

SPECIAL EDITION: CORONAVIRUS 2020

April 2020

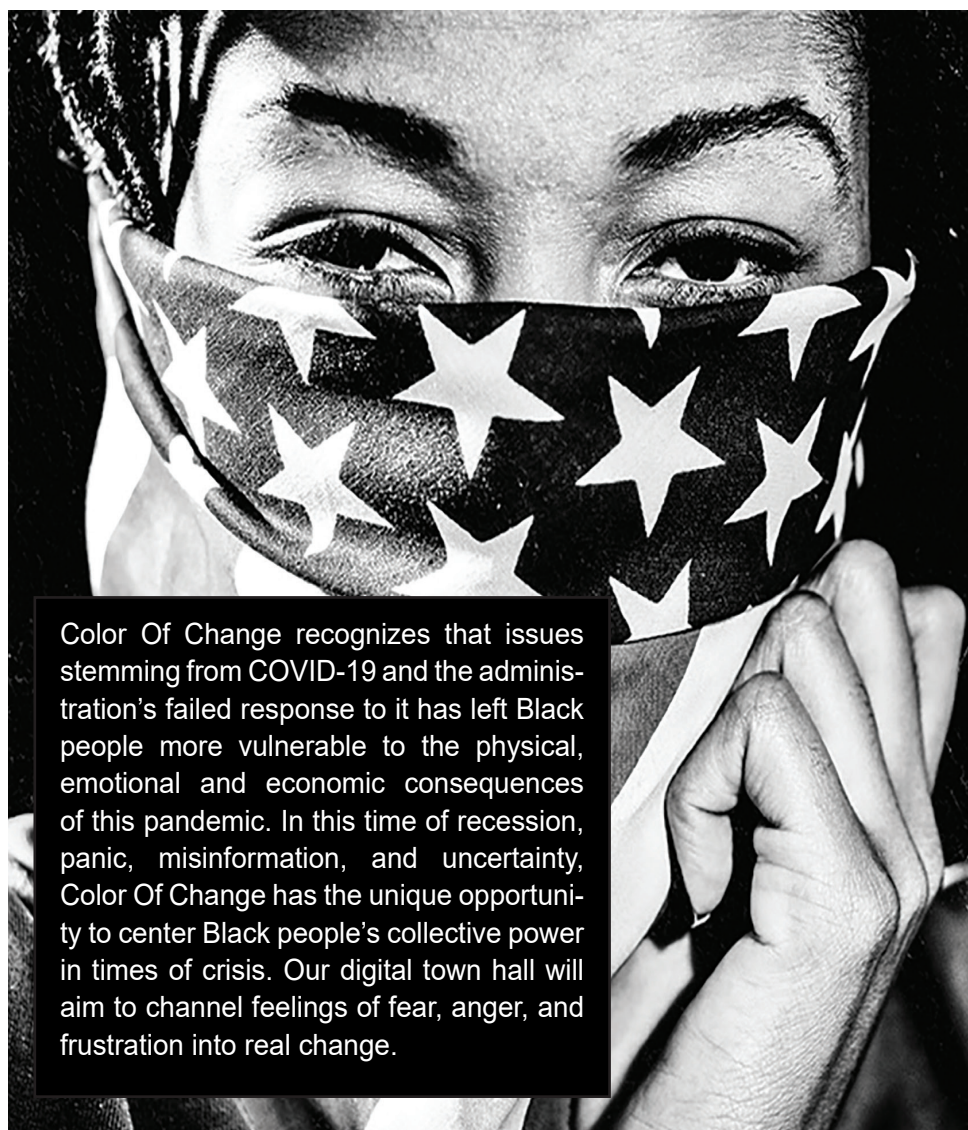
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Vol. 6 Issue No. 4

Spokane's Black Community News Source

THE BLACK LENSTM SPOKANE

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE



THE BLACK RESPONSE TO COVID19

A COLOR OF CHANGE DIGITAL TOWNHALL
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Color Of Change recognizes that issues stemming from COVID-19 and the administration's failed response to it has left Black people more vulnerable to the physical, emotional and economic consequences of this pandemic. In this time of recession, panic, misinformation, and uncertainty, Color Of Change has the unique opportunity to center Black people's collective power in times of crisis. Our digital town hall will aim to channel feelings of fear, anger, and frustration into real change.

Black Press Forms Coronavirus Pandemic Task Force and Resource Center

By Stacy M. Brown

NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent, @StacyBrownMedia

NNPA NEWswire — (blackpressusa.com) The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), the trade association of African American-owned newspapers and media companies, is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing the NNPA Coronavirus Task Force and Resource Center.

The task force will include publishers, editors, physicians, nurses, corporate partners, sponsors, associates and supporters of the Black Press of America.

The national resource center will be structured to provide timely and accurate information to stakeholders and the African American community.

"It is well documented that African Americans get sick more frequently, are screened for illness less often, are diagnosed for disease later, are treated less aggressively and buried earlier than those in other ethnic groups in

"It is well documented that African Americans get sick more frequently, are screened for illness less often, are diagnosed for disease later, are treated less aggressively and buried earlier than those in other ethnic groups in America."

-Sheila Thorne
President and CEO, Multicultural Healthcare Marketing Group, LLC

America," said Sheila Thorne, president and CEO of Multicultural Healthcare Marketing Group, LLC.

"The reasons for health disparities are complex. The deadly spread of the coronavirus in the United States exacerbates not only the poor health status of African Americans but it exposes their persistent lack of access to quality, culturally competent healthcare from testing to diagnosis to treatment," Thorne stated.

"I applaud the NNPA for taking a leadership position to disseminate accurate and culturally relevant health information to Black Americans that will protect all in the community and save lives, especially those who are underserved and underrepresented."

Congressional Black Caucus Chair Karen Bass (D-Calif.) said she was pleased that the NNPA has established a task force and resource center and she's looking forward to contributing.

Continued on Page 7

FOR OUR FUTURE.



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CENSUS 2020
2020census.gov

ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

A Strange New World.

This time last month I was returning from a trip to Los Angeles to discuss ways to make sure that the Black community is counted in the 2020 census. While that is still critically important, that trip seems like a lifetime ago and California feels like another world away. In that world, COVID-19 did not exist. In this world-- it does.

Today, most of the country is sheltering in place, on Governor's orders. Hunkering down wherever we are. Hiding as best we can from something that we can't even see.

We are social distancing. Schools are closed. Business are shut down. Weddings and funerals have been canceled. Streets are empty. The Olympics were postponed. Even the NBA stopped playing, and they never stop playing.

Unless you're living someplace on the moon, or further, you know that our planet is being ravaged by a never-seen-before virus that is moving at the speed of light with a force that has brought even the most powerful of nations to their collective knees.

It sure does put a spin on the concept of power and what that word really means. And on who and what is really in control.



I am clear that I am not in control. My daughter is thousands of miles away, living in what is being described as the next epicenter for the virus in this country-- and I am here. Calling. Texting. Video chatting. As if any of that can somehow protect her and keep her safe.

It's sobering to recognize just how little I have the ability to do right now, about much of anything. Maybe that's why so many of us are snapping up cases of toilet paper. At least we can do that.

We are being bombarded daily, hourly actually, with information about COVID-19. Death counts. Infection rates. Supply shortages. So much information. But for me, what has been noticeably missing in that cacophony are voices from our community. What are we thinking? How are we doing?

In this issue I have filled the pages with those voices, both from our local community and from around the country. My hope is that our social distancing won't cause us to lose each other. Our community is struggling and our business are in a fight for survival. COVID-19 or not, I do believe we have the ability to do something about that.



COVID-19 Social Distancing Neighborhood Party

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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YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett - Viral Immunologist

Scientific Lead for Seattle Team Working to Develop Vaccine for COVID-19



By Dana Givens

(Reprinted from Black Enterprise, blackenterprise.com; Photo Credit: UMBC Magazine)

Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett, a viral immunologist working with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, is taking the lead to develop a vaccine for the coronavirus. She is the scientific lead for Dr. Barney Graham's coronavirus team based in Seattle.

"If you can block the spike protein from binding to a cell, then you've effectively prevented an infection," said Corbett to the New York Times. She and others had studied the spike proteins on SARS and MERS viruses in detail that are similar to COVID-19, using them to develop experimental vaccines. The vaccines never made it to market because SARS was successfully contained with public health measures. Due to their similarities, they can use these experimental vaccines to help find a solution to the current health crisis. She and her team have already started running the first human trials of the vaccine.

Corbett started her work in January when researchers first learned how infectious and contagious COVID-19 was and how easily it can be spread. The team was formed to develop a safe and effective vaccine with Dr. Corbett leading the charge.

Corbett has nearly 10 years of research experience. She received a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences, with a secondary major in Sociology in 2008. She eventually enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she obtained her Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology in 2014.

Black Nurses During the Influenza Pandemic of 1918

Excerpts reprinted from "The Eighteen of 1918–1919: Black Nurses and the Great Flu Pandemic in the United States", American Journal of Public Health, 2019)

By Marian Moser Jones, PhD, MPH, and Matilda Saines, BSc

The influenza pandemic of 1918 & 1919 caused at least 50 million deaths worldwide and 675 000 in the United States. It occurred during a period of pervasive segregation and racial violence, in which Black Americans were routinely denied access to health, educational, and political institutions.

In an article published in the American Journal of Public Health, Marian Moser Jones and Matilda Saines discuss how an unsuccessful campaign by Black leaders for admission of Black nurses to the Red Cross, the Army Nurse Corps, and the Navy Nurse Corps during World War I eventually created opportunities for 18 Black nurses to serve in the army during the pandemic and the war's aftermath.

In 1918, the the US Army and Navy, for which the Red Cross served as the official recruiter, did not accept Black nurses. However, in October of that year, the Red Cross called up several Black nurses for civilian duty and sent them to West Virginia to battle the influenza pandemic.

Throughout US history, Black women have nursed the sick. Enslaved women cared for members of slaveholding families while nursing their own communities. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, many Black Amer-



African American Nurses, Camp Sherman, 1918

Photo Source: American Association for the History of Nursing, aahn.org

icans, including those in health professions, volunteered for military service or joined voluntary patriotic organizations.

Over 100 Black physicians served as US Army Medical Corps officers, along with 12 Black dental officers, 639 Black infantry officers, and 400 000 Black enlisted men. Fourteen Black women served as navy clerks. However, Black nurses were barred from serving. The Red Cross had voted in 1911 to exclude Black nurses from enrollment, citing a surgeon general's statement that the army would be unable to provide suitable (i.e., segregated) quarters for the nurses. In 1917, the Red Cross reversed the policy.

Two days after the World War I armistice, (November 1918) the army finally reversed its stance on Black nurses. Aileen Cole was one of the first called up. She was sent to Camp Sherman, along with Clara Rollins, Susie Boulding, and five other graduates of Freedmen's hospital in Washington, DC: Sophia A. Hill, Marion H. Brown, Nancy Jeanette Minnis, Lillian Spears, and C. Jeannette West; along with Lillian Ball, a graduate of Battle Creek Sanitarium and Hospital Nursing School.

The army sent nine others, also from leading Black nurse training schools, to Camp Grant near Rockford, Illinois: Eva Clay, Willie DePriest, Virginia R. Steele,

Mabel Williams, Magnolia Diggs, Nettie B. Vick, Frances A. Stewart, Pearl Helen Billings, and Anna E. Oliver Ramos.

While the 1918–1919 pandemic was responsible for millions of deaths worldwide and hundreds of thousands in the United States, it also created opportunities for previously excluded Black nurses, including the first 18 to serve in the Army Nurse Corps (ANC) between December 1918 and August 1919, marking a seminal episode in the long and ongoing movement for civil rights and racial health equity.

To purchase a reprint of the full article visit: <https://ajph.aphapublications.org>.

Can We Handle the Truth About the Coronavirus?



NEWS ANALYSIS

By Glenn Ellis

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Don't you already know everything you need to know about coronavirus? What else is there for you to know that you haven't already heard, you ask?

Every media outlet we turn on and everything we read in the papers inundates us with information about this rapidly evolving coronavirus crisis. On top of that, our "friends" are showing how smart they are by rushing to post every single natural/miracle cure; conspiracy theory; and prediction on the end of the human race. Even people I have known for years have all of sudden become epidemiologists; medical doctors; scientists; and researchers!

Regrettably, we have been done a disservice by both the media, as well as our well-intentioned friends. In spite of the best intentions, these new "experts" promote beliefs and folk remedies that could result in dangers equally as bad as coronavirus infection.

During this unprecedented disruption brought to all of our lives, some people are expressing concern that information was held back from them. Folks were upset because they wanted to hear the truth; or so they thought. Instead of continuing to pass on the mounds of gross misinformation and fear-driven behaviors, we should all be only interested in the truth. Well, I'm not so sure we can handle the truth.

Let me share a few "truths" that not many of us have heard about, but many things are specific to poor people and African-Americans in this country.

Call your doctor: For millions of Black, brown, and poor people in this country, that is not an option. As of 2019, roughly 27.5 million people didn't have health insurance at any point last year, according to figures from the Census Bureau. In addition, an analysis from the CDC and the Kaiser Foundation, found 31 percent of Blacks and 47 percent of Hispanics don't have a personal doctor!

I have looked and have not been able to find any data on how many people who are newly insured under Obamacare actually have a primary care doctor they can call. Get my point? This "truth" shows that a whole lot of people are left out when the CDC and other officials tell folks who are already hunkered down, that if they think they have symptoms, "don't go to the hospital; call your doctor first".

Stay in place: This guideline to prevent the spread of coronavirus is probably among the most baffling to me. Let's start with the complexity of many households and families in most of the urban cities where the majority of the poor, Black, and brown people live. One of the most recent

studies to look at family household composition published in the Journal of Black Studies (2007) reported that 39 percent of African-American children did not live with their biological father and 28 percent of African-American children did not live with any father representative. Some families have people live with them that aren't related. Don't forget, the communities with marginalized populations are the places where you find homeless shelters; halfway houses; safe houses; and boarding houses.

Add to that, the many seniors and "sick and shut-in" (many who live alone). The daily challenges in these scenarios means reliance on a variety of support systems in their social network (friends, families, caregivers, neighbors, etc.) as survival tools in everyday living is disrupted or no longer available.

Vulnerable populations: As defined by the World Health Organization, vulnerability is the degree to which a population, individual or organization is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of disasters. For purposes of the coronavirus pandemic, this includes those who have weak immune systems; elderly; chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, obesity); cancer and transplant patients.

It has been long established that Blacks have the highest mortality rate (of all causes) and arguably the worst health status of any racial group in the United States. Now think about what we know about the significant percentage of the Black population in this country that has high blood pressure; diabetes; obesity; kidney failure; heart failure; cancer; asthma; COPD; and a host of other diseases. Just doing some rough calculations, it seems like no stretch of the imagination to conclude that more

than half of all Black folks in this country are a vulnerable population!

