

THE BLACK LENSTM SPOKANE

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Dying to Work

Forced to Choose Between Safety and Paying the Bills

By Mel Reeves

Community Editor
Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder

NNPA NEWswire - "The organizer's conduct was immoral, unacceptable, and arguably illegal," is how an Amazon official sought to frame the efforts of one of its workers who was fired by the company. The worker, Christian Smalls, had tried to bring attention to unsafe working conditions at an Amazon warehouse in New York City.

Smalls had complained about the lack of gloves and masks and that the company had not been forthcoming in sharing with workers that others in the warehouse had contracted the virus, putting everyone at risk.

The official Amazon general counsel David Zapolsky also wrote in notes during a company meeting that included Amazon head Jeff Bezos, that Smalls who is Black, was not "smart or articulate." Ironically, Smalls has told his story to several national news outlets, including a major news network. Nationally, workers have voiced simi-



lar complaints about a lack of protective equipment such as masks, inefficient sanitizing of workspaces, and failure by some employers to honor the social distancing as recommended by the CDC to protect themselves from contracting the coronavirus.

Many have expressed anxiety about facing a kind of "Sophie's Choice," that is, forced to choose between going to work

and possibly risk being exposed to the coronavirus or staying at home and not being able to put food on the table or pay bills.

The MSR last weekend asked a few employees at one of the local Minneapolis Cub stores why they were not wearing masks. Two of them said management had told them they didn't want them to

wear masks. They said management cited the CDC as declaring people do not need to wear masks to be safe from contracting COVID-19.

Asked if management had been informed that the CDC has since changed its guidelines, they said they were not sure. "I hope it changes," said one employee who wished to remain anonymous. "I definitely want to protect myself."

Amazon fired Smalls last week after he led a walkout by a number of employees at a Staten Island distribution warehouse. Amazon says he was fired for violating a company-imposed 14-day quarantine after he came into contact with an employee who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Smalls disputes this, saying the employee who tested positive came into contact with many other workers for longer periods of time before their test came back. He said he was singled out because he wanted the company to sanitize the work area and be forthright about the numbers of fellow workers who had contracted the virus.

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Black Lens Launches Weekly Facebook Live Program

Venturing into live video production for the first time, the Black Lens launched a weekly streaming program on April 16 called Conversations in Black. Hosted by Kiantha Duncan, the program airs Thursdays at Noon on Facebook Live.

Conversations in Black is an interactive, intimate and engaging discussion that each week addresses the issues, events and people that are impacting Spokane's Black community. Right now the focus of the program is on COVID-19.

Guests so far have included, Dr. Bob Lutz, Spokane's Health Office; Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane City Council Representative; Jerrall Haynes, Spokane School Board President; Terri Anderson, Spokane Tenants Union; Shania Wright, co-owner of Wright Way Beauty Supply; Michael Brown, owner of Fresh Soul Restaurant; Pastor Shon Davis of Jesus is the Answer; Rev. Amos Atkinson of Calvary Baptist Church and Vice President of the Spokane Ministers Fellowship, and Alisha Benson, CEO of Greater Spokane, Incorporated.

Guests all discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor's Stay at Home order, and how they are dealing with it, as well as available resources.



The audience is invited to ask questions during the program via facebook chat.

Conversations in Black is in keeping with ongoing efforts by the Black Lens to provide information and resources to the Spokane community.

Future guests will include elected officials, business owners, social service providers and community members, from both inside and outside of the Spokane area.

To watch the program, tune in to the Black Lens Facebook page @ Blacklensnews Thursdays a Noon.



ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

Who Watches Out For Us?

As we continue our forward movement into the second full month of mandated quarantine, the number of reported cases of COVID-19 and deaths from the virus appears to have reached a plateau here, even if it hasn't in other parts of the country.

We are staying home, staying safe, and stopping the spread. Our businesses have closed our church services have gone virtual, and we have foregone those highly anticipated social outings, because we have been told that it is what is best for us.

Some of us have lost pay, others have lost our jobs. Our kids have stopped going to school and we have taken on the role of teacher, principal and school counselor, because we have been told that, at least for now, this is what is best for us.

We have stocked up on masks and hand sanitizer and anti-bacterial cleaning supplies, because that is what we have been told that it is necessary and also what is best for us.

But what happens when the people that we are supposed to trust to tell us what is best for us, stop doing what is best for us?

In Georgia, and a few other states in the US, they are beginning to reopen businesses today, against the advice of most medical professionals. Cases in Georgia are still rising, and many of the reopened business require the close contact that could lead to additional infections.

I have to admit, my eyebrows raised a bit when I heard the list of businesses that were going to be the first to open in Georgia. Hmmm. Barber Shops, Beauty Salons, Tattoo Parlors, gyms. Feels a little Black-ish to me.

All of them require close proximity to other people, with enclosed spaces and multiple touch points where Covid-19 can be left or transferred. I don't think



you could have planned better venues for transmission if you tried.

The controversial re-opening of Georgia, which I believe was just another round of posturing by those who have the privilege to do so, may be what's best for billionaires, but it certainly is not what is in the best interest of the people who will potentially be putting their lives at risk.

In fact, what it does instead is force people out of their homes into workplaces that are already struggling to have adequate supplies to keep their employees safe.

And once the Governor says a business can legally open, then their employees are no longer technically unemployed. So the state is off the hook. Pretty smooth huh?

Many in positions of power, including one publisher of a newspaper that shall remain nameless, right here in Spokane, has insinuated that perhaps the workers should go ahead and sacrifice themselves for the good of the economy. After all, they're only old and poor and people of color, and isn't it survival of the fittest, right?

Well, I say that the owner of the company should have to be right there on the front lines with their workers. I know the small mom and pop business owners will be, but I bet you the million bucks that I wish I had in my bank account, that the corporate tycoons that are whining about the collapse of our economy won't be anywhere near the "Rona.

So who watches out for us? I think the lesson here is that we had better start watching out for ourselves.

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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Contact:

Ben Cabildo at (509) 999-5365
ahana.meba10@gmail.com
www.ahana-meba.org

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YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey

Reginald Francis Lewis

Reginald Lewis sat in his office on the 16th floor of 99 Wall Street staring out at the New York skyline. Munching on his favorite snack of potato chips and champagne, he smiled realizing that a boy from The Druid Hill Section of West Baltimore could create a billion-dollar empire in corporate America.

Reginald Francis Lewis was born on the East Side of Baltimore on December 7, 1942, the only child of Clinton and Carolyn Cooper Lewis. His mother re-married a soldier named Jean Fugett when Reginald was five. His stepfather was a tremendous example of love and hard work. At Dunbar High Reginald lettered in three sports, and as team quarterback remarked "...when I played, I never doubted my ability and could look into the eyes of my teammates when the heat was really on and tell who could perform and who couldn't."

In 1961 Reginald received a football scholarship to Virginia State College but injuries forced him to focus on his educational future instead. Deciding to pursue a law degree, he barely finished senior year with enough credits. Reginald's break came in 1965 when Harvard Law School hosted a summer law program. Reginald barely made the cut, but he was so convincing that Harvard professors agreed to make him the first student ever invited to Harvard's Law School through a summer program, and the first in its 148-year history to be admitted without first submitting an application.

After three years at Harvard Law with passable grades, Reginald went straight to New York working for one of the top law firms. Later, he left the firm to make his own bones as one of the country's most competent lawyers in a new market called Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Companies (MESBICS). Created during the Nixon years, MESBICS functioned under the US Small Business Administration (SBA) as venture capital firms created by corporations or insti-

tutions that guaranteed for every dollar a MESBIC invested into a minority-owned company, SBA would invest three. No one in the country had more MESBIC success than Reginald and from it he developed fierce negotiating skills. During this time, Reginald met and married Loida Nicolas, a young Filipino woman who became one of the first Asian attorneys in America to pass the bar without ever going to a U.S. Law School. They later had two daughters.

As successful as Reginald's MESBIC years were, his signature stroke came when he developed the skills to use debt financing to re-structure corporate acquisitions, in other words, purchasing corporations financed by banks then turning a profit on them, also called mergers and acquisitions. Reginald created the TLC Group Inc. in 1983, a holding company for corporate acquisitions. Reginald spent years grooming his public image as an honest, no-nonsense corporate lawyer, but still dealt with the subtle and not so subtle facade of bigotry. He believed in direct confrontation, not avoidance and prayer – "I will not tolerate racism anywhere, from anybody on any joke or anything...I will stop the president of the United States if he makes an inappropriate statement and tell him that it is inappropriate right then, at that point in time. Period."

Though his first few attempts failed, Reginald's his first successful acquisition was McCall Pattern Company, a sewing-pattern company purchased for \$22 million dollars. Reginald put up one million dollars in secured bank loans without using a dime of his own money. After restructuring and taking McCall to its highest two-year profits in company history, he re-sold it for \$65 million three years later, with net returns of 90-1. His next deal would make McCall look like peanuts.

In 1987, Reginald made a bid for a company up for auction called Beatrice International. Beatrice was an international food



company consisting of 64 companies in 31 countries being auctioned off for one billion dollars. Reginald won the bid at \$950 million and attached "TLC" to the company name. After restructuring its assets, TLC Beatrice became the most profitable company ever managed by a Moor and made Reginald the first man anywhere in corporate America to pass the one-billion-dollar mark in corporate acquisitions.

Throughout his career, Reginald always managed to lend a hand to young Moorish business owners, showing them corporate process and practices, helping them see traps and loopholes in security agreements, and mentorships. His charitable giving was in the millions under the "Reginald F. Lewis Foundation".

Reginald began to feel the weight of the high demands of work on his body. During a medical, exam they found he had brain cancer. Sadly, Reginald Lewis left a multi-billion-dollar empire created by a legacy of tremendous work – all by a man that barely reached fifty. Months after the diagnosis he succumbed and passed on January 16, 1993, but he left us with his formula for success- "hard work, discipline, being focused, and having your skills knitted together in terms of what's needed to get the job done are keys to success."

Sources:
Why should white guys have all the fun? – Reginald Lewis & Blair Walker.
New York Times: 90-1 Return for Investor – Daniel F. Cuff.

What Really Happened to Corporal David Fagen

By Charity Doyl

The Spanish-American War was an 1898 conflict between the United States and Spain. Spain ceded its longstanding colony of the Philippines to the United States in the Treaty of Paris on February 4, 1899, which triggered The Philippine-American War that lasted from February 4, 1899, to July 2, 1902.

While Filipino nationalists viewed the conflict as a continuation of the struggle for independence with the Philippine Revolution, the U.S. government regarded it as an insurrection. The war officially ended on July 2, 1902, with a victory for the United States.

During the 1899-1902 American-Filipino war, the United States Army dispatched four Black regiments to the Philippines. Some sources indicate that 7,000 Black soldiers served in this conflict. Here the Black soldiers found themselves in the position of fighting against

oppressed islanders who were seeking independence from foreign rule.

M.W. Saddler, one of the members of the 25th Infantry writes: "We are now arrayed to meet a common foe, men of our own hue and color. Whether it is right to reduce these people to submission is not a question for a soldier to decide. Our oaths of allegiance know neither race, color, nor nation."

Another soldier wrote in 1899: "Our racial sympathies would naturally be with the Filipinos. They are fighting manfully for what they conceive to be their best interests. But we cannot for the sake of sentiment turn our back upon our own country."

In the Philippines, the Black soldiers were angered by the use of the term "n*gger" by the White soldiers in referring to the Filipinos. Some of the Black troops deserted and joined the Filipino rebels.

Fagen was a native of Tampa, Florida, where the Jim Crow racial segregation laws were in force. He worked as a manual laborer before enlisting in 1898. They assigned him to the 24th Infantry Regiment, a unit of the so-called "Buffalo Soldiers."

The Philippine forces put up posters and distributed flyers with messages encouraging "colored" soldiers to join their cause, appealing to their common suffering at the hands of the White Americans. The supposed "turncoats" of the 24th Infantry only proved one thing: that the systematic racism and oppression of the White Americans was enough to unite even the unlikely of allies.

Fagen turned his back on his own army, and his new life as a Filipino guerrilla began on November 17, 1899, when Corporal Fagen of the 24th Infantry Regiment snuck out of his barracks and met with a Philippine insurrecto officer, who had arranged for Fagen's escape.

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NAACP UPDATE:



Hello Spokane Family,

May this article find you well during the trying times of this Covid-19 Pandemic. Our hearts go out to any of you that have lost loved ones in recent times and our heartfelt gratitude to all of our first responders and health care family. We thank you for your dedication to service, principle and sacrifice.

I now ask you to remember when I pointed out the difference between Necessary Chaos (NC) and Dysfunctional Chaos (DC). Both allow for an opportunity for situations, trends, patterns and/or core foundational issues to be invited to change. "NC" invites positive change. "DC" invites negative change. Both carry the common elements of chaos and change, yet the outcomes are markedly different. For anybody that is paying any amount of attention, there are plenty of invitations to have some healthier outcomes with the onslaught of this pandemic. The fact is we were getting many of these invitations long before this pandemic hit.

Here are some of my thoughts about a few of the opportunities being provided by the Covid-19 pandemic.

• For our local health care system:
The past local and national reflex response has been to deal with our negatively im-



pacted persons of colors as an afterthought, if at all, and by doing so perpetuating the historical oppression, structural classism and racism that is at the core of so many of America's problems. We now have an opportunity to bring race equity and demographic trends to the forefront of the lens that we use to view health impacts and outcomes. To this end, I universally acknowledge Dr. Bob Lutz, Spokane's Health Officer, for being willing to have some very forthright conversations with us and his commitment to transparency about racial data tracking information.

• For our local Criminal Justice System:
The past response and trends have been greatly lacking in concise, clear and trans-

parent ownership of and shifting of disparate impacts across all race and equity borders. Thus, perpetuating the problem and reinforcing those inequities. We are getting a very real invitation to transform these inequities in a healthy, safe and equitable fashion.

• For our Communities of Color:
We are getting a very real invitation to be the change we need to see. To hone in on our common goals and be the unrelenting driving force behind the system wide transformation that all our human family is soulfully crying out for and that generations died for.

• For myself:
Whereas acknowledging the death of my mother on March 22nd due to Covid-19 related illness, who was instrumental in the trauma of my youth and critical in her dedication to healing much of that in my later years. Whereas she was a pivotal force in my initial SUD recovery. I, now being 16 years clean and sober, have a very clear invitation to further carry on the legacy of hope, healing and determination in my bloodline, and in service to our collective human family.

