

HAPPY JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY

June 2019

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Spokane's Black Community News Source

THE BLACK LENSTM SPOKANE

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Jerrelene Williamson Inducted Into Spokane Citizen Hall of Fame

The 2019 Citizen Hall of Fame Awards were held at the Downtown Public Library on Wednesday, May 1, in a ceremony that honored a new batch of inductees into Spokane's Hall of Fame. Longtime residents, Jerrelene Williamson and Pastor Happy Watkins were both recognized during the ceremony.

Through a public nomination process where individuals have the opportunity to submit nominations that are reviewed by a ten member selection committee, the Spokane Citizen Hall of Fame Awards, which are sponsored by the Spokane Library Foundation, recognizes individuals in the community who have made significant achievements to the quality of life and development of the city of Spokane.

Awards were first presented to four Historic Inductees, Ruth Sampson Ayers, Ina & Eric Johnston, Dr. John Moyer and Ed Tsutakawa, followed by honors for individuals in the areas



of Arts & Letters, Economic Development & Business, Education, Innovation & Leadership, and Public Service & Philanthropy.

Jerrelene Williamson, was honored with the the Community Impact Award, which was created by the library foundation to honor contributions from in-

dividuals that don't fit neatly into other nomination categories.

Williamson, whose father was born in Spokane in 1899, was a founding member of the Spokane Northwest Black Pioneers. She is also an author, who penned the definitive book on Spokane's African American history, titled *African Americans in Spokane*, which is available for check out in the Spokane library.

Because of Williamson's tireless efforts to preserve the images and artifacts of Black Spokane, that often unknown and unspoken history has been shared in newspapers, magazines, museums, libraries, schools and universities, as well as on local and national television.

Williamson has also received many honors for her efforts. She was included on the Wall of Fame at her alma mater, Rogers High School.

Continued on Page 11

Congressional Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Examine Disparities that Impact Black Men and Boys

By Jane Kennedy

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Nearly five years after Daniel Pantaleo, a New York City policeman, recklessly choked Eric Garner to death, he is just now facing prosecution at a disciplinary trial that may—or may not—lead to his firing. The officers who stood idly by during the incident that was just one of a series of needless police killings of African-American men and boys, will likely not have to pay for their inaction.

It is this casual disregard for the safety and well-being of Black males that led Congress-

woman Frederica S. Wilson (D-Fla.) to create the Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys Caucus. Co-chaired by Reps. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.), Cedric Richmond (D-La.), and Lucy McBath (D-Ga.), the caucus publicly introduced at a press conference last week legislation to establish an advisory body that will examine the societal inequities that adversely affect this demographic.

They were joined by several other lawmakers, representatives of national organizations, and Tracy Martin, father of slain teenager Trayvon Martin. Continued on Page



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ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

The Power of Knowing Where You Came From



On May 17, I had the privilege of attending the 30th anniversary celebration for the NATIVE Project. For those of you who are not familiar with them, the NATIVE project, which stands for Native American Treatment InterVention Education, provides medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, patient care coordination, wellness, and prevention services for both Natives and Non-Natives in the Spokane community.

The facility, which is located on Maxwell Avenue in the West Central neighborhood, and that is expertly managed by CEO Toni Lodge, was started from a mere \$100. It now has a budget that numbers in the millions. And while that is impressive, to say the least, for me what is even more impressive is the profound impact that the NATIVE project has had and is currently having on American Indians in this area.

I have known Toni Lodge since the 90s, and I have always had great respect for her and for the way in which she fiercely and relentlessly fights for and advocates on behalf of her people. The two of us have joked in recent years about being old war horses, always viewed as angry, who have been in this battle for much longer than I think either one of us would care to admit. There are not a lot of people that I hold in high esteem. Toni is one of those people.

In fact, to be honest, much of what I have tried to do in and for the Black community of Spokane has been in many ways modeled after the effectiveness of the work that I have seen Toni doing in her own community.

The value of that hard work and dedication was made even more evident to me as I stood in the Great Room of the NATIVE Project last month, watching as young and old, elders and children, staff and community members, descendants of the indigenous people whose land we were standing on, were all gathered together in community. Laughing. Talking. Dancing. Eating. Being. Together.

At one point the announcer brought up two young girls. I'm not good at guessing ages, but both looked like they were in elementary school. As the young ladies began speaking, they first each recited their lineage. Their parents. Their grandparents. Their great grandparents. The tribes they belonged to. The lands they were connected to. It was a powerful moment for me.

I thought about how hard Native people have fought to hold on to their history and identity and to their traditions in a country that has tried so hard to erase them from existence. I thought about the pride that I heard in those young girl's voices as they spoke, and what it must do to your psyche, to your sense of well-being, to recognize and understand and be connected to from whence you came.

And then in contrast, I thought about the Black community and of our children. I remembered a young Black boy that was in my class when I was a 4th grade teacher in Los Angeles. I had asked the students to do a report on their ancestors and where they were from. They were to talk to their parents and their families and then present their findings to the class. My goal was to help them connect to their history and to their lineage. The white students came back excitedly talking about Europe and Canada. The Latinx students excitedly talked about Central and South America. The Asian students excitedly talked about China, Japan and Korea. The young Black boy was not excited at all. He talked about Texas.

Black people have been taught that our story started here, in this country, not beyond its borders. We have been taught that the totality of our lineage is contained in the images of shackles and chains and nooses. Why would a young child want to recite that history or be excited to share it? If I want my daughter to know who she is, to be connected to where she truly came from, and like those two young girls, to stand up proudly and declare to the world what her place in it is, then I have some work to do. I think we all do.

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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SPokane

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All Ages Dance 6:00pm - 10:00pm

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BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Taraji P. Henson To Host Summit On Black Mental Health

Source: News One Staff, newsone.com; Photo: IMDB

Actress Taraji P. Henson, star of Fox television's "Empire", is continuing her push to spread awareness about mental illness within the Black community.

According to People Magazine, Henson is organizing a two-day mental health summit through her nonprofit the Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation. "Mental illness is a huge issue in the Black community. The suicide rate of young people has doubled in the last 15 years, this is a national crisis," Henson said.

The BLHF Conference, which is being called "Can We Talk," and will take place from June 7-9 in Washington DC, will provide an opportunity to exchange ideas around normalizing the conversation of mental illness in the African-American community.

Over two (2) days, 350-400 attendees will meet like-minded professionals and leaders with similar goals, learn the latest research and strategies towards addressing mental health issues in the Black



community, and explore topics of the African-American experience on a broad spectrum.

Therapists, social workers and counselors, medical doctors, thought leaders, researchers, influencers and policy makers on the front line of cutting edge work in the field, will come together to collectively identify national trends that have been barriers to mental health treatment in the Black community, discuss strategies to end mental health stigma, and seek pathways to combine research and resources in order to support those who seek help.

For more information, visit: <http://www.canwetalkevent.com>.

Billionaire to Pay off Student Loans for all 400 2019 Graduates of Morehouse College

By Frederick H Lowe
Special to the Trice Edney News Wire from NorthStarNewsToday.com

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Black billionaire Robert F. Smith has awarded the class of 2019 at Morehouse College for Men a gift graduating seniors and their parents won't ever forget.

Smith, founder and chair of Vista Equity Partners and a philanthropist, announced that he would pay off student loan debt for all of the 400 2019 graduates, which is estimated to be \$40 million.

"My family is going to create a grant to eliminate your student loans," Smith told seniors during Morehouse's 135th Commencement address. "You great Morehouse men are bound by only the limits of your conviction and your own creativity."

After he made the announcement, students chanted "MVP"

Morehouse College was founded in 1867 in the basement of Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia. The school moved to Atlanta in 1885. Well-known graduates include



filmmaker and actor Spike Lee, actor Samuel L. Jackson, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Forbes estimates that Vista has assets of \$5 billion, making Smith the wealthiest African-American man in the U.S. Along with Warren Buffet and Bill and Melinda Gates, Smith is part of a group of American billionaires committed to dispersing their wealth to improve the lives of others. Smith urged graduates to help others.

Smith's decision to pay off the student loan debt followed his earlier announcement that he would donate \$1.5 million to Morehouse.

Liberian Refugee & Mayor Runs for Montana Senate Seat



(Source: Akela Lacy, theintercept.com; Michael Woodel, helenair.com; photo: Twitter)

Wilmot Collins, the first and only Black mayor in Montana state history, will seek the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate, running against incumbent Republican Steve Daines, as reported by the Intercept.

Wilmot fled Liberia's civil war, which took the lives of two of his brothers, arriving in the United States in 1994. Twenty-three years later, he defeated incumbent Jim Smith by 51% of the vote to become Mayor of Helena Montana. Smith had served or 16 years.

In making his announcement, Wilmot tweeted, "They say it could never be done. A Liberian refugee elected to office in Montana. Let's prove them wrong again."

Helena's Independent Recorded reported that the Montana Republican Party sent out a fundraising email following Collins' announcement, calling Collins a "media sensation" and "nothing short of a DREAM candidate for Montana Democrats" and claiming he would be "a rubber stamp for the far-left's radical agenda" in Washington.

Harlem Street Renamed to Honor Ruby Dee & Ossie Davis



Source: NY Amsterdam News, amsterdamnews.com; photo: Facebook; Photo Ruby Dee Place and Ossie Davis Way, Bill Moore)

As reported in the Amsterdam News, the late acting and Civil Rights couple Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis were honored in April with the renaming two Harlem New York streets;123rd Street is co-named after Ruby Dee and Saint Nicholas Avenue is co-named after Ossie Davis.

Dwyer Cultural Center hosted the ceremonial unveiling of the newly named streets, Ruby Dee Place and Ossie Davis Way, which was the culmination of a three year process that was spearheaded by the center's Executive Director, Minerva Diaz to recognize Dee and Davis careers that spanned decades.

The couple's children, Nora Day, Hasna Muhammad and Guy Davis, attended the street renaming ceremony. Amsterdam News reported that the children remarked that even though Harlem is changing, Dee and Davis' spirit remains in the community they cherished. "Coming here sometimes, you might not recognize the Harlem that mom and dad grew up in," Muhammad told the Amsterdam News. "What we need to do is have links to the past that will remind us about who the people were that built this neighborhood. Having their names on street signs will be visual representation of that."

Former New York City Mayor David Dinkins, Assemblywoman Inez Dickens, State Sen. Brian Benjamin and the Rev. Al Sharpton also attended.



Friends Open Black-Owned Movie Theater in Maryland



Source: Philip Lewis, HuffPost Black Voices, huffpost.com)

NextAct Cinema, the only Black-owned movie theater in the state of Maryland, opened on March 7. Owners Anthony Fykes and Robert Wright, who met while working at a healthcare company, told Huffing Post News that the response has been overwhelming.

The two friends connected over their love for movies and the catalyst for the movie theater was an invitation that Wright extended to Fykes to "check out his home theater". Fykes emarked that e wanted to duplicate the feeling of the home theater on a larger scale.

Fykes and Wright renovated the Pikes Theatre in Pikesville, Maryland, northwest of Baltimore, giving it a new look, with two small theater rooms that house 43 seats each and adding amenities like the ability for guests to order popcorn, a meal or wine from their seats.

According to the Motion Picture Association of America, the number of frequent African-American moviegoers soared from 3.8 million in 2015 to 5.6 million in 2016. However, many black communities across the country are "cinema deserts" and lack any movie theaters at all, much less any that are black-owned, according to the Huffington Post.

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Five Transgender Women Murdered-All Black

Source: Human Rights Campaign, hrc.org

In 2018, advocates tracked at least 26 deaths of transgender people in the U.S. due to fatal violence, the majority of whom were Black transgender women. These victims were killed by acquaintances, partners and strangers, some of whom have been arrested and charged, while others have yet to be identified. Some of these cases involve clear anti-transgender bias. In others, the victim's transgender status may have put them at risk in other ways, such as forcing them into unemployment, poverty, homelessness and/or survival sex work.

While the details of these cases differ, it is clear that fatal violence disproportionately affects transgender women of color, and that the intersections of racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia conspire to deprive them of employment, housing, healthcare and other necessities, barriers that make them vulnerable.

HRC Foundation's "Dismantling a Culture of Violence" report demonstrates how anti-transgender stigma, denial of opportunity and increased risk factors compound to create a culture of violence -- and provides

clear ways that each of us can directly make an impact to make our society a safer place for transgender people.

Sadly, 2019 has already seen at least five transgender people fatally shot or killed by other violent means. As HRC continues to work toward justice and equality for transgender people, we mourn those we have lost:

Dana Martin, 31, a Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Montgomery, Alabama, on January 6. Reports stated that she was found in a roadside ditch in her vehicle and pronounced dead at the scene. Daroneshia Duncan-Boyd, an Ala-



bama-based trans advocate, said that "she was a person that was loved by many."

Ashanti Carmon, 27, a Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Prince George's County, Maryland, on March 30. Few details are yet known about the crime, and the investigation is ongoing. "Until I leave this Earth, I'm going to continue on loving her in my heart, body,



Claire Legato, 21, a Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Cleveland on April 15. Local media reports that Legato was shot in the head after an argument broke out between her mother and the suspect. She was taken to a near-



by hospital and died from her injuries on May 14. Friends and family took to social media to mourn Legato's death, remembering her as someone who was "full of life."

Muhlaysia Booker, 23, a Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Dallas on May 18. Local media reported that Booker was found dead, lying face

and soul," said Philip Williams, Carmon's fiancé. "She did not deserve to leave this Earth so early, especially in the way that she went out."