I felt it was important to write this particular column, so that we are all clear about the specific impacts of this pandemic, and how it will disproportionately impact Black, brown, and poor people in ways that others won't be affected. Somebody has to (sadly) always look at what happens in this country, and ask the question, "how will this affect my community".

COVID-19 (coronavirus) is real, it's deadly; and it's going to be with us for possibly the rest of this year. Please continue to pay attention to the information from credible sources. Don't become a victim to your friend who all of sudden has become a "master healer". Stick to factual information. Always make sure that you understand, and with every piece of information or official directives, seek the truth.

We know this is wreaking havoc on our families, our communities, our nation, and our world. It is the great equalizer. Just be sure to ask yourself if you can say you have thoroughly considered how this pandemic is affecting you and your family...if you can handle the truth.

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

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

A Conversation with Dr. Georges Benjamin Tells African Americans: "Take this COVID-19 as Serious as a Heart Attack"

Source: Lonnae O'Neal, theundefeated.com

Dr. Georges Benjamin is the Executive Director of the American Public Health Association.

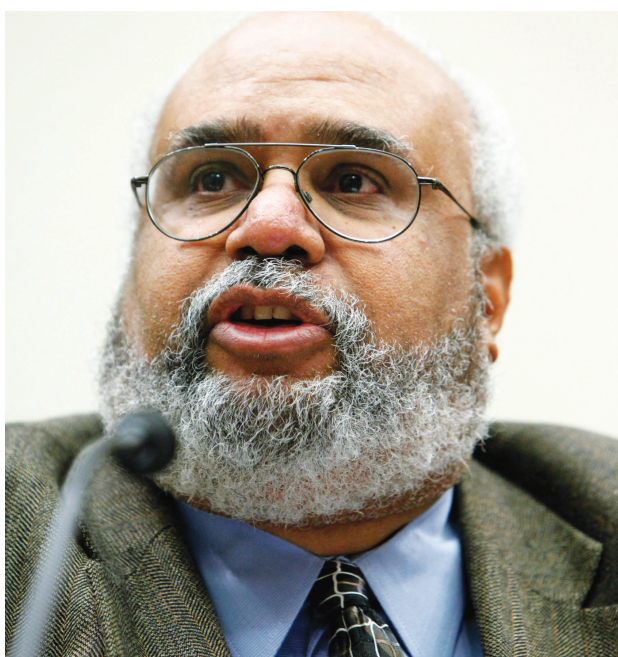
Why are African American communities at added risk for the coronavirus?

I think the biggest challenge is the fact that people of color, African Americans, start out with health outcomes that are disproportionately poor when compared to white Americans. The highest risk, if you get this disease, is to someone 60 or older with chronic disease. With African Americans, you start with a population that is disproportionately sicker, and if it gets exposed, it will have a higher death rate.

Why is our at-risk population for the virus starting out more sick?

The reasons for the health inequities include access to health care, and differences in the quality of care African Americans receive. A lot of what makes you healthy happens outside the doctor's office, so all the social determinants – including racism and discrimination, housing, access to transportation and education – are a factor. And I'll say differences in individual behaviors that we all have based on our life experiences.

Let's talk about the uninsured. Obviously, we still have too many people of color who are uninsured, particularly in those states that chose not to expand the Medicaid program. They certainly don't cover the non-African Ameri-



cans either, but African Americans have had real challenges in those communities, which tend to be in the South and the Midwest. We have lots of folks who work in the gig economy, so they don't necessarily have coverage.

Looking at this coronavirus, the whole issue of not having paid sick leave is an issue where we have people of color who are disproportionately working in the service industries, in the restaurant industries, working for hotels, or places where they are not in unions that have bargained for benefits that give them sick leave. They are hourly work-

ers who don't have certain kinds of benefits, so that if they don't work, they don't eat. And that's a challenge. Obviously, if you get sick and we tell you to stay home, you should stay home. But you're less likely to do so because you've got to work. You'll probably come to work during the early part of your illness and the challenge with that, of course, is you'll infect others.

Why is there so much distrust between African Americans and the medical community?

Everyone obviously goes back to the Tuskegee experiment. The syphilis study where African American men were not treated for syphilis and they continued not to be treated even after we had treatment available. Ultimately the Public Health Service apologized, as well as President Clinton apologized on behalf of America.

We also have experiences where people go into academic health centers and the word on the street is you go in, but you don't come out. That's a reality, but the reason they don't come out is because people go into those places in a much later state of disease. Quite often we have far too many women who are found to have breast cancer. They have a lump in their breast, but they still show up far too late to get the best cancer care.

Also, when you go in and you have someone who doesn't look like you or doesn't communicate with you in a culturally competent way, that's a problem. We still have lots of clinicians out there that talk down to patients. They don't give us the full range of options.

Continued on Page 20

Got Covid-19 Questions?

Get answers: coronavirus.gov

Resources

Spokane

Spokane Regional Health District:
srhd.org/covid19

Spokane County:
spokanecounty.org/4572/COVID-19

City of Spokane
my.spokanecity.org/covid19

Washington
coronavirus.wa.gov

Questions About Stimulus Checks

IRS.gov/coronavirus

Small Business Resources

sba.gov/coronavirus

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1.800.525.0127
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Where to Track Coronavirus Cases

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srhd.org/covid19

Washington

doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus

United States

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates

World

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/world-map.html

Do You Need to Get Tested for COVID-19?

Coronavirus Self-Checker

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html

How to Make Your Own Disinfectant

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COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

Betsy Wilkerson

Spokane City Council



My first observation is COVID-19 doesn't discriminate. But regarding Spokane, it has been eerie. I'm downtown every day and it is such a ghost town. I mean, everything is locked up. You can get a parking spot downtown. You can get a parking spot anywhere.

I will tell you from a work perspective, and this is my boarding home work I'm talking about, it has been challenging because there's so much information out there. The guys just sit and watch that stuff on tv all the time. It feels like there's an addiction to it. Play by play. But really, nothing's changing. Not that rapidly anyway, and not where I need a 24/7, play by play of what's going on.

My one good observation though is that it's made us slow our roll. I mean people are actually at home. Me. I'm talking about me now. I've been home every night for like two weeks. I actually cooked. I had to, because I had to eat. I mean, this is a new dynamic. All that rippin' and runnin' wasn't as important as we thought it was. I love that its given us a new perspective.

Actually, it gave me kind of flashback, looking back at the late 60s, early 70s, when we didn't really have TV. People actually cooked. We were home at night and did family stuff. Before the world just went crazy with the Internet. Those times really were pretty good. It was connectedness and it wasn't just by text. There was actually a human touch to it. So, I have been on the phone more with my

siblings in the past couple of weeks, just making sure they are ok, because these are just strange times.

You know, a lot of us more mature people, who are older, just have a different perspective about all this craziness. We have lived through some stuff and the world didn't come to an end, and we will live through this also.

For me, it's like hitting the pause button or a reset. Asking myself, so Betsy, what's really important to you? Where do you really want to be? Who do you really want to interact with and spend your time with? What difference do you really want to make? Knowing that we won't live forever. It's going to be something that takes us out. It may not be the Coronavirus, but it'll be something. Maybe because we don't have that air of invincibility anymore. I think age does that to us. At least it does for me. I can't speak for anybody else.

With regards to the city, the biggest challenge has actually been coming together, because, and this is an overused word, we are in uncharted territory. There is no game plan. The good thing though, is it has made us have to work together and we have had to work quickly. People can't be getting entrenched. Like I've said in the past, 'don't let perfection be the enemy of doing good'. Let's get something out there for the people to help them.

So there have been some fascinating policies and programs that the city's coming up with.

First of all, no evictions. That was huge. No utility shut-offs, water or Avista. Food programs. There is money that has come into the city that will start going out in grants for small businesses, small business loans. And, of course, the shelter, they're going 24/7 now. The shelter contracts were supposed to end at the end of March but now they have to go 24/7 for social distancing. So that's something.

The most positive thing so far from a government perspective is the collaboration. From what I hear, relationships had been strained with the start of this new administration. But this is a new day of collaboration. Communicating. We've kind of got a policy of no surprises. Keep everybody up to speed as much as possible. That has probably been the best thing that I could see.

The other thing, this experience has humanized everybody. People aren't so much hung up on their titles as just trying to solve the problem. That's the biggest thing.

So yeah, just slow our roll. Hit the reset button.

Shari Clarke, PhD

Vice President, EWU Office of Diversity



The biggest change I think is that all of our courses are going to be offered online, starting spring quarter for the rest of the academic year, so students won't really be coming to campus the way they have been in the past. Clubs and organizations cannot meet the way that they were used to meeting because we have to have the social distancing. That's the biggest thing. Fortunately to date there haven't been any cases at EWU that I'm aware of.

It all just happened so quickly. It was happening right during finals, so I wasn't hearing a lot conversation from students. They just wanted to get home. But I know that there is a sense of feeling really not engaged with the university at this point. With the change to everything being computerized, you miss that whole sense of campus community that you had.

As for me, I am just flummoxed about it and the fact that we were informed about how serious this was well in advance. Apparently the president knew three months before it was brought up and he considered it a hoax. I'm also surprised that we don't have the personal protection that our folks need in hospitals who are treating people. I don't think we're prepared as a country as much as we should have been.

I'm hopeful, but I think from here on out we're going to function differently as a society. We definitely won't be shaking hands. And I think we'll have to be really sensitive and aware of what's out there. President Obama had put a pandemic team in place and Trump got rid of it. We're really suffering from that lack of insight and forethought on that part of this administration.

Black Press Forms Coronavirus Pandemic Task Force

Continued From Page 1

“The NNPA Coronavirus Task Force and Resource Center is a one-stop spot for curated news and resources specific to Black people in America,” Bass stated. “Since 1940, the NNPA has built a network of member publications across the country that covers news and issues most important to Black people in America. The NNPA is a trusted source to reach the Black community, often times overlooked by mainstream media.”

Robert W. Bogle, the chairman, president and CEO of the Philadelphia Tribune, the nation’s oldest and the Greater Philadelphia region’s largest audited newspaper serving the African American community, stated that the mission of the Black Press is being carried out despite the current crisis.

“We became an independent voice to speak up and speak out and deliberately embracing and telling our story,” Bogle offered. “It’s part of our history, and it’s who we are.”

He continued: “It doesn’t mean that others don’t write about us, but are they writing to us and for us? I say, ‘No.’ People in our business have to understand and recommit themselves and reaffirm who we are and the critical role that we play.

“For a lot of businesses, this is a short interruption. Newspapers will be hurt in a critical and severe way. We’ve experienced a day where we didn’t do a dollar’s worth of business. We had cancelations. We have to stop and think about who we are doing business with. If they don’t support us, we should not support them.”

In a memo circulated by NNPA President and CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., and on behalf of NNPA Chair Karen Carter Richards and the NNPA Board of Directors, the trade association noted that all are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It is important to note that the majority of the NNPA member publishers across the nation are remaining on the frontline of providing vital and crucial information to African Americans and others who are challenged by the expanding and growing public health crisis confronting our families and communities,” Chavis wrote.

“Our member newspapers are still printing, and our online and digital distributions of vital life-saving accurate information on COVID-19 are all being done responsibly and effectively. Yet, many of our newspapers are facing a reduction in advertising at a time during this crisis when our news businesses are crucially needed.”

NNPA’s national office has put out an urgent call to federal, state, and local public health officials to immediately increase their outreach to Black America via NNPA member publications.

Through the unprecedented public health crisis, personnel at the NNPA’s main office in Washington, D.C., have worked nonstop to find additional ways to help Black America push through the pandemic. The task force, which will include top infectious disease doctors, medical and health experts from various organizations, and public officials, will aggregate facts and update information about how COVID-19 is impacting Black America in all age categories across the nation.

The task force will send out periodic national COVID-19 alerts to all in the NNPA database, and establish daily coordination between the NNPA and the National Medical Association (NMA), National Black Nurses Association (NBNA), and medical schools at HBCUs to collaborate on best practices and other vital information to assist Black America throughout the pandemic.

Chavis said Bass, the CBC Chair, has been instrumental in the drafting of the stimulus bill that’s now before the U.S. Congress and she’s worked diligently to ensure that the legislation would include some form of assistance for the Black Press.

“At a time like this, our people cannot afford to be ill-informed,” Bass stated. “The creation of the NNPA Coronavirus Taskforce and Resource Center is a great step in the right direction to ensuring Black people get the pertinent information not just at the national level, but at the local and community level. When we leave out the Black Press, we leave a gap, and miss out on effectively safeguarding our community during this global pandemic.”

Chavis noted that daily briefings of the pandemic and original and pertinent content about COVID-19 would be published at www.BlackPressUSA.com.

“The Black Press of America has always taken a frontline position during a time of crisis to keep Black America informed about the truth and facts,” Chavis said. The leadership of the NNPA established the Coronavirus Task Force and National Resource Center as a responsible action to inform and to engage millions of Black Americans and others in response to the coronavirus pandemic, Chavis added.

“We want to contribute to the saving of Black lives and to protect our families, businesses, and communities from this fatally contagious virus,” Chavis stated.

Jerrall Haynes

Spokane School Board President, Small Business Owner

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

Impact of COVID-19 on the Spokane School District

The impact is exactly what we were hoping to try to avoid. That's one reason why from the very beginning we locally made the decision to stay open as long as we could. Closing schools immediately impacts our most vulnerable populations and we know that. Not every child has a stable home environment or has parents that have the luxury to be able to work from home. As a result, we know how important it is for children to not miss a single day of school. There is data that looks statistically at the probability of outcomes for each day of school that a student misses. Whether it be discipline or the impact on education or both. So, missing so much time, unplanned and unscheduled time, is going to be incredibly detrimental to a lot of our student's education outcomes in the long run.

What is the the school district doing?

First and foremost, we are serving and giving out food at 24 different school locations all over town. That in and of itself is big. Especially for parents and families that might not have the means to do so. Even the ones that do, it's hard to pick up such an unexpected expense out of nowhere. Feeding your children two extra times a day when it was planned for them to be fed at school. So that's a big one. We have buses that are delivering food also.

Computers/Tablets

Any student or family that does not have an internet connection or a computer or tablet to be able to access online learning, can sign up either online or by phone and they will be given a laptop or a tablet so the child can access online education. We also have mobile hotspots that we are giving out in partnership with Comcast. There are certain requirements behind it, but they will be able to get free internet.

Connection to Students

One of the biggest things for me is how many of our teachers and staff members have really rallied around and students and families and are really trying to keep them in the loop and staying connected in a multitude of different ways. Whether it's through phone calls, text messages, or e-mails, and providing school work to our children and support for our children and families, so hopefully they can keep learning and growing.

How long will school be out?

Ultimately that decision isn't going to be ours, it's going to be the Governor's. Essentially, we know as much as the public knows. When the decision was made to close the schools, we found out things maybe a few hours in advance. We had a feeling, but knew officially the same day as everyone else. If I'm being honest, I personally suggest that people prepare for school to be out for the rest of the school year. I'm not saying that it's guaranteed to happen, but for people to plan for it. Now we know and understand that things are happening that have never happened before and we have to start looking at things through a completely different lens than how we've ever looked at them before. So, I think that it's a very realistic possibility that school is done for the year.