In each one of these examples, there are situations that carry elements of chaos and dynamics of change but how and what we

choose as a response helps determine what the outcomes will be. We can either continue the potentially destructive inertia or we can strive to grasp the opportunity in the obstacles. We can learn to turn what was meant for evil, destruction or destabilization into opportunities for steadfastness, perseverance, growth, and healthy, sustainable, equitable evolution.

There are many more examples than these in areas such as environmental trends, economics, life expectancy, birth rates, etc. Yet each chaotic manifestation will carry the push for change in either direction... positive or negative, destructive or transformative... Dysfunctional Chaos or Necessary Chaos.

I believe there are some dynamic generational trends that we have yet to face the full impact of. If we are fortunate enough, the choice of the outcome may yet be ours. As your Spokane NAACP Branch #1137 President, we are right alongside you in these challenging times. We created our own unique survey and fully invite you to participate, as we are dedicated to lifting your voice, fiercely determined to help get your needs met and eternally dedicated to the principles of equity and justice for us all.

In Hope and Solidarity,

Civil Rights Leaders Urge African Americans to Remain Home

Source: blackpressusa.com

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

NNPA NEWSWIRE - With the coronavirus death toll passing 50,000 during the last week in April, (**now over 60,000 as of this printing*), Black leaders in the U.S. have taken to warning their communities of the danger of opening the country back up too soon.

The coronavirus has devastated the Black community in Detroit and all of the fatalities in Richmond, Va. are African Americans. Though the numbers are showing signs of slowing down, Black leaders are taking no chances.

On Friday, April 24, a group of civil rights leaders encouraged African Americans to "stay-at-home" shortly after the Governor of Georgia decided to lift the state's stay-at-home order. The CDC guidelines outline that if COVID-19 stats remain down for 14 days straight the state can re-open. Many Governors are following those guidelines.

Melanie Campbell, President of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, joined a group of Black faith and civil rights leaders and the heads of the largest historically Black religious denominations to encourage African Americans to "stay at home" until there is evidence that it's safe to go out.

A letter authored by Rev. Al Sharpton (NAN), Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson (CNBC), Sherrilyn Ifill (NAACP, LDF), Marc Morial (NUL), Derrick Johnson (NAACP), Melanie Campbell (BWR),



Kristen Clarke (Lawyers' Committee) encouraged people to stay at home.

"We, the undersigned, have joined together to state our unequivocal and firm opposition to the premature effort of governors to willfully re-open their states. The actions of these governors, which demonstrate reckless disregard for the health and life of Black residents, compel us to speak out and take action to protect ourselves," the letter began.

"We encourage all Black churches and businesses to remain closed during this critical period. The denominations and independent churches represented in this

statement, which comprise a combined membership of more than 25 million people and more than 30,000 congregations, intend to remain closed and to continue to worship virtually, with the same dedication and love that we brought to the church. The civil rights organizations represented are working tirelessly to protect our communities from injustice and inequality as this country responds to the pandemic," the letter added.

Several Republican governors appear to be taking their marching orders from President Donald Trump who is anxious to re-open the country economically while not referencing the over 50,000 dead Ameri-

cans from COVID-19.

Issues around environmental racism, disparities in health care coverage and treatment and economic considerations are issues African Americans have to confront more than other communities.

The group Black Millennials for Flint are mobilizing to confront the problem of the continuous lack of clean water in the city after it was revealed that former Michigan Governor Rick Snyder made serious errors during the Flint water crisis.

"On April 25, 2014, a completely dehumanizing decision was made by former Governor Rick Snyder to switch from the Detroit Water System to the Flint River creating one of the most lethal man-made crises in American History. Fast forward to 2020, 6 years later, not a single individual involved in this act of genocide has been held accountable for the poisoning of an entire city," the group wrote.

"To put this in perspective, or to 'make it plain' as our elders say, the kindergartners in Flint that started this 2019-20 academic school year have not lived a single year of life without the threat of unclean drinking water. Their first year of their educational journey has now also been brought to a halt due to COVID-19," they added. The Flint water crisis continues along with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist for NNPA and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is also a political strategist as Principal of Win Digital Media LLC. She may be contacted at LBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at @LVBurke

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BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Gov. Inslee Appoints Judge G. Helen Whitener To The Washington State Supreme Court

(Source: WA Governor's Office; seattlemedium.com)

OLYMPIA – On April 13, Gov. Jay Inslee announced the appointment of Judge G. Helen Whitener to the Washington State Supreme Court. She replaces Justice Charles Wiggins, who retired from the bench last month.

Whitener has been a judicial officer since 2013. From 2013 to 2015, she served as a judge on the Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals. Inslee then appointed her to the Pierce County Superior Court in 2015, where she has worked as a judge for over five years, retaining her seat in a 2015 election and winning re-election to a full term in 2016. Before becoming a judge, Whitener litigated criminal cases for 14 years as both a prosecutor and defense attorney.

Whitener is known for her commitment to justice and equity. She serves as co-chair of the Washington State Minority and Justice Commission and as a member of the Civil Legal Aid Oversight Committee. She continues to garner recognition for her work to advance the cause of justice. Last year, Whitener was awarded the Washington State Bar Association’s C.Z. Smith Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award, the King County Washington Women Lawyers President Award, the Tacoma-Pierce

County Bar Association’s Diversity Award and the Seattle University School of Law’s Woman of the Year Award.

“Judge Whitener inspires lawyers and non-lawyers alike with her relentless work to raise awareness for matters of race, justice and equity,” Inslee said. “She is tireless in her commitment to building a justice system that works for all, and as a Supreme Court justice, she will have an even greater platform to promote justice for everyone in Washington state. I am very pleased to appoint her to this bench and I look forward to her many contributions to our state for years to come.”

Whitener is originally from Trinidad and moved to the United States as a teenager to attend college. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Baruch College in New York and her law degree from Seattle University School of Law.

“Judge Whitener is an outstanding choice for our highest court. In a field of outstanding candidates, she stood out as a dynamic and exciting jurist who would add to the talent and perspectives of our Supreme Court. Lawyers and citizens who have tried cases in her court uniformly rave about her work ethic, insights, and her ability to help advance the concept of justice for all in our state. During a very challenging time, this is a real bright and shining mo-



ment for justice in our state,” said John Allison, Spokane attorney, and president, Washington State Association for Justice.

“On behalf of the state bar and as a practicing lawyer, I am thrilled Judge Whitener will be serving the people of Washington on the Supreme Court,” said Washington State Bar President Rajeev Majumdar.

“Last fall, she received the bar’s Excellence in Diversity APEX Award, our highest honor for someone in the legal community dedicated to championing diversity and justice. That’s because Judge Whitener is a tenacious, fearless, and compassionate advocate of human rights for all, and she has opened pathways and opportunities for many communities,” Majumdar continued. “While many know her for her work in Pierce County, I can personally attest to her traveling statewide to inspire and mentor youth from underrepresented backgrounds into the legal profession. Now the entire state will benefit from her human-centered and dignified pursuit of justice.”



Tamara Moore Becomes First Black Woman Head Coach of Men's College Basketball Team

(Source: Joe Jurado, theroot.com; Wilson Wong, nbcnews.com; Photo Credit: Kevork Djansezian, Associated Press)

Tamara Moore, who played in the WNBA and in Europe, was named the men’s basketball head coach at Mesabi Range College in Virginia, Minnesota, making her the first African American woman hired as a head coach for a men’s U.S. college basketball program.

“Now, it’s time for me to show you guys and show people that women are just as knowledgeable as men to coach the game,” she told ESPN.

Moore excelled in basketball at an early age. In 1998, she was named Minnesota’s High School Miss Basketball winner. She later played for the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she was named 2001 Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year and a two-time First Team All-Big Ten selection. Moore played in the WNBA from 2002-2007 as a guard for such teams as the Phoenix Mercury and the Los Angeles Sparks, before playing in Europe.

She was the coach for the girls basketball team at Edison High School in Minneapolis before assuming her new role at Mesabi Ranch. In addition to being head coach of the men’s basketball team, Moore will also coach the school’s softball team.



Moore became the second female head coach of a men’s basketball team, after Kerri-Ann McTiernan coached Kingsborough Community College in the 1990s, and 11 women served as assistant coaches in the NBA during the 2019-20 season. But a woman has never been the head coach of a Division I or NBA men’s team.

“I’m honored to coach on any level,” said Moore, who told ESPN that her ultimate goal was to become a Division I head coach. “I’ve never been doubted about my coaching ability. I just think it’s all about opportunity. The message, with my hiring, is that the ceiling is now broken, and let’s just take it even further.”

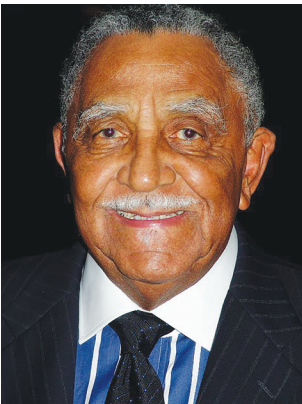
Rev. Joseph E. Lowery Co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Dies at 98

Source: Phil Helsel and The Associated Press, nbcnews.com/news; Amir Vera and Tricia Escobedo, cnn.com)

The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., died on March 27. He was 98.

Lowery died peacefully at home, surrounded by his daughters, according to The Joseph and Evelyn Lowery Institute for Justice & Human Rights.

A leader in the Civil Rights Movement, Lowery was born in Huntsville, Alabama, on October 6, 1921. He became an ordained Methodist minister after graduating from College.



An encounter with a white police officer when he was young sparked Lowery's desire to work for civil rights.

Among numerous awards for his decades of work, Lowery received the NAACP Lifetime Achievement Award and the President's Medal of Freedom from Barack Obama.

COVID-19 NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Taraji P. Henson Makes Free Virtual Therapy Accessible for the Black Community



Source: Njera Perkins, afrotech.com; Photo Source: Instagram

Taraji P. Henson announced on Instagram that she is launching the COVID-19 Free Virtual Therapy Support Campaign for families and others dealing with the aftermath of COVID-19 to better assist “under-served communities experiencing life-changing events related to, or triggered by, the COVID-19 pandemic”.

“In the African-American community, we’ve been taught to tough it out, hide our suffering, but this is something none of us have ever experienced, and no one should suffer in silence,” Henson said on Instagram.

Henson’s campaign is sponsored by the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation, which Henson founded in 2018 in honor of her father who suffered with mental health challenges as a result of his tour of duty in the Vietnam War.

According to the Foundation's website, one in five Americans suffer from mental illness and African-Americans are the least likely population to seek treatment. "We were taught to hold our problems close to the vest out of fear of being labeled and further demonized as inapt, weak, and/or inadequate."

Virtual therapy services began on Wednesday, April 15th. The cost for up to five (5) individual sessions will be defrayed on a first come, first serve basis, until all funds have been committed or exhausted. For more information visit: borislhensonfoundation.org

NYC Teen Tutoring Thousands of Students Online



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

New York — Alexis Loveraz, a 16-year old from New York City who is homeschooling like most other students during the coronavirus pandemic, has gone viral as he tutors thousands of young TikTok users around the world.

A math whiz with a 4.0 average at Harlem Prep High School, Alexis was urged by his friends to post tips on algebra, geometry, and chemistry on the popular video-sharing platform TikTok. He was immediately hailed the “TikTok Tutor,” and now has around 650,000 followers and 5.4 million likes on TikTok.

“I was, like, really shocked,” Alexis told CBS 2 New York. “Things that they probably forgot like before COVID-19, this is like a refresher of what I’m, like, giving them out. It’s really cool because they understand it even better the way I’m explaining it to them.”

Alexis' followers are mostly students from the United States, Canada, Australia, Philippines, Singapore, and other countries who wanted to learn while quarantining in their homes. Some of the comments say, “How did you explain it better than my teacher?” and “You explain 1000x better than my math teacher!!!”

Alexis is adding Google Classrooms to upgrade his popular videos. “I’m excited about this. I know he can do this and more. I’m so proud that he helped a lot of people,” his mother, Likmilian Hiciano, proudly said.

While Alexis isn’t making money yet from tutoring online, he is glad to still continue doing it. He said, “The knowledge I have, like I want to share it to other people.”

Michigan Hospital Worker Denied Care Four Times Dies of Coronavirus



Source: Tonya Pendleton, thegrio.com; Photo Gatewood family)

Deborah Gatewood, a phlebotomist at Beaumont Hospital in Farmington Hills in Detroit passed away from complications of the coronavirus according to NBC News. She was only two years away from retiring from her job of 31 years.

Gatewood’s daughter, Kaila Carrothers told NBC, her mother started feeling bad in the middle of March. She drove herself to the ER. “They said she wasn’t severe enough and that they weren’t going to test her. They told her to just go home and rest.”

When Gatewood developed a cough and returned to the ER the next day, she was again refused a COVID-19 test. A few days later, she returned with a fever but was told she was still not sick enough to be tested.

By the time Gatewood's daughter found her barely conscious in bed on March 27th, and was able to take her to another hospital, her fever was 106 degrees. Gatewood was hospitalized with double pneumonia. By April 17, she was dead.

Carrothers, said she is saddened that the hospital didn’t respond to her mothers symptoms, which were already known to be associated with COVID-19, especially since her mother was employed at the hospital for so long.

Carrothers advises people with symptoms not to wait, but to seek help, and if they are rejected at one facility to go to another.

99-Year Old Woman Becomes Oldest U.S. Patient to Survive Coronavirus



Source: blacknews.com

Albany, GA — Maude Burke, a 99 year old African American woman from Georgia has recovered from COVID-19, making her the oldest person in the U.S. to survive the disease so far.

Burke was hospitalized in the Phoebe Putney Health System for 17 days until she was allowed to be released. In a video the hospital posted on Facebook, the nurses and medical workers can be seen cheering her on as she was wheeled out in a hospital bed.

"Her strength and determination are amazing, and we wish her well as she continues to recover. Thank you for being an inspiration, Ms. Maude!" The Hospital wrote. Burke is said to be currently staying with her family.

Muslim Lawmakers to Host Virtual Ramadan Celebration



Source: Anne Branigin, theroot.com; Photo Source: Facebook)

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, lawmakers are planning to host a virtual Iftar on May 12 at 7pm (EST) to give American Muslims the opportunity to safely fellowship with community leaders.

