in 1962 and 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state-school prayer stood in violation of the first amendment, because it represented establishment of religion. Bring prayer back!

For years it was commonplace for students to participate in many types of religious activities while at school. The problem arose when nonreligious students were compelled to participate in such activities and were not usually given any opportunity to opt out. While students do continue to pray in public schools, even in organized groups such as “See You at the Pole”, the lawsuit disallowed schools from including prayer as a compulsory activity required of every student. Bring prayer back!



Many school districts and states have attempted to reestablish school-sponsored prayer in different forms since 1962. The Court’s school prayer decisions were, and still are, deeply unpopular with the public, many politicians and most religious organizations. Bring prayer back!

Eighty-nine percent of the U.S. population believes in God and some 60 percent belong to a religious organi-

zation. In an opinion poll, 78 percent of Americans support the reintroduction of school prayer. Although public support is overwhelming for school prayer, in many schools today prayer is only allowed long as it is not officially sponsored by the school and it does not disrupt others. Bring prayer back!

Many people believe that one of the main reasons children are so disruptive, and easily influenced today is because no prayer is allowed in schools. Bring prayer back!

I strongly believe that prayer in public school is very important, however I don’t believe it is the place for religious faith building. The home is the most important place to start with prayer, teaching children morals, standards, and values.

Yes, prayer was removed from the public school system 54 years ago but prayer was never removed from the home. Bring prayer back to the home!

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OUR VOICES

Why I Chose Not To Attend The “March For Our Lives”

By Chanice Lee
(15 years old)

(Reprinted from themelanindiary.com)

My Mom and I are in the car getting ready to drive to the pre-March For Our Lives meeting. The GPS says it'll take 48 minutes to get from Fort Lauderdale to Parkland, so we leave an hour early to make it to the 6PM meeting.

As soon as we pass the sign that says “Parkland”, I notice a complete difference in the environment. The roads are nicely paved, people are out biking with their families, walking their dogs, and the million dollar houses are so beautiful that I couldn't help but stare in awe. Parkland is nothing like my neighborhood even though they are only 40-50 minutes away from each other.

After 20 miles of driving, we make it to Pine Trails Park where the meeting is being held. As soon we get out of the car and walk into the park where everyone is gathered, we enter the common area and are greeted by hundreds of people in #MSDStrong and #NeverAgain shirts. I'm standing next to my Mom, observing, and I notice that 98% of the people here are White.

Whenever I enter a space, I automatically look for Black faces, so that's what I started doing...only to find 5 of them out of 200+ people. During the meeting, we broke up into the different volunteer committee groups, and guess what? I'm the only Black person in the group. I listened to the group captains for a couple of minutes, and then I pulled aside from the group to tell my Mom that I'm ready to leave.

As we drive back home, I can't help but ponder on my 1 hour experience at the meeting and I think of a Facebook post I saw a couple of weeks ago. Tiffany Burks, a community organizer for Black Lives Matter Alliance Broward, posted this heart-wrenching message on Facebook:

“I'm sitting here soaking my feet and reflecting on my day. The conversation that spoke out to me to most was with a Black girl from Blanche Ely. We were walking about a half a mile away from the Broward County School Board Building in Down-



town Ft. Lauderdale. Her shoes were in her hand, she was barefoot and exhausted. I mean we all were. We were now 8.5 miles in and she was like, “You know what? I know for a fact if the shoe was on the other foot and the shooting happened at my school that they wouldn't be walking for me. There wouldn't be all this noise but you know what? I talked with God, my Mom and I'm doing this anyway because it's the right thing to do, but in the bottom of my heart I know that they don't care about us Black kids the same way.”

“I wanted to tell her she was wrong or that's not true but I just sighed and said you are right. I wished I could give her some words of encouragement but all I could muster up was, ‘Hey we are about 15 minutes away...we are almost there, let's keep walking..’

I am so proud of Blanche Ely and all the Black kids that walked out today despite knowing that burden that they shouldn't even have to bear. This is why we say #BlackLivesMatter

Although I do not know the girl Tiffany was referring to in her Facebook post, all I know is that after my trip to Parkland, I felt just like her. I had every intention of going to the march until this night.