For information about the SPS response to COVID-19 or for resources visit spokaneschools.org. If you do not have internet service call the district at 509-354-5900.

Impact of COVID-19 on your business?

As a small business owner, COVID-19 has almost stopped my business dead in its tracks. As someone who makes his money through the gym business, with the mandated closure it has forced me to try to be a little more creative in terms of trying to bring in income.

One option is giving people workouts to do at home. But that in and of itself impacts you financially. Even if all of your clients do sign up for it, you can't charge them the same thing that you charged for in-person training.

What services do you offer?

Right now I only offer online training, but my services include general fitness classes, sports specific training, small group training, basically the whole gammet. Eventually I will offer general memberships for people to work out on their own.

People can sign up for workouts and I'll send workouts that they can do at home. Whether you have equipment or no equipment at all.

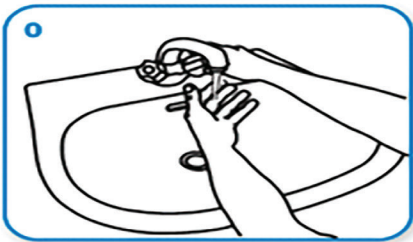
The benefit to online training is that it gives people who are forced to stay at home the opportunity to start their fitness journey in a lot less aggressive environment. One of the things I hear from people all of the time is 'I want to start working out on my own first and once I get in shape then I'll get a trainer'. It's a real thing and it's very common. So, online training gives people a chance to get those initial awkward feelings about working out and their initial hesitation and fear out of the way and put the ball in their court.

To contact and support Jerrall Haynes, call We Rise Fitness at 509-899-8009 or e-mail jerrall.haynes@gmail.com.

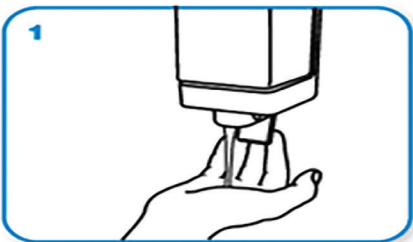


Clean Hands Save Lives

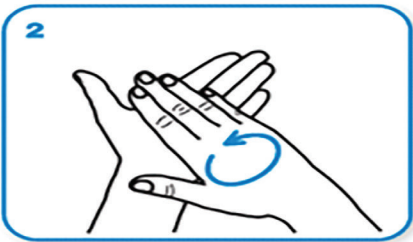
How to Wash Your Hands



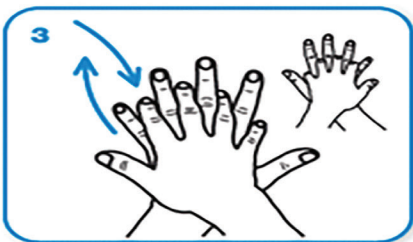
Wet hands with water



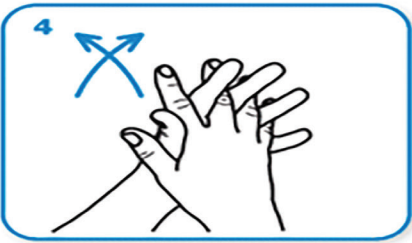
apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



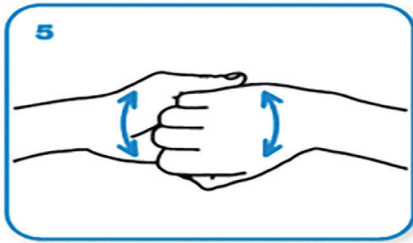
Rub hands palm to palm



right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



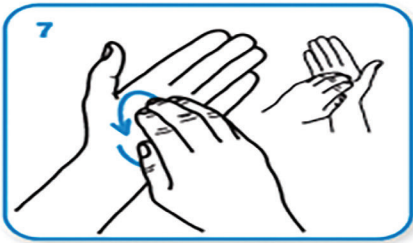
palm to palm with fingers interlaced



backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



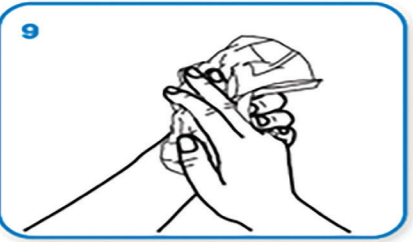
rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



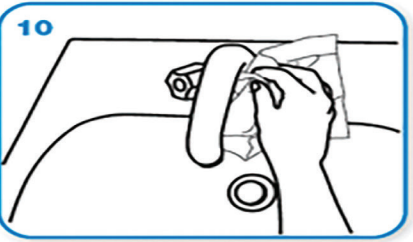
rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



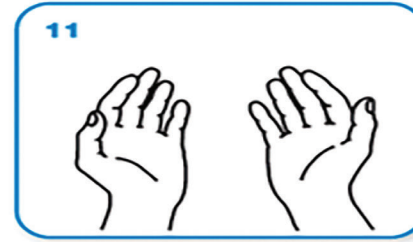
Rinse hands with water



dry thoroughly with a single use towel



use towel to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.



For information visit: [World Health Organization at who.int](http://WorldHealthOrganization.org)



**CLEAN
HANDS KEEP
YOU HEALTHY.**

Wash your hands with soap
and water for at least

20 SECONDS.

LIFE IS BETTER WITH

**CLEAN
HANDS**



www.cdc.gov/handwashing



This material was developed by CDC. The Life is Better with Clean Hands Campaign is made possible by a partnership between the CDC Foundation, GOJO, and Staples. HHS/CDC does not endorse commercial products, services, or companies.

NAACP UPDATE:

NAACP
1919-2019 CENTENNIAL
<http://www.SpokaneNAACP.com>

By Devon Wilson

We will get through this.
We will get through this.

It’s a simple statement; in times of trouble it offers some solace or encouragement. A signal that whatever crisis or problem at hand is only temporary. That we, as a community, as a society, as a species have been through worse and will continue to persevere. I’m sure you’ve already seen the phrase in a number of news articles and social media posts that discuss the COVID-19 pandemic.

We will get through this.

But within that “we” a curious thing happens. People go missing, get forgotten, or are simply ignored. Because the fact is not everyone will make it through this. At the moment of this writing, over 100 people here in the United States have died due to the COVID-19. Those who are elderly and immunocompromised are most at risk and least likely to make it through this.

I say this not to be contrarian. I believe the devil has enough advocates and it brings me no joy in highlighting this unfortunate reality. My hope is that by bringing this fact to everyone’s attention, by taking a closer look at “we” that everyone can be vigilant in ensuring that more “we” actually can make it through this.



Which is why I’m proud to share that the Spokane NAACP and broader Alaska, Oregon, Washington State Area NAACP have called for all actors in our state - whether they be municipalities, agencies, institutions, or community organizations, to apply a racial equity lens in all operational responses to the COVID-19 virus. This includes a call for transparency in decision making processes, easing of overpopulation in our jail systems, and an expansion of paid sick leave for those impacted.

We do this because we know that in times of crises those farthest from power are often the first to be forgotten. We saw it in New Orleans after Katrina. Reams of scholarly articles have examined the disparities in the federal government’s response to the needs of poor families and communities of color. We saw it during the AIDS crisis – when our LGBTQ+ siblings’ and sisters’ calls for help went ignored for years. We saw it during the 2008 financial collapse – when Wall Street was bailed out at the expense of Main Street. There is an unfortunate tendency in our institutions to comfort the already comfortable. While over a trillion dollars has already been injected into the stock market to calm panicked investors, our hope is that by shining a light on this issue early on, we can avoid repeating some of our past mistakes.

Let’s be clear: this is just one piece to the puzzle. We know better than to exclusively look to bureaucracies and agencies to save us. It has been absolutely inspiring to see how, in times of struggle, people really do come together (in groups no greater than 10 individuals) and look after one another. This call for equity from our institutions doesn’t abdicate our own personal responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable among us are looked after. We’re simply asking those in power do their part to ensure we all get through this.

Devon Wilson serves as the Criminal Justice Chair for the Spokane Area Branch #1137 of the NAACP

NAACP Tele-Town Hall Draws Over 21,000

BALTIMORE — On March 15 the NAACP hosted an emergency tele town hall the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic with several special guests, including U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams; Senator Kamala Harris; Congresswoman Robin Kelly; La June Montgomery Tabron, president & CEO, W.K. Kellogg Foundation; Dr. Rich Besser, president & CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Dr. Jerry Young, president, National Baptist Convention; Rev. Traci Blackmon, United Church of Christ; Nicolette Louissaint Ph.D., executive director, Healthcare Ready.

The severity of the coronavirus has had widespread implications across the world and continues to affect the most vulnerable and underserved communities. More than 21,000 concerned citizens from across the nation joined the tele-town hall live, with another 4,500 tuning in online, to hear from a panel of faith, medical and political leaders on how they can protect themselves and the safety measures the federal government is taking to mitigate and ultimately end the pandemic.

The call opened with **Derrick Johnson**, president and CEO of the NAACP, highlighting the importance of the town hall. He called on the government to provide support for all communities by highlighting his personal experience of living through Katrina and the longstanding impact of neglecting those that most need access to social services. His remarks were followed by **Senator Kamala Harris**, who brought attention to the fact that “this pandemic is stretching our healthcare system, economy and causing grief among our communities.” She also highlighted the stress and undue burden it is placing on small busi-

NAACP

EMERGENCY
TELE-TOWN HALL

THE CORONAVIRUS
PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

LEADING PUBLIC HEALTH AND POLICY EXPERTS TO ADDRESS HOW THE
CORONAVIRUS CRISIS IS AFFECTING OUR COMMUNITIES AND TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS.



DR. JERRY YOUNG
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL
BAPTIST CONVENTION



ROBIN KELLY
CONGRESSWOMAN



REV. TRACI BLACKMON
UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST



DR. JEROME ADAMS
SURGEON GENERAL



KAMALA HARRIS
SENATOR



NICOLETTE
LOUISSAINT, PHD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
HEALTHCARE READY



DR. RICH BESSER
PRESIDENT & CEO,
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON
FOUNDATION



LA JUNE
MONTGOMERY TABRON
PRESIDENT & CEO, WK
KELLOGG FOUNDATION

VISIT: NAACP.ORG

for underserved groups and 950 million for state and local public health response that will be disbursed via the Center for Disease Control (CDC).”

Nicolette Louissaint, Ph.D., executive director of Healthcare Ready, brought attention to the need for organizations and health professionals to use “creative methods” for interacting with the populations they serve. She also spoke about caring for 46% of the population that relies on prescription drugs and the reality they face in the next month.

La June Montgomery Tabron, president & CEO, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and **Dr. Rich Besser**, president & CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, spoke briefly about their commitment to educating communities and ensuring everyone in the nation has the opportunity to help reduce the impact of COVID-19.

Rev. Traci Blackmon, United Church of Christ, offered remarks that uplifted the spiritual wellbeing of the nation and brought into focus the need for participants to lean on what health professionals are advising while also looking to their faith to comfort them during this difficult time.

The call closed with NAACP President Derrick Johnson inviting **Dr. Jerry Young**, president, National Baptist Convention, to offer an inspirational prayer.

More information can be found at naacp.org about resources for those impacted by the coronavirus.

Visit the following link to listen to the full audio of the Emergency Tele-Town Hall: <https://soundcloud.com/user-600736616/coronavirus-emergency-tele-town-hall>

nesses. “When we look at Black families that are starting small businesses, there is going to be a real concern that these businesses will have to close due to the economic impact of this pandemic. I am looking at how the federal government can support through bridge loans that will help small businesses make it through the next couple of months.”

Jerome Adams, U.S. surgeon general, offered rallying advice about what actions individuals can take to cope with the anxiety the virus is causing and health measures to take to ensure safety is a number one priority. He also mentioned four different methods of testing established through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), state and local labs, and hospitals. In clos-

ing, he mentioned, “I’m fighting for Black and Brown communities, people who are disadvantaged, and families that need support.”

Congresswoman Robin Kelly talked in-depth about the two bills that were passed for coronavirus preparedness. She stated, “100 million of 8.3 billion dollars would be directed to community health centers

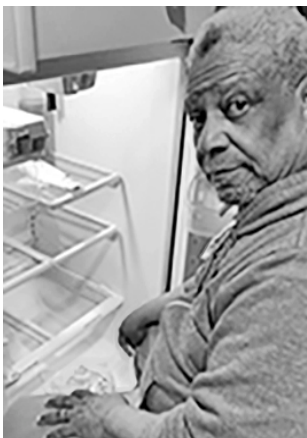
How I See It by Bob Lloyd, age 76

Shelter in place: for a week we got it made.



Sleep a little longer about 6-8 hrs. What happened while we were asleep? What's Coach Mo's mantra for the day? What's Doc Gupta's take on COVID-19?

Self-maintenance activities: take a walk, do house chores we avoided, call distant friends, read/listen to books, watch Netflix, put on some music - or make some.



No poultry? Plenty of free range turkeys available on the South Hill.

Sheltering in place: 6 - 8 weeks? months?



We are social beings. You can't have a democratic process without freedom of assembly.



He will not leave office peacefully. Organize and VOTE like your life depends on it.

Be Prepared for Containment: A Suggested 3-Month Food Storage Plan. More resources here: flumob.org/resources

		Family					Family	
		Total	Have	Need			Total	Have
EMERGENCY WATER (2 week supply)								
14 gallons or about 4 x 24 ct. cases of 16.9 oz. Bottles								
GRAINS (75 lbs.)		Total	Have	Need	FRUIT			
Wheat, hard	25 lbs. or 4 #10 LDS cans				Apple slices	1/4 #10 LDS can		
Flour, white	15 lbs. or 3 #10 LDS cans				Applesauce	45 oz. or 3 cans		
Rice, white	10 lbs. or 2 #10 LDS cans				Banana chips (opt.)	1/4 #10 can		
Oats	5 lbs. or 2 #10 LDS cans				Fruit, various etc.	12 - 15 oz. cans		
Spaghetti and/or Macaroni	4 lbs. or 1 #10 LDS can				Raisins or other dried fruit	16 oz.		
Pasta, other	4 lbs.				VEGETABLES			
Corn meal or Masa Harina	1 lb.				Vegetables	12 - 15 oz. cans		
Pancake Mix	2 lb.				Potatoes flakes	4 lbs. or 2 #10 LDS cans		
Cold or Instant Cereal (opt.)	6 boxes or 6 lbs.				Green chilies or mushrooms	2 - 4 oz. cans		
SUGAR (15 lbs.)		Total	Have	Need	Pumpkin	15 oz. cans		
Sugar, white	10 lbs. or 2 #10 LDS cans				Cams	15 oz. cans		
Sugar, brown	2 lb.							
Sugar, powdered	1 lb.							
Honey	2 lb.							
Corn syrup	4 oz.							
Jam/Jellies	37 oz.							
Jello	2							
Pudding	2							

Will shelter in place result in containment and the loss of the democratic process?