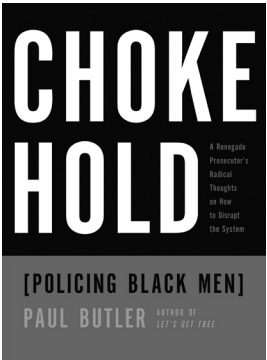
violence." Officers say that there is no indication as of this point that the April attack is linked to Booker's killing.

Michelle "Tamika" Washington, 40, a Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Philadelphia on May 19. Police responded to reports of shots fired in North Philadelphia's Frankl-



inville neighborhood, according to the Philadelphia Gay News. Washington, who was also known by the name Tameka, was found with several gunshot wounds and transported to Temple University Hospital, where she was pronounced dead. She is remembered by friends and loved ones as a beloved sister and "gay mother."

Arizona Prisons Ban 'Chokehold,' A Book About Racism In The Criminal Justice System



(Source: Ann Brown, moguldom.com; Bobby Allyn, npr.org)

The book Chokehold: Policing Black Men, which was written by Georgetown University criminal law professor Paul Butler, in 2017 to address the racism in the U.S. criminal justice system has been banned by Arizona prisons according to a story on Moguldom. Dr. Butler told The Associated Press that he was informed his book was banned due to its "unauthorized content."

In a letter to Butler's publisher New Press that was reviewed by NPR, they say Arizona officials argue the book is potentially "detrimental to the safe, secure and orderly operation" of prison facilities. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the right of prisons to ban books if it is to protect prison security, however the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has urged the corrections department to reverse the ban or face legal action.

NPR reported that last year, the ACLU called for an end to a ban of another book on the interaction of racism and the criminal justice system, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, by Michelle Alexander, which prison officials in states including New Jersey had boycotted. Corrections officials there later dropped the ban.

Arizona has one of the country's highest incarceration rates of Black men, according to the AP, with about 14.5 percent of Arizona's prison population made up of Black people, even though Blacks comprise only 5 percent of the state's total population.

Historically Black Fort Valley State University to Develop 107-Acre Solar Farm on Campus



(Source: Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, jbhe.com)

Historically Black Fort Valley State University in Georgia has announced that Georgia Power will develop and construct an 11 megawatts fixed-tilt solar generation facility located on the university's campus. The solar farm will cover approximately 107 acres of land owned by the university, controlled by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, and leased by Georgia Power.

The new facility will also serve as a research hub for Fort Valley State professors and students interested in building Georgia's energy future. The project will benefit the public by enhancing education, training, research, economic development, and stewardship of community sustainability. Additionally, students will be provided with hand-on experience with Georgia Power during the project's development and operation.

Dr. Cedric Ogden, a professor of agriculture engineering technology and an extension engineer at the university, will spearhead the new project. When completed, it will be one of the largest solar farms stationed on a United States college campus. In addition to research opportunities for faculty and students, the new facility will be used to engage local farmers and landowners through the university's Cooperative Extension Program. Extension participants will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities focused on nontraditional uses of their land and the feasibility of renewable energy. The solar farm is expected to begin generating electricity in mid-2020.

Designer Releases 3D-Printed Stamp to Put Harriet Tubman on the \$20 Bill



(Source: DeNeen L. Brown, washingtonpost.com; Photo courtesy Dano Wall)

Last month U. S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced that he would be delaying the replacing Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill with Harriet Tubman until 2028. The change had been announced in 2016 by former Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew. In response to Mnuchin's delay, the Washington Post reported that New York designer Dano Wall tweeted: "We'll see about that."

Wall, who according to the Washington Post said the more he learned about Harriet Tubman, the more impressed he was with her accomplishments and the more determined he was to get the bills with Tubman's face into circulation, created a 3-D stamp that can be used to superimpose a portrait of Tubman over Andrew Jackson's on \$20 bills.

Wall said he has been stamping as many \$20s as he can and encouraging others to do the same. "My goal is to get 5,000 stamps out there," he told the Washington Post. "If there are 5,000 people consistently stamping currency, we could get a significant percent of circulating \$20 bills [with the Tubman] stamp, at which point it would be impossible to ignore." Wall created a website to provide background information and instructions for making and using the stamp. He said he has sold out of the stamps and is hurrying to produce more. For information visit: <https://tubmanstamp.com>

YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

Juneteenth - June 19, 1865

Source: juneteenth.com

Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. This was *two and a half years* after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863.

The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops there to enforce the new Executive Order. However, with the surrender of General Lee in April of 1865, and the arrival of General Granger's regiment, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance.

General Order Number 3

One of General Granger's first orders of business was to read to the people of Texas, General Order Number 3 which began most significantly with:

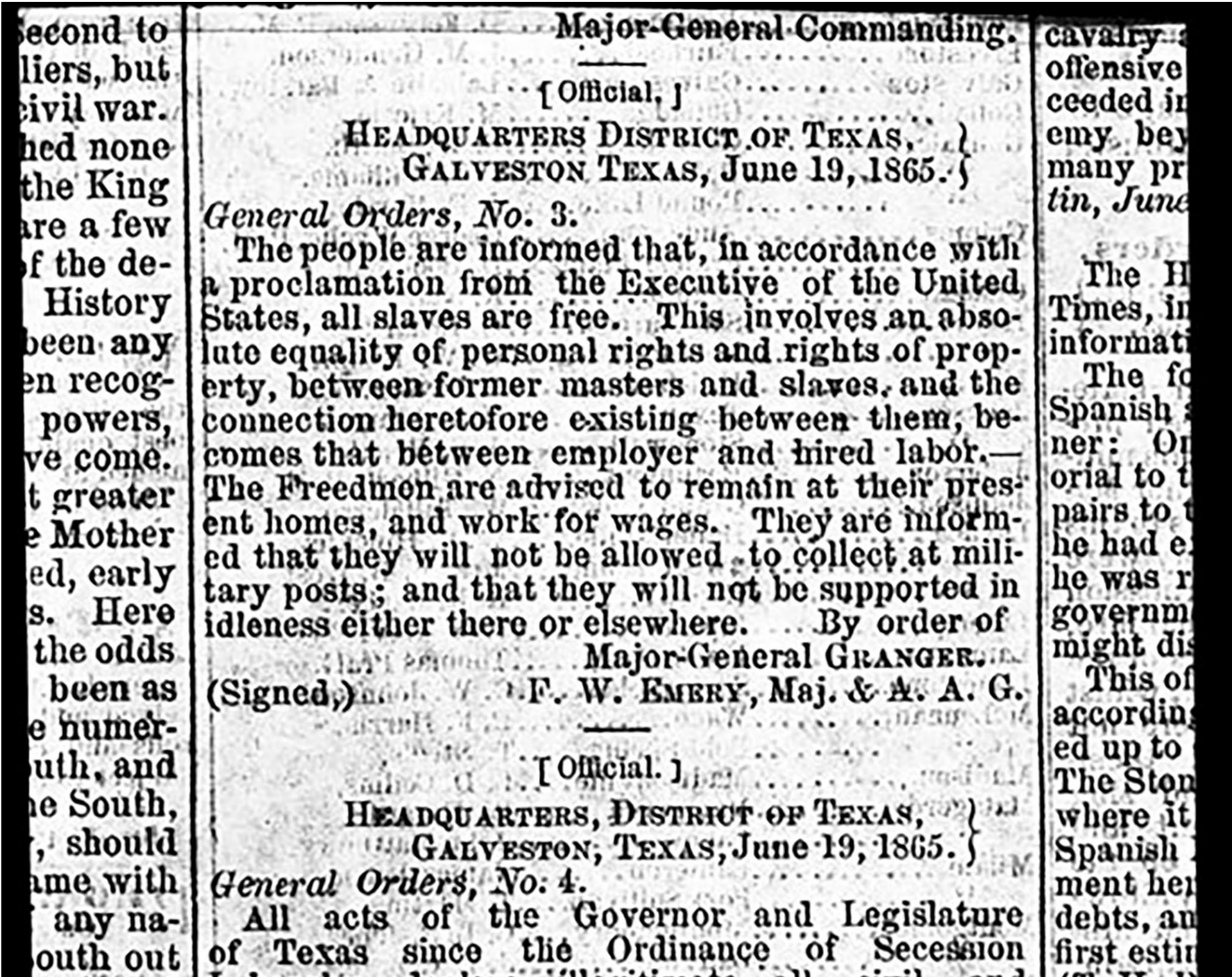
"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer."

The reactions to the news ranged from pure shock to immediate jubilation. While many former slaves lingered to learn about the new employer/employee relationship, many left before these offers were completely off the lips of their former 'masters' - attesting to the varying conditions on the plantations and the realization of freedom.

The celebration of June 19th was coined "Juneteenth" and grew with more participation from the descendants of slaves. The Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassuring each other, for praying with each other and for gathering remaining family members together. Juneteenth continued to be highly revered in Texas decades later, with many former slaves and descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on this date.

On January 1, 1980, Juneteenth became an official state holiday in Texas through the efforts of Al Edwards, an African American state legislator. The successful passage of this bill marked Juneteenth as the first emancipation celebration granted official state recognition. Edwards has since actively sought to spread the observance of Juneteenth all across America.

See page 24 for Spokane's Juneteenth Events.



Page from Galveston Tri-Weekly News, 1865; The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, 2006-2014.

NAACP

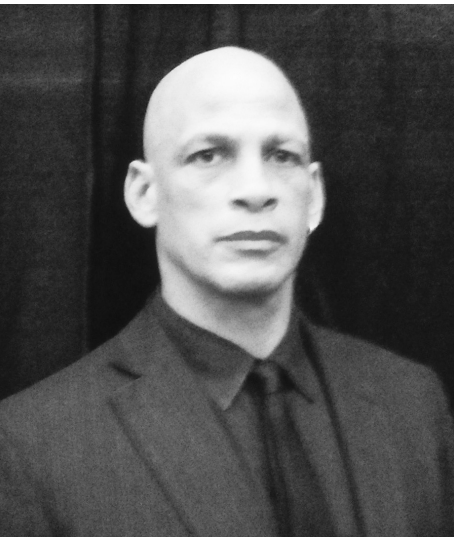
UPDATE:

NAACP

SPOKANE

1919

http://www.SpokaneNAACP.com



By Kurtis Robinson
President, Spokane NAACP Branch #1137

Greetings everyone,

Yes, That’s Right! Your Spokane NAACP Chapter #1137 turned 100 years old on April 14, 2019 and for many of us it’s already been a very wonderful, interesting and challenging year.

We started out this most important year with the Bail Project roll out at Gonzaga

University, with partners like the Gonzaga BSU, The Gonzaga Institute for Hate Studies, Power 2 The Poetry and many others.

We then received a proclamation from the Mayor of Spokane and City Council making April the official Spokane NAACP 100 year centennial celebration month. We proceeded to celebrate that proclamation and our chapter’s birthday at Calvary Baptist Church with a wonderful event and spectacular turn out.

Our intent is to have one more important celebratory gathering of this one hundredth year at the Northern Quest Casino from September 13th through the 15th with the Alaska Oregon Washington (AOW) state area conference coming to Spokane. Not only is this is an AOW election year, with the 2020 elections coming up, there are many local and national important conversations happening concerning criminal justice reform, jail populations, bail reform, de-escalation, the school to prison pipeline and racial covenants.

We expect our upcoming AOW state area conference event to be centered not only around these conversations, but also on

what solutions are possible and what actions can be taken.

More importantly we are still working to not only heal from the intergenerational trauma, the cultural resentment and the continued micro/macro racial aggressions and disparities that inundate so much of our American culture, but we are also striving to make sure that we celebrate our resilience and our determination. Not only to embrace how far we’ve come, but to also acknowledge how far we still have to go ... for ourselves, for our children and for our children's children.

With your local NAACP's dedication to those realities, I am happy to share with you that, for the first time ever, Superintendent Keys has given concrete approval to implement a Black Prisoners’ Caucus (BPC) at Airway Heights Correctional Facility. The intent is for this to take place not too long after the AHCC Juneteenth events and will be sponsored by myself, Lydia Barlow and Cassandra Butler.

We also continue to bring forth implicit bias trainings in a way that is actionable, practical and accountable, and to work

very closely with many of our community partners like SCAR, The Native Project, Center for Justice, NAIC, PJALS, GSP, SRLJC Racial Equity Committee, Empire Health Foundation, Spokane Alliance and JustLead Washington (to name a few), in order to ensure meaningful collaboration, accomplishment and fidelity in addressing the many challenges our impacted communities of colors are facing.

And as we enter into this Juneteenth month, I am compelled to not only remember what we celebrate but also why we celebrate it. That we have created our own affirming events because many of the mainstream holidays continue to carry the overtones and undercurrent of many of the things that our communities are still fighting to overcome, even in this age .

I have been absolutely honored to be the Spokane NAACP president during this centennial year. The great Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. said “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” I would add that, “without advocacy and accountability, injustice will continue to grow and thrive.” KR, 2019

Spokane’s Poor People Feel the Sting



By Devon Wilson
Criminal Justice Chair, Spokane NAACP

“For the fourth time in at least a year, Spokane police planted a bike outside Safeway grocery store at Mission

Avenue and Hamilton Street in northeast Spokane, hoping to bait people into walking away with an expensive new toy.”

This was the opening line of a Spokesman-Review article published in May. The article detailed an ongoing operation carried out by the Spokane Police Force where an expensive bike is placed in a low-income neighborhood (northeast Spokane experiences the highest poverty rate in the city) and officers wait for someone to steal it. The article created a cascade of questions in my mind. Most notably: why, how, and when?