My Mom starts a conversation with me while we're in the car. She brings up the fact that we were in a predominantly White setting and she wanted to know how that made me feel. She says, “I can't help but think if this were to happen at Dillard or Blanche Ely (predominantly Black High Schools in my neighborhood) if the Black kids would receive this type of support. This country does not care about Black children who have already been doing the work to create change in our communities for years.” I agreed with everything she said.

As a 15-year-old Black Teenager, I felt so conflicted when I was trying to decide if I should attend the march or not. I thought to myself: If the shooting happened in my low-income, Black neighborhood, would the residents of predominantly White, wealthy neighborhoods show up for Black Teens? Would they give us millions of dollars and invite us to be on national TV? Would they drive 20 miles like I did to get to Parkland for the pre-March For Our Lives Meeting to show up to a Black Lives Matter meeting? Probably not, unfortunately.

That was enough for me to decide if I would go or not. Prior to the march, I spent weeks working with other students on the March For Our Lives Parkland volunteer committee to recruit High School Students around Bro-

ward to join the march and doing everything I could do to help. So although I decided not to go, I still did my part by helping organize the march.

What the Marjory Stoneman Douglas students are doing is amazing and I can't deny that at all! But, when I noticed the amount of global support they got for standing up for what they believe in, it felt like a slap in the face. Black youth in different cities all across America have been working extremely hard to eliminate gun violence and they were never supported in the ways that the Parkland students are supported. Black teens have been protesting against racism, police brutality, and unjust killings for years, but we were faced with racial slurs, negative media attention, and complete backlash. Who offered us millions of dollars, free taxis, and national platforms to share our stories on? Nobody. That makes me angry, and if you are not outraged too then you are not paying attention. How does society suddenly understand protesting when it's predominantly White children protesting?

I'll admit, I'm also a little annoyed to see people of the #NeverAgain movement using sayings created by the Black Lives Matter movement (i.e “Don't Shoot” & “Am I Next?”). School shootings are a very serious topic, but co-opting phrases from Black-led movements when we young, Black activists do not receive half of the amount of support as the Parkland students is very frustrating.

So, I'll end this article with a tweet that sums up how I feel. Seun Babalola, a 2018 Young Futurist on The Root and Penn State University student, said it best:

*Seun @seuntheactivist
Please do not ever feel intimidated to call out white privilege especially if you are a person of color in a predominantly white space. It is a very necessary thing to do in spaces such as those due to the fact that many of those people live in a bubble.*

Chanice Lee is a 15-year-old lover of books, writing, and activism! She is the author of the book, “Young Revolutionary: A Teen's Guide To Activism” and also is an aspiring Criminal Justice Lawyer. To read more of Chanice's writing, visit her blog at <http://www.themelanindiary.com>.

Spokane, Just Stop Bullying Rachel Dolezal

Letter to the Editor, Spokesman Review
editor@spokesman-com

Yesterday, I hung art at the Downtown Public Library for my February Show to raise money and get groceries donated for organizations, including Homeless Veterans, Meals on Wheels, St. Judes and House of Charity.

A few artists with good hearts also donated their work.

This year, my good friend, Rachel Dolezal gave me four paintings. They sold immediately this morning and all that money will go directly to St. Judes. She was bringing four more paintings when I was told they did not want her paintings here-- “too much controversy.”

Rachel helped me out a few years ago when she was the NAACP President and without her help, I might still be homeless.

People do the time for a crime and we are supposed to let them move on. Rachel did no crime and is still doing time three years later.

She is a mom to three Black children and they suffer every single time she gets harassed or turned away from a job opportunity. Her life has been devoted to Black Culture and she has fought racism every day for African Americans- especially her children.

Who the hell cares what color she is? She deserves a chance.

Anthony Stevenson
a.k.a. Salik Seville

**Editor's Note: Salik originally sent this letter to the Spokesman Review. It was not printed. They wrote an article instead. I am printing Salik's letter because his voice deserves to be heard.*



OUR VOICES

Why It Hurts When The World Loves Everyone But Us

By Janaya Khan
(Reprinted from *theroot.com*)

I’ve been processing seemingly contradictory emotions since the Parkland, Fla., school shooting. I am at once in awe of and humbled by this youth resistance movement and its solidarity efforts, and yet almost indescribably devastated. This feeling of devastation goes beyond the tragic and preventable loss of life; it is connected to the loss of humanity that happens when we as a society choose to support some of our children while ignoring or even maligning others.