Coronavirus Is Forcing Black Churches to Make Tough Choices

What responsibilities do pastors owe to their congregants to keep them safe?

By Candice Marie Benbow
Reprinted from zora.medium.com



In a world that seeks to push Black people to the depths of despair, Sunday proves those forces do not win. Perhaps that is why the threat of the Covid-19/coronavirus pandemic presented a greater cause for concern. As it swept through the country, coronavirus posed risk to the one day many Black Americans hoped would make sense of the week’s chaos. Among a Sunday kind of people, debates ensued whether traditional worship should take place.

For many, this was an issue of public safety. That, while Sunday has always been symbolic of Black faith, traditional worship now had major health implications. After a Covid-19 outbreak within a congregation and the news that many can be asymptomatic and unknowingly spread Coronavirus, many pastors transitioned away from traditional worship. With the third Sunday being a primarily senior-led worship experience, Pastor E. Dewey Smith Jr. (House of Hope Atlanta) couldn’t reconcile loving his congregants and ignoring breaking news. “I just couldn’t have any peace putting God’s people in that kind of jeopardy,” he says. House of Hope created a fully online worship experience and encouraged members to host small groups in their homes.

“We know that the average Black church is between 75 and 100 members. Missing a service can mean the difference between lights on and lights off for many congregations.”
~Theologian and Ethicist Keri Day

There were pastors who understood the risks and still believed it was important for people to be able to have traditional worship. “This week has changed everything and we will never be the same,” says Pastor Courtney Clayton Jenkins (South Euclid United Church of Christ of Ohio). As pastor, Clayton Jenkins took the necessary precautions to ensure the sanctuary was thoroughly sanitized and encouraged most vulnerable members to stream online. Known for opening her sanctuary following major crisis moments, Clayton Jenkins grounds that decision in her experience processing 9/11 in her undergraduate chapel and local church. “There is something about being in the house of the Lord when there is so much trouble beyond you.”

As the conversation of whether to hold service continued, many saw the decision to continue on with regular programming as another example of Black pastors’ greed, regardless of church size. Yet, for many congregations, it was not that simple. All of Louisville, KY’s Hughlett Temple AME Zion



Church’s monthly bills are due this week. Pastor Valerie Washington could not ignore that. Additionally, their tithes and offerings pay the salaries of church employees and aid in emergency benevolence.

“We know that the average Black church is between 75 and 100 members. Missing a service can mean the difference between lights on and lights off for many congregations,” says theologian and ethicist Keri Day. “Many of our congregations are vulnerable financially because we are vulnerable financially. And yet what would it mean for the ethical response of pastors in this moment to honor what our officials are saying and have the faith they preach about when it comes to the church’s finances?”

Brad Braxton, PhD, who is a pastor (The Open Church of Baltimore) and a chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer (Saint Luke’s Episcopal School) believed this moment did not call for the villainization of pastors on either side of the issue. Instead, he sees it as a call to think critically about the role the church plays in community health. Service at The Open Church took place on a conference call and included a sermon, a Covid-19 information session led by a health care professional, and prayer. “We had church,” Braxton says. “And God was not dishonored.”

As coronavirus continued to make its presence known on American soil, many pastors could not help but honor the information presented—even if it contradicted their initial position. Bishop Clarence Laney (Monument of Faith Church of Durham, NC) was set to go through with Sunday’s service until he watched Chanequa Walker-Barnes’ “Pastoring in a Pandemic” on Saturday afternoon. As an ordained minister, licensed therapist, and pastoral care professor, Walker-Barnes offered pastors concrete issues to weigh as they considered moving forward with traditional forms of worship.

“After watching that and learning many of our seniors still planned to come as a sign of

faith, I knew I couldn’t do it.” Consequently, there was no service at Monument of Faith.

Beyond the decision to host services, many bemoaned the theological responses to the coronavirus crisis circulating on social media. Among them was the belief that, if Christians significantly adjusted their lives as a result of coronavirus, it signaled a true lack of faith.

Founder of one of the largest denominational bodies among Black congregations, Bishop Paul Morton cautioned against the closure of churches as they are a “spiritual hospital” and “spiritual police department.” There was also the creation of the C.O.V.I.D. (“Christ Over Viruses and Infectious Diseases”) acronym and meme. This illuminated the growing consensus that Black pastors do not take pressing community concerns seriously and seek to numb Black Christians to reality with over-spiritualization.

“We can’t explain a virus theologically,” says theologian and Africana studies professor Monica Coleman. “But we can respond to a virus theologically.” Coleman suggested congregational leadership calling members and working with them to ensure the practical needs of medicines and groceries are met. Coleman also suggested churches think critically about providing their members with information regarding powers of attorney and other legal protections. “The more we plan, the less stress we feel. If pastors can alleviate stress, that’s what they should be doing.”

As new guidelines suggest gatherings of no more than 10 people, pastors must assess their willingness to concede to forces beyond their control. “Most of us wrestle with the theological and social implications of a decision because our skills may not be as sharpened as we think they are,” Bishop Laney says.

This flexibility may include finally listening to those who have been calling for congregations to embrace various forms of technology for the last decade. Laney concedes that had certain technological investments been made

at Monument of Faith, canceling Sunday’s service wouldn’t have been necessary.

“So many of us have been resistant because we viewed technology as an alternative to the brick and mortar,” Laney says. “But that’s not the case at all and this has really shown me its importance in ways I didn’t see.”

Transitioning to online connection and growth groups, South Euclid UCC will be using this as an opportunity to stretch the boundaries of what church looks like. As pastor, Clayton Jenkins is also exploring what that means for baptism and communion. “Are we going to trip if it’s not unleavened bread and grape juice? If I say go grab a ritz cracker and some water, will you be okay with that? This moment will force us to use divine imagination and ensure that it is theologically sound.”

As a pastor and senior executive at an educational institution, Braxton also believes this is a prime opportunity for his ministerial colleagues to understand themselves as part of a larger public health apparatus. “I honor the ways the epidemiologists, public health officials, and physicians provide necessary care for our community,” Braxton says. “As a pastor, I lead a community that contributes to public well-being. Knowing this, what is our responsibility to contribute to public health?”

“I believe this is a time when fan-based ministry will fail. Clayton We love to say ‘where two or three are gathered together’ but could two or three survive for six months if we’ve not really prepared them? If we have not been authentically and earnestly making disciples, it will show now.”
~ Pastor Courtney Clayton Jenkins
South Euclid United Church of Christ, OH

“I believe this is a time when fan-based ministry will fail,” Clayton Jenkins offers. “We love to say ‘where two or three are gathered together’ but could two or three survive for six months if we’ve not really prepared them? If we have not been authentically and earnestly making disciples, it will show now.”

Smith agrees and believes the Covid-19 crisis will call pastors into deep reflection. “This is really just the beginning of a season of unknown,” he says. “There are a lot of things we can be right now but none of them are more important than being the hands and feet of Jesus.”

Sunday is coming and many will not gather at their respective houses of worship to celebrate victory over the forces of death. To do so would give those forces permission they must not have. Yet, as a Sunday kind of people, we bear witness to our faith and resilience every day. And, on the day we consider most holy, we have an incredible opportunity to reimagine the ways we honor that truth.

Candice Marie Benbow is a theologian, essayist and creative who situates her work at the intersections of beauty, faith, feminism and culture. candicebenbow.com

Inside a Catalytic Event

By Rodney McAuley

I find myself in the midst of what I will call a "catalytic event" (or season). In using this term, I am referring to a painful but necessary experience, which has launched me into a new reality.

Metaphorically, I'm like Neo in the 1995 movie "The Matrix." I've taken the red pill. I am being deconstructed in order to be reconstructed. My faith is becoming more real to me than ever before.

I'll say it this way: All that can be shaken is being shaken until that which can't be

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

shaken remains....on Christ the Solid Rock I stand....covenantal relationships shall remain and grow deeper and stronger.... all dross is being burned away....I am coming forth as pure gold...

He's got me. Christ in me (and I in Him), the hope of glory.

shalom....rm



COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

Local Churches Responding To COVID-19

By Pastor Shon L. Davis
Jesus Is The Answer Apostolic Church

My name is Pastor Shon Davis and I am the senior pastor of Jesus Is The Answer Apostolic Church. I am writing this article to simply express my personal views of how my church and other partnering ministries within the faith community are responding to this recent pandemic of the coronavirus in our city.

I would like to begin by stating that the views shared in this article are from a Christian, faith based perspective and are not intended to be the sole view of the local church.

As I look back to the opening of this 2020 new year, there was a lot of excitement and positive energy in the air around this year being a more progressive and forward moving year.

Yet, no sooner then the second month of the new year, we began to experience the loss of famous celebrities that influenced many across our nation and now a virus that has caused a pandemic around the world, and has created a new norm for how citizens are conducting their every day lives.

I am reminded of a tweet that LeBron James sent out on March 11th in response to the passing of Kobe Bryant and now the coronavirus effect;

“Man we cancelling sporting events, school, office work, etc etc. What we really need to cancel is 2020! Damn it’s been a rough 3 months. God bless and stay safe” (@KingJames)

The positive and hopeful energy of a progressive new year seems to have shifted into a state of uncertainty, fear and even doubt of a healthy recovery. With school districts unsure if they will even reopen before the summer break, small businesses, especially restaurants are not just counting their losses, they are re-evaluating whether or not they will even be able to reopen their doors.

The loss of employment because of mandatory closure of businesses. Restrictions on social gatherings that has caused major events to be canceled and even causing churches to have to shift their services to video streaming and social media communications.

Society has been focusing so much on the effect that the virus is having on people and how fast it is spreading, that we are overlooking the secondary virus that is attached to the first, and that is fear.

This is where I agree with the term “Pandemic”, simply because it is not just the “Epidemic” that is causing universal health problems, but the “Panic” that is accompanying the virus has spread just as fast as the virus itself.

From a biblical perspective I can understand where the fear and panic is coming from. The bible says that “Men’s hearts will be failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth (Coronavirus) (Luke-21:26).

Our nation has found itself in a very vulnerable position trying to defend itself against an enemy that we have never seen before. Many of our experts and the best minds in medicine are working tirelessly to find an antidote for a virus that keeps changing how it is transferred from one person to another.

We have pushed social distancing and limiting physical touch to minimize the spread. However, we are now reporting cases where it is being transmitted through aerosols and particles smaller than 5 micrometers that can float in the air for minutes or longer for others to simply inhale.

With the incline in the number of cases and death tolls rising, I can see why it is causing such fear, anxiety and enhanced health problems across the nation. However, as a person of faith, the word of God keeps us grounded in a way that we are not motivated by fear, but led by the spirit of God.

The bible says that “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy-2:7).

Though the physical buildings of our churches may no longer be the current place for gathering and assembling ourselves together. We are not limited from gathering around the throne of God through our prayers, devotions and faith to believe in his sovereign grace and power to heal our nation.

I personally believe that COVID-19 has forced the church to become the church beyond its four walls and to engage a population that generally would not attend within the physical buildings.

Now, I am in no wise insinuating that we are to be irresponsible and not take the proper precautions to prevent ourselves from becoming subjected to or even from sharing the coronavirus unknowingly. Even as people of faith, it’s important that we educate ourselves and become better informed of the effect of this virus and not take it for granted.

Though some will choose to emphasize that closing the doors of our churches and preventing the people of God from assembling themselves together is a sign of being scared and fearful, which is evidence of a lack of faith. Where I personally differ with those views of belief is in the biblical fact that the same God that said that “he is able to keep us from falling” (Jude-1:24), also said don’t willingly jump off of a roof top and then expect me to catch you (Luke-4:9-12).

There is a healthy fear that is within man that surfaces as an emotional ability to sense danger that may be moving within close proximity of a person. But to be scared is when fear has reached an emotional level of terror and the signal from the brain is to retreat. The biblical source for this type of belief is found in 2 Chronicles-20:3 (And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord.) Fear was his ini-

tial emotion that danger was coming upon him. But he chose not to be scared and retreat, but to stand in his faith and pray and seek his God.

The Church of Jesus Is The Answer has chosen to not operate in fear, but to walk in wisdom. Though we have suspended our services for gathering together within the church building. We are still engaging in Christian service by meeting the needs of a vulnerable populations within our community.

Our church has chosen to do wellness checks on the elderly and kids that are home because of schools being closed. We have chosen to provide food and personal supplies for families during this time of crisis. On this past Saturday we served 287 families (Parents and Children) with a variety of food boxes and personal supplies that will last for a few weeks. Our mentoring team is checking in on students that are at high risk to provide social and emotional supports and to keep them on the right track.

Because of our partnership with Spokane Public Schools, we are also able to help families in navigating the school systems while being shut down to make sure their student have laptops and academic supports for in-home and online learning.

Our activities are still being done with reasonable health precautions not to subject anyone from our group to the virus.

This to me is more than just the church responding in the time of crisis, it is simply an act of humanity that dismisses religious beliefs, political views, ethnicity, social economical status, or sexual orientation. It’s simply the right thing to do.

I pray that the Spokane community will be safe and wise as we all navigate through this season of uncertainty with faith to believe, “That this too shall pass”.
Sincerely,
Pastor Shon L. Davis

I Wonder What People Thought Was Going to Happen

By Kurtis Robinson
President, Spokane NAACP

I wonder what people thought was going to happen and what was so important for us to ignore the signs and the warnings. We have sacrificed far too many crucial ecological dynamics. We have ignored far too many vital healthy relational parameters.

There was bound to be and still is coming many of the repercussions that have been set in and have had sustained motion for far too long...they are all interrelated...the way that we treat each other in relationships and the way that we have treated our environment.

And in this time, with the loss of my mother to this disease, diagnosis of my oldest biological daughter with cancer, my oldest friend given 4 months to live, and the loss of a dear tribal elder earlier this year, I am reminded of the reality of what's truly important.. that inspite of this pandemic, we still have the same issues, racial bigotry, classism, justification, otherizing and environmental domination, that have been plaguing us for generations.

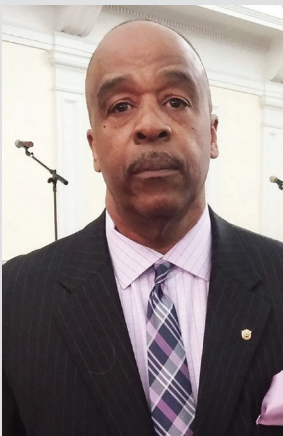
We will either use this pandemic challenge as an opportunity to do better at shifting those woeful trends or will become more efficient at perpetuating multiple tracks of these devastating harms...

Choices. Which ones will we make now.



A Simple Call

By Rev. Walter Kendricks
*Pastor, Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church
President, Spokane Ministers Fellowship*



The church {Universal or One, as a whole} has responded to the current crisis brought about by the Coronavirus and the corresponding ban on large gatherings via a couple methods, one of which though considered “Old School”is tried, true, effective, and in most cases, extremely welcomed on behalf of recipients. The method referred to is “a phone call”.