Why would Spokane officers, who complained in a 2017 audit by Gonzaga University that the

community does not “trust the work they do” actively deceive members of the community in which they supposedly want to build trust? How does a department that is too understaffed to adequately address actual crimes with real victims have time to sit outside a grocery store all day?

Property crime is of course a real phenomenon that has harmed many people in our community. But we deserve better recourses. Public information campaigns that encourage the safe storage of items and organizations like neighborhood watch groups that promote cultures of shared community vigilance have been proven to strengthen security and reinforce solidarity.

It’s also important to note that our current criminal justice system is geared towards re-offense, not reform – over 80% of property offenders are arrested for a new crime. We should be steering those on the verge of committing a crime away from jail, not baiting them in.

Which brings us to the final question: When will Spokane demand that its police move towards healthier solutions and away from counterproductive and predatory practices?

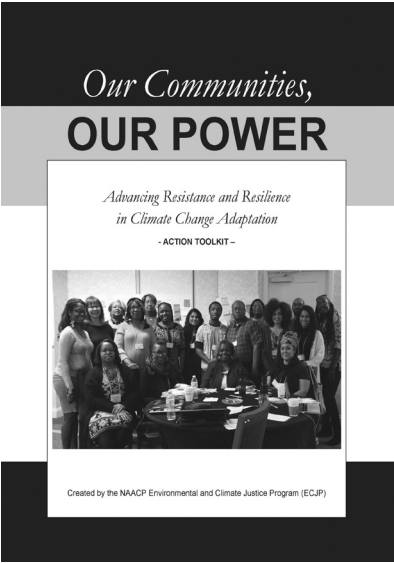
NAACP Releases Toolkit to Address Climate Change

(source: naacp.org)

On Tuesday, April 30th, on the steps of the Compton CA City Hall, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) released the *Our Communities, Our Power: Advancing Resistance and Resilience in Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit* and launched the OCOP Pilot site in Compton, California.

The toolkit and initiative equip communities with the information needed to implement projects related to building resilience to the impacts of climate change, with modules that include: Establishing Local Food Systems, Becoming Certified in Equitable Emergency Management systems, Improving Stormwater Infrastructure, Restorative Justice, Healing Justice, and more!

“Our communities must transition from a situation where we are on the losing end of too many socio-economic equations because of systemic inequities,” said Katherine T. Eglund, Chair, National Board of Directors Environmental and Climate Justice Committee. “Climate change impacts are already deepening the



marginalization that our communities face, and more is on the horizon. This is why this suite of tools for transformation is urgently needed.”

The Our Communities, Our Power: Advancing Resistance and Resilience in Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit can be downloaded from the NAACP website by visiting: <https://live-naacp-site.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Our-Communities-Our-Power-TOOLKIT-FINAL.pdf>

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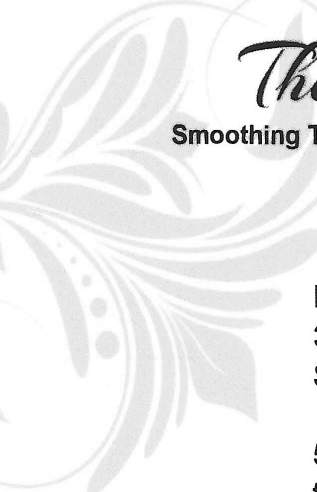
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Heads Up (Spokane)

By Kiantha Duncan

Overcoming Yourself.

I’ve always been a hard worker. I pride myself on hard work being a core value of mine. I learned early on to be steadfast, dedicated and committed to achieving my goals.

I’ve always kept hard work at the forefront of my mind. I fully understand that life gives us nothing but instead allows us to have the things we go after with persistence.

Based on being born into this world as a poor Black child with limited resources, my social -cultural identity dictated that there would be many obstacles that I would need to overcome.

Along with foster care, I was raised by my grandmother, who as far back as I can remember would give me sage advice about who to trust and who not to trust; where to go and where not to go; and who to stay away from as they might get in the way of my success. What my grandmother didn’t tell me was that, more often than not, I would have to get out of my own way. She also didn’t tell me that I could behave in ways that would make me responsible for sabotaging my own success.

I believe if we are honest, we can all relate to having been the obstacle in our own way at one point or another. We do this for many reasons and in many ways. Often times subconsciously.

My Achilles heel has always been procrastination. Now I will preface that by saying that the procrastination has always been a symptom of something bigger. There were times in my life that I feared what would happen if I didn’t complete a task properly, and believe it or not, I have also feared doing things too well, as that would

bring negative attention and judgment my way. I’ve learned that my procrastination was a covering for my own deep fears. Until I realized what was happening, I stumbled over the same stone over and over again.

Perhaps you’ve never considered that your behaviors and subconscious habits may be preventing you from accomplishing your goals after all. It’s much easier to credit something or someone external as the cause of your hardships or failures. I mean, who wants to be to blame for their own missteps?

Maybe you’re like me and share in the ability to procrastinate. Maybe you’re not a procrastinator but instead neglect to move towards your goals for fear of failure. Maybe you’ve stopped believing in yourself and instead of changing your situation you choose to live a fragment of the life you really want and deserve. I would be remiss to not tell you that it is very likely that the biggest thing you need to get over in order to be successful is yourself.

While my grandmother was right in telling me who to watch out for and how to move in this world, the thing I needed to know was that sometimes the “bad guy” in the story was me. My way of thinking and my own actions have caused me to suffer when gone unchecked. In hindsight, I can only imagine what I might have become had I not gotten in my own way so many times over the years. I believe there is so much more I could have accomplished had I learned this lesson earlier.

Now that I am aware of how I get in my own way and sabotage my own success, I continually work on ways to get over myself and course correct. When I catch



myself exhibiting negative behaviors, I do my best to check them immediately. This requires that I reframe my thinking.

Each of us have to develop your own strategies to being successful in this life. We must be willing to look at ourselves in the mirror and get honest about the behaviors that impede our success. The good news is that you too can course correct and reading this article is just the beginning. Search yourself and weed out any behaviors that sabotage your ability to live your best life.

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

#Black Girl Magic: Two Black Attorneys Free Seventeen Inmates

Source: *blacknews.com; Stacy M. Brown, theatlantavoice.com; Christianna Silva, MTV.com*

Two Black female attorneys, Brittany K. Barnett and MiAngel Cody, recently freed 17 inmates who were serving life-without-parole sentences for minor drug offenses. Barnett, who is founder of the "Buried Alive Project," and Cody, who is founder and lead counsel of the "Decarceration Collective", partnered to create the “90 Days of Freedom Campaign.” Each of the inmates who were freed, all first-time offenders, had their sentence commuted.

The *Buried Alive Project*, spearheaded by Barnett, is working to raise awareness and eliminate life without parole sentences for federal drug offenses that were handed down under federal drug laws.

The *Decarceration Collective*, led Cody and another African American attorney, Bella Bahhs, is a premier federal criminal defense firm and collective of lawyers, community organizers, and criminal justice policy consultants, that are all working "to dismantle a system that privileges prisons over people." The firm's mission is "to provide free legal representation to federal prisoners sentenced to life for drugs and to end the policies that put them there." They provide federal criminal defense, strategic communications and public relations counsel, serving individual, public and nonprofit clients throughout the United States.



The two women, who both left six-figure jobs and wiped out their savings accounts to do the work that they are currently doing, mostly for free, acknowledged the role that Kim Kardashian West played in providing funding for their project.

Barnett shared, "We attempted to get grants from these large foundations shelling out millions of dollars to other organizations but would not look our way because they so-called don’t fund “direct services.” Our hands were full picking locks to human cages, we didn’t have time to participate in glorified begging from the nonprofit industrial complex only to be turned down,” she said.

According to the Atlanta Voice, Barnett explained that Kardashian “linked arms with



us to support us when foundations turned us down.” She continued, “We and our clients and their families have a lot of love for [Kardashian] and are deeply grateful for her,” she said. “We need Kim’s support and the support of anyone else who wants to join this fight.”

MTV News reported that the collaboration between Barnett, Cody and Kardashian came after President Trump signed the First Step Act, "which aims to give inmates with good behavior, particularly those serving time for nonviolent drug offenses, the opportunity to shorten their sentences."

In 90 days, the two attorneys freed 17 people from life without parole sentences – the second-most severe penalty permitted by law in America. “Only two of us ... Pros-

ecutors opposed nearly every single case we had,” Barnett said. “We litigated our asses off in federal courts across the country. We won downward departures in most of our cases due to good lawyering,” Barnett continued. “People set to die in prison are now free. Our clients weren’t even on this selective list the Sentencing Commission sent out or on federal defenders’ radars. In fact, we have copies of letters federal defenders sent some of our clients telling them they weren’t even eligible for relief under the First Step Act – but we got them free.”

According to MTV News, The Sentencing Project reported that in 2016, 450,345 incarcerated people in the U.S. were serving sentences related to drug offenses – more than 10 times the number of people in the U.S. incarcerated for the same crimes in 1980.

The success of the 90 Days of Freedom campaign was limited, however, because there were so many who didn’t qualify.

As a result, the group is launching The Third Strike Project, according to Angela Wynn, media liaison at the Decarceration Collective. The goal of the project is to help “the hundreds of men and women left behind by the First Step Act’s limited legislative provisions."

"Our work is not done,” Wynn said in a statement to MTV News. “There are so many more we hope to save.”

Both the The Decarceration Collective and The Buried Alive Project can be found on Facebook.

Age for Sale of Tobacco and Vapor Products Raised to 21

There is a new law that impacts young people and the age they can buy tobacco and vapor products.

In April, Governor Inslee signed a bill raising the age for the sale of tobacco and vapor products from 18 to 21.

Washington is the ninth state to pass this type of legislation, which is effective Jan. 1, 2020. This change to state law is timely because new data showed that youth vapor product use doubled among eighth, 10th and 12th graders from 2016 to 2018 (from 15% to 30%).

Studies show this policy change will reduce youth use of tobacco and vapor products. It will also lead to fewer health issues and deaths from smoking and vaping.

If there are young people in your life who use tobacco or vapor products, talk to them about quitting. Give them the resources listed here.

If you aren't sure how to talk with them, visit Start Talking Now (starttalkingnow.org), a website with tips for how to talk with young people about drug use.

New resources:

- Washington State Quitline has a program for youth ages 13-17 who currently use tobacco or nicotine products. Youth can sign up by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW or going to quitnow.net/mve/quitnow. The quitline can provide private and judgment free support. A trained person will help youth start a plan to quit and help them stop for good.

Content
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- Truth Initiative® has a program to help youth quit vaping. This free text message program can give young people information about quitting. To sign up, youth can text "QUIT" to (202) 804-9884.

If you smoke or vape you can be a role model by quitting.

To learn more about quitting, visit Spokane Regional Health District's smoking cessation webpage at donemyway.org where you can find help to stop smoking and listen to stories from people who have stopped for good.

For more information visit donemyway.org, contact SRHD at healthycommunities@srhd.org or call (509) 324-1504.

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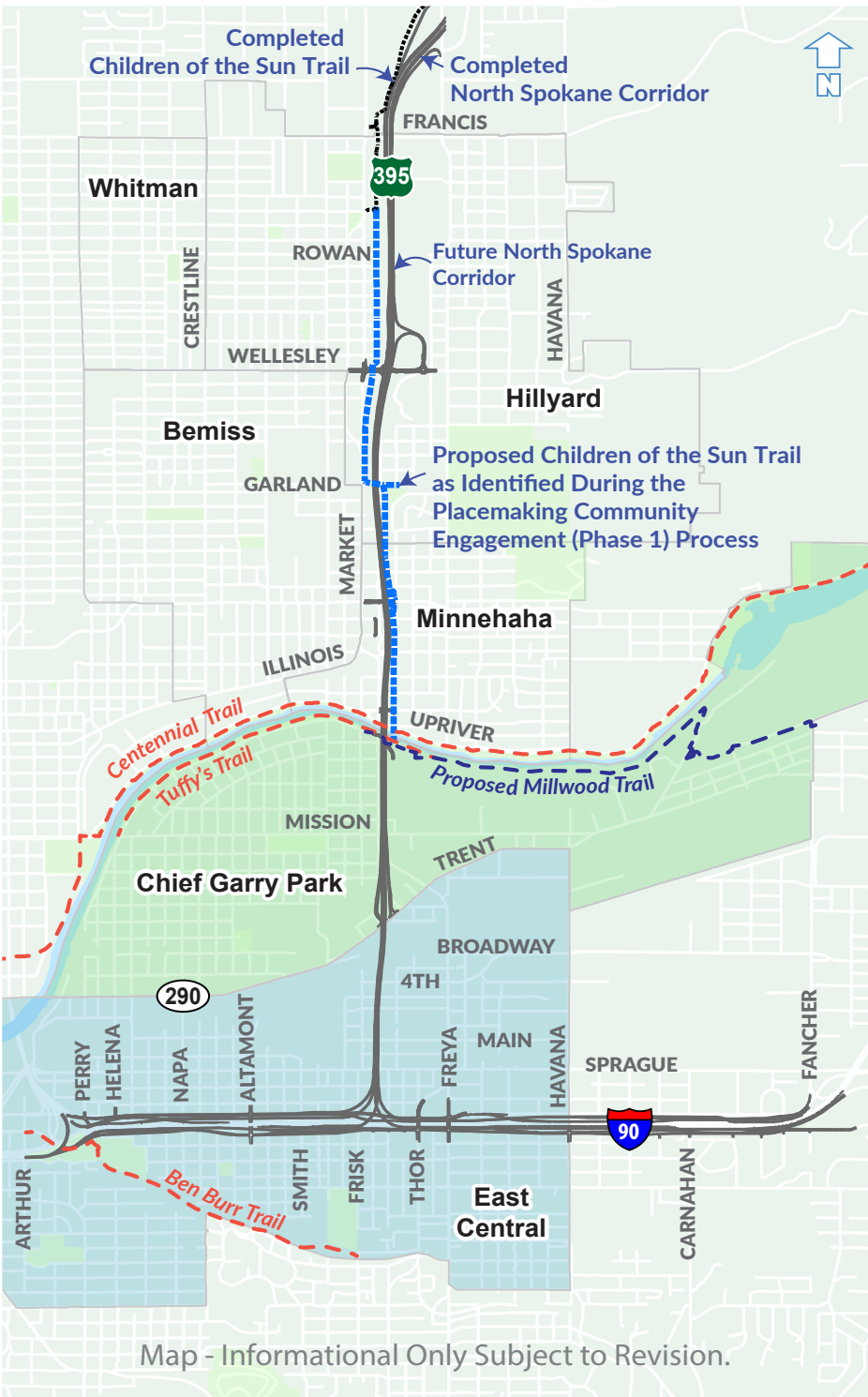


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COME PARTICIPATE

US 395 North Spokane Corridor and Children of the Sun Trail CHARRETTES

This is your opportunity to have a voice in identifying the Children of the Sun Trail route and potential placemaking opportunities in your neighborhood around the North Spokane Corridor.