Why was it so easy to support the Parkland youths while the youths in the Movement for Black Lives were repudiated and disregarded?

I know that the defense for enthusiastically supporting the young people in Parkland while remaining immovable on Black Lives Matter (the media’s catchall term for all black organizers, regardless of actual affiliation) is that the latter supposedly had no actionable goals and no leadership.

And yet the documented wins made possible through BLM’s dedicated leadership, as well as the fearful hostility in the state’s response, tell a different tale.

For the past four years, I have been part of a movement that has matured into the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), a collaboration of organizations that include groups like Black Lives Matter, Black Youth Project 100 and the Dream Defenders. For years, these groups, largely led by young people, have been fighting for a better world.

Our work has influenced changes to policies and legislation that endangered American lives. We have demonstrated against police brutality, created a policy platform that covers everything from tax reform to education, fought for the dignity of Black people by pushing back against mainstream-media narratives, and engaged in electoral-justice projects that have led to more Black people, and especially black women, running for office.

So much of this work began with the Dream Defenders, also started by students in Florida fighting gun violence. Dream Defenders fought the “Stand your ground” self-defense law all the way to the state Capitol after it was used to defend the killer of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. This fight is not a new one, but the Parkland students offer it a new face, one that was invited into the building instead of being forced to stage a 30-plus-day sit-in, as the Defenders did.

So this isn’t actually about whether or not the baseless assumptions of “no goals or leadership” were true—clearly, they were not. It is about why so many people needed to believe it to be true in order to justify not supporting Black youths.

We are not facing the real issue of what this country has done in constructing assumptions about race so deeply



held as to be scarcely acknowledged. We believe that the youths from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, largely white and white-presenting, are innocent and therefore worthy of our sympathy and protection, whereas Black youths and other Black people are never considered truly innocent. There is always this societal narrative when it comes to the killing or persecution of Black people that we somehow did something to deserve it.

The widely held belief that Black people “deserve it” is so pervasive that it doesn’t ever need to be said. It is embodied in every person who suggests that Trayvon Martin shouldn’t have been wearing that hoodie; that Rekia Boyd shouldn’t have been outside her house; that Michael Brown shouldn’t have talked back; that Aiyana Stanley-Jones shouldn’t have been sleeping in her bed; that Tamir Rice shouldn’t have been playing in the park; that Sandra Bland shouldn’t have been driving her car.

This hideously loaded conclusion is something that Black children become aware of as soon as the outside world becomes aware of them. We are taught that our lives have less value and that people can both fear us and not be fearful of us, as we wield no real power of which to be afraid. We learn about our people and ourselves from anyone who does not look like us. We are not believed when we tell the truth. We are made to believe that we deserve poverty, food deserts and over-policed, treeless communities.

It is a terrible thing when people in a society accept that another group is beneath them; it is worse still to be those underfoot.

And it saddens me to say that this moment serves to remind Black youths that the world cares less about them than it does other children. The rush of support for the

Parkland youths from mainstream-media spots, to sizable financial contributions from celebrities, to high-powered activists helping to organize their march and amplify their work, is exactly what young people deserve—and it’s why the drastic difference in how Black Lives Matter was received is all the more apparent.

M4BL made it possible for the Parkland resistance to exist as it does today. The Parkland students are interrupting politicians who refuse to speak to real issues. They are planning a march. They have multiple emerging faces of leadership. These are precisely the same tactics designed by the young people in M4BL when they were confronted with gun violence in their communities; the only difference of consequence is that the latter group is Black.

It is because of this reality that youths in M4BL had to do it alone, largely abandoned by society, and still managed to influence every societal level from culture to Congress. These young people were told repeatedly, from every side, that no one would assist them because of a “lack of leadership.” If a dearth of leadership were actually the problem, wouldn’t efforts to build up Black leadership have appeared in the same ways that they are so readily available for Parkland youths now? Where were these efforts a few short years ago?

To be Black in this world is to know that what is acceptable in the actions of other people is unacceptable in you. The double standard in protest is no exception when tactics informed by Black resistance, like disruption, are celebrated unless Black people are the ones doing the disrupting. Our attempts to wrest for ourselves the very basic dignities and rights that all human beings should enjoy results in our being hunted as “Black identity extremists.”