An Iftar is a nightly gathering held during Ramadan to mark the end of each day’s fast. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is observed worldwide by Muslims as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community.

The event is co-chaired by Representatives André Carson, Ilhan Omar, Rashid Tlaib and Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison. Those scheduled to give remarks include Imam Khalid Latif, Imam W. Deen Shareef, and artist Aisha Fukushima.

Registration is required to participate in the event. To register visit: muslimadvocates.org/iftar.

United Negro College Fund Mobilizes to Support HBCUs During COVID-19 Crisis



(Source: goodblacknews.org)

The United Negro College Fund worked in concert with several organizations, institutions, and elected representatives to

secure \$1 Billion in funds for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) from the \$2Trillion stimulus relief package passed by Congress and signed by the president in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The UNCF is using the funds to support HBCUs and displaced students who face issues because of the growing pandemic, such as the need for housing, food and technology to support online learning.

Many UNCF students come from communities and homes where they have limited tools to get online or broadband access is limited or unavailable, making it difficult to continue their education, as schools have gone virtual. Many student's part time jobs have been temporary eliminated due to the pandemic and some students have found it financially difficult to get back home, and some have no homes to go back to.

UNCF has established an emergency fund to help students continue their education and to maintain the sustainability of HBCU member institutions. For more information on how you can help or get help, visit uncf.org.

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

Uganda President Yoweri Museveni Set to Relax Lockdown

(Source: [xinhuanet.com](#); [tuko.co.ke](#); [branapress.com](#); [Jacobs Seaman Odongo](#), [monitor.co.ug](#); [npr.org](#)/

KAMPALA - Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said this week the country would lift lockdown after the ministry of health concludes a rapid assessment of the prevalence of COVID-19 in communities.

Museveni said in a televised address that the outcome of the survey will be announced on Monday (5/4) and will determine the next step the country would take when the 35-day lockdown ends on May 5.

The survey targets market vendors, truck drivers, communities around border crossing points, health workers, security forces and other people likely to be infected. During the survey, the investigation teams will take a blood sample, a nose and throat swab from individuals to test for the novel coronavirus.

"Our people are studying intensely. We shall give you guidelines and a way forward before the end of the lockdown on May 5," said Museveni.

Museveni said the guidelines and restrictions that the country imposed from March 18



have helped contain the spread of the virus. "These prevention efforts have given us good results. We have been testing people every day since March 21. Our curve has been flat," said Museveni.

Museveni has been holding regular televised briefings regarding COVID-19 and has gained a large social media following

as a result. According to the Daily Monitor, President Museveni's Facebook page, [@PresidentYoweriKagutaMuseveni](#), had 600,000 followers as of March 1 and has increased by 26% since the country's lockdown began.

In his briefings, Museveni, who has been in power for 34 years and is described as

using brute force to put down popular rebellions, cautioned Ugandans against "misbehaving during the coronavirus pandemic while thinking God would save them." He told viewers, "God has a lot of work. He has the whole world to look after. He cannot just be here in Uganda looking after idiots."

Describing the coronavirus as an army that Uganda was in a war with, Museveni said, "This army is not interested in the spoils of war. It has no intention of regime change. It is not concerned about the rich mineral resources underneath the earth. It is not even interested in religious, ethnic or ideological hegemony. Its ambition has nothing to do with racial superiority. It is an invisible, fleet footed, and ruthlessly effective army."

The 75 year old Museveni, wearing a gray sweatshirt, jogged and did pushups during one of his briefings to show Ugandans how to exercise indoors so as not to expose themselves to the virus.

So far, Uganda has confirmed 79 coronavirus cases, with 52 recoveries. The country confirmed its first case of coronavirus on March 21, with President Museveni announcing a partial lockdown the following day.

Zimbabwe Tries Fine or Jail to Keep Children in School



([TriceEdneyWire.com/GIN](#)) - Zimbabwe is experimenting with a bold attempt to make parents prioritize education and bring down drop-out rates.

Harare has amended its laws to make the first 12 years of schooling compulsory. Children are now required by law to stay in school for an extra five years to 16 years of age. It is also now an offence to expel children on the grounds of pregnancy or non-payment of fees.

If parents fail to send children to school, they now face up to two years in jail, or a \$260 fine if they can afford it.

Last year at least 60 percent of the children in primary school were sent home for failing to pay fees, according to the state's Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVac).

As the economy sputters, parents have less to spend on education as they struggle to buy food. National research shows drop out rates in some areas are as high as 20 percent.

The high drop-out rate has also been blamed on pregnancy, early marriages,

the distance from school and a lack of interest.

Zimbabwe's first leader Robert Mugabe, a former teacher who died last year, was praised for the education policies he adopted after independence in 1980.

The school system he established gave black Zimbabwean greater access to education as hundreds of state schools were opened, leading to Zimbabweans enjoying among the highest literacy rates in Africa.

However, free education ended in the 1990s and in the following decade the education system began to crumble.

Some parents, however, believe the government is shirking its responsibilities amidst broken promises to provide free basic education and a chronic shortage of state schools.

GLOBAL INFORMATION NETWORK creates and distributes news and feature articles on current affairs in Africa to media outlets, scholars, students and activists in the U.S. and Canada. Our goal is to introduce important new voices on topics relevant to Americans, to increase the perspectives available to readers in North America and to bring into their view information about global issues that are overlooked or under-reported by mainstream media.

Kenyan Growers Send 'Flower of Hope' as Major Markets Dry Up

([TriceEdneyWire.com/GIN](#)) – It was inevitable during a lockdown that sales of Kenya's flower exports would dry up as buyers make fewer impulse purchases of carnations, roses and other blossoms.

According to data from the Kenya Flower Council, sales of cut flowers in overseas markets have fallen below 35 per cent of what is expected this time of the year.

This month, the Kenya Private Sector Alliance, through its members, Kenya Flower Council and other flower growers, launched a "campaign of solidarity" – sending 300 floral bouquets to first responders, doctors and nurses in the UK.

A note penned by President Uhuru Kenyatta acknowledged the health crisis that has pummeled the revenue-generating sector.

"There have been a few moments in history when the world has faced a crisis as far-reaching and consequential as this," he wrote. "It is exactly at moments such as this that we must display our humanity, perseverance and hope. Whatever the adversity, no matter the foe, we shall triumph together. We stand united. Tuko Pamoja. From Kenya with love – H E Uhuru Kenyatta."

Despite the depressed sales, flower growers must still care for the flowers otherwise the plant deteriorates and will not bloom in the future. Labor is still required to perform these tasks so that once the pandemic passes, production and sales can return to expected levels.

The principal export of the Netherlands for over 200 years, flowers today are grown in other regions, including sub-Saharan Africa, and are challenging



the Netherlands' traditional hold on the industry.

Cut flowers are now Kenya's second largest export after tea, contributing around 1% of the country's GDP. They are also one of the country's largest source of employment, with over 100,000 people working directly in the flower industry and an estimated two million indirectly.

"Flowers are therapeutic and are a great way of expressing our appreciation to the gallant men and women working round the clock to take care of the sick," said Bimal Kantaria, managing director of Elgon Kenya. "With this campaign we want to send a message of hope and solidarity as we work to ensure our brothers and sisters in the flower industry do not lose their jobs during these trying times and our highly acclaimed flower sector remains afloat."

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Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears

To Whom Much Has Been Given...



It's just over a month now of shelter at home here in California. In my county, as of last week, wearing a face mask is mandatory in grocery stores, or anywhere you might not be able to maintain six feet of space between you and another person. It's a roller coaster ride as regards to how I'm handling all of this on any particular day. Sometimes I'm disoriented and anxious. Sometimes I'm impatient and short-tempered. But when I find myself complaining, I snap out of it and remind myself that for the most part, I'm simply inconvenienced, and I count my blessings.

I'm blessed because my family is healthy, and we're doing everything we're being told to do to keep it that way. Every epidemiologists and public health official is imploring us to stay home in order to be safe and that's what we're doing. When they tell me to wear a mask, I'm wearing a mask, and I'm doing it for as long as they tell me to do it. I do this out of concern for myself and other people.

I'm blessed. We have a home in which to shelter in place. I'm not worried about paying the mortgage or the rent next month. I haven't been laid off from a job. I may not be able to drive anywhere but the grocery store, but I have several nearby grocery stores to go to. I may have to stand in line and wear a mask in order to get in, but once I'm in, I have enough money to buy what I need. The shelves may be cleaned out of disinfectants and paper products, but there are plenty of fresh meats, produce and healthy food options to choose from, at least for now.

I'm blessed because I'm not working in a meat processing factory or in a field picking produce in close proximity to other people. I don't have to show up to an essential job as a healthcare worker, a first responder, a janitor, a grocery store cashier, or the person at the drive-in window at a fast food restaurant. No, I'm relying on other people risking their health, and maybe their lives, to keep my family fed.

I personally know people who have tested positive for COVID-19, but no one close to me has died. Meanwhile people who live in communities of color are watching family and friends die around them at an alarming rate. In Chicago, African-Americans comprise 70% of all deaths from COVID-19. In New York, Latinos make up 29% of the population but are 39% of all the people who have died from COVID-19 and African-Americans are dying at twice the rate of white New Yorkers. In San Francisco, 80% of those hospitalized for COVID-19 have been Latinos.

At first the information was anecdotal. There was very little data on the novel coronavirus' effect on specific racial and ethnic groups. States began to gather and release racial demograph-

ics after journalists like Ibram X. Kendi and politicians like Elizabeth Warren started to sound the alarm. Writing in *The Atlantic*, Kendi warned, "There is a racial Coronavirus pandemic within the pandemic." Now the data to support the alarm is pouring in from hospitals, labs and states across the country.

As one Vox news article read, the COVID-19 virus is a not a great equalizer; it is a great amplifier of preexisting social inequities tied to race, class, and access to the health care system. It is a great magnifier of inequality.

A Washington Post analysis found that majority-black counties had infection rates three times the rate of majority-white counties. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analysis of nearly 1,500 hospitalizations across 14 states found that Black people made up a third of the hospitalizations, despite accounting for 18 percent of the population in the areas studied. An Associated Press analysis of available death data found that Black people constituted 42 percent of the victims, doubling their share of the populations of the states the analysis included. In Louisiana, more than 70 percent of the people who have died so far from COVID-19 were Black, more than twice their 32 percent share of the state's population, and well above the 60 percent share of the population of New Orleans, where the outbreak is worst. In New York, African-Americans comprise 9 percent of the state population and 17 percent of the deaths.

Why is this happening? We've heard a great deal about underlying health conditions putting all people at greater risk of dying from COVID-19. African-Americans suffer disproportionately from chronic diseases such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, lung disease, obesity, and asthma. Why is that? Social determinants underlie these health conditions; things like financial and educational disparities, food desert communities, and redlining.

A couple of weeks ago I watched a special on CNN hosted by Van Jones and Don Lemon on the disproportional impact of the Coronavirus in communities of color. It was informative and sobering, but some of what I heard was troubling on another level. There were several famous people like P Diddy, Snoop Dogg, Charles Barkley, Len Manuel Miranda, America Ferrara, and George Lopez talking to their respective Black and Brown communities about doing the right thing to take care of their health during this Coronavirus pandemic and urging them going forward to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

One of the people featured on the program said, "Yes, this is an inherently biased and racist country, but at the end of the day, it comes down

to personal choice." Within the hour-long show, I heard at least three times, from one or another of these rich and famous folk, "I'm not trying to blame the victim, but"

Yes, I agree people need to take more responsibility for their health and wellbeing, AND I want to remind these exceedingly privileged people-of-color on this program, that those living in economically marginalized communities face major obstacles that make it extremely difficult to take charge of their own health. Nobody on the CNN panel has to take three busses to get to the closest grocery store, ten miles from their community. If your only choices are the bodega on the corner, 7-Eleven, McDonalds, Burger King, Wing Dome, and Popeye's, it's not so easy to make a different choice about what you eat.

If somehow, you're fortunate enough to have a grocery store in your community that happens to have organic produce and products, how do you pay for food that is far more expensive than the chemically-grown variety? Sure, folks on SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Benefits) can use their cards at farmer's markets, should you be lucky enough to have access to one, but have you been to a farmer's market lately? Good produce, high prices. How far are your benefits going to go spending that much on food?

44 million people in this country have no health insurance, and another 38 million are underinsured. Organizations like the US Institute of Medicine, The Urban Institute and Families USA estimate that more than 26,000 people in the US die every year because of lack of health insurance. If people are choosing not to have health insurance, it's because they have no other choice.

Before I read it in a newspaper or saw it on cable news, my sister who lives in Phoenix told me about the devastating effect the Coronavirus is having on the Navajo Nation. About 175,000 people live on the reservation, which overlaps the state boundaries of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. According to the Navajo Nation Department of Resources, 30 percent of residents have no access to running water. Approximately 54,000 people do not have piped water to their homes. These residents haul water either from safe watering points or from unregulated sources, such as livestock wells and springs. For some, water is delivered to homes once a month by tanker trucks. A single basin of water may be used by multiple family members in a day to wash up. It's the only way they're going to make it last for a month. One of the primary ways to avoid becoming infected with COVID-19 is to wash your hands several times a day. How do you share the same basin of water with several other people in a day and wash your hands adequately?

Yes, systemic racism is central to the plight of people of color, but as we watch marginalized people die from the COVID-19 virus at disproportionately alarming rates, there is absolutely no denying the carnage of the Coronavirus is the consequence of severe economic disparity. It's beyond immoral that this is reality in a so-called developed country!

Human Beings never seem to tire of taking advantage of one another, abusing the power we have to subordinate one another, killing one another, and hating one another because of differences in ethnicity, skin color, gender identity, religion or class. We invent all manner of reasons to close our minds and harden our hearts. We find all kinds of ways to construct our personal and collective comfort zones.

Devastating events the magnitude of this global pandemic, literally shake us to our core, and radically shift us from our normal ways of moving through life. It shatters the glass bubbles we live in. It destroys the emotional walls we've built to keep ourselves safe. It makes us experience things we don't want to experience, and look at things we don't want to see.

I'm a million light years from being as privileged as Charles Barkley, or Snoop Dogg, but I'm still, relatively speaking, privileged. We all talk about white privilege, but people of color blessed to have privilege, often don't look at their own. While others live the nightmare, we have the privilege of choosing not to see what's in our faces, begging to be seen. Privileged Americans of any race and ethnicity may choose not to respond – we may choose to look the other way, but we can never again say we didn't know. Everyone is talking about getting back to normal, or the "new normal," whatever that is. But there are some things that should never be normal again.