I have found that a simple phone call to Members or Congregants on Saturday evening or Sunday morning, checking on their well being and inquiring if they have any special needs or prayer requests, to be an effective and personal way of showing the love of GOD. It brings Pastor and member together in a very personal setting, where concerns, fears, and or anxieties can be dealt with immediately.

Presently the Sunday Worship experience for the vast majority of Churches, born of necessity, relies upon Social Media, teleconference, live streaming etc. to bring Church to the people.

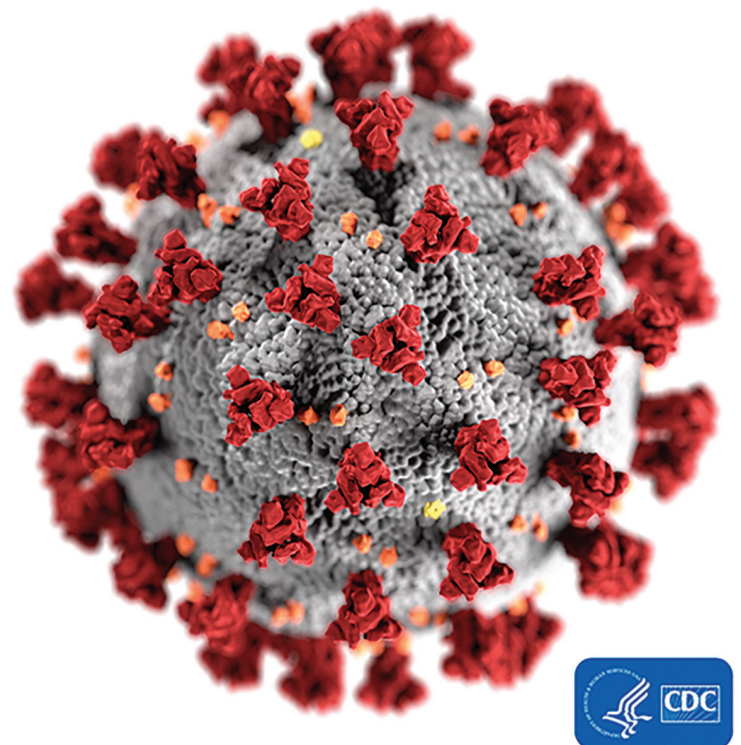
However, the current crisis has served the purpose of reinforcing to me a simple truth: The Church isn’t the building, nor is the Church the order of service. The Church is GOD, in us and with us.

What is a Coronavirus? What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses, named for their crownlike shape, are a large family of viruses that are common in many species of animals. Several coronaviruses can infect people, according to the CDC. These strains mostly cause cold-like symptoms but can sometimes progress to more complicated lower respiratory tract illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis.

On rare occasions, animal coronaviruses can evolve and spread among humans, as seen with MERS and SARS. The virus at the center of the latest outbreak is being referred to as a novel (new) coronavirus because it is something that health officials have not seen before. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, known as SARS-CoV-2, is the name of the new virus strain that was identified in January. This newly identified type of coronavirus has caused a recent outbreak of a respiratory illness that is called COVID-19.

The full name of the disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease.



How is COVID-19 Spread?



The virus is thought to be transmitted from person-to-person through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It may also be possible for a person to be infected by touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes.

What are COVID-19 Symptoms?



Patients with COVID-19 have reported symptoms similar to other respiratory illnesses, including mild to severe fever, cough and shortness of breath. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. **Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell.** In rare cases the virus can be spread through contact with feces.

Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. People with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

If you develop **emergency warning signs for COVID-19** get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face. (This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning).

How to Protect Yourself (and those you love)

The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to the virus.



Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



Avoid close contact

Avoid close contact with people who are sick

Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community.

This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.



Clean and disinfect

Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface. *****Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.***

Complete CDC Guide on disinfecting households:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>

How to Protect Others



Cover coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wear a facemask if you are sick

If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room, vehicle, at the doctor's office). If you are NOT sick: CDC says you do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick. Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

For more information on COVID-19 visit srhd.org/covid19 or cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov

Black Barbers Can't Take Business Online During Coronavirus Shutdown

By Mike Muse
Reprinted from Level: level.medium.com

On Sunday, March 22, New York announced that the state now accounts for roughly 5% of coronavirus cases worldwide, and nearly 2,000 of those who tested positive for the virus in the state have been hospitalized.

In response, a growing number of governors, from New York to California, have ordered various restrictions on public gatherings and businesses. Such measures, necessary though they are, have crippled the economy at every level, from corporate to small business to individual.

Recognizing the moral imperative of the moment, Congress has proposed a \$1.8 trillion economic stabilization package to aid families and businesses affected by the pandemic. (That's nearly double the size of the expected federal budget deficit this year, but market stabilization and Americans' well-being takes precedence in a moment like this.)

A bailout of this size and scope is unprecedented. Every industry is being devastated by the coronavirus. The American public and industries need immediate relief, and for the first time, voting in favor of a bailout will not cost an elected official their position. There are no conversations around deficit spending when the Las Vegas Strip is closed for business.

For far too long, when it comes to our nation's well-being, the role of government intervention in citizens' lives has come down to a single rhetorical question: Is it a moral obligation or a constitutional right? In both finance and health, the answer has mostly been a "no." America's economic engine is based on capitalism and the strength of the free market, with the occasional assist from tax cuts and interest rate adjustments; public health has likewise been treated as an individual responsibility, with the limited support of a social safety net in the event you fall.

Both systems have existed relatively independent of each other — at least until coronavirus struck, bringing America to an unprecedented standstill. It is here that the question is no longer rhetorical, and it is here that the answer is starkly clear: It is, without question, a moral obligation.

Yet, all money and business sectors are not created equal in the proposed stabilization legislation. The amounts that trade groups and lobbyists are asking Congress



Photo: Corey Jenkins

to allocate to their respective industries are numbers unseen during a presidential election year: \$1.4 trillion for the manufacturing sector; \$4 billion for museums; \$100 billion for doctors, nurses, and hospitals; \$325 billion for restaurants; \$60 billion for Boeing; \$250 billion for the travel industry.

The resulting allocation of funds will be a civics lesson in the power of political currency. Which industry has the best access to the politicians drafting legislation? Who has the juice? In the lobbying world, it's a matter of who is best positioned with the party in control of the government. Their advocacy on behalf of their clients will determine not only what is included in the stabilization package but at what amount.

The major industries will, of course, be well taken care of in the bailout — but what about the industries that aren't major? The small neighborhood businesses that are too small for representation by powerful lobbyists, but too big to fail in the community? The business that sits on the front line of services for Black men, but is the most affected by six-foot social distancing mandates? The business that not only is an economic driver of a neighborhood but a gathering spot for social commentary that challenges opinions and nourishes the soul?

The barbershop has been part of the bedrock of Black community — and there's no Black barbershop lobby on K Street fighting for these business owners.

Unlike businesses selling goods like clothing or food, barbers can't transition their business to online commerce or takeout service; there are no unemployment benefits to apply for. During this pandemic, the barber is one of the most vulnerable — not merely because of the nature of the business, but the value it is assigned. A vanity service doesn't immediately come to mind for a bailout, and it won't without a representative convincing legislators of its worth.

To understand the economic role that Black barbershops play in the community, you first have to understand the history and origin of the institution. In the book *Cutting Along the Color Line: Black Barbers and Barber Shops in America*, Quincy T. Mills writes that the Black barbershop can be traced back to the early 18th century when enslaved men and women acting as plantation barbers and hairstylists would groom fellow slaves on Sunday mornings — “the only leisure time they had for proper grooming.”

Early barbershops were essentially the original Black-owned businesses; free and enslaved African Americans hired out by their masters “seized the opportunity to become entrepreneurs in an industry void of white competition, with minimal startup costs and significant profit potential.”

For many Black men in the U.S., barbers are ambassadors of entrepreneurship, the first Black-owned small business that we support. But due to the close relationship a Black barber has with his clients, it never feels transactional. Instead, it's a frequent ritual that over time becomes a bond of friendship rather than a service. That's wonderful, but it also minimizes in clients' minds the financial responsibility being shouldered by barbers, whether rent, taxes, utilities, or any other operating expenses — costs that don't disappear when incoming revenue does. Like say, now.

The case of the Black barber is representative of the economic trickle-down effect the coronavirus is having on all industries. In particular, similar professions that provide a service, that in good times, are viewed as optional (although I'd challenge you to find any Black man that views a weekly haircut as optional). But due to low numbers of the profession as a whole — in 2018 there were just short of 80,000 barbers in the United States, of all races — these are the professions that can go unnoticed during a global pandemic. Without the storytellers, the advocates, the lobbyist on Capitol Hill, finding financial relief will be challenging.

The current debate in Congress regarding the proposed stabilization package centers on two competing ideologies on the allocation of funding: either an emphasis on people or on big corporations. At stake is the \$500 billion program within the package that would award loans to states and cities as well as businesses. The program would be administered through the Department of Treasury, at the discretion of Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

I'm not sure the last time Mnuchin has been inside a Black barbershop, but it's important for him to know that these non-corporations are still giants in the community. They may not have boards of directors, but they're large holding companies of community interest, held together by collective bargaining agreements, with work environments that allow for Black men to show up as their authentic selves — and Six Sigma certified to deliver a consistent, guaranteed, product weekly. Even if K street hasn't come in for a fade.

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COVID-19 LOCAL IMPACT

FRESH SOUL



Michael Brown: Fresh Soul's last open day as on Saturday, March 28. We did take out orders during the week following Governor Inslee's Stay Home order, but it wasn't enough to sustain the business and pay employees.

Fresh Soul was a place where a lot of older people would come in and sit down and eat, but since this thing started, it's been devastating. A lot of businesses are closing down. (Michael and his six staff will be out of work until the Stay at Home order is lifted.)

My true thought is for people to get close to your neighbor. Do like God said. The first commandment was to love him with your whole heart, mind and soul, The second one was to love your neighbor. Hopefully people will support each other. Step up and become better neighbors.

Michael says stay tuned because as soon as the restrictions are lifted, Fresh Soul will be back open. "We're gonna be right back!"

To contact and support Fresh Soul call (509) 242-3377 or visit: www.freshsoulrestaurant.com

CHKN N MO



Bob Hemphill: The last day of operation for Chkn-N-Mo was Tuesday, March 24. The business was doing take-out following the Governor's Stay at home order.

I was doing pretty good with carry out. One day I got thirty calls, but so many people are carrying the virus. You touch this. You touch that. Money. Credit cards. So, we decided to just close things down for a while.

The current plan is to open back up for take-out on April 6th.

I'll do the same thing that I did before. I've got a regular clientele, people who have been coming in for years. They like the food and they like the experience.

Just put your faith and trust in God. The more we honor life and honor and respect God for the things that we have, the more he will give us.

To contact and support Chkn-N-Mo call 509-838-5071 or visit: <http://chicken-n-more.com>

WRIGHT WAY BEAUTY SUPPLY

Shania Wright started to notice a decline in January. In our industry, in December and January we start to ramp up our supplies to prepare for the rush in February. So, people in our industry are spending thousands of dollars to stock the shelves, expecting it to fly off the shelves, and it just didn't happen.

Even though people in China were being affected, it didn't have any effect on us at first because we were used to the down time and not being able to get product during the Chinese holiday. When we started to see the effects of it was when they came off of their holiday in February, that's when the realization started hitting our business.

We couldn't get product because there was more caution about what was coming in and out of the country. My vendor on the East Coast and even in California couldn't get product. They couldn't fulfill anything. Everything was on back order. Normally with back orders, they would say, ok, this will be back in on this date. They had no dates. Everything was indefinite. Usually products are only indefinite because they're going to phase them out. But everything was listed as indefinite, so it left us in limbo.

We knew about the virus over there and we weren't really concerned or worried at all because we thought it was just an isolated illness that they were experiencing in China and that they had a handle on it. So we were just going to wait it out.

The impact that COVID-19 has had



on us, aside from being at home, our shelves are definitely bare. We're really just working off of whatever we have on hand. The suppliers have even said, let us know if you need to put an order in, but even their orders don't have an estimated time of when stuff is coming back in. So, we just have what's on the shelves.

Unlike grocery stores that are getting a constant supply of food coming back on the shelves, our industry doesn't have that yet. And as a small business,

we don't know if we're going to be able to restock as quickly as we're selling it because we're trying to figure out what's more important, restocking our shelves so that we have the product on hand, or are we going to use that money to pay the bills.

Customer's are still able to order products. If they've been in the store, they know the items that we carry and that makes it easier for us to build an online order for them. I've been encouraging our customers to call because we're still taking orders that way and then we can have the order shipped to them.

What comes to mind when I reflect on the impact of COVID-19, was something I was told that I thought was a cliché. Whenever you start a business, everyone said you want to have six months of finances so you are able to cover it if something happens.

My reflection is also that I made a very serious mistake on my part. I had the option of paying into unemployment. I should have been paying myself in such a way that I wouldn't have had to wait until we were declared a major disaster to get some relief. Now, it's a blessing that we have it, but if I had to do it over again, I would do it differently. In fact, starting in April, I am actually going to start paying into unemployment. I'm going to start issuing a W-4 for myself. So those are the things from a business standpoint that I realize I need to be prepared for regardless of how often or if this ever happens again.

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Because I Love You

By Kiantha Duncan

Our World Has Changed

What if the world as we know it has changed so drastically that it never looks the same again?

What do we do with the daily feelings of extreme fear and anxiety?

How do we protect what we love, value and treasure?

There is a probability that the world as we know it will never be the same. In the aftermath of a virus that has devastated every country and every city, domestically and internationally. It is as if a nuclear bomb was detonated and we have now found ourselves scrambling to find our way in a heavy cloud of thick, dark radioactive smoke. We are all trying to understand what happened. What is happening and how can we recover from the devastation that this virus has already yielded.

It feels as if we woke up in the middle of the storm. Wind blowing. Frigid temperatures and towns filled with empty streets and dead bodies unlike anything we have ever seen before. Amidst the chill there is still a calm that is accessible to anyone who is willing to connect to their most inner self. Even in the midst of the storm, there is shelter, a hidden place that you alone can occupy.

In this quiet, still place there is connection with God. Our ultimate provider, protector and shield. In this space, no words or tears are required, as God already knows. No sound of motion is needed to demonstrate

the cares of our hearts, as God resides in that space and holds all that concerns us.

The truth is our world has permanently changed, although this change was not preempted by some evil spirit that comes to steal, kill and destroy us. Because I love you, I must inform you that we are the spirit or entity that caused this disaster. While that may be a hard pill to swallow, it is only in this acceptance that we develop a vaccine for what we have caused.

We got lost. We found refuge in our own gain and socio-economic status. We lost respect for our planet and mankind. We stopped caring about those who were out of our sight. We stopped caring for those most in need. We became over committed to things that had little value or meaning. We stopped listening to the cries in the wind. We stopped listening to the messages in the crops. We silenced the voices of those suffering.