What is a Charrette?
A charrette is an inclusive, interactive and collaborative workshop where community members can identify relevant issues and potential solutions for projects with community-wide significance.
Please join us at your neighborhood and Children of the Sun Charrettes.

CHIEF GARRY - NEIGHBORHOOD
SATURDAY / June 1, 2019 - 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Spokane Community College - Lair,
1810 North Greene Street, Spokane, WA

EAST CENTRAL- NEIGHBORHOOD
SATURDAY / June 22, 2019 - 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Southeast Day Care Center,
2227 East Hartson Avenue, Spokane, WA

CHILDREN OF THE SUN TRAIL
SATURDAY / July 13, 2019 - 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Sheridan Elementary - Commons,
3737 East 5th Avenue, Spokane, WA

Why have Charrettes for Placemaking and the Trail?
At these workshops you will explore relationships between “Special Places” in your neighborhood and the North Spokane Corridor along with Children of the Sun Trail, from the Spokane River south to the I-90 vicinity, in the Chief Garry and East Central neighborhoods.
The charrette process provides opportunities for you to share ideas and solutions for potential placemaking: spaces, features, access, alignments and activities, that can preserve, enhance, and create public spaces that promote people’s quality of life and well-being, in and around the North Spokane Corridor and Trail.

CHILD FRIENDLY
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DOORS OPEN AT 9:30 AM
PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US

Translation Information
If you need this announcement translated and/or translation during the charrette contact WSDOT Office of Equal Opportunity at 360-705-7090.
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Если вам необходимо это объявление и/или перевод во время семинара-обсуждения на русском языке обратитесь к Отдел по обеспечению равных возможностей WSDOT по тел. 360-705-7090.
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Nếu bạn cần thông báo này và/hoặc thông dịch viên hỗ trợ trong buổi charrette bằng tiếng Việt, liên hệ WSDOT Văn phòng Cơ hội Bình đẳng theo số 360-705-7090.

Title VI Notice to Public
It is the Washington State Department of Transportation’s (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT’s Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO’s Title VI Coordinator at 360-705-7090.
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information
This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equal Opportunity at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA (4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

For More Information Contact
Bob Hilmes, P.E. WSDOT Eastern Region Project Engineer (509) 324-6089 hilmesb@wsdot.wa.gov
Charlene Kay, P.E. WSDOT Eastern Region Planning Director (509) 324-6195 kayc@wsdot.wa.gov
Kerry Brooks, Ph.D. Eastern Washington University kbrooks@ewu.edu

For additional information see our Story Map:
NSCplace.com or Facebook @NSCplace



What is a Charrette?

You are being invited by the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to participate in a Charrette to discuss plans regarding the North/South Freeway project that is now underway. (See page 10). WSDOT would very much like to have participation from communities of color and other underrepresented community, but...

What is a Charrette?

A Charrette is an inclusive, interactive and collaborative workshop whose purpose is to identify relevant issues and potential solutions for projects with community-wide significance.

In other words, it is a facilitated conversation about an important issue. The goal is for everyone's voice to be heard. But in order for your voice to be heard, **you have to be in the room.**

WSDOT is engaging the community in the planning of unique community “places” that will be in and around the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) and the Children of the Sun Trail in the Chief Garry Park and East Central neighborhoods.

Your participation in the Charrettes and in future workshops is needed to ensure the outcomes are reflective, as much as possible, of the community’s collective and coordinated interests.

I hope to see you there!

Spokane Hall of Fame Awards

Continued From Page 1

Williamson was also honored with the prestigious Jefferson Award from the Seattle-Post Intelligencer, which has recognized community involvement in Washington state since 1977.

Pastor Percy Happy Watkins, who has long been considered the "Inland Northwest's Pastor", was nominated in the Public Service and Philanthropy category. Watkins, who arrived in Spokane in 1961, after being stationed at Fairchild AFB, is revered across the state for his annual rendition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's, "I have A Dream Speech." But his impact in the community goes far beyond that. Watkins is the two-time recipient of the "Inlander's Best

Spiritual Leader" award, as well as the 2018 recipient of the Civil Rights Award from the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations. Retired from New Hope Baptist Church in 2018, the lives that Pastor Watkins has touched over the year as he presided over countless wedding, baptisms and funerals, would be impossible to measure.

This year's ceremony was emceed by KXLY Northwest anchor, Robyn Nancy, and awards were presented by Andrew Chance, Executive Director of the Spokane Public Library and Ben Stuckart, Spokane City Council President.

To view the 2019 nominees and inductees, as well as past recipients, visit <http://www.spokane-library.org/chof>. Photos and honoree content courtesy Spokane Library Foundation.



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**Pastor James &
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Watkins**

Carl Maxey Center Annual Meeting

Non-profit organizations hold annual meetings to review the previous year's achievements, elect board members and disclose financial information. The Board of Directors for the Carl Maxey Center (CMC) held their very first Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 18. The purpose of the meeting, which was held in the Carl Maxey Center building on 5th Avenue in Spokane's East Central neighborhood, was for the community to get a report back and update on all of the exciting things that have been happening for the Carl Maxey Center over the past year.

Board President, Betsy Wilkerson, kicked off the meeting with a warm welcome and thank you to the community members, donors and supporters in attendance. She followed that with an introduction of the rest of the Board, Walter Kendricks (Vice-President), Terrie Ashby-Scott (Secretary), Curtis Hampton (Treasurer) and Wilhelmina Williams (member-at-large), who all have agreed to stay on for another year to guide the center through the remodel phase of the project.

Betsy shared the Board's vision and desire for the Carl Maxey Center to have a positive impact on both Spokane's African American community and on the East Central neighborhood. She then turned the meeting over to Sandy Williams.

Sandy, CMC 's Executive Director, began by offering background on the organization's history, sharing that Friends of the Black Lens (FOBL) incorporated as a Washington State non-profit in November 2017. The initial goal for the organization was to offer support and expand on the work that the Black Lens Newspaper was already doing in Spokane's African American community. However, it didn't take very long for the Board to realize that the need in the community was much greater than that.

With the support of the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund, who stepped in as fiscal sponsors, the Board's goal expanded to focus on uplifting, empowering and transforming Spokane's the African American community from the inside out, by addressing four key areas: Racial/Social Justice & Equity; Education & Advocacy; Business/Workforce Development & Economics, and Cultural Enrichment.

Accomplishing all of that, the Board felt, was going to take something that they didn't have, a dedicated place, a space of their own to create community infrastructure and build critical mass.

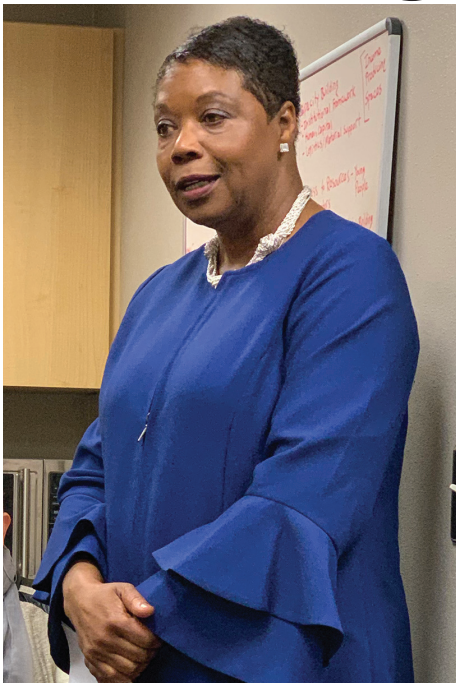
The Carl Maxey Center building had been sitting underutilized for a long time. Sandy shared that she drove past the for sale sign several times before taking the first of many walk-throughs in May of 2017.

She felt immediately what the possibilities could be and ultimately asked the real estate agent to let her know if a serious offer was received from someone else. That serious offer came in February of 2018.

Sandy shared that the Board had a decision to make. The owner was only willing to give them eight weeks to raise the money before accepting the other offer. After a good deal of deliberation, the Board decided to go for it and voted to launch a capital campaign to purchase the building.

While capital campaigns typically take months and even years to complete, with plenty of time built in for planning and strategy sessions, Friends of the Black Lens received their very first donation on June 22, 2018. Six weeks later, on August 3, 2018, they closed on the building, raising \$230,000.

Continued on Page 19



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JUNE 15
5:00PM to 8:00PM

Gonzaga University ROTC Presents CSM THOMAS E. WILLIAMS LEADERSHIP AWARD

On May 10, 2019, as a part of the Gonzaga University/Whitworth University United States Army Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) Commissioning Ceremony, Gonzaga University presented the CSM Thomas E. Williams Leadership Excellence Award to two graduating cadets, 2nd Lt. Andrew John Knox and 2nd Lt. Zachary Thomas Wall.

The CSM Thomas Williams Leadership Excellence Award, which was established in 1998, is given each year to senior Gonzaga ROTC Cadets who, throughout his or her tenure at Gonzaga, best exemplify the Army Values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

Command Sergeant Major Thomas Williams was a career soldier, who proudly served this nation and its young men and women for over fifty years. He enlisted at the age of fifteen years old on April 12, 1948, initially experiencing segregated all Black units, both at home and abroad.

CSM Williams went on to serve in Germany during the occupation, and on tours in Korea, Vietnam, Germany, California, South Carolina and Hawaii, serving active duty in the U.S. Army for thirty years.

His final tour of duty brought CSM Williams to Gonzaga University in 1973 to serve as the Senior Enlisted instructor and Department of Military Science's Sergeant Major at Gonzaga University, where he distinguished himself by training and preparing hundreds of young men and women for leadership roles in the United States Army.

CSM Williams retired from active duty in April 1978, but continued at Gonzaga University for another twenty years as the Department of Military Science's Civilian Personnel Technician.

According to those in the Gonzaga ROTC program, CSM Williams' years of service were marked by two tenets: "lead-by-example" and "the less you talk, the more you are listened to." In recognizing his contribution to the program, Williams was described as "a man of few words, yet a man of great action, who literally touched the lives of thousands of Gonzaga University students."

The award narrative describes how students flocked to the Sergeant Major, not only for his experience, but because he provided a "keen listening ear", and offered discerning words of wisdom when asked, "Mr. Williams, what do you think I should do?" His ability to offer "sage advice" and "treat all with respect and courtesy" was highlighted as well, not-



ing that his presence "served as the quiet confidence needed to those whose lives he touched."

After he retired, CSM Williams remained involved with the Gonzaga ROTC Bulldog Battalion until his passing on February 7, 2015. He proudly presented the award each year until he was no longer physically able.

His family has now taken on the honor of presenting the award on his behalf. His son, Rick Williams, and wife, Wilhelmina Williams, have presented the award in previous years. This year's award was presented by his daughter Sandra Williams.

The 2019 Commission ceremony marked its 70th anniversary and featured remarks from Thayne McCulloh, President of Gonzaga University, and Beck Taylor, President of Whitworth University, as well as a keynote address delivered to the fourteen graduating cadets from a former student of CSM Williams, Major General (Retired) Joseph Caravalho Jr., who now serves as the President and CEO of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine in Bethesda, MD.

Photos courtesy: Jerry Rolwes, Valley Chapel Photography



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**JUNE 13, 2019
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM
TAWANKA 215**

People needing accommodation should contact
bnicholson37@ewu.edu by June 7, 2019.

Africana Studies Program
Eastern Washington University
start something big

Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears

Power, Love and a Sound Mind



If the magnitude of fear, anger and hate in the world today were palpable, we would spend our lives walking through smog so thick that we couldn’t see more than a foot in front of us. Energetically, that poisonous fog is tangible and absolutely present in our collective psyche, and it does indeed render us incapable of seeing much beyond ourselves and our own self-interests.

There is psychological debate as to whether fear is always the antecedent to hate, but in the case of xenophobia—fear of that which is strange and foreign to us—fear of the other, I would say that is exactly the case.