At the heart of the matter: There isn’t one Black person I know who isn’t supportive of the Parkland youths, and who isn’t also hurting from the constant reminder that we are undeserving of the same love and support.

As America tries once again to forge a new dream of itself, we cannot negate the reality that the very presence of those denied the dream only serves to destroy it. Black people cannot be treated as if the issues that impact us are ours alone when they are connected to the entire structuring of the Western world. If history has taught us anything, it is that no real progress is possible without the presence of Black people. True progress begins when we show up for Black youths who have the courage to fight for a world better than the one they inherited.

Janaya Khan is the co-founder of Black Lives Matter Canada and has become a leading voice in the global crusade demanding social transformation, justice, and equality. Known as Future within the BLM movement, Khan is a Black, queer, gender-nonconforming activist, staunch Afrofuturist, boxer, and social-justice educator. An accomplished lecturer and author, their writings have been featured in The Feminist Wire, The Root, Huffington Post Black Voices, and Al Jazeera. Janaya currently resides in Los Angeles as the organization director of Gender Justice LA. For more information visit: <http://janayakhan.com>.

My Skin is My Skin

By Shawn Fletcher
(1998)

My skin is my skin
stopped, pushed, spit on,
then forced into
a hostile environment
is what happened to me
on my job.
Then I was asked
what are you going to do
about it
you black bastard?
I walked away in disbelief
Why is this happening?
(read the title)

Can you picture a pearl white
1974 Caprice Classic
that has a burgundy cloth
roof top with a matching
continental kit on the bumper?
Can you see the
14 inch gold wire wheels
that the car sits on?
Now imagine
two swivel captain chairs
for the front seats.

As for the back seat,
a sectional couch.
All wrapped in burgundy and
white crushed velvet.

Can you see it?
This is my car.

As I drive,
my eyes happen to glance
in the rear view mirror
and I notice
blue and red lights
flashing
Not again, I said to myself
this would be the 46th time
I have been pulled over.

Let me see your identification.
The usual rude request.
Do you have a job?

Where did you get the money
to buy this car?
No, I do not sell drugs.
No the car is not stolen.
I reply.

Harassment....
Crying, hoping,
dreaming and sharing

Equal I thought.
But that’s not the case.
Spit on, harassed
and then in the face.

I have been victimized
by a stereotype,

by people who choose
to practice this insensi-
tive, ignorant,
disrespectful,
learned behavior
that has been passed
down from generation
to generation.

But through the grace
of God, I have learned
to forgive those
over and over again
no matter what

My skin is my skin.



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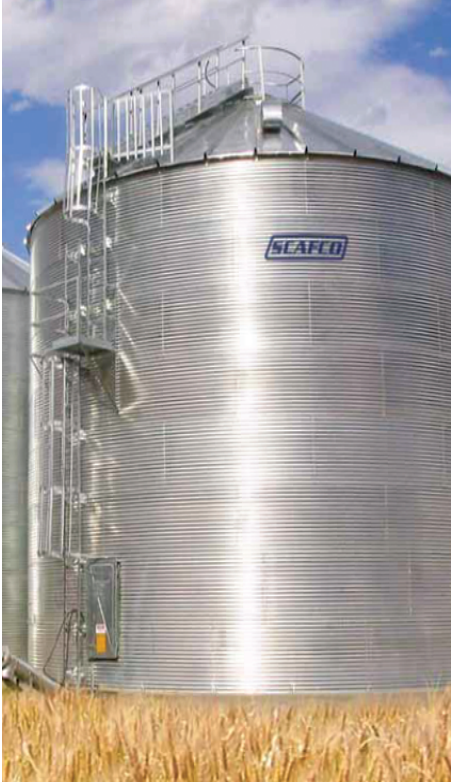
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Empire Health Foundation (EHF) will open the 2018 **Responsive** and **Rural Aging Grant** cycles on April 2nd - April 27th. The grant programs serve EHF's seven-county region of Adams, Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Spokane and Whitman Counties, including the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Spokane Tribe of Indians and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

The **Responsive** program is designed to address one-time, urgent needs, while the **Rural Aging** program focuses on one-time projects designed to help adults 50 years or older in rural communities live full, meaningful lives with independence and dignity. Non-profits, churches or government agencies may apply for funds up to \$15,000.

A proposer's conference is coming up on April 3rd at 10:30 AM.