This pandemic is devastating, particularly in communities of color. Marginalized people have always paid the highest price for America's socio-economic dysfunction and lack of conscience, but this is almost beyond imaging. It's hard to find the blessings in a global pandemic, but there's a message in this for those of us who have eyes to see and ears to hear. We have to leverage this moment to expose and radically change these systems.

Christian scripture says, "To whom much has been given, much will be required." That means those of us blessed with any degree of privilege have a responsibility to use our resources, our gifts, and our knowledge to benefit others. So, let's stop simply counting our blessings, and be a blessing.

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

Because I Love You

By Kiantha Duncan

Healing PTO

This has hands down been the most incredible 30 days of our lifetime. Communities across our nation are sheltering in place in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. If you are anything like me, you too have found yourself going through a spectrum of emotions, sometimes all at once. This thing last month has been tough.

There were days this past month that I was able to get more done around the house than ever before. There seemed to be so many small projects lying in wait for my world to slow down just a little bit. I would imagine that some of you know exactly where I am coming from.

There were a few days, however, that I the only thing I accomplished was rest. For the first time, I actually have been listening to my body as it lets me know what it needs and when it needs rest. I am more conscious of what my body is communicating to me. Often, my life was too loud to hear its tender tones. I was disconnected.

If you have ever felt disconnected from your body, I invite you to accept this pandemic as an opportunity to slow down physically and emotionally. No, this

may not have been the circumstances we wanted, but none the less, there is an opportunity to take advantage of the gift that social distancing and the universe is giving us.

It is my belief that Covid-19 is a once in a lifetime opportunity to re-set, shift and reimage the lives we live. This pandemic is giving us mandatory personal time off (PTO). It's up to us how we chose to spend that time.

During this time of uncertainty, let's collectively commit to spending this time to connect with our own bodies and spirit. Be willing to get honest about where there are spaces and opportunities for growth. Be willing to make adjustments to who you are and how you have shown up during your time here on earth. Imagine how different our post pandemic nation would love if we all took this time to do our physical, emotional and spiritual healing work?

This time in confinement should not be spent going through the motions of simply completing tasks and checking boxes off of a to-do list. Those things are fine, however, don't let them distract you from what you really have the opportunity to do. Use this time



in social isolation to tend to your body, mind and soul. Come out of this offering a better version of yourself to the world. **K**

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

Black Psychologist Offers Quarantine Tips for African-Americans

By Brianna Nargiso

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - As Coronavirus cases have risen to well beyond a half million confirmed cases in the United States, it can be difficult to remain positive, minimize anxiety and work through times of painful transition and uncertainty.

Psychologist Dr. Esther Hyatt, PhD., a retiree from the New York City Department of Education, shares a few tips that could benefit Black people during the quarantine. She advises the following:

Plug out

Being able to turn off the news for a bit and disconnect from technology. Dr. Hyatt emphasizes the importance of turning off the television, walking away from the computer and separating from your phone. While technology can seem to keep us in the loop, it is also imperative to not make technology a lifeline.

"We must learn to remove electronic stuff," says Hyatt.

Jonathan Comer, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at Florida International University says overexposure to the news does not help awareness. Instead it can contribute to increased fear and anxiety. Comer also shares that checking in a few times a day versus all day generally does not provide you with more information.

"You definitely must turn off the TV," says Hyatt.

Get enough sleep

Sleep is essential. In quarantine it can be easy to oversleep, therefore, it is important to maintain healthy sleep habits in order to be energized, reduce stress levels and provide support to your immune system.

"While sleep requirements vary slightly from person to person, most healthy adults need between 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night to function



Credit: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health

at their best," reports Help Guide, an organization dedicated to mental health & wellness.

With the extra time afforded to folks during the pandemic it is very important that sleep be a key part of your new daily routine, emphasized Dr. Hyatt. Although reality has changed and most people are not getting up for work or traditional in-person class, it is just as important to maintain

"We should make sure we're getting an adequate amount of sleep, not oversleeping under sleeping to maintain healthy lifestyle habits throughout turmoil, like this," she says.

Exercise

Exercising and getting your body moving doesn't have to be strenuous, involving heavy machinery, weights or recorded workouts. While those things may benefit some people, exercising can be as simple as stretching, walking or moving your body in small rotations.

"You can begin with your feet, by first moving your toes and moving up to your arms," says Hyatt.

Dedicating a portion of your time to improving your exercise habits gives you a sense of weight control, strength management, and energy.

According to Mayo Clinic, daily exercise contributes to lowering risks to cardiovascular disease, something that disproportionately affects African-Americans. Regular exercise has also been linked to the prevention and management of stroke, metabolic syndrome, high blood pres-

sure, type 2 diabetes, depression, anxiety, many types of cancer, arthritis, and falls. "Lead a healthy life by doing your exercises," says Hyatt.

Eat healthy

According to NPR, while about 75 percent of people think they live healthy lifestyles, 80 percent don't eat enough fruits, veggies and whole grains. Despite what most people think, they do not consume enough nutrients but instead they consume less fruits and veggies and exceed recommended amounts of sodium, added sugars and saturated fats.

"We need to eat foods that are healthy for us and that will benefit our body," says Hyatt.

During a time where people are self-isolating and staying home, it is important to practice healthy eating habits. Fruits and vegetables can be superfoods that help your body function well and fight infection and disease.

Not forgetting to drink water regularly is critical. Water plays a large role in healthy digestion and contributes largely to eliminating toxins from the body.

"You must remain hydrated and drink a lot of water," says Hyatt.

Utilize the free time at home

Dr. Hyatt urges Black folks to take time to move around the house and find something to do that you may have been putting to the side. Whether that be cleaning out an old closet, rearranging

a room, painting the basement, decluttering a storage room or donating unused items to those in need, finding something indoors to keep busy not only keeps you moving but it exercises the brain and allows for another thing to be checked off the to-do list.

It is also imperative that this time be used to also "face the reality of what is going on," says Hyatt.

Coming to grips with your feelings can be helpful to use this time wisely and be intentional with yourself and validate emotions that you may have surrounding the pandemic. It is okay to feel those things and acknowledge them. Normalizing feelings is important during a time where heightened anxiety is expected.

"Remember that anxiety and stress are completely normal reactions. Rather than try to talk yourself out of worrying, give yourself a program to follow: Staying well-informed, taking common sense precautions, and finding time to clear your mind. And know that it's OK to seek help from a professional if you're having trouble managing stress and anxiety on your own," wrote Dan Harrah for Mercer Behavioral Health Consulting Group.

Once acknowledging personal feelings, people can begin to focus on other things and utilize the free time to be more productive.

While productivity can mean different things for different people, as long as it is safe, indoors and makes you feel happy, go for it says Hyatt.

According to Hyatt, activities like knitting, crossword puzzles, art and these activities play an integral role in channeling the brain's attention and focus. This can also be working on building self-confidence through positive affirmations and relaxing with music.

"Music is great," says Hyatt. "We all have things that bring us joy, find that thing and do it inside."

During COVID-19 Shutdown Grant Elementary Offers Food & Support to Students and Families

By Ivan Corley
Principal
Grant Elementary

Since the first day we were out of school due to COVID-19, Grant Elementary has been a meal distribution site serving breakfast and lunch for students and kids from 11-12 noon, Monday through Friday. We continued to serve meals during spring break as well as, since we knew the need would still be there during this time.

We have had tremendous support from our school district leaders who have supported our efforts to meet the needs of our students and families. Our district leadership has also been very sup-



portive in helping us get technology access to our students by creating a system where we can get laptops in a timely manner and have them available at the school for parents to pick up or we can deliver the laptop to their home.

We have also been so fortunate to have amazing community partners who help us every day by providing learning materials and supplies for students, books, learning games, puzzles, household needs, cleaning products, and help delivering food and supplies as well. Our school staff and volunteers have been amazing as well. They are at Grant every day helping out and helping bring smiles and joy to the faces of our students and families when they arrive to pick up food and needed resources or their student's laptop.



It takes a "collective effort" to accomplish what we are doing for our students, families, and the Grant community, and I feel so fortunate and proud to work along side such a committed group of caring people.

During this time, that is very stressful, uncertain, and changing each day, it has been important for me to remember the "why" of my work and the purpose behind what I do everyday. That "why" is our students and their families, and the amazing teachers, support staff, counselors, classified staff, volunteers, and community partners that keep me

inspired to give them my best. They deserve nothing less! I know that together, we will persevere through these times and come out even stronger.

I have enjoyed being the principal at Grant Elementary and the many positive moments I have shared with students and staff. I know those will continue and we will soon be back together adding more memories as we continue to learn and grow within our amazing school and community.

Missing all of my students, their families, and my staff. Stay strong, patient, caring, and safe.

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Dying to Work: Safety vs Paying Bills

Continued From Page: 1

Amazon workers have been particularly vocal across the country as social media has shared protests by workers holding signs denouncing their working conditions. “This disease is killing people on a daily basis,” one worker who wished to remain anonymous told Business Insider. “As people are testing positive for it where I work, they still expect for us to come there.”

The U.S. Postal Service has confirmed that 259 employees have tested positive for the virus in its workforce of 630,000. To date, two letter carriers in New York City, one in Montgomery, Alabama and one in Detroit have died after contracting the virus.

The Postal Service has sought to make gloves and masks available in all of its work stations, but employees still say basic items are not available. More than 85,000 workers have signed a petition asking for better protections.

The Washington Post recently reported that four grocery store workers have died after contracting the novel coronavirus. Two were Walmart workers who worked at the Evergreen Park Walmart in Chicago, one was a worker at Trader Joes in Scarsdale, New York, and another was a grocery greeter at a Giant store in Largo, Maryland.

A Detroit bus driver Jason Hargrove, whose Facebook rant warned people to be careful and be responsible died from the virus only weeks after posting the video. A bus driver in King County, Washington also succumbed to the disease last week; he too had been vocal about having his transit company provide better protection for him and his fellow drivers.

According to the Daily Mail, 22 New York City transit workers have died after contracting COVID-19.

Four workers at New York’s Shop Rite stores have come down with the disease.



Frontline healthcare workers have also been contracting the virus in increasing numbers. A number of them have died.

Workers for American Airlines have reported that a few of their co-workers have come down with confirmed cases of COVID-19. A worker for an American Airlines regional carrier in Boston said, “Since my co-workers have come down with it, you would expect that they would at least investigate who the worker has been in contact with and have them quarantined.

“They are basically saying they don’t care if it spreads to our families or the general public. No serious measures have been taken to do anything about exposures.”

Eddie Ortiz, an assistant manager at the New York store Gristedes, described his staff as tireless frontline warriors. “They didn’t hesitate for one minute to stay and meet the needs of the public,” he said.

Several of the country’s most prominent union leaders and a number of New York

political leaders have demanded that Amazon rescind Smalls’ dismissal. New York State Attorney General Letitia James and Mayor Bill de Blasio called for an investigation into Smalls’ firing. James called Smalls’ firing “immoral.”

“At the height of a global pandemic, Chris Smalls and his colleagues publicly protested the lack of precautions that Amazon was taking to protect them from COVID-19,” James said in a statement. “In New York, the right to organize is codified into law, and any retaliatory action by management related thereto is strictly prohibited. At a time when so many New Yorkers are struggling and are deeply concerned about their safety, this action was also immoral and inhumane.”

According to Amazon their workers are heroes: “The truth is the vast majority of employees continue to show up and do the heroic work of delivering for customers every day,” said a company spokesperson.

“Amazon would rather fire workers than face up to its total failure to do what it should to keep us, our families, and our communities safe,” said Smalls. “...We won’t stop until Amazon provides real protections for our health and safety and clarity for everybody about what it is doing to keep people safe in the middle of the worst pandemic of our lifetimes.”

Smalls told the MSR that it was important for him to express solidarity with fellow Amazon workers in Minnesota and the rest of the country and urged them to, “take the power back. We are the power. If they are not caring about your well-being, then walk out! Without us they are nothing.”

Mel Reeves welcomes reader responses to mreeves@spokesman-recorder.com.

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WA State Dept of Commerce Announces Small Business Resiliency Assistance Program to Provide Assistance to Minority Businesses

Source: WA Department of Commerce

OLYMPIA, Wash. – The Washington State Department of Commerce has announced a new partnership with organizations that serve cultural and historically disadvantaged businesses and communities across the state. The Small Business Resiliency Assistance program will provide technical assistance to small business owners affected by the COVID pandemic.

This group of committed, community-based organizations is reaching out to small business owners and working with them individually to find and apply for assistance that can help them right now.

Several of the partners are translating information about available funding and other resources and will help people complete application materials that are required in English.

“These efforts are critical to make sure that small business owners from every community and every culture can access programs and resources available during this emergency,” said Commerce Director Lisa Brown. “Our partners are helping struggling businesses find and apply for state and federal assistance programs, and also



Washington State
Department of
Commerce

helping them develop plans to stay open as we look toward economic recovery.”

“Since the beginning of this pandemic, community members have been concerned about the impact it would have on their business,” said Ed Prince, Executive Director of Washington State’s Commission on African American Affairs. “I commend our state leaders for recognizing the issue and stepping forward to help struggling small minority businesses.”

“We’ve received clear and pointed input from our community on how important it is that the state make resources available in a way that is culturally appropriate, and idiomatically accessible,” said Toshiko Hasegawa, Executive Director of Washington State’s Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs. “Washington is one of the most diverse states in America.

Targeted efforts to ensure support services reach the businesses that need them the most are crucial for economic survival and recovery.”

“During these challenging times it is important to provide access to opportunities for preparing small businesses to thrive into the future,” said Maria Siguenza, Executive Director of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs. “This new program, designed to remove barriers to support, is vitally important to our community. Together, we strive to ensure that language, culture and bureaucracy do not stand in the way of building a stronger small business community.”

“Like many other economic crises, COVID-19 will disproportionately impact the Black community. We need financial solutions that will aid in restoring econom-

ic growth,” said T’wina Nobles, President of The Tacoma Urban League. “Tacoma Urban League is poised to provide direct services to businesses owned and operated by Black people and other community members from historically underserved communities, cultures and populations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The organization providing assistance for communities of color in the Spokane Region is AHANA.