To me, one of the most powerful scriptures in the Christian Bible, is in the book of Timothy: “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind.” That is the translation from the King James Version, the one with which I grew up. These days there are more translations of the Bible than I can name, but it’s enlightening to look at various interpretations of the very same scripture.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.” (Christian Standard Version). Sound mind becomes “sound judgment.”

“God’s Spirit doesn’t make cowards out of us. The Spirit gives us power, love, and self-control.” (Contemporary English Version). Here, sound mind becomes “self-control.”

And finally, “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” (New International Version). Sound mind becomes “self-discipline.”

I don’t judge any one of these as right or wrong. Each speaks to me in different ways, but “Sound mind” remains for me the most powerful, because it encompasses it all.

Fear can lead to Serious Psychological Distress (SPD). This is an umbrella term used to describe feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and restlessness that are bad enough to damage and diminish our mental capacities and our physical well-being. Such distress lends itself to bad judgment, and a lack of self-discipline (think substance abuse). Damaged people create dysfunctional families, communities and countries. Severe dysfunction can lead to behaviors and atrocities that lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and intergenerational trauma (e.g., slavery and its legacy in America).

What of power? Fear can make us feel threatened, so we seek ever-more power to give us the illusion of superiority. It’s an easy fall from there into abuse of power. Or our fears might lead to a sense of worthlessness so severe and permeating that we feel powerless. We may try and counter our fears by turning to anger. Unaddressed anger can become hate – hate of those we perceive responsible for our distress. It also becomes self-hatred.

Psychologist Bernard Golden believes that haters seek out connection and camaraderie with like believers. This fills a void in one’s identity. He describes hatred of individuals or groups as, “a way of distracting oneself from the more challenging and anxiety-provoking task of creating one’s own identity.”

Golden explains, “Acts of hate are attempts to distract oneself from feelings such as helplessness, powerlessness, injustice, inadequacy and shame. Hate is grounded in some sense of perceived threat. It is an attitude that can give rise to hostility and aggression toward individuals or groups. Like much of anger, it is a reaction to and distraction from some form of inner pain. The individual consumed by hate may believe that the only way to regain some sense of power over his or her pain is to preemptively strike out at others. In this context, each moment of hate is a temporary reprieve from inner suffering.”

Our response to fear can become an addictive behavior, or certainly unconscious behavior. From the standpoint of Spirit, our intentions and our actions must be in service to right-relationship with others, and with ourselves. Our power must be righteous power, not self-righteous power. I’ve never been in any 12-Step Program, therefore I can only speak as an outsider, but the core principles as I understand them resonate with me, because they have universal application.

Step One of the 12-step program is: “We admitted we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.”

For me my powerlessness is an illusion born out of my very limited egoic-self. Our egoic-self is the biggest scaredy-cat of them all. It wants to control EVERYTHING, because it believes only through absolute control of the situation can it avoid pain. If it feels threatened, it defaults into protection mode. Good judgment is buried. Our egoic-self hates feeling powerless, and therefore rails against accepting its powerlessness, often seeking to alleviate the psychic pain by any means necessary.

Step Two: “Came to believe a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” Step Three: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand God.”

Our egoic-self is absolutely necessary, particularly in our younger years, but there comes a time when it must take a back seat in service to something that is infinitely greater than it—it must humble itself in service to the Divine Transcendent.

Step Four: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” Step Five: “Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

The path to righteous power lies in deep and honest self-inquiry. The minute we name our fear-driven behavior, we are already bigger than it is. God, as the Transcendent Spirit of the Cosmos, and the Divine within ourselves is our deepest and truest witness. Telling another human being begins to lighten the burden of shame.

Step Six: “We’re entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” Step Seven: “Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.”

Because my concept and image of God is not anthropomorphic (*having human characteristics*), I find the language of having God remove our shortcomings difficult, but I do be-

lieve in letting go and laying our fears and actions at the altar of Mystery. True healing and transformation will never come from the level of our egoic-self. Paraphrasing what Albert Einstein said many times in many contexts, no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.

Step Eight: “Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. Step Nine: “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Reaching out to the people our fear-driven behavior has harmed and seeking reconciliation is perhaps the hardest of all things to do. It’s where the rubber meets the road. It’s a sign of true intention. I’ve written about reconciliation before in the context of America’s African slave trade. Healing the festering wound that is the legacy of slavery in America must entail owning responsibility and confessing that original sin and its grievous consequences directly to the descendants of the those enslaved.

Step Ten: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.” Step Eleven: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for the knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out.”

Again, the language here is difficult for me, but the principle is sound. We can never stop engaging in deep, personal and honest self-inquiry through prayer and meditation. Never stop acknowledging that we frequently fall short of the mark, and never stop the regular practice of surrendering our egoic-self to that which is both greater than us and lives within us.

Step Twelve: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

There’s a wonderful book by author, spiritual prophet, educator and social justice advocate Parker Palmer called, “Let Your Life Speak.” Letting our lives speak means living consciously, always seeking right-relationship with God, with ourselves and with all living things, including our planet. Others will see the light and be drawn to it.

We’ve looked at power and a sound mind. What then of Love? Much beloved Catholic monk and mystic Father Thomas Keating, asked devout Buddhist and Integral Philosopher Ken Wilbur why he as a Buddhist revered Christianity. Wilbur replied, “Because Jesus is the only Master whose prime directive was Love.” Wilbur’s answer has been the rock on which I stand and sustain my Faith.

When everything in me wants to give into anger and hate of religious fanatics who cloak themselves in Christianity; when another Church, Mosque and Synagogue is bombed and burned; when another refugee child dies in custody at the border; when another Black person is beaten, shot or killed by the police, and whenever I hear the phrase, “Make America Great Again,” I find strength in 2 Timothy 1:7; “God has not given me a Spirit of Fear, but of Love and of Power and of a Sound Mind.”

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A New York Fashion Designer: My Community, My Dream.



By Renika Williams

Dreams are abstract things that you create as children while stroking your doll’s hair or building a sandcastle on the beach. And just like that sandcastle, dreams can be fragile and ever changing.

The ebb and flow of every wave pushes and pulls against each grain of sand, morphing and adjusting them, leaving your perfect sandcastle less

defined and much harder to keep standing.

My dream, like that sandcastle, was prime for collapse. It seems I spent much of my career just trying to keep it alive—that was—until I achieved it.

I am now officially a Fashion Designer in New York City. Not a design assistant or an assistant designer. Not an associate designer. After ten years of work in this industry. After plenty of let downs and recoveries, I am officially a Designer.

Over the years, I tried asking nicely for what I felt I deserved, assuming that my drive and my passion and my work ethic would speak for itself. They didn’t.

Then I tried working even harder, yelling from the rooftops, riding that delicate line between being strong and assertive and being considered too aggressive. Still, to no avail.

In the end, it was patience and belief that got me here. Not letting myself drown under the weight of years of hearing “not good enough” and learning to handle the sting of every “no” and “not yet”. Each time I got stronger. I stood taller. And with every step backward, I got closer to reaching my star.

I could say that I achieved this goal solely through my own hard work. I have the late nights crying at my desk and the

huge bags underneath my eyes from pulling all-nighters to prove it. But, I can’t say that I achieved this dream on my own. I wouldn’t want to. This dream—my dream—was shared by my family and by my community in Spokane.

This is not a dream that belongs to a singular person. We all share in this. Spokane and my family helped to lift me up and give me a better shot at that star. My once abstract dream was nurtured and fed. It was pampered and loved, until I believed I could do it myself. It was that love and that faith in my future that finally got me here. It was all of you and I really am writing this article to simply say “Thank you.”

Spokane knew who I was before I knew it myself. Spokane taught me to stand out and stand up for myself. Spokane taught me to be great. Spokane loved me.

As I check off this box in my life and set myself up to achieve new and greater goals, I can only hope to have you all stand by me once again helping me reach that next brighter star.

African-Americans and Social Determinants of Health: Is it Race? Or is it Racism?

By Glenn Ellis

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - There is no disagreement that African-Americans have worse health outcomes across the board when compared to other races. Researchers, scientists, sociologists, and doctors all agree.

Data and statistics reflect the dismal reality that if you are African-American, you will be more likely to die at birth, die giving birth, grow up sicker, be diagnosed of a life-threatening illness later, and die sooner.

What is less known, and agreed upon, is the fact that the determining factors for all of these outcomes, is not because one is African-American, but because of what are known as social determinants of health.

It's true, research had concluded that medical care and is only responsible for 10-20 percent of a person's health: regardless of what color they are. The remaining 80-90 percent is attributed to these social determinants of health.

Doctors see this every day in their patient population. A recent survey by The Physician Foundation revealed that 90 percent of the doctors in this country say that most of their patients have a social condition that poses a serious threat to their health. Only 1 percent of the doctors surveyed felt that none of their patients were affected by SDOH.

So, what exactly are social determinants of health?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), these are the "conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age". In other words, the conditions of health are alarming in communities with poor SDOH such as unstable housing, low income, unsafe neighborhoods, and/or substandard education.

One only has to look at every city (urban and rural) to see how this plays out in most of our lives.

In the United States, it is SDOH, not race that accounts for the dismal health outcomes for African-Americans. In fact, the inequities in outcome are clear all the way down to the level of neighborhoods in the same city.



Several years ago, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation initiated a first of its kind initiative to look at life expectancy by neighborhood in respective cities around the country.

Known as United States Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimate Project (USALEEP), the found shocking differences in life expectancy of as much as 20 years for residents in the same city, living just a few miles apart; in some cases, just a few blocks.

Further examination of the data shows that, almost with exception, neighborhoods with the lowest life expectancy were those with substantial African-American or Latino populations.

As the cities in this country become more gentrified, we are seeing the health outcomes for the Black and brown people in this country worsen.

Are there other reasons that HIV/AIDS is a chronic condition for Whites, while it continues to be an epidemic in the African-American communities in this country? Or, Black women are two to six times more likely to die from complications of pregnancy than White women? And their babies almost three times the infant mortality rate as Whites?

Is it due to the genetic makeup of African-Americans? I think not!

Every human being on the planet is 99.99 percent identical. A difference of 0.01 percent is all that separates us from each other. That means that the 3 billion pairs of genes (human pairs) that make up our individual genetic code are equal to a book with 262,000 pages. The individual differences between us represents only 500 of those pages!

Understanding this is what will allow us to stop using race, a totally social construct, in the concepts of medicine and healthcare. Instead, we must realize how much of our human and financial resources are "misused" applying race to issues of health.

We can see it in how, even today doctors have been found to believe that there is something about being African-American that results in not providing adequate pain medications due to the belief that we have a higher tolerance for pain, because of our skin color. The same phenomena were observed even in children at Emergency room with appendicitis; African American children were denied pain medication for the same reason.

Most alarming to me are the implications as we move further into genomic medicine.

If we are not careful, we can see research from this endeavor to further engrain the notion that there are racial differences that justify our higher rates of high blood pressure; diabetes; and other diseases and conditions.

Currently, policy, legislation, and funding are directed towards supporting the theory that African-Americans are more susceptible to poorer health outcomes, while SDOH are being largely ignored.

Continued on Page 19

Disparities that Impact Black Men and Boys

Continued From Page 1

In addition, dozens of boys who are members of the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project mentorship program Wilson founded 25 years ago traveled to Washington from Miami and Jacksonville to participate in the event.

"We are here because we acknowledge a tragic truth: All too often, Black males in America are treated as their own class of citizen. They are rarely given the benefit of the doubt. They are labeled delinquent, not rowdy. They are hardened criminals, not misguided youth," Wilson said. "Their very existence is often seen as a threat."

The Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys Act of 2019 calls for a bipartisan commission to be housed within the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' office. Led by a staff director, its 19 members would include appointees from the Senate and the House, the Congressional Black Caucus chairperson and five CBC members, as well as representatives from federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. Duties include examining homicide rates, arrest and incarceration rates, poverty, violence, fatherhood, mentorship, drug abuse, death rates, disparate income and wealth levels, school performance at various grade levels, and health issues.

One year after their first meeting, members will be required to produce an annual report that includes recommendations to address these issues. In addition, the report,

which will be publicly available, will be submitted to the president and cabinet secretaries, Congress, and the chairs of the appropriate committees of jurisdiction.

Rep. Jeffries noted in his remarks that while African-Americans have made "tremendous progress," there is still a long way to go.

"We understand that when America catches a cold, the black community often catches a fever. When the black community catches a fever, it's young black men and boys at the center of the affliction of economic pneumonia. You can't continue to ignore realities of this situation, which is why this Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys is so incredibly important," the New York lawmaker said. "We all recognize that unless we take the time to give our young men and our young black boys the opportunity to be successful, the system will seize the opportunity to give these men and young black boys some [jail] time."

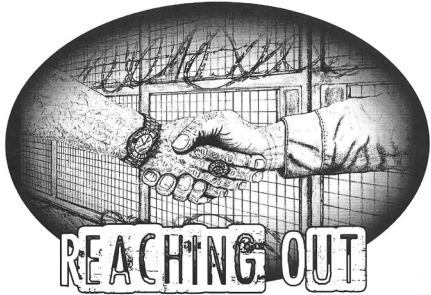
Jamonza Clark, a sophomore at Miami's William H. Turner Technical Arts High School, feels blessed to be a part of Wilson's Role Models program and a strong family unit, but recognizes that there are countless boys who look like him whose futures are very uncertain. "Many of us live in ZIP codes that don't have the same resources and opportunities that give our white counterparts head starts in life," he said. "How are we supposed to get ahead when on the day we are born, we're already behind?"