Contact Christina Kamkosi, christina@empirehealthfoundation.org or visit www.empirehealthfoundation.org

APRIL EVENTS

APRIL 3

POWER 2 THE POETRY: POETRY WORKSHOP

A workshop in writing and performing powerful poetry led by the poets of Power 2 the Poetry. Register online for \$10 at <http://spark-central.org/workshops>.
7pm - 9pm
Spark Central
1214 W. Summit Parkway, Spokane
For more information call 509-279-0299 or visit spark-central.org.

APRIL 5

DIVERSE VOICES WRITING GROUP

ADULTS & TEENS // A writing group for all experience levels that supports and elevates diverse voices.
5:30pm - 6:45pm
Spark Central
1214 W. Summit Parkway, Spokane
For more information call 509-279-0299 or visit spark-central.org.

APRIL 12

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/ex-pungement, Police & Govt Accountability.
5:30-7:00pm
Community Building Lobby
35 W. Main Street, Spokane
Questions? Center for Justice: 509-835-5211

APRIL 14

MARCH FOR SCIENCE

To preserve America's long heritage as a nation of curiosity and innovation, Spokane's citizens and scientists will join others across the globe. We unite as a diverse, nonpartisan group.
Rally-12:30 pm March- 1:00pm
Clocktower Meadow
Riverfront Park, downtown Spokane
For more information visit: <http://www.marchforsciencespokane.com>

APRIL 18

FUSE DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

April's selection is Heart Berries by Terese Marie Mailhot
6:00pm -8:00pm
Spokane Public Library (Downtown) Level-up Classroom
906 W. Main Street, Spokane
Free, inclusive, welcoming, open to the public.
For more information contact Erin Pringle-Toungate at EJToungate@gmail.com.

APRIL 17

Please Note Date Change

NAACP MONTHLY MEETING

Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting
7:00pm
Community Building Lobby
35 W. Main Street, Spokane
For more information contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 (ext 1141) or visit <http://spokaneNAACP.com>

APRIL 21

22ND ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATION

You are invited to the 22nd Annual African American Graduation. Honoring African American graduates from K-12 schools, colleges and universities in Spokane and surrounding areas.
1PM
Whitworth University
Hixson Union Building
300 W Hawthorne Rd, Spokane 99251
For information contact aagradspokane@gmail.com.

APRIL 26

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, LFOs, Police and Government Accountability, etc.
5:30-7:00pm
YMCA North
10727 N. Newport Highway, Spokane
Questions? Center for Justice: 509-835-5211



ACLU
Washington



FLIGHTS & RIGHTS SPOKANE

NO COST
WEDNESDAY / APRIL 18 / 6PM
THE MCGINNITY ROOM
116 W PACIFIC AVE #100, SPOKANE

Join the ACLU of Washington and guests for a panel discussion on immigrant rights, immigration enforcement, and police practices. We'll discuss how federal immigration policies and practices are affecting Spokane and ways to keep our communities safe. All are welcome, beverages and light snacks will be provided.

RSVP online at aclu-wa.org/events

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

THE VEGGIE Connection Event!

SPONSORED BY:
THE BLACK LENS

Enjoy a day filled with healthy living, vegetarian/vegan-minded vendors; non-profits; local food enthusiasts, speakers, and more!

May 5th
from
10am-4pm

Vending and Sponsor Opportunities:
theveggieconnection@outlook.com

RSVP: veggiecxnspokanewa.eventbrite.com

Emmanuel Family Life Center

www.theveggieconnection.com 631 S. Richard Allen Court Spokane, Wash. 99204

Veggie Connection After Party - 5/6/18 - House of Soul, 120 N. Wall Street, Spokane, WA

22nd Annual

African American Graduation Celebration

Honoring African American graduates from K-12 schools, colleges and universities from Spokane and surrounding areas.



A Cultural Salute for Outstanding Academic Achievement

RECOGNIZING
Richard B. Williams Scholarship Recipients

Saturday, April 21, 2018 ♦ 1:00pm

Hixson Union Building, Whitworth University — Spokane, Washington

— Reception will follow the ceremony —

Tickets for family and friends are limited to a maximum of 5 tickets per graduate due to budget and facility capacity. Please plan accordingly.
FOR INFORMATION: aagradspokane@gmail.com AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATION CELEBRATION COMMITTEE