The impact of our actions have shown us all ill prepared and vulnerable. It is in that vulnerability that we experience fear and anxiety. There is something that we must come together as a human race to do if we want to create a healthy, compassionate and livable world. What we must do is simple. We must finally open our eyes and hearts to all things living, from our earth to our air and last but not least to our fellow human beings who suffer in ways that prior to this virus were hidden to those of us with privilege.



We must be willing to critically evaluate systems of oppression. We must be unwilling to sit idly by as “others” hurt. We must respect our planet and each of its delicate inhabitants. Our only protection against this ever happening again is universal precautions. All must be protected.

Be still and know that together, hand in hand is the only way we can walk into what is sure to be a new world and planet for us all.

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

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

Finding Gratitude While Locked in My New York Apartment

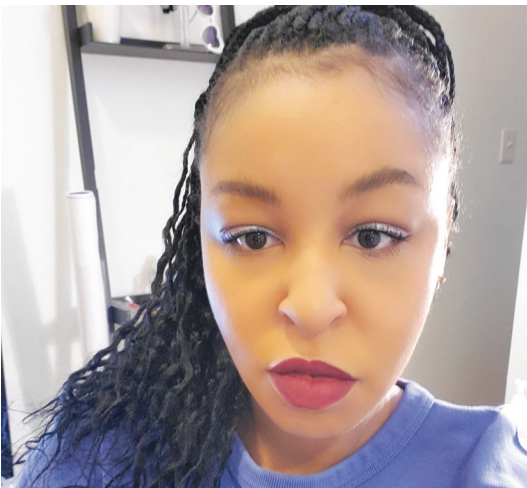
By Renika Williams

In New York, it’s easy to get lost in the speed of things. Successes and failures, our lives and relationships all pass by in the blink of an eye. Here, looking up is reserved for tourists, because we simply never have the time. Our lives speed by, living in the memory of Facebook reminders and #fbfs. Once magical moments lose their shimmer and everything starts to feel routine.

Three months ago I was celebrating my 32nd birthday, surrounded by friends and feeling stuck, but now, three months later, and knee-deep in what can best be described as an alternate reality, the repetition and routine I despised back then has caused me to feel both privileged and thankful.

Being asked to stay inside initially seemed like a dream. An excuse for me to work-from-home in my pajamas and binge-watch my favorite tv shows while answering work emails. I’ve never worked from home before, so I have to say, I was even—dare I say—a bit excited at the opportunity. What started as a not-so-scary chance to wake up late and not brush my hair before work, quickly evolved into a strategic battle for television and snack dominance between me and my boyfriend. But as the businesses around us began to close and the seriousness of the moment began to take hold, we realized that things around us and our TV schedule would never be the same.

We were both lucky enough to have jobs that allowed us to continue our positions from home. We work for eight hours a day in separate offices, trying to keep our routine as normal as possible. This rou-



tine, once boring, now keeps me sane. I feel grateful to have a job in this time of uncertainty. There are many of us, some that I know well, who lost their jobs and security overnight. We are both stuck inside, but we are stuck inside together, with our jobs, Hulu and so much food. We both have a good deal to be grateful for.

Before this, I took “outside” for granted. Seeing friends, going to work, and simply being outside. Three months ago taking a walk would have sounded exhausting. Work sounded disheartening. But now I value the time I spend on the roof watching the sky and I value the projects I do for work that keep me off the couch and my bills paid.

Sometimes what feels like a rut is just a reminder to be a little more appreciative of the things we already have. Sometimes it takes a global pandemic. Go figure.

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A Conversation with Dr. Georges Benjamin

Continued From Page 5

What do you think needs to happen with coronavirus testing in the African American community?

People go to see practitioners that they trust. Most of our [local] governmental public health agencies are in the community all the time. They have outreach workers, they have programs, so they are not just showing up today and deciding that we now want to test you so that your first question is who are these folks, where are they from and what’s their motive for being here. If you have a long-standing relationship with those communities, you’re much more likely to accept who they are and trust what they say, so you have compliance with getting the test and believing the test results.

At some point when treatment becomes available, compliance with taking medication or getting the vaccine – it’s not available now, but at some point when it becomes available – is absolutely essential. Otherwise, if people don’t trust it, they won’t get the prescription filled, they won’t take the shot, they won’t even do the quarantine process because they don’t trust the information they are getting. If you have a strong federal, state, local and community partnership, then you’re going to have a much more effective engagement.

What do you think of the decision by sports leagues to cancel their tournaments and seasons?

Because of the trajectory that we’re projecting for the number of people who are going to get sick if we don’t do what we call social distancing, I applaud the sports industry for reducing our exposure and canceling or delaying those events until the peak of this epidemic is over. People of color go to a lot of those games, so we can see that as a way of putting us less at risk.

We’re social people and in addition to sports, we’re going to be loath to give up our church services and our reunions and those places that are incredibly meaningful to us. So what would you tell us about weighing those gatherings against the risk of the coronavirus?

This is serious business and we need to pay attention to trusted voices on this. I actually happen to trust the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – I know they screwed up part of the testing piece – but that information on their website is solid. Go to organizations like mine, the American Public Health Association, our information is solid.

I’m hoping we will get ministers and trusted advisers in the community up to speed. The places we also get health information – Uncle John and Auntie Sue, our barbers, our beauticians – right now they don’t all have the right information, but I’m hoping they’ll get that right information so that we can have all our trusted advisers give us the right scoop.

For information on the American Public Health Association visit: <https://www.apha.org>. To view the APHA's webinar series on COVID-19 called "COVID-19 Conversations" visit <http://covid19conversations.org>.

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COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

To South Carolina and Back

By Curtis Hampton

On March 17th, my morning started out just like every other morning. I woke up and checked a couple of news feeds to see what I had missed during these unprecedented times. On March 16th, Governor Inslee had signed a Washington statewide emergency proclamation temporarily shutting down restaurants, bars, recreational and entertainment facilities until at least April 15th and this was on the heels of Washington School closures that started on March 16th.

After reviewing the news, I would typically call my mom who is 84 years young and resides in the place of my birth, Greenwood, South Carolina. When I called my mom, there was no answer. When she didn’t answer, I told myself what I always tell myself, she is either on the phone or she just forgot to hang up the phone. But after three additional attempts, I started to get a little panicky. I reassured myself that it was fine, just like all the other times. My mom would always say, “I’m alright baby”, then we’d laugh and go on with our day.

But on this day, after making one additional call to my fourteen year old grandson, who had also been out of school since March 16, my daughter called and said that my mom had fallen, that 911 was called and she was on her way to the hospital. That night, my wife researched flights to South Carolina and the following day, I took the first available flight.

When my wife dropped me off at Spokane International airport, that was when the magnitude of what we are all experiencing with COVID-19 took on a stronger validation. I have flown in and out of Spokane for over 40 years, but on that day, I felt a weirdness that I have never experienced before. The airport was void of the usual hustle and bustle that we have come to accept as air travel. My flight was at less than 50% of capacity. The airline practiced social distancing by alternating seats and rows. Ironically, I’ve never flown First Class but on this day I was asked if I would mind sitting in First Class as opposed to my assigned economy seat. Since we all have heard about the transmission of germs during travel, I was well equipped with a dose of Airborne and wet wipes to wipe down all the surfaces that I might come in contact with during the flight.

After a quick stop in a deserted Denver Airport, I arrived at Greenville-Spartanburg International airport. There, I once again encountered the unusual sparseness. I picked up my rental car and proceeded to wipe down all surfaces that I could potentially come contact with. My plan had been to drive directly to the Hospital and check on mom, but due to the time of my arrival, the hospital informed me that I could not see her until the following day.

The morning of March 18th, I arrived at the hospital at approximately 7:30 AM. My expectation was that I would be interrogated because I’m from Washington State. Secondly, I thought that there would be questions as to whether or not I had traveled to a foreign country recently. To my amazement, no questions were asked. But they did ensure me that everyone entering the hospital used wipes. I was allowed into my mom’s room and the only restriction that they had in place at that time, was one visitor per patient at any time.

Mom was happy to see me but said that I should not have flown all that way because “she was fine.” It had been 4 months since I saw my mom and my obvious instinct was to give her a hug and a kiss but being in the hospital and being from Washington State, I decided against it. Mom was in the hospital for two days and fortunately her fall was not as serious as I had thought, but it was serious enough for me to be there.

As I talked to medical staff, I learned that surprisingly when the EMS had arrived to pick mom up, no one was wearing any type of protective gear. Even more surprising, I got off to a rocky start with one of my mom’s doctors because I asked him about the lack of entry procedures for individuals entering the hospital. He did not seem to see the need to check the temperatures or think that visitors could present a hazard to their patients. Several hours later, I had the same discussion with mom’s second doctor, who said he



would take my feedback to the hospital administrators and check what the procedures are for the EMS as they enter so many homes.

It is my contention that some southern doctors are unknowingly operating from baked in biases when it comes to Black patients and feel that they should not be questioned.

One of the nurses told me that the process for her and her husband is to protect herself and the patients. After her shift, she goes home, showers and isolates her clothing before picking up her kids from day care. Her husband, who also works in the emergency room, does the same before coming in contact with the kids or his wife.

Mom was allowed to go home and start her rehab. I was able to schedule nurse checkups, and physical therapy upon her hospital release. Once I got mom home, her neighborhood friends all wanted to come by and visit. It was difficult for some of her friends to comprehend when I requested that they call before coming over and asked them not to touch her and to try to maintain 6ft separation. I’m sure that I was called some names because of it and that some of them felt that I was overreacting to the situation.

On one of my many trips to Walmart, I was in the pharmacy picking up prescriptions for mom and I heard someone call my name. It was the wife of a high school friend who passed away a few years back. Again, my instinct was to give her a hug, but I resisted and said that we should wait until we get through this crisis. To my surprise, she told me that “you won’t get anything from hugging,” that stuff is all made up. I was also surprised when I encountered two Black republicans who both thought that the virus was a hoax or a bible prophecy.

A few days later, when the Nurse and the physical therapist showed up at moms, I think that the medical community was beginning to acknowledge that people are dying from the virus and it was time to gear up. During the time I was in Carolina, you could see the conversations start to change. While I was there, three people that were in the hospital during the time my mom was there, passed away due to COVID-19.

As my return to Spokane date was approaching, my wife and I started to hear more and more about the reduction of flight travel. I was notified of a flight cancellation to Chicago and Denver and started to stress about my return. My wife and I decided if flights were canceled due to a travel ban, I was making preparations to drive over 2300 miles to return to Spokane. Eventually, I received a return flight that wasn’t canceled.

During my return flight, there were even less people traveling. On my first fright from Greenville to Houston, there were 12 people on the flight and therefore social distancing was not an issue. The Houston airport consisted of essential staff only. None of the usual food vendors or bars were available. I then flew to San Francisco, another airport that was void of passengers and vendors to serve the travelers. There was an eeriness that most of the travelers took on as they traveled to their various destination. There seemed to be a greater awareness and seriousness that seemed to be in the air on my return trip than was present on my initial flight.

What I came away with from this trip is the uncomfortable feeling that while most of us are slowly beginning to get it when it comes to the coronavirus and COVID-19, there are others in our community and around the country that may not get it until death comes knocking on their door, if they ever get it at all.

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

COVID-19 & the Arts Community

By Ginger Ewing
Executive Director & Co-Founder of Terrain
Spokane

As Governor Inslee’s shelter in place order took hold, local musicians almost immediately began emerging from isolation with “Quarantine Jams.”

Think 5 musicians — each stowed away in their home — piecing together chords and melodies via an app on their phones and then sharing it with the world.

Similar events happened across artistic disciplines. Theaters live streamed productions. Poems and publications were distributed electronically. Chefs shared recipes on social media. Visual artists shared works in progress and galleries gave virtual tours. People held internet dance parties. Book groups met over the video conferencing service Zoom.

It's in these moments that the essence of what binds us together becomes so clear.

Art making and art consuming connects us to our community. It provides moral clarity and emotional affirmation. In a way nothing else does, art has the power to take bleakness and transform it into beauty.

Art and creativity are the tools we use to cope, to process, to better understand the human experience. Art and creativity is what feeds our souls.

Which is why COVID-19 is so uniquely cruel.

With the closure of venues, galleries, restaurants, coffee shops, museums, and retail stores, vital financial lifelines for the artists in our community — many of whom rely exclusively on gig work and restaurant and retail jobs to make ends meet — have been absolutely pummeled.

According to Americans for the Arts economic impact survey, artists and art organizations have lost 3.6 billion dollars due to coronavirus as of March 26th alone.

Meaning, the very people and places we turn to in times of need, that comfort us, that make us feel less alone, now need our help. So if you are healthy, and able, check in and see how they’re doing. Consider giving to one of the



many community funds that have sprung up to support creative work. The poets, the painters, the musicians, the barbers, the chefs, and the filmmakers will thank you.

So will your soul.

Interested in supporting the arts community during COVID-19? Do you need funds yourself?

- Check out these links to give:
- COVID-19 Artist Trust Relief Fund - artisttrust.org/donate
 - Spokane Artists and Creatives Fund - spokanearts.org/donate
 - Food is Love Campaign - chapsgirl.com/get-the-goods
 - Spokane Hospitality Workers Emergency Relief Fund - gofundme.com/f/spokane-food-amp-beverage-emergency-relief-fund/donate

- Check out these link to apply for relief:
- COVID-19 Artist Trust Relief Fund - artisttrust.submittable.com/submit
 - Spokane Artists and Creatives Fund - survey-monkey.com/r/677MN8G

For information about Terrain visit terrainspokane.com.

Sometimes it Takes a Crisis

Dr. Jeanne Baynes
Africana Studies Faculty, EWU



Our world has been so disconnected and divided for the past three years due to the culture of our nation. Unfortunately, COVID19 has impacted the world, especially the United States of America as we are the epicenter of the coronavirus. Sometimes it takes a crisis for people to become more supportive, and empathetic of others, and those who are less fortunate than we are. This virus has encouraged us to reflect on and appreciate what we have, who we are and who our family and friends are. It has forced us to slow down and communicate more with our family members. More people have reached out to me to check in and to see if I needed anything now than in the past.

Being that I was at risk, I had planned to visit my daughter and her family in the Atlanta area to visit my new granddaughter. By the orders of my son and my daughter to take the necessary precautions, I was ready with my mask, wipes, gloves and sanitizer. They both highly recommended that I check in with my friend who is a nurse, and doctor for approval. After checking in with my doctor, I was approved for travel providing I had my supplies with me. Furthermore, my itinerary was changed from Seattle to Minneapolis and onto Atlanta. Observing the airports and airplanes, they were spotless and everyone was relaxed and considerate. Even though they looked spotless, I diligently cleaned my seat, tray and seatbelt as I peered across the row to the next passenger. When my daughter picked me up from the airport, she had me strip before entering her house and sprayed my belongs. Taking a shower, I felt better.