Rep. Richmond empathizes with boys and men who are judged by the color of their skin or what they wear. Sports, he said, is the one area where all the rules are the same for everybody, and African Americans excel. "So when we start talking about the game of life and making sure that our young men achieve the success that they should, then we have to look at all of the barriers," Richmond said.

Rep. McBath, who is serving her first term in Congress, experienced every parent's worst nightmare when her 17-year-old son, Jordan Davis, was gunned down at a Jacksonville gas station because his killer thought the music in the teenagers' car was too loud.

"I was teaching him to stand up against unrighteousness and to stand up in the face of injustice. I was preparing him to take his place in this world at the decision-making table as a powerful young black man. My son, like so many others, was a victim of implicit bias and racism and I feel an obligation in my core to address these issues on behalf of each of the young men that are standing here today full of potential and destined to do great things," she said, adding that any form of discrimination, "both explicit and implicit" is unacceptable.

Turning to the 5000 Role Models of Excellence students, she continued, "I implore each of you to stand up. You deserve to have a place at the table and decide the course of our world. I believe in all of you. This is what democracy looks like, and this is how we will change our world."



THE BLACK

Coyote Ridge

PRISONERS CAUCUS

Endangered Species

By Joseph Broadway Kennedy

Greetings from the belly of the beast. To the Black Lens readers, it would be very difficult to sustain any extended amount of hope inside or happiness without you. We appreciate you so very much.

The very best place for us to begin today, especially where our younger brothers are concerned, is that you must acknowledge that for everything you think you know, there is a great deal that you don't know. There are fundamentally three types of people in our society: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened.

The majority of people in our society fall into the last category. Throughout the ages, the pursuit of all men has been to acquire knowledge, but until we can differentiate the real from the fake, true knowledge and the ability to use it effectively will always escape us. It is critical to our success that we are no longer found sleepwalking in the bowels of these institutions or any segment of society. It is critical to our success that we become empowered; that we speak the truth with greater conviction, courage and purpose. We have an obligation to educate and uplift one another past the racism, past the gangsterism, and passed any of that Willie Lynch divide and conquer bull.

As we reflect on mass incarceration and its interwoven connections to that of legal slavery and the American dream, it is not lost on us that today one in four African American men are tethered to the prison system. The Black prison rate exceeds the college enrollment rate. Prison profiteers are writing laws, signing bills, introducing legislation and handing out sentences that take us back to the auction blocks, as they price and sell our humanity.

When the prison system transformed into the prison industrial complex, it became a profit-making industry. As a profit-making industry, the poor underclass became

the primary commodity which fuels its profitability, longevity and survival. Most business models within the framework of capitalism are dependent upon the law of supply and demand. We are being bought, sold, traded, warehoused and managed for profit on the open market--- just like corn, wheat, cotton, and pork bellies.

If you find yourself doubting this, take a look at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). Locate CoreCivic (CXW), formerly Corrections Corporation of America, and Geo Group (GEO), both of which are private prison corporations.

With the weekly arrival of incarcerated men here at CRCC, we see in their faces the deafening tone that the Amerikkkan dream for an inordinate number of Black men, and other men of color, has instead become a pipeline to prison. A closer look will reveal the many “for profit corporations” such as J Pay, Access, Global Tel Link, Union Supply Direct and Keefe, just to name a few, whose annual revenues are in the billions. These companies sell us and our families inferior products at 3 to 4 times their market value and in some cases higher. In addition, the majority of prisons across this country maintain some form of correctional industries, whereas incarcerated people make less than a dollar an hour, and in some states earn nothing.

Our neighborhoods have become factories producing the raw materials that fuel this 80 plus billion dollar a year industry. We've gone from the slave ship, to the slave plantation, to the prison industrial slave complex.

The prison industrial complex extends far beyond prison. Its tentacles impact employment potential, housing, education, voting rights and beyond. So, it forces us to sincerely examine the fact that of the 75% of prisoners released nationwide, nearly all are rearrested within 5 years. Current statistics indicate that substance abusers recidivate at a rate of 56% and those who

are gang affiliated return to prison at a rate of 86%. Numbers don't lie and these numbers are staggering. We overstand that this country's criminal justice system criminalizes poverty, substance abuse, and mental health and it should invigorate us to educate ourselves academically, morally and mentally.

We realize that much of what we've been fed in the game is poison. Everyday we are lied to. We are told that our worth in this world is based on the material. We waste our lives chasing money, cars, clothes, and whatever else the capitalist elite tells us we need in order to be somebody. We are conditioned to accept violence as a viable means of gaining respect. Neither money nor violence can make us good men. The wise man knows that our greatest strength is our capacity for love, empathy, and overstanding. Every great man has had “love” at the center and source of his strength: love for his people, for life, for his woman. We must make a conscious effort, a conscious decision to put an end to the pain. My mama used to say, “baby when you got your head inside the mouth of the lion, you gotta ease it out.”

We are way past that. We are in the belly of the beast. We have been consumed and we have got to make the lion spit us out. Activism and agitation are key to promoting a vigorous regurgitation. Let's remember what brother Frederick Douglass said, “if there is no struggle, there is no progress.” Whenever there's a catastrophic event, epidemic or pandemic, whether it's a natural disaster or one created by the hands of men, there are always first responders. This ain't a movie and the Calvary ain't coming. This is our crisis. We are the first responders.

I don't have all the answers. I don't believe that any one person does, but it doesn't take a genius to know that with over 2.4 million people behind bars, our prison system is broken. The methods being used to help a person get out and stay out aren't working. We overstand the emphasis placed on safe-

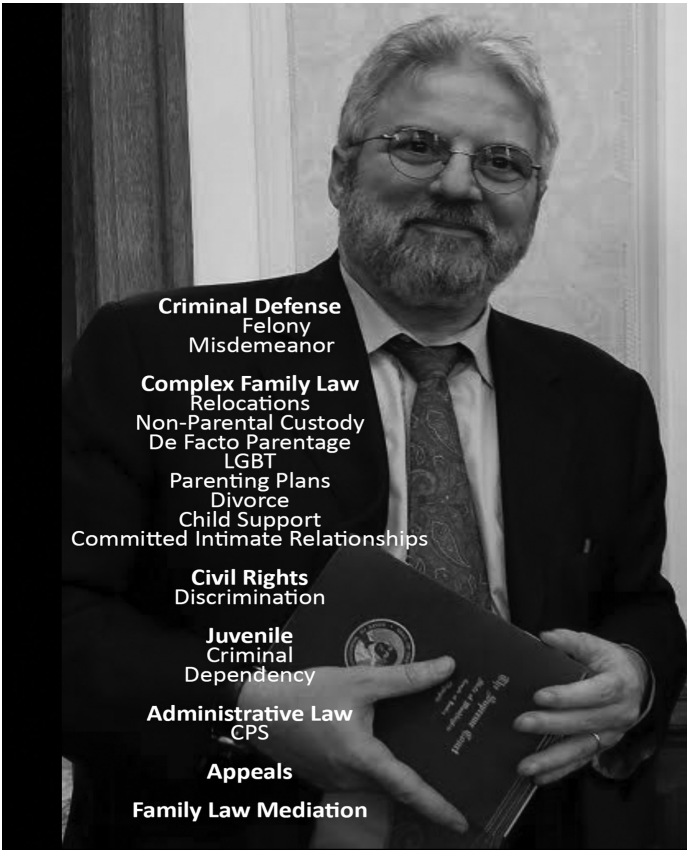
ty, where the public is concerned, and we are aware of security operations relating to the DOC, but society as a whole should be ashamed for helping fund a system that has been a failure for so many years that we've lost count.

Throughout our fractured history we have faced a plethora of challenges from every facet of society. At times they seemed insurmountable, yet we persevered. Without a creative struggle, we cannot have a serious conversation about rebuilding our communities. In 2019-20, partnerships are going to be extremely important to our success. We are reaching out to business leaders, community leaders, politicians, educational institutions and citizens of every color, creed and religious affiliation to help them see the value in our collective efforts. It is evident that this and more is achievable if we can eradicate our petty differences through cultural education, commitment and activism. We reduce our power and potential by failing to be a collective struggle. Wherever social cooperation is increased, oppression is weekend.

The winds of change are shifting, forces are mobilizing all across the state of Washington, as well as nationally. Like-minded people, formerly incarcerated people and citizens have formed alliances in an effort to stimulate and create change where criminal justice reform and reentry is concerned.

We urge the readers of the Black Lens and all rationally minded citizens of this country to join an organization near you that is out there advocating with the understanding that social justice is not a competition but an opportunity for many to add their voice for progressive change. It's time we require more of ourselves and each other. We need you. We need your voice and we need your service. Have a blessed day!!

Contact The Black Prisoners Caucus with any comments or questions: www.bpceast@gmail.com



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African-Americans and Social Determinants of Health

Continued from Page 17

Dr. Richard Cooper of Loyola University has done research on high blood pressure that has made an indisputable case for the dismissal of the fallacy of African-Americans being “predisposed” to poor health outcomes.

In his research, Dr. Cooper studied high blood pressure in Nigerians, Jamaicans, and in African-Americans. His conclusions: Only African-Americans had the highest rates of high blood pressure. To further make the case, he found that Germans and Russians

have rates that were significantly higher than African-Americans!

Seems like it’s more about being African-American in this country, than it is about just being African-American. It begs the question: Is it Race or is it Racism?

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

The information included in this column is for educational purposes only. It is not intended nor implied to

be a substitute for professional medical advice. The reader should always consult his or her healthcare provider to determine the appropriateness of the information for their own situation or if they have any questions regarding a medical condition or treatment plan.

Glenn Ellis, is Research Bioethics Fellow at Harvard Medical School and author of Which Doctor?, and Information is the Best Medicine. For more good health information listen to Glenn, on radio in Philadelphia; Boston; Shreveport; Los Angeles; and Birmingham., or visit: www.glennellis.com

Carl Maxey Center Annual Meeting

Continued From Page 12

Eight weeks after that, on September 28, 2018, having raised an additional \$145,000, the Board closed on the adjacent lot, which went on the market just as they made an offer on the building. It was an unbelievable few weeks.

Sandy shared that 1/3 of the funds came from a grant, 1/3 from private foundations and the final 1/3 came from community donations, most of which were \$10 & \$20. Two key things made the community portion of the giving such a success: a house party that was hosted by Ben Stuckart and an anonymous donor who agreed to match all community donations up to \$100,000, effectively doubling the amount.

Once the property was secured, the Board reached out to the community to get input on what they wanted to see in the newly purchased building. The Board held an open house on September 15, where com-

munity members were given tours of the building and 3x5 cards to take notes as they looked around. The notes were posted on the walls in the garage and gathered up by Board members after the Open House was completed.

The Board also hosted two focus groups. One held on October 10 that specifically targeted the African American community and the second one held on October 13 that included representation from through Spokane.

Information from the Open House and both focus groups was reviewed by the board and discussed in a meeting with CMC architect Patsy O'Connor. Patsy distilled all of the information down into floor plans. After an exciting back and forth process, the Board approved the final site plans (shown below), which were presented at the annual meeting.

Finally, Sandy discussed two funding opportunities that together will launch the

Remodeling Phase of the Carl Maxey Center Project. The Carl Maxey Center was named as a recipient of Washington State Capital Funds (\$350,000). The request for funds was sponsored by Senator Andy Billig and supported by Representatives Marcus Riccelli and Timm Ormsby. It was an important show of support for the Carl Maxey Center project.

In addition to the capital funds, the Carl Maxey Center was selected by the Unitarian Universalist Church to be the recipient of the church offering during their General Assembly, which will take place in Spokane from June 19 – 23, 2019. The attendance is expected to be in the neighborhood of 3,000 and the generous donation from General Assembly participants will be applied to operating costs and other pre-development expenses associated with the remodel.