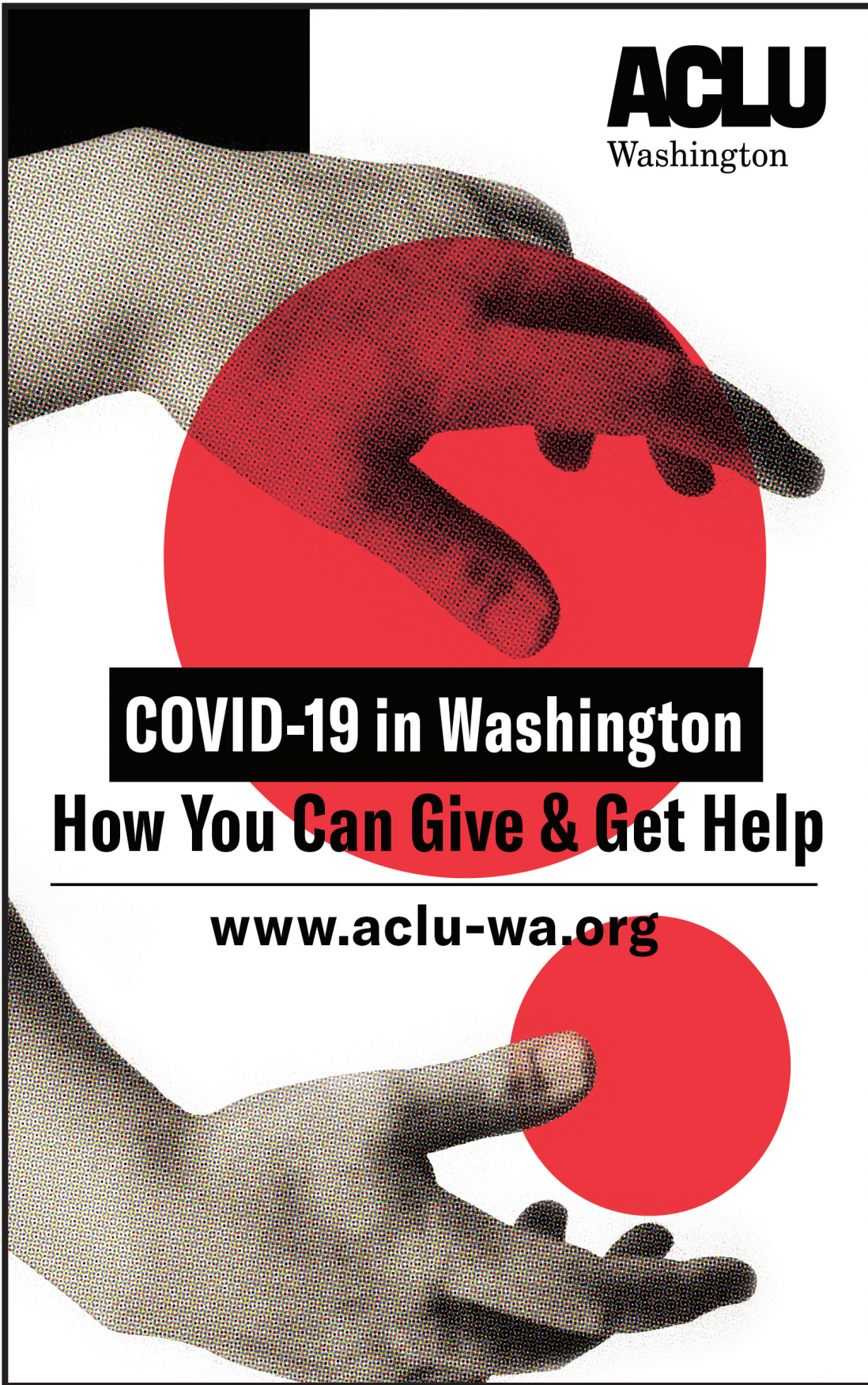
AHANA is a Spokane based non-profit organization that supports and promotes Inland Northwest multi-ethnic and multi-cultural businesses and their communities.

AHANA’s technical support and assistance may include:

- Navigational and technical assistance with contracts and applications
- Translating and distributing information
- Mentorship, education and/or training
- Planning for recovery and re-opening and support of their workforce

Services available through August 31, 2020.

For more information, contact Ben Cabildo (509) 999-5365, ahana.meba10@gmail.com, or visit the website at ahana-meba.org.



ACLU
Washington

COVID-19 in Washington

How You Can Give & Get Help

www.aclu-wa.org



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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](https://irs.gov/coronavirus)

Small Business Resources

sba.gov/coronavirus

QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19?

CALL THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH:

1.800.525.0127
press #

or visit srhd.org/covid19



Where to Track Coronavirus Cases

Spokane

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

YouTube Video

youtube.com/watch?v=LBwQWbi_50g

COVID-19 RACE/ETHNICITY OF CONFIRMED CASES SPOKANE COUNTY 2020

Race/Ethnicity	# COVID+	% COVID+	# county	% county
Hispanic all	29	9.0%	29291	5.7%
Non-Hispanic AI/AN	2	0.6%	7152	1.4%
Non-Hispanic Asian	5	1.6%	13110	2.5%
Non-Hispanic black	2	0.6%	9549	1.9%
Non-Hispanic multiple	1	0.3%	20118	3.9%
Non-Hispanic NH/OPI	3	0.9%	2839	0.6%
Non-Hispanic white	254	78.9%	433191	84.1%
Unknown	26	8.1%		
TOTAL	322		515250	100%

Source: srhd

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FOR DETAILS TUNE IN TO 88.1 | 92.3 FM OR KYRS.ORG MAY 16th - 22nd

To Know and Understand

by Willie Holland

I don't know it all, but I do know this, to know and understand are our tools of enrichment.

So, if you are enlightened, I'm on a mission to search and Explore, with no inhibition. Your door, would it be locked and in position, or would it be open to the core to let me in to feel the depth of your existence?

To know and understand you is my vision, so forget the lesser senses, let our stimuli be the mind's eye and attention the too dimension.

Dimension covering all facets of your being. (Meaning ...) not your body, but your being.

And though your looks are more than pleasing, it is you that interests me, and you that is intriguing.

And to touch your mind with mine, to me, would serve a deeper meaning then to touch you from the contour of your back to every curve to every sexy thing on you that comes attached.

You see, it's all about the fashioning of substance over the straw-house. And we can build a palace so sublime and defined, it can't be brought down.

And the blueprint will be all by our design and by the power of foundation. What we make can set the stage for something great because, to know and understand is at the base of our entire future interaction and it's connected to our fate.

So if you choose to grant my wish, to let me in to feel the depth of your existence, I'll search and I'll explore you to the core of your dimension.

To know and understand you are my mission and you're not like the other women, so my approach with you will be different.

Corporal David Fagen

Continued From Page 4

The rebel agent had a horse waiting for him outside the garrison, and together, they disappeared into the jungles around Mount Arayat, Pampanga.

Fagen fought in the Brigade of General Urbano Lacuna in central Luzon. While originally commissioned as a lieutenant, Fagen's valor, guile, and many military successes led to his promotion to the rank of captain. Because he was a successful guerilla leader, the American military became obsessed with his capture. His exploits were reported in the Manila Times, and in several American newspapers. A \$600 award was offered for his capture, dead or alive.

Fagen enjoyed a good time. He was a master of stud poker, having regularly relieved his fellow soldiers of several hundred dollars on payday. He was fond of carousals, played a guitar, and lived in camp with his Filipino wife. He was "often amusing" and voluble, supremely confident, and a natural leader.

Over the past forty years, many have speculated that Fagen had faked his death and lived for many years. The American authorities' desire to suppress any mention of

Fagen—or any of the other Black deserters—made following his trail extremely difficult.

During the American Occupation, David Fagen, now known as Mr. Brown, settled near the grounds of Malacanang Palace. Filipino rebels chose to exploit the Filipinos belief in the kapre, a Philippine mythical creature described as a black, tall, hairy male who always smokes big tobacco pipe. They encouraged Fagan to climb a balete tree at night and smoke cigars to scare the natives away.

Fagan's ghosts a.k.a Mr. Brown can still be strongly felt under a balete tree. He is a benevolent ghost who is helpful in finding lost things but also "mischievous" and is known to play pranks on Palace officials and guests. Sometimes, you could see smoke wafting from the tree.

The tree, according to historians, has stood witness to the unfolding of the country's history from the Spanish-American War. President Aquino has officially proclaimed the aforementioned balete tree as a Heritage Tree.

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Distance Learning Earns an 'F' in Most Poor Homes

By Frederick H. Lowe

Special to the Trice Edney News Wire from NorthStarNewsToday.com

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Illinois Governor J. Robert "JB" Pritzker recently announced that remote learning for Illinois pre-K-12 students enrolled in public and private schools will continue their studies until the end of the academic year while schools remain closed to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19.

"Following careful consideration of the science and close consultation with public health experts in Illinois and across the nation, in-person learning in schools will not resume during the 2019-2020 school year, with remote learning days to continue for all pre-k through 12 grade students," Pritzker said.

With that announcement, Illinois joins 25 states and three U.S. territories that have either ordered or recommended that schools keep their buildings closed for the remainder of the academic year and rely on distance learning.

Distance learning has rapidly grown, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

The Economic Policy Institute, a Washington, D. C.-based think tank, recently published an article headlined "Access to the online learning amid coronavirus is far from universal, and children who are poor



suffer from a digital divide." EPI reported the digital divide is based on family income.

"The data from the National Center for Education Statistics' National Assessment of Educational Progress for eighth-graders, show that full access to online learning is far from universal and that students who are poor are less likely to have access to the key tools and experiences they need to attend school online," NAEP reported.

The numbers are very troubling. Nearly 16% of eighth graders overall, and almost

25% of eighth graders who are poor, do not have a desktop or laptop computer at home on which they can follow their classes, EPI reported.

The Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday in an article headlined "Students are in desperate need of computers amid coronavirus distance learning" black and Latino students are less likely to have the technology they need to learn digitally.

California Gov. Gavin Newsome announced this week that more than 70,000 laptops, Chromebooks and tablets have

been donated to the school system by technology companies to assist in distance learning.

Poor students are defined as students who are eligible for the federal free-lunch or reduced-price lunch program.

Before some governors ordered residents to shelter in place, students could visit branches of the public library and use those computers, which are free and connected to Internet, but now the libraries are also closed until further notice.

The Economic Policy Institute also noted that 7 percent of eighth graders who are poor do not have access at home to the Internet or hotspots, which can be expensive and essential to online learning. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic students have lower rates of home internet access than their peers who are White and Asian.

Only a fifth of teachers considered themselves proficient in integrating computers into classroom instruction.

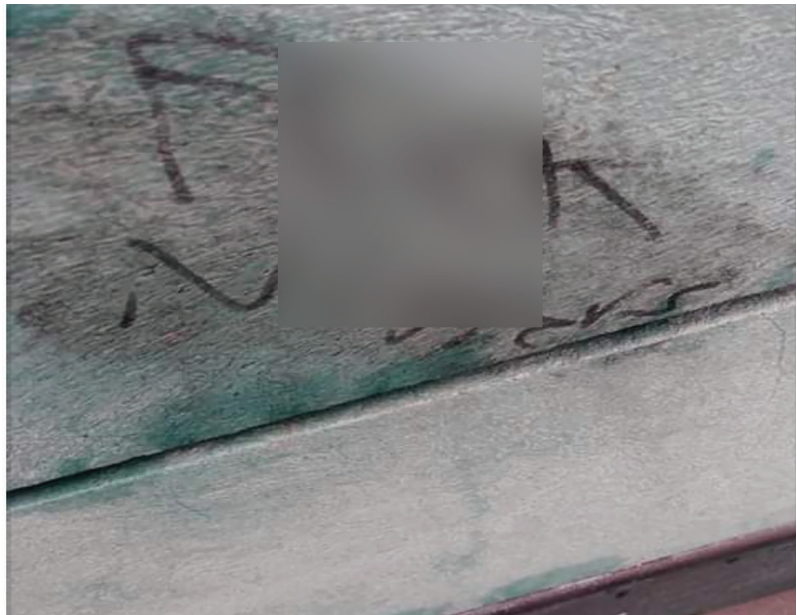
"The shares of students with teachers who don't consider themselves proficient but have received some training in applications and computer use is higher," EPI reported. "Yet that still leaves nearly 24.1 percent of eighth -graders with teachers who are neither proficient in nor trained in software applications."

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

Racism Sucks

Today my family and I went for a walk to add to our daily exercise. Racism sucks! Prayer needed for the people that scratched this into the Spokane Valley trail benches. With the COVID-19 lockdown, it felt so good to go for an hour walk. Seeing that dampened my spirit. I prayed and we continued our walk. Thank you Jesus.

-Donna Thomas



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Fair housing counseling, advocacy & education

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported in part by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD. NWFHA is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication.



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COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

The Tragedy of My Quarantine Hair

By Renika Williams

So, here we are, day 45 of this quarantine and things for me are going pretty well. In the middle of a mass panic, I have been blessed to have a pantry full of food, all the streaming-services I can possibly handle and enough space to keep my boyfriend and I from killing each other. Overall, it's not so bad.

But hiding beneath my comfy pajamas and the closely-cropped windows of my Zoom work conferences, something terrible is happening. Something horrific. Truly terrifying. That is the nightmare that has become my QUARANTINE HAIR.

(*Imagine me now putting both hands on my face and screaming as my hair bursts in all different directions and into snarls at the back of my neck.)

I know that we are all worried about toilet paper shortages, running out of hand sanitizer and medical-grade masks, and dreading the potential collapse of our country's food supply chain, but can we please talk about the under-discussed, under-reported tragedy of African American life without our beauty supply stores?

I'm a do-it-myselfer and for me walking into a beauty supply store is like being reborn. I walk inside in a state of chaos and I come out with everything I could possibly want or need to make myself look like my very own version of a BAP (Black American Princess). It's a kind of magic.

Each wig, or package of weave hair, lining the walls and shelves, sorted by color, style and length, offers a unique possibility to become anyone I want to be.



Each gel, each conditioner, each bottle of weave glue—allows me to take control. Every visit is new and special, and afterwards, I always feel revived.

Beauty supply stores help me unleash the me that is trapped beneath my sweats (and to also take some pretty great photos for Instagram!).

Since Covid-19 happened, going to the beauty supply store has more than lost its luster. If a store is open at all, inventory is limited or depleted, and my access to even a minimal supply of Black products with their transformative powers has been devastated.