Many advised me against traveling. I prayed and remembered this scripture, Psalms 23:1-6: “The Lord Is My Shepherd” as I contemplated traveling out of the state. Keep in mind, I have been faithful and wise in dealing with this crisis as I listened to facts and not walk in fear. However, I applaud those who are socially distancing themselves in order to work to improve the conditions, sanitizing and washing their hands to discourage the spread of this virus. Thanks for the dedication to the doctors, nurses, and first responders in working on the front lines in this pandemic. I have faith that this too shall pass if we are patient and committed in restricting our interactions. Remember, all lives matter, as the senior population is valuable as well.



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Day Twelve Under California's "Stay-at-Home" Order

By Rick Williams
San Jose, California

As I sit here on day 12 under a Stay-at-Home order in California, I have found joy in the small gestures of neighbors helping neighbors, and friends and strangers taking advantage of the opportunity to slow down a bit or at least enjoy the extra hours they have in the day because they do not have to commute an hour each way to work.

I have rejoiced in the fact that most people have been able to differentiate between keeping physical distance while not losing their emotional connection to each other. The development of online happy hours and social distance gathering circles held in front yards, driveways, and parks with friends and neighbors, reflects our determination to stay connected.

While the above has been positive, it comes against a backdrop of neighbors getting sick and dying, and others losing their jobs and their economic security. Healthcare workers and first responders working to exhaustion, without the equipment they need to succeed.

My main reflection is why was the wealthiest country in the history of the world so under prepared and poorly lead during this crisis. I also wonder if, as a nation, we will learn anything from this crisis.

The crisis has exposed the true nature of our nation's infrastructure, the consequences of having a healthcare



system driven by profits versus care, the racial and income disparity that has allowed some to work at home while others must risk illness because working at home is not an option. The crisis has also revealed the tight-rope faced by too many families living on \$65k a year or less.

Will we use the crisis to develop policies to correct these issues? Time will tell. I hope and pray that we do not get through this crisis and go back to business as usual. Stay safe and healthy!

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

Be Nice to Service Workers

By Jaeylin Snyder

It took me a very long time to realize that my past doesn't define me. It took me a long time to realize that life doesn't give breaks, self care is important, happiness comes from within, and deodorant is not antiperspirant.

But it's also taken me a long time to realize that no matter what I do, I will always be looked down on by somebody who doesn't realize what I've already done and what I've had to go through.

I am a 19-year-old biracial woman. Yes, I said woman. I am not a child.

Here's my credit. I survived abuse. I survived suicide attempts. I've survived bullies and hate and racism. I have had a job since I was 16 years old. I have only been unemployed for 7 months since my 16th birthday, ALTOGETHER. I was a wrestler. I was a varsity softball player. I've bought two cars. I am building my credit and I have never missed a credit card payment. I graduated with a 3.6 GPA, and I'm about to start college for software development.

But all anybody really knows about me anymore is that I work at a grocery store.

I know, I know. I'm really beating around the bush. But here's what I'm trying to say.

I was categorized as an "essential worker" amidst the current COVID 19 calamity that has grasped the United States and its citizens. However, I don't feel essential. I get yelled



at for trying to do my job. I've gotten talked down to and looked at funny when I relay what a manager has told me to say to a customer... but most of all, I have been treated as an inconvenience. I have worked long weeks, and I haven't even been there for a month yet. I was thrown into the fire and told to swim.

However, you're probably wondering why it took me so long to get to this point; the request to treat your local grocery store workers nicely...

I was very blessed to be able to live through what I've lived through, but people still do not realize how deep a person's past can be. We are all fighting a battle that the next person cannot see, and we are all struggling.

I am exhausted. I can't focus on anything but work and whether someone is going to yell at me at work today. I get anxious, because I have to worry about how I will react when a customer gets frustrated with me for stuttering and slipping on my words, or taking too long to count their change because so much is going on that I can't focus on the task at hand.

I should not have to rehearse what I would do if a customer tried to hit me. It is NOT my fault we are out of bottled water, toilet paper, or Ramen noodles.

Please don't make me, or any of us, question if we belong at our job or if we are actually "essential."

Without us, you wouldn't be able to get all that tuna fish, all that ramen or all those little frozen pizzas...

Moral of the story, please stay patient. Nothing comes to us easily. We are trying, and we are here to help you.

It costs nothing to be kind.
It means everything to feel appreciated.

Sincerely,
A 19-year-old, autistic, paranoid, studdery and nervous checker at Winco who just wants to be able to breathe without making somebody upset.

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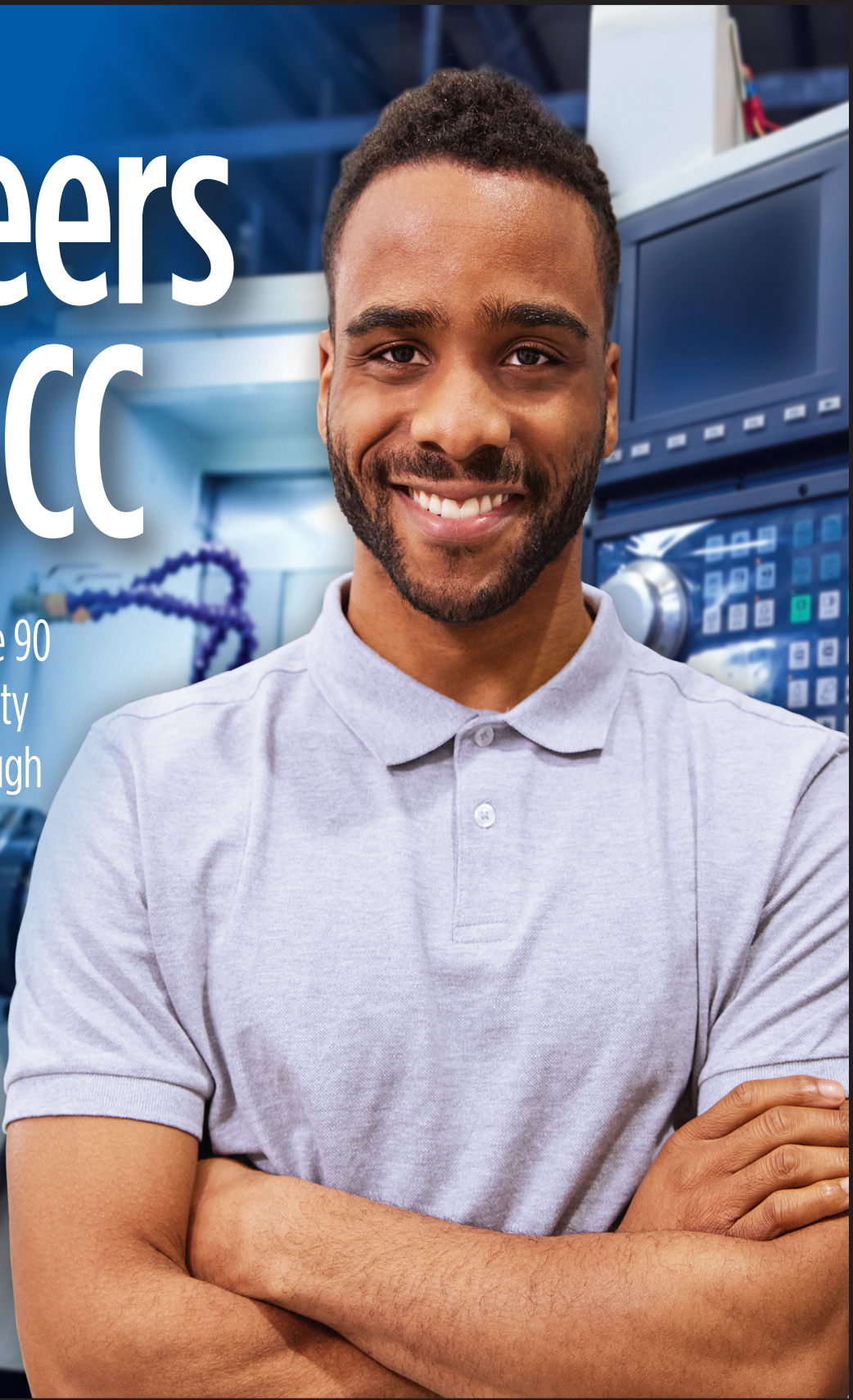
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Jails, Prisons Struggle with Spread of Coronavirus

By Brianna Nargiso

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - As COVID-19 continues to spread globally and the U. S. has now become the first country to top 100,000 cases, prisons and jails across the country continue to house inmates and employees who have tested positive for the Coronavirus, and authorities are desperately trying to abate the spread.

For example, due to the severity of the virus that had killed 32,137 around the world and 2,054 in the U. S. as of Sunday, March 29, The Board of Corrections, an agency providing oversight of New York City jails, urgently recommended that all people with a high risk of dying from the virus be released from the jail immediately. The board also asked that the jail take the necessary steps to significantly decrease the jail’s population immediately since social distancing has been among the keys to preventing the spread of the virus along with thorough hand washing and decontamination of surfaces.

In response to the recommendation, New York City Mayor Bill De Blasio released 40 people from New York’s Rikers Island last Friday and another 23 people on Sunday who were considered at a high risk of dying from the virus.

De Blasio took to Twitter to tell New Yorkers “...an additional 200 being evaluated right now for release who have less than 90 days left in their sentences.”

However, the release of 63 people is just not enough to stop the spread of the virus, which easily moves from per-



son to person and can also be contracted from surfaces and the environment where an infected person has coughed or sneezed. Therefore, advocates for the incarcerated are pressing authorities to do more.

Jails throughout the United States have followed similar precautions to protect inmates, staff and the general public:

As states struggle for answers and public health advocates encourage release of non-violent inmates endangered by the virus, the federal prison system on Sunday, announced its first death. Patrick Jones, 49, who was housed in a minimum security prison in Oakdale, La., has died from

the virus after testing positive on March 19, according to widespread reports.

California has also begun releasing large numbers of inmates in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. According to the L.A Times, Los Angeles County reduced their jail population by 6 percent in February. Pennsylvania, Maine, Texas, Illinois and Ohio have also begun releasing inmates amidst state outbreaks.

The Bureau of Prisons has suspended all visits for 30 days. Inmate transfers has also been with few exceptions. Many inmates who are assumed to have had contact with the virus are being quarantined.

The New York City’s union for corrections officers have demanded to be given more protective materials like masks, gloves, soap and hand sanitizer.

According to NPR, Arizona and Minnesota prisons have waived copays charged for inmates seeking medical visits and waived fees for personal hygiene supplies amidst the outbreak.

Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) said in a letter to The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), “Our incarcerated population faces severe threats to their health and safety every day, and BOP must prioritize and work diligently to improve prison conditions nationwide. As the country prepares for coronavirus, it is also incumbent upon BOP—in coordination with HHS—to prevent outbreaks and to safely and humanely treat all affected individuals.”

27 Years in Solitary Confinement. Tips on Making the Best Use of Time Alone.

By Keith Lamar as told to Samantha Michaels

(Reprinted from Mother Jones, 3/24/20)

For 27 years, Keith LaMar has survived solitary confinement in a supermax prison in Ohio, isolated for 23 hours a day in a space the size of a bathroom. From his bed, if he crooks his neck at just the right angle, he can look out through a slit of a window a few inches wide at a parking lot. But in all these years, he hasn’t touched a blade of grass or a tree; the closest he’s come to the outdoors is in a below-ground concrete “rec cage,” covered by a steel grate ceiling. If he’s lucky, he might catch a glimpse of the sun.

LaMar, 50, was locked up as a teenager after killing someone in a dispute during a drug deal. A few years later, he was moved to solitary confinement and sentenced to death after he was convicted of murdering five inmates in a prison riot known as the Lucasville Uprising. He says he did not kill them. Activists in Ohio and around the country have rallied to his cause by writing op-eds and staging solidarity actions. His execution is scheduled for 2023.

After a hunger strike in 2011, LaMar and a few other death row prisoners at the Ohio supermax won the right to hug their family members during visits, instead of just seeing them through a plexiglass barrier, and to make phone calls from their cells. Lately, his friends outside prison have been telling him about the spread of the coronavirus and the new “shelter in place” orders taking effect in many states. His friends wonder how he stays positive during prolonged periods of physical isolation. The social distancing they describe is nowhere near as extreme as the punishment of solitary confinement—a form of torture. But he has tried to offer what insight he can. He called me last week from his cell.

In solitary, I’m already quarantined somewhat. The only way we would get sick is if a CO [correctional officer] or somebody brings it in. It’s probably inevitable because the guards, even if they don’t have a temperature, can still be carrying the virus. And they are the ones who pass out mail, who give us food. I’m doing what I can in



terms of washing my hands frequently, but there’s only so much you can do. You just sit here waiting to catch it.

I had a strict rule with my family that if anyone is sick please don’t come visit, because once you get the flu [here] it’s just torture. They don’t give you any medications, beyond ibuprofen, so you pretty much have to suffer through. If you catch something as severe as coronavirus, I don’t know how they intend to deal with that. Perhaps they would ship you out to another facility, a hospital. I’m definitely afraid.

They have suspended all visitations, so our families aren’t able to come. Before, I was getting five to six visits a month: nieces and nephews, my uncles, aunts, friends. I realize there’s a pandemic, so I’m all for suspending visits temporarily. My fear is that after this is said and done, they will use this as an excuse to extend the no-visit policy. I went 18 years without being able to hug my family. That’s the only concern I have, besides getting sick.

People have been asking me questions ever since this “shelter in place,” with people having to stay home. It’s somewhat similar I suppose to being in solitary confinement, even though you might be with family and whatnot. Being in solitary confinement is really just being thrown upon yourself: You’re running around, just like people do in your regular life, and now all of a sudden you’re confronted with yourself, and find that in a lot of cases you haven’t really

put anything into yourself to occupy yourself. Everything is outward directed. That’s what happened to me 27 years ago, and what happens to a lot of guys who are initially thrown into this situation—it’s like being thrown into the ocean. You have to learn how to swim. You have to learn how to deal with yourself.

I’ve been lucky in a lot of ways. My cell has a bookshelf with three shelves, and there’s a table to sit and write. I have a lot of music, books to read. Not to distract myself from myself, but to take me deeper into myself. I paint, I work out, I do yoga, I meditate.

I didn’t know I could write. I dropped out of high school in the 10th grade. I was 23, 24 years old at the time I was thrown on death row, at a loss of what would become of me. My education, if you can call it that, has come from my own efforts. I just started reading Richard Wright’s Black Boy, over and over. Paying attention to what he was doing and how. Before I knew what a semicolon was, I saw how he was using it. That’s how I learned to write. And I became an author. I’m not the best writer. My book *Condemned* probably won’t make the New York Times bestseller list. But that is my story, and I wrote it. And in that way I feel somewhat vindicated, that at least I tried to stand up and say something about my life.

I also like reading about the Holocaust. One of my favorite authors dealing with

that genre is Primo Levi. Compared to my situation, his situation was much more extreme. You could die or be sent to the gas chamber on a whim. The arbitrariness of being thrown into those situations—I respond a whole lot to his experience. James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, is also a big influence on my life. And Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*. We’ve got three bookshelves, all three are filled with books. Being in solitary confinement, these books are my community. A lot of these guys, I’ve read their books over and over. So I’m intimately connected to these people. James Baldwin, I consider him like a family member.