Sandy wrapped up her presentation by sharing that the remodel of the Maxey

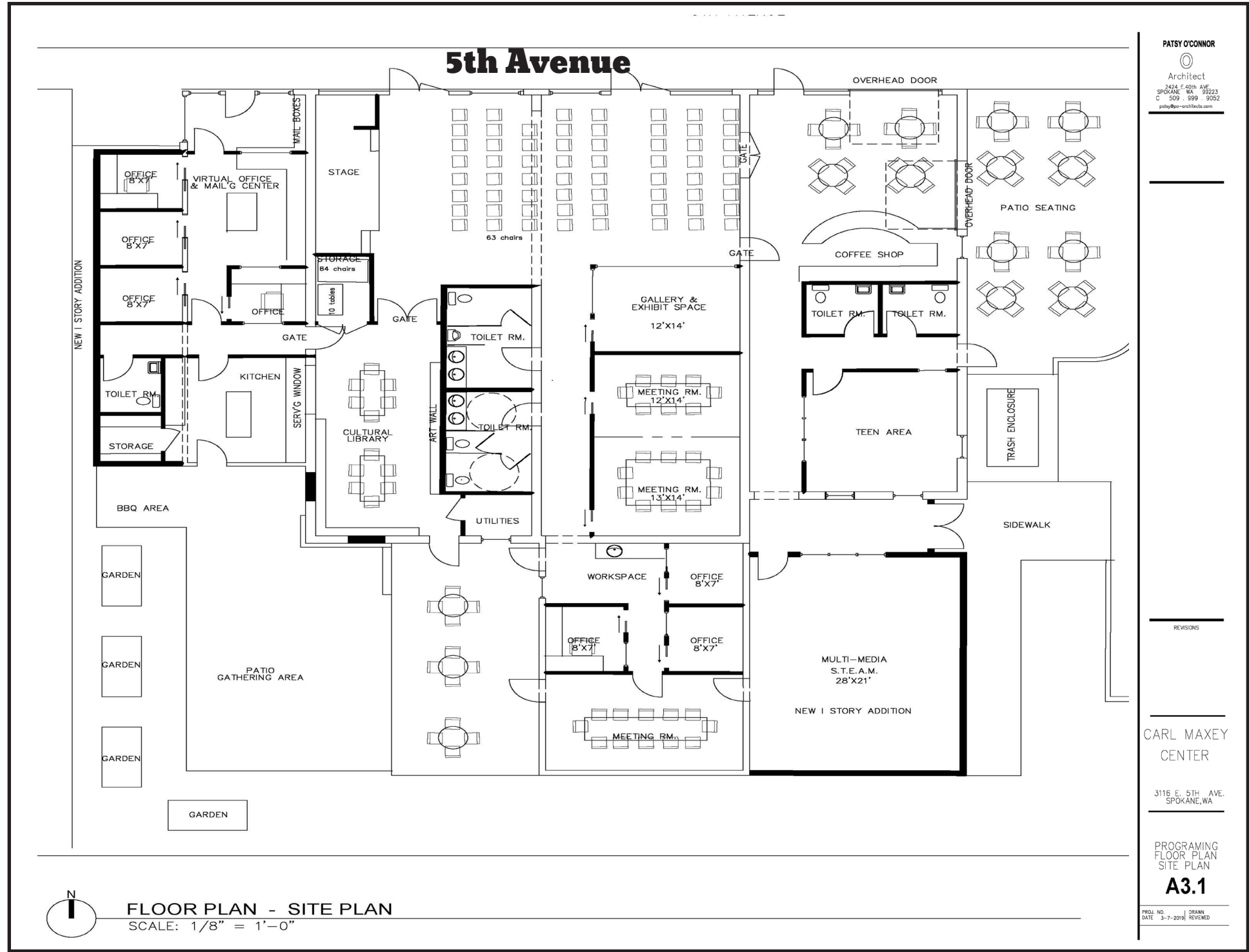
Center building will happen in phases and that the planning process for the first phase is already underway. In the mean time, the building is already in use. Focus groups have been held for the Spokane Regional Health District looking at health equity and for Fuse looking at Tax Reform.

The Carl Maxey Center hosted a Women of Color gathering. The Inland Northwest Juneteenth Coalition is holding their planning meetings in the building, and a new community group consisting of friends and family of members of the Black Prisoner's Caucus has also started holding meetings in the center.

The meeting wrapped with a call for volunteers, as things get busier, more support will be needed. A volunteer tab is located on the top of the website home page.

For more information about the Carl Maxey Center visit carlmaxeycenter.org.

Photos courtesy of Robert Lloyd.



OUR VOICES

Forget the Adversity Score, Just Dump the SAT

By Julianne Malveaux

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - The College Board, the organization that develops and administers the SAT test, has developed a new "adversity score" to augment the widely used college admissions examination. The fact that the College Board has had to create an "adversity score" is reason enough to discard the badly flawed SAT test, a test that many consider racially biased, and that only measures the likelihood of first-year college success. In other words, it measures the accumulated advantages that some students have over others because of the quality of their high schools, their family wealth, and other factors. The "adversity score" seeks to measure the disadvantages that some students experience. Interestingly, the "adversity score" does not measure race, although racial discrimination is alive and well in our nation.

Indeed, the development of an adversity score that does not account for race is a capitulation to the anti-affirmative action forces, some directed by this administration's Justice Department that have brought lawsuits against Harvard and other universities because of "anti-Asian" bias. It is also a bow to the argument that a white student from a poor family is more disadvantaged than a Black child whose family

is upper-middle-class, when there is plenty of evidence that this is not necessarily so. Structural racism is so woven into our national consciousness that child of middle-class Black folks is likely to do worse than their parents did. Our nation is in race denial, and this adversity score, which does not consider race, is part of the denial.

The pilot testing of the adversity score seems to indicate that using it may create more diverse admissions, but there are precious few details about the score (and it won't even be shared with students and their parents). But the very existence of an adversity score raises questions about the efficacy of the SAT. This is perhaps why.

This is an interesting time for the adversity score to be rolled out. Robert Schaffer, Public Education Director of Fair Test (the National Center for Fair and Open Testing) says the adversity scores are a way for the College Board to defend itself against its critics. He said, "Schools do not need the SAT or ACT – with or without 'adversity scores' – to make high-quality, admissions decisions that promote equity and excellence." In fact, more than 1000 colleges and universities, including half for the top 100 liberal arts colleges, do not use the SAT to evaluate applicants.



What should colleges use, instead, to evaluate students? How about high school grades? Some will argue that the quality of high schools varies. Well, that ought to be an impetus for improving the quality of some high schools, especially those in inner cities. How about class rank? The University of Texas uses class rank to admit some students, which ensures a diverse class given the segregation that remains in our nation's high schools. The adversity score will purportedly reflect differences in high school quality.

Eliminating the use of the SAT would do much the same, allowing college admis-

sions counselors to make better decisions. The College Board says it is a nonprofit organization, but let's follow the money. It makes so much money that its President, David Coleman, earns more than a million dollars a year, more than the President of Harvard University. The organization is making megabucks on the backs of our students, and it is reinforcing biases along the way. Some see the adversity score as a step in the right direction toward modifying the SAT. I see it as a defensive move to shore up a flawed test and an even more flawed organization.

This fall, more than 150 colleges will use the adversity-enhanced SAT in their admissions process. Based on those results, more colleges will use the score to measure adversity. I know lots of folks who consider the development of an adversity score good news. It would be much better news if colleges and universities simply decided to stop using the SAT. It measures privilege, not knowledge, and it is demonstrably biased. Fixing a corrupt system instead of changing it only serves to reinforce the status quo.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist. Her latest project MALVEAUX! On UDCTV is available on youtube.com. For booking, wholesale inquiries or for more info visit www.juliannealveaux.com.

Prevent Long Hot Summer of Violence in America

By Russell Simmons,
Exclusive to the NNPA Newswire
blackpressusa.com/op-ed

Across the nation and throughout the world, millions of people are still mourning the tragic and senseless killing of our Brother Nipsy Hustle. We are again reminded of the terrible sickness of violence in communities across the United States.

We should not wait for another one of our hero's to be killed before we stand up to take action to prevent this plague of violence from continuing.

Nipsy was a great example of what can happen when a young man from our community puts his head down and transcends the traps that are laid by the enemies of our youth in America.

Let me be clear: All those who have the capacity and opportunity to do their part to end the senseless spiral of violence but do nothing by their omission are aligned with the forces that are against our communities' safety, resilience and progress. Complacency with violence directly contributes to its devastating continuance.

There are, however, very successful programs in nearly every hot pocket in our inner cities that are alarmingly underfunded. Those effective anti-violence programs are in constant need of volunteers. I have personally witnessed



"Complacency with violence directly contributes to its devastating continuance." -Russel Simmons

and worked closely with so many extremely productive and amazing programs that in fact prevent violence.

Effective programs like Erica Ford's "Life Camp" in Queens, New York or Captain Dennis Muhammed's "Peace Keepers" efforts in over 20 cities are in need of additional funding and support from city, state and federal agencies.

Of course, in addition, the private sector and local community support, systems must also be summoned to help out. Now is the time to act to prevent future violence.

These two programs are shining examples of how much better and effective local interventions are than the police who in many cases are disconnected, not trusted, brutal and too often fatal.

But despite the results of current research studies on what works, city budgets in too many states are now being turned over to ineffective police containment strategies because of the undue influence of police unions and other conservative political forces.

Violence cannot be contained. It has to be prevented by trusted and effective

community-based programs. Are we prepared to sit back this summer and watch more than 50 of our kids get shot and killed every weekend in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Detroit, Miami, or in St. Louis? Because if we don't act urgently now, that's what is gonna happen!

Where is the national debate or priority about our children's safety from violence? It appears that the hip-hop community is the only authentic and caring voice that is speaking out effectively and consistently on this important issue and "Taking back responsibility."

Most religious and political figures won't bring it up publicly or earnestly unless we do it first. I will do my part. Will you?

No matter how big or small your impact might be, everyone's input and support is needed now. Even if you only will just write to your member of the U.S. Congress to urge more funding for community anti-violence programs, that will also be helpful. The clock is ticking. The summer is coming. Are you prepared to lose a love one or a friend to violence in our communities? Or are you going to join me and others to help make a lasting difference?

Thank you for your response. With great love, all things are possible.

OUR VOICES

Why the 'One Percent' in the US is Worried

By David A. Love, JD
(originally published by Aljazeera.com)

Inequality in the United States has reached such levels lately that even members of the "one percent" have started worrying.

Ray Dalio, founder of Bridgewater Associates hedge fund who is ranked 57th wealthiest person in the world by Forbes magazine, quipped in a recent interview that capitalism is denying "equal opportunity for the American dream". He said that he was "a by product of capitalism when it also gave equal opportunity", adding "I was very lucky to live the American dream by having the proper care and the proper public school education ... A number of things have changed."

Former Starbucks CEO and prospective presidential candidate Howard Schultz, who prefers to be called a "person of means" rather than a billionaire (ranked 617th by Forbes), recently observed that "the vast majority of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck" and declared that the next US president must urgently address inequality.

CEO of JP Morgan Chase Jamie Dimon (ranked 1,717th) also noted earlier this year that: "A big chunk of [Americans] have been left behind [...] Forty percent of Americans make less than \$15 an hour. Forty percent can't afford a \$400 bill, whether it's medical or fixing their car. Fifteen percent of Americans make minimum wages, 70,000 die from opioids."

Indeed, the growing impoverishment and despair that are plaguing our country are hard to miss. The US also has the highest rate of income inequality among Western nations, with the top one percent claiming 40 percent of US wealth in 2016, in contrast to a 25 to 30 percent share in the 1980s. According to the rather conservative estimates of the US Census Bureau, around 14 percent of the population or 45 million live in poverty. According to the UN, 8.5 million of them face extreme poverty and 5.3 million suffer in "Third World conditions of absolute poverty".

But in reality, many more Americans struggle to secure a dignified life for themselves and



their families. A damning report published by the UN in 2018 found that: "High child and youth poverty rates perpetuate the intergenerational transmission of poverty very effectively, and ensure that the American dream is rapidly becoming the American illusion. The equality of opportunity, which is so prized in theory, is in practice a myth, especially for minorities and women, but also for many middle-class White workers."

Perhaps parts of the American "one percent" are finally ready to admit that socio-economic inequality has reached unprecedented levels and that the current status quo is unsustainable because just like South African billionaire Johann Rupert, the prospect of the poor masses rebelling is keeping them "awake at night". They are now saying that capitalism "needs work" and are proposing various "fixes" - mainly "trickle-down philanthropy". Some have gone as far as suggesting that social provision should be enhanced and that the wealthy should be taxed.

Yet all of them are quick to outright reject "socialist policies". In a recent interview for NBC, Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and wife of the second richest man in the world, echoed the thoughts of many of the super-rich, saying that: "What I know to be true is I would far rather live in a capitalistic society than a socialist society."

But Gates is wrong. The current system in place in the US is not capitalism, but rather

"socialism for the rich" which favours the "one percent" by granting it ever-increasing subsidies, exorbitant tax breaks, deregulation and executive bonuses. The rest of the population lives in an unfair system of inequality and segregation, struggling to make ends meet under severe austerity and erosion of labour rights. It is a system of "survival of the fittest", which privileges some over the others based on race and gender.

Economic growth now only "uplifts" the rich, who are able to control the distribution of wealth by influencing the government and making sure it serves their interests and maintain their power. Through the US system of legalised corruption, the wealthy funnel billions of dollars in donations to election campaigns.

Unsurprisingly, the stop-gap fixes that people like Gates, Dimon, Schultz and Dalio are proposing are unlikely to work because they are designed to maintain the current system in place so they can continue to accumulate wealth unrestrained. The only viable solution that would prevent a major socioeconomic disaster in the US and subsequent social upheaval would be to overhaul the system.

Solutions to economic inequality and the excesses of American capitalism are necessary to save capitalism from itself, or better yet, to save people from capitalism.

There is an increasing number of dramatic proposals for economic justice that look promising. These include Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal, which envisions a national mobilisation to eliminate carbon emissions and transform the US economy, boosting economic growth and job creation, while seeking economic and racial justice for vulnerable communities. Ocasio-Cortez has also called for a 70 percent marginal tax rate on earnings above \$10m.

Congresswoman Elizabeth Warren has a plan to wipe out \$1.5 trillion in student loan debt by levying a surtax on the ultra-rich, while Congressman Bernie Sanders has put forward

a proposal for universal healthcare. The idea of reparations for slavery, which could help alleviate some of the racial inequality in the country, is also gaining ground.

Although conservatives attack proposals promoting economic justice and equity as dangerous because they could lead to a totalitarian socialist system, such policies have long been a part of the US system. After all, the Green New Deal is named after the New Deal, which was introduced during the Great Depression to protect the poor, strengthen labour rights and impose strict regulation on the financial system.

At the same time, Americans are increasingly in favour of a major overhaul of the system, due to the problematic and corruptive nature of the current one. Existing and proposed government programmes of economic redistribution and equity are popular. Socialism is also gaining popularity, even surpassing capitalism among Democrats, particularly millennials. Such policies, which translate into more democratic ownership and control over the government and greater public accountability, most certainly frighten the wealthy for their effectiveness and political popularity.