I ventured out to my local supply shop not too long ago, and witnessed a long line of Quarantine Hair victims standing six-feet apart, dressed in masks and

gloves, hovering outside of a closed door. The owner cracked the door, using a plastic broom handle that he had used to barricade himself inside, but now used to hand out a bag of braiding hair and some change to an eager customer.

You can no longer go inside to peruse the aisles—you get what you get!

To avoid getting whatever I would have gotten from the man with the broom, I have been trying to take care of my own hair with things I have at home.

"Try all-natural, real food hair products," said the amazingly beautiful Black woman in the YouTube video. "It's so good and healthy for your hair." So, I tried it.

What I've learned is making your own hair care products is extremely messy—and exhausting, and I've come to believe that maybe the professionals know just a little bit more than what was in the article I found on the 46th page of Google results.

In the end, the only thing that I can do right now is learn to accept my new hair normal. Maybe untamed and unkempt will become the new post COVID-19 trend. Or maybe it won't.

After 45 days, my hair looks—wild. But I'm getting used to it. It's my quarantine hair, and me and my quarantine hair are learning to make peace.

Still, I cannot wait to step through the door of my favorite beauty supply store on that very first day of freedom, to buy a bag of everything I've been missing, and make that magic happen once again.

Is anyone else having Quarantine Hair?

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COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

The Word is "Slow Down"

By Latrice Williams

Bernadette Pillar Real Estate
Spokane

Before COVID-19 hit I was a regular working class woman, helping my clients buy and sell homes from 9am to 9pm (give or take). I have 6 children still in school and 1 adult child. Our normal routine in the morning consisted of waking the older kids up to go to school around 6am, getting ready and then waking the younger ones up. After sending them off to the bus stop at 8:20am, I would head to the office for my scheduled appts for the day. You can see by the hours I listed above, I had some very gruesomely long hours.

The hours I worked did not leave much room for me to be a school teacher and quite frankly a lot of the time I wasn't showing the most attention and affection. I was always tired from meetings, cooking dinner and helping with homework problems here and there.

I'm not sure if anyone else is talking about this but the social distance has not only saved our lives but it has also allowed me to become the mother and teacher that I never knew I was able to do. It has brought our family closer. Closer to God and closer to each other. We have a new schedule now that ensures that I am home for the first half of the day teaching and being mom.

I was so nervous. I didn't know what I could or would teach. I knew I wasn't like



everyone else. I had no where to turn but Jesus for some direction. And, direction, he gave.

We start off every morning from 9am-10am with devotion. Teaching the Bible is refreshing and brings hope. Following devotion we go into their scholastic studies. The schools took a little longer to contact us about what they were going to be able to give us to keep them engaged, so I began to search online and built a routine that way.

I know this time has been a very sobering time for most, with so many losing their lives. I can truly say that this has been a blessing in disguise for us. The Word is "slow down". I've learned that little in life holds more importance than family and close friends.

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

Caged Birds Still Sing

By Inga Laurent
Associate Professor of Law; Director, Externship Program, Gonzaga University
Spokane

December 1986 marked the end of the tradition where miners sent canaries into coal mines to determine safety. Technology replaced the birds, but for two centuries, those canaries saved many lives. John Scott Haldane (“the father of oxygen therapy”) recommended sending them into mines because they are sensitive to gases like carbon monoxide, since they need a lot of oxygen to fly and sing. So long as the canary could whistle back, miners knew they were safe.

I recall hearing the phrase “like a canary in a coal mine” a handful of times while growing up, but I first came across it in reference to Black folx while reading an article a few years ago. Lani Guinier (the first woman of color appointed as a tenured professor at Harvard Law School) borrowed the phrase from a colleague, using a version of it as the metaphor that runs throughout her entire co-authored book “The Miner’s Canary: Rethinking Race and Power.” She posits that the abysmal socio-economic indicators that have been allowed to plague marginalized communities are early warning signs of a crumbling society that will eventually affect us all. Degradation permitted to persist eventually ends up impacting everyone.

Danny Glover ever-so-eloquently echoes this sentiment. “When the hurricane struck the Gulf and the floodwaters rose and tore through New Orleans, plunging its remaining population into a carnival of misery, it did not turn the region into a Third World country, as it has been disparagingly implied in the media; it revealed one. It revealed the disaster within the disaster; grueling poverty rose to the surface like a bruise to our skin.”

Black people have always been expected to bear heavier burdens. Problems like income inequality and instability, housing insecurity and lack of health insurance, which leads to severe health problems and higher mortality rates have always overwhelmed us. Black people have long been America’s canaries.

So it was wholly unsurprising that COVID-19 would hit us hard. As Jamelle Bouie, Op-Ed columnist for the New York Times wrote: “[Coronavirus] Brings to light the inequities that have always existed. To use just a few, relevant examples, Black Americans are more likely to work in service sector jobs, least likely to own a car and least likely to own their homes. They are therefore more likely to be in close contact with other people, from the ways they travel to the kinds of work they do to the conditions in which they live.”

This Country fails its folx constantly, people of color and the poor have always known that truth, but it can be difficult to see what doesn’t directly impact you. Many people, for the first time, are no longer blind, as these failures are unearthed. Collectively, citizens are now capable of recognizing issues because we’re all at risk and impacted, we’re interwoven. Owen Jones of The UK’s Guardian writes “Coronavirus is the great leveler. Rich or poor, we have all been plunged into turmoil, insecurity and isolation, bonding together by our inability to imagine what



life will be like in two weeks, let alone two months.”

Our disintegrating health care system and infrastructure, an economic house of cards that barely sustains, housing and food insecurity, problematic mass incarceration conditions. How great thou are not, America. This crisis has made evident that our government is incapable of protecting us well. Right now, we lead the world in deaths. Nearly 40,000 of us, lost. But this isn’t news to us.

So, my hope for this tragedy is that it serves as a shrill wakeup call. Others now can acknowledge what we’ve always understood. America only achieves greatness when it’s a reality for all, when our nation lives up to “the true meaning of its creed,” and when there’s no longer a need for the sacrificial.

In the meantime, while this Country comes to grips with and gets itself together, we do what we have always done. We save ourselves. We push, we dig deep and we keep singing. Socially, spiritually, fiscally, physically and mentally, we work to fulfill broken promises. We choose to make the best of what we’ve got. We steadfastly continue patiently sharing lessons we’ve long held, like the improvements made for the most marginalized positively impact everyone.

You might have heard it said in Church like this “what you do for the least of these, my brethren, you do for me.” We keep advocating for better leaders, those who do the right thing, who move us forward, enacting the policies we’ve always preached. We build stronger communities and selves.

We personify this message: Dear America, the only way we ever truly break free is united.

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

There Has to be and Will be a Way

By Jacquelynne Sandoval
jsandovalrealestate.com
Realtor®, Windermere
Spokane Valley/Liberty Lake

What a crazy time of uncertainty! I am a Realtor in the beautiful city of Spokane Washington, and one of the most appealing parts of this community is the beauty of nature, the beauty of the people and the beauty of opportunities. And now we are told to stay home because of COVID-19. My entire job is based on the fact that I have to meet with people and interact face to face to show them their future home, or prepare them to sell so they can move on to the next exciting stage of there life. And now something has essentially stopped their lives, which then stops my whole livelihood. Though for some this has brought about a mindset of defeat, I choose to say there has to be and will be a way.

Our housing market is going strong and from the words of our company economist, it doesn't look like it will slow down any time soon. There are some obstacles that have popped up on the road to purchasing and selling a home. Many banks have changed the way that they are lending, and have even had to make these changes in the midst of contracts that are already pending. Our residential new construction has been stalled and even completing minor tasks of painting and minor repairs can not be done. Though for some this has brought about a mindset of defeat, I choose to say there has to be and will be a way.

As a Realtor in the time of COVID-19, we are becoming creative on how to continue to help our clients, family and friends see their dream of home ownership come true. With keeping safety at the top of our minds, I provide gloves, booties and sanitizer



for clients prior to entering any home. The Governor has placed restrictions stating that we can only have the realtor and 1 person on property at a time. So this has made it very difficult for families with younger members to envision themselves within a home. I offer live video calls, live virtual tours for any clients that don't feel comfortable entering into homes, and conduct virtual open houses.

I believe that this has become an opportunity for me to reach out to our community even more. Many are in a time of uncertainty, a time of need and a time of lost hope. I want to provide people with a smile and to remind them that they are not going through any of this alone. My goal is to keep showing people Love, compassion, and friendship and to change there mindset from defeat to a mindset of hope.

COVID-19 REFLECTIONS

God Didn't Bring OHF This Far

By Tommy Williams
Operation Healthy Family
(ohfspokane.org)
Spokane

Like other organizations COVID-19 has severely impacted Operation Healthy Family, especially with our Brush For The Future oral health education program. This program teaches elementary students how to properly floss and brush their teeth along with being given toothbrushes to brush during the school day.

With COVID 19 and its dangerous spread implications we don't know if we will ever be able to continue this program again. BUT since we are a Faith Based nonprofit, we operate on things that are unseen and



know God didn't bring OHF this far to leave us nor forsake us! Stay strong Spokane....WE GOT THIS!!!

Spokane Ministers' Fellowship



Greetings to all.

My prayer for our community, for you as individuals of our community, for your families, and all those loved by you, is for your health, peace, and prosperity during these troubled times. I remain confident for our wellbeing, and this confidence is based on our legacy as a strong, enduring, long-suffering people. We shall make it through these extremely challenging times. Though hard to conceptualize at present, I believe that when this present crisis has passed, our community shall be all the wiser, and stronger, prepared to face whatever challenges that lie ahead.

I write this to inform you of some of the activities the Ministerial Fellowship of Spokane has been involved in over the past few weeks, activities which have made a positive impact in, and more importantly, for our community.

First, the Innovia Foundation awarded a grant to the Ministerial Fellowship. The purpose of this grant was to provide funds to the respective Church families for distribution to individuals within the Church families. This process, concerning the distribution of funding, was used with our history as a people in mind, understanding then respecting the influence of the Church in our daily lives.

Additionally, the Ministerial Fellowship of Spokane was granted funding for distribution to various Minority owned and operated businesses within the City of Spokane. We as a Fellowship fully understand the importance of supporting financially and by solicitation the businesses within our community.

In my role as President of the Ministerial Fellowship of Spokane, I have been asked on numerous occasions “what does the Fellowship do for, or in our community?”. One answer to that question is found



within this article. Another answer to that question is we are working hand in hand with other Church organizations, who are not Members of the Fellowship, who also are present and active within our community. We are together as organizations, working on your behalf, tending to your needs, be they physical or Spiritual.

The purpose of these efforts, along with other non-religious organizations active within our community, is to improve the quality of the lives lived for those within our community. Continuing to work together, we, together, can overcome any and all challenges placed before us.

Finally, due to travel restrictions, the meeting scheduled for Spokane this past March of the Commission on African American Affairs was postponed by Governor Inslee. The meeting has yet to be rescheduled at this point in time. However, as soon as the meeting is rescheduled, I shall notify you.

Until next time, remain safe, take care of yourselves, and take care of one another.

And so it goes.

Walter Kendricks.

*Pastor, Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church
President, Spokane Ministerial Fellowship
Eastern Washington Representative, Washington
State Commission on African American Affairs*

DO YOU KNOW HIS NAME?

Those who know His name, can find comfort in knowing He has promises of deliverance and protection on so many pages throughout the bible!!!

For example: Psalms 91 (KJV)

1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.
3. Surely, He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
4. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under is wings shall thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
6. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.
8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.
9. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation;
10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
11. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.
12. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
14. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore, I will deliver him: I will set him on high, because, he has known MY NAME.
15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.
16. With long life will I satisfy him and shew him my salvation.

The Most High, the Almighty, the Lord, God, the Deliverer
Along with Social Distancing and wearing masks, we can find
solace in God's Word. He has promises of deliverance and pro-
tection from pestilence or viruses for anyone who knows, or de-
sires to know, His Name. Believe it, receive it, say it, walk in it!

God bless you!

Carole Ann Shook

Music Minister, Word of Faith Christian Center
nshirapa@hotmail.com

Holy Temple

Church of God in Christ

806 W. INDIANA AVE | SPOKANE, WA 99205

A CHURCH IN
THE HEART
OF THE CITY,
WITH THE
PEOPLE OF
THE CITY
AT HEART.

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SUNDAY

SUNDAY SCHOOL | 9:45 AM
WORSHIP SERVICE | 11:00 AM

WEDNESDAY

BIBLE STUDY | 7:00 PM
YOUTH GROUP | 7:00 PM

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**Pastor James &
First Lady Shawn
Watkins**

“Land Of The...”

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

America
Land of the free
Land of the free

America
Money and greed
Money and greed

America
Land of opportunity

America
This is your eulogy

Destruction
Corruption
Extortion
Armed Forces

Pitch forks
And torches
White hoods
On horses

Or actually
White men in red hats
Who state nothing
But alternative facts

Make America great again
Let's not pretend
America stands for everything
we should be against

The government is not your friend
these politicians do not care
about your problems
Please tell me any promise they've ever kept
I'll wait...

And if they did
it was just a coincidence
Better not rely on them
stimulus checks
Ain't nothing free
Best remember that

Bailing out the banks
and higher ed
Even though they have
billions in endowments
While the small businesses
are left to suffer
Big bank take little bank
A country full of suckers

Taxes are an obligation
Unless you a corporation
If you want to get over
on the government
Just ask Jeff Bezos

Imagine if criminals actually had consequence
Actually my mistake criminals who are rich
with pale skin
If you ask me those are the true terrorist
If you have any melanin
You are guilty until proven innocent
Ain't that a... yeah
And even if you are innocent
It really don't matter
because America
Is the land of ignorant
And ignorance is bliss

Y'all should of been listening to Kendrick

But everybody is responsible
Even if you do have darker skin
Cuz we all commit sin
We all wish to win

Have you ever stopped to really think
Does living your best life
Affect others from living their best lives
Insight
You decide

Does jewelry, cars, and clothes
Make you a good person
Ever heard of blood diamonds
No?
Start researching

Most of our products, resources, and perks
Come at the demise of others
Do you know that our consumerism
And capitalism cause so many to suffer
Me included
I'm not just pointing the finger at you
I'm taking responsibility too

You know how much pollution
we as a country produce
If the rest of the world was like America
Then we would be doomed

Hands up don't shoot
If you broke and Black
Then you screwed
Because society has proved
That killing those people is cool

If we only demanded the truth
If we only ate better food
Don't eat veggies or fruits
Diet of trans fats, sugar, and fast food
Drop dead from diabetes type 2

If we only knew
But we don't got no excuse
Just type in Doctor Sebi on YouTube
And you can learn about anything from google



Kids overweight due to their parents mistakes
No exercise just snacks, tik tok
and video games

When we gone use our brains
In order to make the right gains
Can't you see all my people are in pain
And my people is all people
Because we all the same

A truly dark future awaits
So what's it going to take
to actually produce change
And I mean change in a positive way

Because America has always been
on a trend of decay
This country has never been great
This country was built off the free and
in humane labor of slaves

Also let us not forget about the Natives
And the crime of the stolen land we claim

America the home of the brave?
America we should be afraid
But nothing really matters
When you got money to make
America's claim to fame
Staying paid and rubbing it in your face
No compassion for the rest of the human race

America a legend is made
America the land of shame
R.I.P time to put you in your grave

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FUTURE.