I’ve watched quite a few people fall apart, lose their minds. But I went in another direction. So 27 years later I’m still sound in mind and body and spirit. I attribute that to just reading and cultivating myself. That’s the thing, when you’re thrown upon yourself, you realize you are more equipped than you realized. A lot of the system keeps us from realizing our own power. It’s a good opportunity for people to tap into that.

Being in solitary confinement, it’s a punishment. But people out in society, it’s an opportunity for your kids to get more in tune with themselves. Because when you’re in school, especially with the internet being what it is, everybody is generally being pulled away from themselves.

The root word of education is “to educate,” to bring forth that which is already there. Education isn’t really about what kind of career you’re gonna get or how you’re gonna make money. That’s not why we were born, to make money for somebody else. To get a big house. To have a nice car. You’re here to bring forth that which is already there. Hopefully young people being forced to stay home outside of the mainstream curriculum are able to get a glimpse of themselves and start pulling on that thread.

This interview was condensed and edited for clarity. To read online visit: <https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2020/03/social-distancing-keith-lamar-solitary-confinement-coronavirus/>

OUR VOICES

COVID 19 Pandemic Could be an Opportunity for Change in the US

By David A. Love, JD

(blackcommentator.com) The COVID-19 pandemic is stretching national health systems to their limit across the world. In some countries that have been particularly affected by the pandemic, such as Italy and Spain, legally enforced lockdowns have been imposed to help slow the spread of the virus and ease the pressure on public health services.

The United States, where all 50 states have confirmed cases, however, is more susceptible to the impact of this public health emergency than any other industrialized nation. If its leaders do not take swift action and implement fundamental reforms, the pandemic will cause more devastation there than it already did in Europe.

European nations are struggling to respond to the crisis despite having relatively well-functioning social security systems and universal health coverage. The US, however, has neither. Neoliberal policies implemented by consecutive administrations, which prioritize maximization of profit for corporations and the rich over the wellbeing of ordinary citizens, have left the country completely unprepared to tackle a health crisis of this scale.

45,000 Americans are dying each year because they do not have health coverage. 30 million people are living without medical insurance and a whopping 137 million are facing financial hardships due to medical debt. One in four US workers - more than 32 million - is not entitled to paid sick days.

As COVID-19 rapidly spreads across the country, these pre-existing weaknesses put the US on course for an unprecedented socioeconomic catastrophe.

However, there is opportunity in crisis. As it exposes the nation's flaws, weaknesses and moral blind spots like never before, the coronavirus pandemic can make Americans of all walks of life realize that neoliberal policies that value profit over human life are a threat to national security. This realization can in turn pressure the US leadership to implement the necessary reforms to ensure all Americans have social security, comprehensive labor rights and access to adequate healthcare.

The Trump administration tried to tackle the pandemic as if it is merely an economic threat. Earlier this month, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York announced that it would offer \$1.5 trillion in short-term loans to banks to "address highly unusual disruptions in Treasury financing markets associated with the coronavirus outbreak". There



has also been talk of bailing out airlines that are facing bankruptcy as a result of the pandemic. This approach, however, already caused a considerable backlash, with many pointing out that the bailout money could be better spent on other priorities, like student debt relief or universal healthcare.

Just weeks ago, Democratic presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders' "Medicare for All" universal healthcare proposal was being dismissed by many as unrealistic, unaffordable and even un-American. However, such schemes do not appear so far-fetched now that the country is dealing with a virus that can potentially kill more than a million and collapse the economy.

There are growing calls for the federal government to change the way it treats its citizens and local administrations across the country already started implementing measures to address some of America's most fundamental weaknesses that are being exacerbated by the deadly pandemic.

Some cities and states have halted evictions, mortgage payments and student and medical debt, and they are now considering suspending utility bills, water shutoffs and bank fees. Some jurisdictions have delayed arrests for nonviolent offenses, and federal immigration officials have halted most arrests. And with the coronavirus pandemic poised to become a humanitarian crisis in the nation's prisons, jails and migrant detention centers, there are renewed calls for decarceration.

Moreover, as the coronavirus pandemic threatens to exacerbate socioeconomic inequality and vice versa, some

lawmakers even proposed implementing a policy of basic universal income to counter unemployment and prevent an economic depression.

In addition, as the virus complicates in-person voting and threatens to disrupt the US election, there have been proposals to allow voting by mail - a policy that would expand voter participation across the country.

Policy proposals that would have been swiftly dismissed as fringe left-wing fantasies merely a few weeks ago are now being discussed in the mainstream. This shows that long before reaching its devastating peak, the coronavirus pandemic has already changed US politics.

And there is no reason for the change to stop here. The coronavirus pandemic could be the wake-up call the US has long been waiting for.

Some 80 years ago, Japan's unexpected attack on Pearl Harbor finally convinced the US to stop ignoring a war that was about to reach its shores and devastate its people. In response to the military attack, Washington embarked on a campaign to prepare the country for war. The industry was mobilized to manufacture military equipment and all Americans were encouraged to help the war effort in every way they could.

The coronavirus pandemic can be this century's Pearl Harbor moment for the US. In the face of this crisis, Washington can choose to acknowledge the threat neoliberal policies, growing inequalities and injustices pose to the nation and take action. Just like it made manufacturing of military equipment a priority all those decades ago, it can now shift its defense spending to public health as a matter of national security.

In a worst-case scenario, coronavirus can kill 1.7 million Americans and infect 214 million others. But if Washington chooses to hear the growing calls for change and swiftly moves to implement the reforms necessary to address the problems that make this public health emergency particularly deadly, this tragedy can eventually pave the way for a new and more just America.

This commentary was originally published by Aljazeera.com

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OUR VOICES

Billions for Boeing, Pennies for the People

By Julianne Malveaux

NNPA Newswire Contributor

NNPA NEWSWIRE (blackpressusa.com) - The development of the \$2.2 trillion stimulus package was extremely flawed. The Republican bullies in the Senate, led by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, wrote the bill with absolutely no Democratic input, then suggested that Democrats amend their legislation.

The first draft of the bill, unsurprisingly, was a goody grab for corporations with much less for individuals. Initially, the Republican Senate would have given Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin a slush fund of \$500 billion to assist troubled industries with absolutely no oversight.

The last version of the bill does include both monitoring and an inspector general to look for fraud and abuse. Republicans would have doled the money out to their cronies. But the Dems, led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, stood their ground. The stimulus legislation is better than the 2008-2009 bailout legislation; it is gratifying to see that the Senate rose above partisanship to get this done.

Republicans even conceded that Mr. Trump, his grafter family, other cabinet heads and senior leaders, along with their families, cannot benefit from this stimulus legislation. It is unfathomable that this provision has to be put in writing, but 45, a hotel owner, pushed hard for hotels and cruise ships to get bailout benefits, but some in Congress have apparently peeped 45's hole card.

It takes extreme hubris for our nation's chief executive officer, who has used the United States Treasury as a piggy bank, to be as self-serving as 45 is. Good for Democrats for recognizing the pattern of double-dealings makes it clear that written prohibition of these shady practices is necessary.

Michigan Congressman Justin Amash, an independent who used to be Republican, tweeted, "This bipartisan deal is a raw deal for the people. It does far too little for those who need the most help while providing hundreds of billions in corporate welfare, massively growing govern-



ment, inhibiting economic adaptation, and widening the gap between the rich and the poor."

The legislation is likely to be hundreds, if not thousands, of pages long. And it's got lots of fine print.

For example, \$17 billion in loan funds are set aside for "businesses deemed critical to maintaining national security. While Boeing isn't mentioned by name, the Washington Post quoted a confidential source who says this money is partly set aside for Boeing.

This is the same Boeing that manufactured faulty, crashing planes. And they've imperiously said they will take assistance only on their terms. Some think the federal government should take an equity stake in companies that get bailout funds. Boeing's CEO said he wasn't interested in such a deal. If the feds wanted to play hardball, they'd

force Boeing into bankruptcy, since bankruptcy doesn't mean the cessation of operations, it means the restructuring of debt.

Meanwhile, there's no helpful fine print for ordinary people. Sure, people will get \$1200 checks, plus \$500 per child. That's better than nothing, but compared to Boeing's billions, it's pennies. The ability to get unemployment insurance for extra weeks will also be helpful for those who lose their jobs.

More food stamp funds will be available. But there is some confusion over whether gig workers will get the benefit. Instead, it seems that those who have good jobs will get great benefits, while those who have part-time jobs, gig jobs, or are unemployed won't get much. As Congressman Amash says, this stimulus package will widen the wealth gap.

Inequality is at the very foundation of our economic system, so it isn't surprising that the coronavirus stimulus package reflects the biases that are hard-wired into our system.

We need committed, vocal, progressive members of Congress (Maxine Waters, Barbara Lee, Ayana Pressley, Bobby Scott, AOC, and others) to shine a bright light on this inequality, and to either modify the legislation or develop legislation to address some of these inequalities.

On March 23, Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) introduced HR 6379, the Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act, that provides protections for workers and families mostly because the stimulus package does not. And there is a rush to pass the stimulus quickly as more and more people are out of work.

Stimulate the economy if you will, but don't ignore the people on the bottom. If we are injecting \$2.2 trillion into our lagging economy, make sure that some of it trickles down the poor.

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A Good Time for Patience

By Dr. E. Faye Williams

(TriceEdneyWire.com)—Most of us run around every day—often frantically and stressed out wondering how we're going to handle everything that is on our plate. Day after day, we worry, but we refuse to stop and figure out what our next step is. We often don't eat right because we have so much to do. We don't exercise because there's just not enough time. We don't take the time to read a good book that would just be enjoyable to read. We rush from place to place trying to solve the problems of the world.

Now, we're faced with something we might never have heard of before called coronavirus. Not only due to presidential orders, governors' orders, orders of local officials, CDC and other health agencies giving us directives, we've been forced to pause. This might be a good time to have patience since what happens next is beyond our control. We might do what Dr. Dee Carroll suggests in her book called Emotional Emancipation. She urges us to step into our freedom, reinvent our challenges and move beyond them. For an unknown amount of time, we've been forced to slow down our pace from the things we usually do. We've been taken away from our usual hustle and bustle routine. Since no matter what we do personally, we don't have the know how to resolve the coronavirus, so this seems like a good time to show some patience.

Maybe this is a good time to listen to the words of Dr. Homayoun Sadeghi who said, "...everything that happens is a gift, how adversity can make us magnificent creatures if we let it, and how embracing it can bring about an amazing journey of emotional healing and overall health...."

During this critical period of our being forced to slow down and do things in a different way, maybe we can teach ourselves to be more patient about things that really matter. Maybe we can take the time to be more thoughtful toward others. We can take the time to call friends and family we've neglected to call for a very long time. Instead of sending demanding messages that require immediate responses, let's try sending warm, encouraging ones for others who may be going through very stressful times.

Even when there's no coronavirus concern, all of us go through something, but too often we don't take the time to deal with it. We move on to the next challenge without dealing with the one we just went through. If your work has slowed down or become non-existent, why not begin writing that book you've always thought about writing? Why not learn to meditate? Why not work some crossword puzzles? Why not just do nothing for a few days? That's probably the hardest thing in the world for a normally busy person to do—but it may be just what you need.



Since I can't do all the things I normally do in a day, I've stepped up my walking. In the early morning, there's almost no one out there so I find myself relaxed, having clearer thoughts and feeling more energetic. I am organizing and finding things I haven't seen for years. I've thrown out a lot of things that I should have thrown out years ago. I've also found things I wanted that have alluded me for years.

I'm learning to stop saying "I've got to do this" and "I've got to do that" all day long, knowing I can never do all the things in one day that I schedule or that just come up seemingly out of nowhere. I'm exercising patience these days and I feel great!

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Be The Change You Wish To See In The World! - Gandhi

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Editor's Note: Because Of Governor Inslee's Stay At Home Order, the Black Lens will not be including the April Calendar. Stay Home and Stay Safe!

Making Dreams A Reality



By: Hope Samudio

Malachi Davis was once just a five-year-old boy in Kennewick, Washington, with a dream. Destined for stardom since birth, he saw himself on Broadway and the big screen. Many years have been put into Malachi's career. He began "doing church plays and started doing community theater" but can now call himself "an actor, singer, model, and dancer."

You can see Malachi on the big screen in "Home Sweet Home". When you need to see more of his talent, you can catch him playing the lead role in University High School's production of "Pippin".

That is only the beginning of Malachi's career because when you are that driven, you accomplish many things. According to Malachi, his "biggest accomplishment was when I went to Las Vegas for a talent search, and I won best teen singer." To get to this point, "There were many nights where I had to stay up just to learn lines or just to do an audition." Malachi also added, "This is a very tough career path, but knowing that there's gonna be a great outcome at the end keeps me motivated."

Someone who has achieved this much at such a young age must have a secret. Malachi says that you need to "never give up and remember that no matter how long it's gonna take to keep pushing, even if you're 84 still sending self-tape auditions to keep pushing because you will get the right job."

Even an inspiration like Malachi has something that causes the spark in their brain. For Malachi, "the freedom of creativity" inspires him the most "because you can do whatever you want with the simplest ideas and make it big."

Driven by every tiny idea in his brain, Malachi never stops believing in himself no matter what happens. Having faith in yourself is a powerful thing that has helped Malachi reach this part in his career. The part where he is no longer a five-year-old boy in Kennewick Washington with a dream. He is a 16-year-old boy in Spokane, Washington living his dreams.

The show dates for University High School's Production of Pippin are currently scheduled for April 30-May 9th.

Happy 93rd Birthday Violet Noble



April 4, 2020

Happy Birthday to this beautiful Blessed young lady of God. Violet, We say young because we don't think you have an old bone in your body.

Our mom is still moving with Grace thanks to God. Mom, has always walked real fast, and as kids we had to walk with dad or get left behind.

Growing up as a child, dad made sure each of your birthday's were memorable. So on this beautiful day we just want to wish you a very Happy Birthday. We love you dearly but God loves you more.

Love, Rob, Rhonda, Sherri and your other son Robert



Historical Monument Dedication

Walter Lawson
1862-1917
Buffalo Soldier
Police Officer

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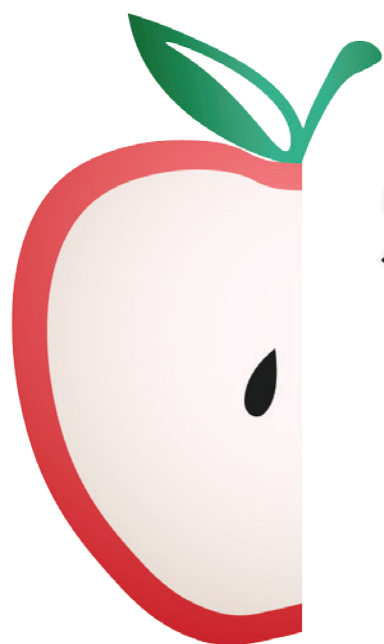
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