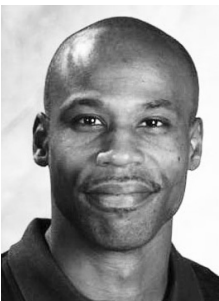
If members of the "one percent" truly care about the widening wealth gap, they should not resist the implementation of these policies. An overhaul of the system might make them less wealthy, but ultimately will not be to their detriment. A profit can still be made if workers are paid dignified salaries, provided proper healthcare, and granted social and labour rights.

Indeed the choice of the "one percent" is reduced to either living in a more equal and just society or facing the wrath of angry impoverished masses.

David A. Love, JD serves BlackCommentator.com as Executive Editor. He is a journalist, commentator, human rights advocate and an adjunct instructor at the Rutgers University School of Communication and Information in Philadelphia, and a contributor to theGrio, AtlantaBlackStar, The Progressive, CNN.com, and The Huffington Post. He also blogs at davidalove.com.

Just Something to Think About

By Kendu D. Humphreys



I remember when "Mrs. Johnson" commanded more respect and praise in the community than "Michael Jordan". I remember when males addressed all females in high regards, such as Queens, Sista's, and Earth. I remember when there was a strong woman in most every household, and "Big Mama" was more than a movie.

I remember when calling any female a bitch, got you a fresh ass whooping from her, and anyone in ear shot. I remember when people, in general, had more home training, because mothers reminded them "to keep on clean underwear". I remember when talking back to your mom got you slapped in the mouth and criminal charges didn't follow. I remember when females didn't have to twerk just to get attention.

I remember when men protected females, no matter what. I remember when there were way more strong, and morally right men in the household, community, and in the world because a strong woman was always right along side them. I remember when females valued innocence, themselves, their bodies, and their reputation, way more than that of money, glamour, or some guy. I remember when females were way more cautious about having a baby, and not so quick to be a "single mother". I remember when sons had a more descent outlook towards females, because of their mothers. I remember when Mother Earth, Mother Nature, and all Mothers were praised.

My aim isn't to blame women, nor point fingers. It's just a simple comparison of how strong I saw many women thirty or so years ago, and nowadays it's way different, to say the least. To be honest, independence doesn't make up for true strength. The strength most women had back then, made boys wanna be responsible, respectful, and real men. Nowadays,

that same independence seems to keep them as man-children.

A lot of our males nowadays are totally lost, have no respect, no home training, hate their fathers, and despise women (but certainly not all, God still makes good real men). Those that get all the attention are more satisfied with being a baby daddy, than being a real father. Then again, how could they be with no real father in the house to show them how. I didn't grow up with my mother, nor my father. By the time I was 18 months, I was in a group home in New Jersey. I identified as my "mommy" the woman who ran the group home. In my personal opinion, she was the best role model I could have had to becoming a "good person". I still quote her words to this day, and have a healthy respect for all women because of her.

The fact is that thirty plus years ago our community and households were torn apart by many outside forces. Government agenda, equal opportunity, urban reform, welfare, etc. Urban males were stripped from their homes and sent far away to jobs with opportuni-

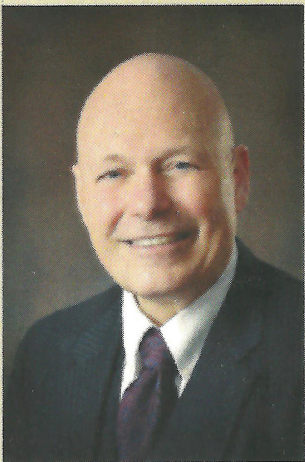
ties, war, prison, the streets, or a grave. Then "big brother" stepped in with housing, welfare, and child support. The sad fact is many urban women submitted to the terms and subjected themselves to being "the victim" and became single mothers. Then, generations later, we have many poor excuses for what a man is, when thirty or so years ago, we had perfect examples of men in almost every household. I believe to have a healthy nation, and a way less cluttered world, women must be women again. Then there will be a lot more real men again.

My intention isn't to bash Black women. I love all my sistas, and mean no disrespect. But, us brothas are stomped on everyday, and that's not right. It's always quotes like, "where are all the good men at" or "all men are dogs". Good men hear that everyday, while being called the "N" word all day. It's very embarrassing to those of us that are trying. Then, our own sistas bash us the most (that I believe is the most painful). That gives little boys, and young men no self pride, no self worth, and hate for all that looks like them.

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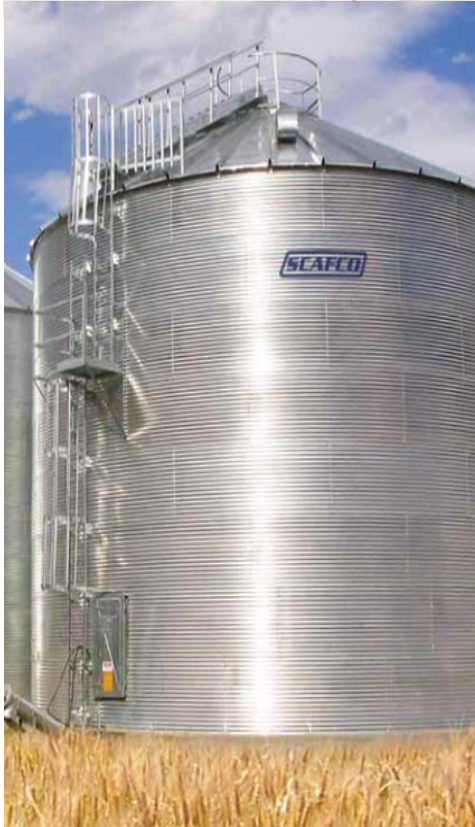
Career Opportunities
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Long established manufacturing company is seeking energetic and hard-working individuals for management, sales, office, machine operators and laborer positions. To view all of our current openings, please visit our website www.SCAFCO.com and/or CWallA, our authorized distributor of SCAFCO products www.CWallA.com to fill out an application.

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JUNE EVENTS

JUNE 8
SPOKANE PRIDE PARADE & FESTIVAL
"To Thrive Not Just Survive"
Since 1992, Spokane has come together to celebrate the LGBTQA community. The Pride Parade starts downtown at Noon The Rainbow Festival opens immediately following the Pride Parade in the Riverfront Park Lilac Meadows (East of the Clock Tower). Live Entertainment, Resource and Business Fair, Family Area, Odyssey Teen Zone, and the nYne Pride Bar featuring Beer, Wine, & Spirits. There will be a fireworks display, weather permitting.
Parade starts at Noon
Downtown Spokane
Spokane Falls Blvd & Stevens Street
Please RSVP by June 2. For more information contact New Hope at (509) 535-1336.

JUNE 8
NEW HOPE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP TEA
"A Spring Cleaning of the Heart & Soul"
Come join the women of New Hope, enjoy Christian fellowship, devotional, music, fabulous food, decadent desserts and tasty teas.
2 - 4pm
New Hope Baptist Church
9021 E. Boone Ave, Spokane Valley
Please RSVP by June 2. For more information contact New Hope at (509) 535-1336.

JUNE 8
EAST AFRICAN NIGHT
International Dinner Series
A celebration of Somali and Ethiopian cuisines with guest cooks Rhama and Biette. The menu includes: Doro Wat, Fufu, Sambosa, Somali Salad, Somali Rice, Injera Bread, and Lamania.
6 - 9pm
Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane
4340 W Fort George Wright Dr, Spokane, Washington 99224
Tickets are \$25/person (kids 5-12 are \$5). To reserve seats, email inlandcurry@gmail.com.

Send information about upcoming community events to sandy@blacklensnews.com.

JUNE 11
BOOK LAUNCH: THE EYE OF THE SPIRIT
Join Stephen Pitters to launch of his 6th book. Jazz by Saxophonist Jermaine Carlton
6:30 pm
South Hill Library
3324 S Perry St, Spokane, WA 99203
Stephen Pitters is the host of Spokane Open Poetry on KYRS Radio. For information e-mail spokane-openpoetry@kyrs.org.

JUNE 11
FUSE SPOKANE - DIVERSE VOICES BOOK DISCUSSION
June Book - "The Poet X" by Elizabeth Acevedo
National Book Award winner. YA novel set in Harlem about a girl who becomes a slam poet.
6:30pm -8:00pm
Downtown Public Library - First Floor, Rm 1B
906 W Main Ave, Spokane, WA 99201
Questions email Erin at EJToungate@gmail.com

JUNE 13
EWU AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATION
Celebrate the achievements of EWU Africana Studies students.
3 - 4:30 pm
EWU - Tawanka Hall 215
Cheney, WA
For more information call 509.359.2205 or e-mail bnicholson37@ewu.edu.

JUNE 13
JUSTICE NIGHT
Speak with an attorney. Free Consultations in these areas: LFOs (Legal Financial Obligations), Housing, Juvenile Law, Family Law, Seal/Expunge/Vacate Convictions, Police Accountability. NO CRIMINAL LAW.
5:30 pm
Center for Justice
35 W Main, Spokane 99201
Cost: Free. Sponsored by Center for Justice. For more information call 509.835.5211 or visit their website at www.cforjustice.org.

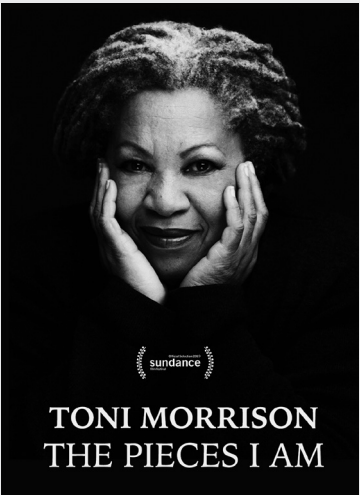
JUNE 14 - 16
JUNETEENTH WEEKEND
Celebrate African American history and culture, while commemorating the official ending of slavery in the US (June 19, 1865)
June 14 - Pillar Awards
6 - 9pm - SCC Lair - Auditorium
1810 N Greene St, Spokane, WA 99217
Tickets \$10
June 15 - Community BBQ
2-5pm - Liberty Park
1623 E 4th Avenue, Spokane 99202
June 16 - Father's Day Brunch
2:30 - 5pm - MLK Center @ ECCC
500 S. Stone Street, Spokane 99202
For more information visit: inwjc.org.

JUNE 15
WORLD REFUGEE DAY
Honoring refugee women.
11am - 3pm
Nevada Park, 800 E Joseph & Nevada
For more information contact Refugee Connections Spokane at 509-209-2384 or rcs@refugeeconnectionsspokane.org

JUNE 15
SHADES OF ME: POP UP GALLERY
Join the Shades of Me artists as they take over the Carl Maxey Center garage.
5-8pm
Carl Maxey Center
3118 E. 5th Avenue, Spokane 99202
For more information visit Shades of me on Facebook @Shadesofmeart

JUNE 17
NAACP MEETING
Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting.
7pm
Check the NAACP website or facebook page for meeting location
For more information contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 or visit: naacpspokane.org.

SAVE THE DATE



BLACK LENS PRIVATE MOVIE SCREENING

TONI MORRISON: THE PIECES I AM

This artful and intimate meditation on the legendary story-teller examines her life, her works and the powerful themes she has confronted throughout her literary career.

Friday, July 19
6pm - 8:30pm
Magic Lantern Theater
25 W Main Avenue, Spokane, WA 99201

Cost: \$10
Advance Tickets are available online **now** at <http://blacklensnews.com>.
Advance tickets are strongly encouraged, the screenings typically sell out.

For more information contact the Black Lens at 509-795-1964.

TRANSFORMATIONS

A YWCA camp for young women of color | June 24th-28th, 9am - 4pm

personal empowerment . self-image workshop . cultural hair workshop
wellness workshop . healthy relationships . critical thinking . media image analysis
personal expression . goal planning . art/journaling . college campus tour

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
SPOKANE

TRANSFORMATIONS CAMP

Celebrate Your Personal Uniqueness
Explore What Healthy Relationships Look Like
Discuss Body Image And Conflict Resolution

YWCA Spokane invites young women of color, 11-15 years of age, to join us for a week long empowerment experience that will challenge and motivate you to embrace the extraordinary young woman that is YOU.

Transformations Camp is a place where you will learn new skills, make friends, grow in confidence, gain a strong sense of self, and have fun!

Enjoy a free summer program complete with progressive curriculum, lunch, and field trips.

Hurry and confirm your spot; first-come, first-serve.

June 24-28, 2019 | 9am-4pm
YWCA Spokane, 930 N Monroe
transformations@ywcaspokane.org
509.789.9303

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9TH ANNUAL

JUNETEENTH

CELEBRATION

14

JUNE

6TH ANNUAL

PILLAR

AWARDS

SHOW

6-9PM

SCC LAIR AUDITORIUM

1810 N GREENE STREET

SPOKANE, WA 99217

15

JUNE

BBQ AT

THE PARK

2-5PM

LIBERTY PARK

1623 E 4TH AVE,

SPOKANE, WA 99202

16

JUNE

5TH ANNUAL

FATHER'S

DAY

BRUNCH

2³⁰-5PM

MLK OUTREACH

COMMUNITY CENTER

500 S STONE ST,

SPOKANE, WA 99202



Community Colleges of Spokane



Community Colleges of Spokane
Spokane Community College

MULTICULTURAL CENTER



Community Colleges of Spokane
Spokane Falls Community College

MOSAIC CENTER



WEST CENTRAL COMMUNITY CENTER



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excellence for everyone



The CARL MAXEY CENTER



MARTIN LUTHER
KING JR



ΩΨΦ
CHI ALPHA ALPHA
CHAPTER



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