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Spokane County Mutual Aid:

Enables Neighbors to Help Neighbors During COVID-19

SPOKANE COUNTY MUTUAL AID
HOTLINE: (503) 662-7912

WHAT IS MUTUAL AID?

www.mutualaidspokanecounty.com
spokanecountymutualaid@gmail.com



By Jac Archer

On March 18, only five days before Governor Inslee would issue a stay-at-home” order, over twenty people logged onto Zoom for a meeting. They weren’t co-workers, congregants, or members of the same non-profit; many of them didn’t even know each other. Still, at 7pm, a block of little boxes populated with faces from all over Spokane County. This was the first meeting of a group (“Not an organization!” members will tell you) that calls itself Spokane County Mutual Aid (SCMA).

Spokane County Mutual Aid “Connects community volunteers to vulnerable community members in need without the emotional hurdles most public assistance provides,” explains Nico Wilkes, an SCMA volunteer. SCMA has no board, and no budget. They resist hierarchy in favor of a “leaderful,” relatively flat organizational structure. What they have, is an offer.

If you can’t afford or just can’t pick up your own groceries, if you need an emergency lunch and some hand sanitizer, or even just need a few extra dollars with no strings attached, then Spokane County Mutual Aid is here for you. If you have what you need, but would like to share your time, talent, or treasure helping others weather the COVID-19 storm, SCMA will welcome your participation at any level of involvement.

“Right now, we provide a way to connect people who want to help with people who need help, especially those who might slip through the cracks of other service-based programs,” Says Taylor Weech, another SCMA volunteer. “We match people from our network of volunteers with incoming requests based on geography, availability, and what they’re willing to do. It’s a no-barrier model, which I think is important.”



SCMA volunteers emphasize that everything they provide, from lunch bags and groceries, to small cash infusions of up to \$50, are not intended as a “hand up,” but an example of community members supporting one another.

“We operate through the basic mutual aid principle of “solidarity, not charity”, acknowledging that under unjust systems, we all have things we need help with and we all have gifts to contribute to each other,” says Weech.

To contact Spokane County Mutual Aid, you can reach out to them at: spokanecountymutualaid@gmail.com and on Facebook and Instagram

SCMA Website: <https://www.mutualaidspokanecounty.com>

SCMA Phone Hotline: (503) 662-7912

Donate to Spokane County Mutual Aid through Venmo: [@spokanecountymutualaid](https://www.venmo.com/spokanecountymutualaid)



Dennis Cronin
Attorney at Law P.S.

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THE BLACK PRISONERS CAUCUS

Coyote Ridge

By Willie Holland

I wanted to ensure that not only my own voice is heard throughout this crisis. So, I will begin by sharing some of the thoughts of others here with me that are experiencing this terrible Virus. I will share my own thoughts before I close out today.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, it has made me seek a better understanding of community with my fellow brothers and sisters because this virus has effected all people, but the news and media has yet to show any attention on the Black community and how it is affecting us. So I, as a Black man, seek to try and help my community and make sure we are educated!

- Antaeus Clark

I'm worried about my family. My mother works in a retirement home around the "hot bed" zone... where patients have tested positive for the virus. Our family dynamics are a concern. "It seems that we are safer in here than they are out there."

- Jermaine Lewis

At 2:00 pm on Friday, April 10th, 2020, it became mandatory for all Department of Corrections' staff members to wear masks, exactly 30 days after a staff member at Coyote Ridge Correctional Center (CRCC) tested positive for the Corona Virus.

While the majority of inmates would like to know what decisions the Governor and the Department of Corrections (DOC) are going to make concerning everyone, there are inmates and Correctional Officers who do not take this seriously. While some are concerned and terrified, and others are taking much needed precautions, most are misinformed. I, on the other hand, am experiencing feelings of disappointment, uncertainty, frustration, grief, vulnerability, and empathy.

Since the first confirmed case in Washington, there have been a number of individuals at CRCC who do not take what the world and our country are going through serious-

ly. This is primarily due to the lack of information provided to them.

Social distancing was not being enforced by staff while individuals continued to walk around making jokes about how it's all a hoax, and how it is not that serious. To be candid, a great deal of inmates at CRCC felt that because they were incarcerated, there was nothing to worry about. That was, until news reports of inmates testing positive for the virus at Monroe Correctional Complex (WSR), then it became a real concern.

Whether people know it or not, there are a lot of individuals serving time in prisons who have a great deal of underlying health issues, and anyone who has done a fraction of time knows that the medical systems in prisons are inadequate and insensitive to most patient's needs.

We, as Black men, are worried because it has been reported that the virus has a greater effect on the African-American population. This alone has some of the "brothers" at CRCC feeling like they may not make it to their release date. Even worse, losing a loved one, because this virus has zero respect for name, age, gender, religion, or status. With the understanding that no one is exempt there are individuals who are now taking the much needed precautions to stay safe.

Correctional Industries' staff members are implementing the necessary safety measures to ensure that staff and inmates alike are practicing social distancing and are properly washing their hands. Every morning, before work, workers are asked if they are experiencing a sore throat, cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Their temperatures are then taken before they are allowed to go to work.

Currently, (we) are on what is called a modified lockdown, which has been revised several times. This is a way to avoid a massive outbreak, while providing inmates with an avenue to communicate with their families, and avoid

"cabin fever". Posters of social distancing and how to implement it, have been posted all over the institution in hopes of educating people about the importance of keeping a healthy distance from each other. Visitor and Volunteer access has been prohibited. And despite all of the efforts, there are still people at CRCC who are completely misinformed.

There are daily conversations between inmates and staff concerning who is more at risk of infecting the other. Staff claims that because of our visitors to CRCC, inmates could potentially be carriers of the virus and infect them. While inmates feel, that since staff are the ones coming in from the outside community, the likelihood of them infecting the inmates is much greater. Because of those extremely different perspectives, both sides feel that it's okay to socialize among themselves, and only apply social distancing when it comes to the opposite side.

This lack of knowledge creates and perpetuates` an atmosphere of confusion, distress, resentment, anxiety, and indignant behavior. Which raises the questions: What are Governor Inslee's and the justice system's plan to get ahead of this epidemic? Along with that, what are they doing to prevent a massive outbreak within the institutions?

Inmates are in constant fear and uncertain of their future wellbeing. Perhaps DOC can allow inmates to transfer their savings to their loved ones who are in need of financial help. DOC can also take the necessary precautions needed by supplying inmates with appropriate PPE, and by following the recommendations provided by the World Health Organization. Rather than denying the efforts to support those who are in need, along with keeping themselves healthy.

We are in this together. It makes sense for us to work together. What are your resolutions?

Willie R. Holland Sr. #838113
CRCC BPC President/Facilitator



THE BLACK PRISONERS CAUCUS

Airway Heights

Dominique Booker

It was probably a few weeks before we all went on lockdown and the whole nation went on lockdown, somebody came back from work at Correctional Industries and came straight to me and said, hey man, you need to hear this, it's sounding pretty serious. This COVID-19 thing's pretty real. He said it sounds like we're going to go on lockdown. You might want to stock some food up. He said he saw a memo.

He's telling me all this. And when people come and tell me, I listen. I don't just push it off to the side as if it's not real. I take it seriously. So he tells me this and I told a few people. Most people said, aw ain't nothing going to happen, and the next thing you know, sure enough, he was right. We went on modified lockdown.

They cut off visitors. They minimized our dayroom time. They took away gym and yard almost completely at first. We all went to mainline dinner and lunch all separately, instead of going together like we usually do. They kind of shut a lot of stuff down immediately, then they started to release that a little, started letting us come out a little bit more, and started letting us get our yard and gym back, just with our unit. They've been changing things to try and see what works better.

The mood has changed a lot. We have a lot of people in here that are pretty worried about catching COVID-19 because we're

so close to each other. We're not really getting the social distancing space that we need. A lot of these guys are pretty level headed for the most part, but you hear worrying and complaining. Some are not taking it seriously.

For me, I know that with every negative there comes a positive. So, I know there's some good that could come out of this. I also look at the opportunity to get closer with my people and to take that seriously. I really want to be able to do that and to appreciate my freedom. Even inside of the prison, the freedom that we get inside of here, I've been trying to learn to appreciate that more because at any time it clearly can get taken away.

They've been talking about letting prisoners out and right now they're talking about only non-violent offenders. I get the community concerns, but for me, I feel like, with that kind of thinking, you're saying that people who have committed whatever crime, they don't matter. Like their families and their people don't matter. Only the people that committed a non-violent offense matter. When any of these guys could have committed a violent offense and just didn't get caught. There's a lot of stuff going on that we don't know about, but they only focus on what's on paper and not focusing on what's the real. A lot of people deserve the chance of either getting out or at least getting the kind of protection they need.

Jermaine Williams

I watch KXLY. I watch KREM 2. I watch KHQ. I watch all of them. All of the ones I have access to. Nationwide and locally. So, that's how I became exposed to it. In fact, I found out maybe 4-5 days before they actually notified us via kiosk message that there was a person here who had tested positive.

When this thing first broke, and when Seattle, specifically King County, was a hot zone, I didn't think that it was going to impact us, as far as the Black community, because we were not getting any numbers or information on how Black people were being affected.

The very first thing I recall them changing was the visitation schedule. And then from there, our senior living unit, which is K-Unit, went on a quarantine, where they were completely separated from everyone else. They couldn't mix with us. They couldn't go eat with us. Anything like that.

We still had our volunteer programs at that time. But then the next step, which was the next week, volunteer programs were canceled. And then religious service programs were canceled. And then education programs were canceled. And it's been that way since. The last step was us being confined to where you only operate and navigate with your unit, with the exception of your work program.

From what's being expressed, there is quite a bit of anxiety inside, there is quite a bit of frustration inside. People have actually vo-

calized their frustration. People have physically displayed their anxiety. There's a lot of suspicion, of course you have the conspiracy theorists always, but there is a lot of suspicion, because sometimes we wonder about the information that we are receiving. Whether or not they're telling us what they want us to know. If they're actually telling us the truth or if they're lying to us outright. So, there's quite a bit of anxiousness and anxiety. You also have some people who are downright terrified.

I'll be the first one to tell you that I have a concern about being inside. Initially, I didn't take it super serious. I didn't think it was a big deal. I felt like this was probably the safest place to be because all of the reports were getting said that no offenders have it, no inmates have it statewide. So, I'm like okay, we don't have anything to worry about.

But then, fast forward, and now it's like once staff people start testing positive, then I'm thinking about the fact that according to the CDC you don't even start showing symptoms until 14 days after you've contracted this thing. That's a cause of concern for me. Because if one of us gets it, I believe that because of the way that we interact with each other, a bunch of people are going to get it before it's all said and done.

The idea that we may not make it home to see our loved ones, as result of something that is completely out of our control, and on top of that, is something that is completely preventable.

OUR VOICES

“Normal” Is the Stockpiling of the Dead Bodies

By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels

(BlackCommentator.com) Americans await the return to “normal.” Neighbors announce eagerness to return to “normal,” and, I nod, pretending that everything rest in my maneuvering to put six feet between us, walking on.

Normal? What was “normal” before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

I’m the head-of-household in my apartment. Alone here with my aging 13-year old cat, I have a 62-year old sister living in Chicago. Neither her nor her son are in the best of health. Her husband died in 2017 from health conditions he suffered for many years. When there isn’t a great deal of income and Whole Foods money isn’t an option, then you eat what neighborhood grocery stores have to offer.

I have younger siblings and cousins, too. Seniors, in that they are all in their fifties. I lost a brother, a mechanic, almost four years ago to lung cancer, and two cousins. One was a nurse and the other a prison guard. Health issues, both. I have one cousin with asthma—serious enough for him to drive from Nebraska to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, seeking additional treatment. Two brothers suffer from hypertension.

When they where younger, my brothers worked for fast food establishments. Today, those in their fifties work in stressful service positions, stressful professional positions. Essential positions.

We siblings and cousins have long experienced the absence of parents and grandparents. Many years ago, some forty, thirty, twenty years ago, these older members along with aunts and uncles, died of complications to cancer or diabetes or heart conditions.

Migrating from Arkansas and Louisiana, during the Great Depression no less, our parents and grandparents arrived in northern cities to discover that life for African Americans wouldn’t be a whole lot better than down South. Living in the North had its own stresses, as Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. realized when he rented a flat on the West Side of Chicago back in the 1960s.

Not until months before my mother was diagnosed with cancer did she visit a hospital. I don’t recall her seeing a “GP.” The same for my father. I know one uncle at least, visited a doctor at the VA once he returned from serving 23 years in the Air Force. He ended his days in a nursing home.

But for the most part, on my maternal side of the family, folks seldom relied on the medical establishment; instead, they opted to seek medical service in my grandmother’s kitchen: a loose tooth was yanked on it enough, cold or runny nose was treated with cod liver oil, and an upset stomach received a table spoon or two of the “pink stuff,” Pepto-Bismol.

Cooking without salt, butter, lard, sugar—for starters, meant the pantry or the refrigerator needed to be restocked, even if full with the white packaging of bloody slabs of rib meat my father, a beef boner, brought home, every other Friday... I can’t imagine anything in their lives they would have considered “normal”—except that maligning level of stress that comes from being Black in America.

We are not necessarily a healthier generation. And our children aren’t either. And almost every African American knows another Black, a friend, neighbor, or co-worker suffering from diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, or cancer. Stress-related health issues are as pervasive as the long-term of lead is to residents in Flint, Michigan.

And yet, what a shock it was on April 9, 2020, for America to travel again to that perpetual “new” and “uninhabited” world only to discover people, and those people, Black and Latinx people, are dying of the COVID-19 at alarming rates. Is there disparity between us and them? And the network and cable pundits asked one another to explain? Please explain! What’s been happening?

The reality is that there’s racism and profits. That deadly ideology of white supremacy is what kills African Americans. The US capitalist can’t afford to pay for the health and well being of “free” African Americans!

(In the meantime, white Americans, during this COVID-19 pandemic, stockpiling guns and ammunition?)

Are you anxious? Suffering from anxiety? How would you rate your level of depression? Are you depressed?



Whenever I see my oncologist, I’m asked these questions by someone who, regardless of her youth, doesn’t expect any sassy response from an “ole Black woman.” So I look past the nurse, and, jokingly, suggest that it’s no more than usual! Ha ha ha!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), during the first month of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, 33% of Blacks were hospitalized, yet Black Americans consists of 13% of the US population. In contrast, 45% of white Americans were hospitalized with COVID-19 while whites make up 76% of the population. The Latinx population is at 18%, but 8% were hospitalized in the first month of the outbreak (Washington Post).

The impact of this pandemic within the African American and Latinx communities shouldn’t haven’t alarmed medical personnel, for example. How many of these patients, often with job-connected health insurance, suffer from stress-related illnesses? How many of these patients receive Social Security Benefits for underlying health problems? How many of these African American and Latinx patients are victims of policies fueled by an ideology of white supremacy? That last question is a bit tricky since most white Americans, regardless of their profession, would prefer not to think about “politics.”

More than 89% of Black and Latinx patients, however, suffer from underlying health conditions. Few want to talk about why, because to do so would be to think beyond the “normal” and engage in listening to Blacks and Latinx. But, in America, it’s so much easier to serve a corporate schedule of appointments, fifteen minutes and out! Next on the schedule!

That’s the “normal” in America.

The “normal” before COVID-19, for example, tracked by the CDC, showed the disproportionate number of Type 2 diabetes cases among African Americans to be alarming, indeed, “epidemic,” with some 4.9 million African Americans suffering from this disease.

It shouldn’t have been surprising that Black Americans have less access to healthcare. If there is a job, there might be health insurance. Or a Type 2 diabetic could just work two jobs or maybe three, so there’s just enough income to pay for shelter, food, and to purchase insulin! At any rate, as long as there’s a job offering health insurance, then there’s health insurance. No stress!

In Chicago, where Blacks make up 30% of the population, 70% of the population that has been hospitalized with COVID-19 are Black. It’s not just that health insurance is absent or minimal or linked to whether or not the patient remains on the job, but, according to Eugene Scott, writing for the Washington Post on the findings of the National Institutes of Health, hospitals within the Black community are not well funded, and many have been subject to closures.

On visits to Chicago, my birthplace, I noticed the expansion of the Northwestern University’s Medical facilities. Serving residents in the downtown area where Trump Tower and other high-priced condominiums are home to the wealthy, it has competition from the University of Illinois Medical facilities. Not to be outdone, on the South Side, the Hyde Park’s University of Chicago has expanded it’s campuses as well.

What makes possible all this expansion of expensive real estate, if not the mindset that considers the value of the lives of African Americans, Latinx, the economically poor and homeless of no worth? Why should the real estate industry worry itself with providing affordable and equitable housing for a population that has no voice and, therefore, no power (as in wealth)?

If African Americans lose employment or shelter or health insurance or all three at once—then what happens? Family? Often moving in with family members isn’t feasible, if, say, the brother is struggling to remain employed at a low-paying and unsafe job to stay indoors at night and have food at the table. Or, if the mother, who should have retired, is forced to continue working to afford the beta-blockers for her heart condition. Then it’s likely she can’t afford to feed an additional mouth or more for longer than a week or two.

And in a “normal” America, if you are below the poverty line, to lose shelter due to layoffs or gentrification is often the last straw. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, some 47% of all homeless people in the US are Black.

Most service employees can’t work at home, and most service employees are Black Americans and among the 20 million Americans who’ve filed claims for unemployment benefits. s.

Crazy! And it never ends...

No, in the “normal,” Black Americans aren’t listened to! Aren’t heard! Black Americans appear on the peripheral of “We the People,” servicing a system rigged to maintain the “normal.” ...And our silence too! That’s the insidious irony of that “normal,” missed by Americans who think they benefit from it’s deliberate dysfunction.

For decades, African Americans have struggled to break through the imposition of silence. Yet, on top of everything else, Blacks have had to contend with, living in the dysfunctional “normal,” Blacks are reminded often to censor themselves so as not to appear threatening to a system that doesn’t care if they die by the droves.

Subject to micro-aggressive behavior of white supervisors, co-workers, neighbors, store clerks, or the children’s teachers, some of African American and Latinx are driven to over eating, over smoking, over drinking—exacerbating congenital and chronic health problems. Racism is simply a matter of opinion--"your opinion!"

For many in the African American and Latinx communities, the wellbeing of white Americans becomes a job in itself! How to stay one step ahead of frightening white neighbors or co-workers or store managers? Or law enforcement...

Circulating on the Internet is a video showing a white police officer stopping his vehicle across from a van that is open in the back, exposing what appears to be hospital equipment. Gowns and masks. There are some items on the ground near the van. A man is packing this van, but he’s interrupted. He must take note of the officer approaching him—with handcuffs. Only seconds have passed! Just as the man reaches the police car, he turns to call up to his wife, who appears and begins talking to the police from the sidewalk.

There’s been a misunderstanding. Really?

This scene is just like before, in the “normal,” for the young man in handcuffs is a Black American. In fact, he’s a doctor, on his way to supplying the homeless with necessities to survive COVID-19 while living on the streets—in America!

The narrative, “we’re all in this together,” contradicts the “normal” Americans so eagerly await.

I can’t imagine most Americans were disturbed by the “alarming” news that so many African Americans and Latinx have been stricken by the COVID-19 virus. The underlying health condition in America is that those dead bodies forced many to remember their white privilege—it can be so “normal” to believe it’s natural, if not divine.

Even if the economy hasn’t been beneficial to 99% of their population, nonetheless, they await it’s return to “normal.”

Normal? If only America could move past what counts as normal!

Lenore Jean Daniels, PhD is a BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member and Columnist. She has a Doctorate in Modern American Literature/Cultural Theory. To contact Dr. Daniels and BC, e-mail chesimba2012@yahoo.com or BlackCommentator@gmail.com.

OUR VOICES

The Role of the Black Church During a Pandemic

By Pastor Jamal Bryant

Senior Pastor, New Birth Missionary Baptist Church (GA)

NNPA NEWSWIRE - I recently came across an article on NewsOne.com that highlighted a furor on several social media platforms regarding whether wealthy pastors are contributing enough to COVID-19 relief efforts.

Admittedly, some of the social media memes and tropes were amusing and of course, some were outright mean-spirited, sophomoric and disrespectful, but that's the complex mosaic of the social media space and if you're in the public square at all, you have to be able to stomach the bitter and the sweet.

As I processed the article and the dialogue it generated, my personal and pastoral PTSD was kicked into overdrive recalling the pummeling my church (New Birth) and I took just a few weeks earlier when we announced that we'd formulated a partnership with a telemedicine firm and a community health clinic to provide coronavirus testing to our community.

Without bothering to do any due diligence, we were labeled as "opportunists," "vultures," "ungodly" and worse.

And while it is always painful to be insulted and castigated, it hurts even more when it's the African American community leading the campaign of misinformation. Of course, New Birth and I were confident in our intent and execution of the testing initiative and fortunately, local affiliate CBS 46, cleared the issue up nicely and we're moving forward.

Rather than get lost in trying to salve healing wounds, I believe our focus should turn to the larger question of what exactly the role of the church should be, not only in this season of a global pandemic but as the core societal anchor of the African American community.

I've preached many times that 93 percent of what Jesus did was outside of the walls of the church as he healed, fed, evangelized and organized.



Admittedly, if you were to honestly assess the 21st century church, that dynamic has been completely flipped. Far too many churches and pastors are concerned with what happens inside of the building and not concerned or active enough with affecting the greater community, and those who need to be ministered to beyond the opulence and comfort of gleaming wood floors and the immaculate stained glass.

We indeed have a conundrum. Should the church be doing more? Yes; and if you look closely many churches are doing plenty.

I am blessed to pastor at New Birth, where we have the capacity and more importantly, an engaged, committed church family who take seriously our mandate to love, lead and live like Christ. Our goal is to be a church that does 93 percent or more of our ministry beyond the walls of our beautiful sanctuary.

In a little over a year, we have provided meals for fur-loughed federal workers; we have provided 5 000 pairs of free shoes for school-aged kids in the DeKalb/Atlanta community; we have bailed out first time, nonviolent offenders; and married 30 couples free of charge in two mass weddings. Even as we are all in the chaos and calamity of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have decided that even if church has stopped, ministry doesn't.

Consequently, we are providing free groceries to 1000 families each week and we have entered a partnership with local hotels to provide free lodging and meals to our beleaguered doctors, nurses and allied health professionals.

This is the work of the church and it is not only having a major impact in the community; it is helping to attract souls to Christ and members to our church. To God be the glory for over 300 new members who have joined New Birth since we suspended our in-person worship a month ago.

I am proud of what we are doing at New Birth but there are plenty of other churches who have stepped up in a major way even if they are less heralded, barely noticed and never celebrated.

It is disheartening to see so much misinformation gain momentum and to see the church chastised and rebuked in haste and seemingly at will.

The church is needed now more than ever and as we emerge from this recent Easter holiday, I am praying for my comrades of the gospel and I am hopeful that we as a people will be less antagonistic towards the body of Christ and that God will resurrect our hopes, restore our compassion and revive our love and interdependency on one another.

These times are challenging, stressful and unprecedented; it calls for all of us to raise our game and our consciousness in the hopes that we will emerge as a stronger, better connected community.

The World of Black-Owned Businesses and Entrepreneurs Has Lost its Greatest Champion

By Marc H. Morial

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - As the nation's preeminent civil rights organization dedicated to the economic empowerment of Black people, the National Urban League shares a mission with Black Enterprise magazine and its late founder and publisher, Earl G. Graves, Sr.

Founded in 1970, Black Enterprise has helped to launch and nurture the careers of two generations of African American professionals and innovators. Earl Graves was not just a chronicler of Black businesses and entrepreneurs, but a leader, and a role model for excellence in his own right.

Graves' partnership with and support of the National Urban League was extensive and influential.

Graves' devotion to his three sons, Earl Jr., John and Michael, was a large part of the inspiration for the National Urban League's Male Responsibility Campaign. The initiative, launched in 1985 by then-president John Jacob, was designed to educate young men about the importance of a father in a child's life.

The following year, Jacob and Graves teamed up to persuade a national hotel chain, the frequent host of Black-themed conventions and meetings, to expand its advertising into Black-owned media.

Born in 1935 to West Indies immigrants, Graves was seized by the entrepreneurial spirit early in his life, selling Christmas cards door-to-door in his Brooklyn neighborhood at the tender age of 6. His father's struggle to move beyond blue-collar employment, despite a high school diploma, was a motivating force as he pursued a college education. He graduated in 1957 from Morgan State University, whose business school now bears his name.



Earl G. Graves Sr.

Graves served two years as an officer in the Army, then worked in various jobs before joining the presidential campaign of Lyndon Johnson in 1964. The next year he was appointed to the staff of U.S. Senator Robert F. Kennedy, for whom he worked until the senator's assassination in 1968.

He started Black Enterprise with a \$250,000 loan, and turned a profit in a remarkable 10 months.

"Black Enterprise was just a modest magazine when I founded it," he said. "Just me, a few brave advertisers like Pepsi, ExxonMobil and General Motors; and a small but spirited staff. And one other person who did just about everything there is to do to put out a magazine—my wife, Barbara."

"I feel that a large part of my role as publisher of Black Enterprise is to be a catalyst for Black economic development in this country. When I can act as an instrument to make it happen for legitimate and reasonable people, I do it. I try to be helpful and put people together, whether it's finding a candidate for a trustee position at Howard University or reaching out to the CEO of Motown Records to save a company that was at the forefront of black economic development in the early days."

— Earl G. Graves, Sr.

Over the years, Graves served on the boards of some of the nation's most influential corporations, including American Airlines, Daimler Chrysler, and Federated Department Stores. His endorsement of Barack Obama in the pages of the magazine was considered pivotal in Obama's victory.

Graves demonstrated an almost perfect combination of intelligence, ambition, tenacity and passion in his career and in his personal life. His influence can be seen everywhere from the humblest small businesses to the c-suites of the nation's most influential corporations.

The Urban League Movement extends its deepest sympathy to his children and grandchildren and all who loved him.

Earl G. Graves Sr., founder of Black Enterprise magazine and author of "How to Succeed in Business Without Being White," died from complications of Alzheimers on April 6 at a care facility in White Plains, N.Y. He was 85.

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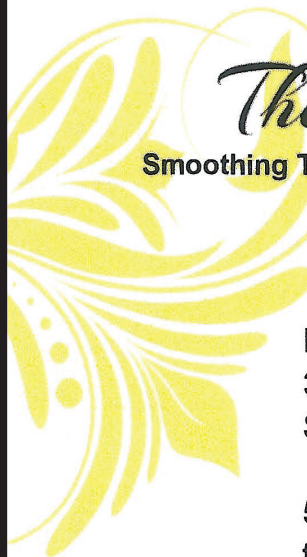


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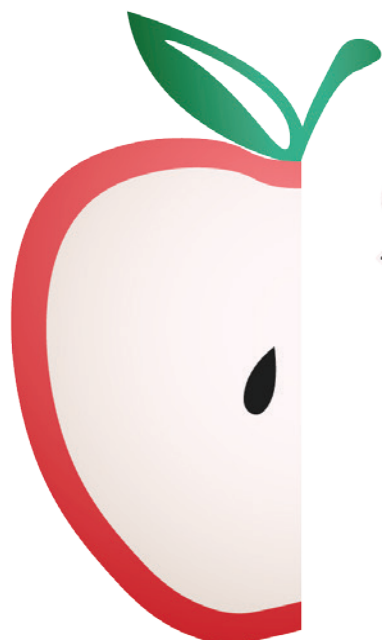
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