

THE BLACK LENSTM

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Black Lens Teen Journalists

A Grant to the Carl Maxey Center from the Samuel & Jane Joseph Family Fund at Innovia Foundation Supported Two Teen Journalists

Our Mental Health Issues Aren't Our Fault

By Ashiah Campbell

It is no question as to whether access to mental healthcare for Black folks is adequate and widespread enough to be largely useful to the Black community as a whole. The answer is no. Taking into consideration the unique barriers Black folks face when it comes to accessing mental healthcare, such as social stigma, distrust of the healthcare system at large, lack of culturally competent/diverse providers, and underinsurance, it can be understood that the healthcare system, not designed with Black folks in mind, continues to work against the community today. While glimpsing the outright truth of the matter may appear bleak, Spokane community leaders have taken notice of these discrepancies and are taking action to help fix them from the ground up. Alethea Dumas is one of these people.

Dumas is the Program Manager for Equity and Engagement at Better Health Together, a local non-profit. She has also started hosting and facilitating virtual spaces for Black healing within the last year upon noticing the pandemic's disproportionate effect on Black mental health. The spaces are essentially used to talk about experiences, as well as share support and resources. Dumas also mentioned that it seems the virtual spaces have become a kind of substitute for professional care, largely due to a lack of access and representation.



Looking on a larger scale, one can quickly find the truth in this. Of all the African-American people who need access to mental health services, only one-in-three actually receives it, according to the American Psychiatric Association. The APA also acknowledges that, in 2015, 86% of working psychologists in the US were white, while only 4% identified as Black or African-American. These statistics not only validate concerns about the lack of access and representation, but raise more questions about culturally competent care.

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The Adultification of Black Girls: Preserve and Protect Black Girlhood

By Jada Richardson

The adultification of Black girls is an issue erased from conversations surrounding the dismantling of white supremacy and the centuries old patriarchy. Not only has this issue been erased from conversations on policy reform and systemic reconstruction, it has also been viewed as a "cultural norm," causing many to become complicit with the dehumanization of Black girls.

This form of dehumanization is a continuation of the historic emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse inflicted on young Black children, specifically girls. The practice of adultification has led to experiences of unsolicited redirection and discipline within schools, and experiences of violence at home and in neighborhoods.

For me, I experienced adultification through unsolicited redirection and disciplinary practices that included isolation. I can clearly remember the report cards I received throughout Kindergarten to Fifth grade. Not the grades themselves, but the repetitive comments made on my "mature" social behavior. My frequently asked questions and insistent hand raising were viewed as a threat to the productivity of the classroom.

There were teachers that believed my behavior was malicious and troublesome, instead of recognizing that my behavior was a result of boredom. They thought that my advancement was a dysfunction. In class-



rooms where "normalcy" was superior and innocence was equated with skin tone, my strengths were interpreted as threats, blatant defiance to authority. I was experiencing adultification, the idea that Black girls are less innocent than their peers.

Adultification categorizes Black girls as challenging and disruptive for exhibiting age-appropriate behaviors. A report from the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection showed that Black girls are exposed to adultification as early as preschool.

Continued on Page 31

Meet the Spokesman Review's New Racial Equity Reporter



On June 14, Amber Dodd will start work at the Spokesman Review as their new Race Relations and Racial Equity Reporter. The position, which will explore and cover issues surrounding racial equity and systemic racism, among other topics, will provide coverage for both the Spokesman review and the Black Lens Newspaper, in a one of a kind partnership that is setting a precedent for newspaper collaborations around the country.

Funded through the Community Journalism and Civic Engagement Fund at Innovia Foundation, with a \$50,000 donation from the Michael Conley Charitable Fund and a \$60,000 matching donation from the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund, the reporting position will be named in honor of Carl Maxey, Spokane's influential civil rights leader and first prominent Black attorney.

Recognizing Amber's 2,500 mile trek across the United States to relocate to Spokane, I thought I would spend

a little time chatting with her before she gets here and introduce her to the Spokane community. An excerpt of our conversation follows.

Where were you born, where did you grow up and all that kind of stuff?

I was born in Baltimore. My parents moved around a lot, but Baltimore is like the base. That's where my grandma lives. That's where most of my family is from on my mother's side. My dad is from Mississippi.

I spent grades 3-5 in an all white neighborhood and I think that was my first time kind of seeing the complications of race and what exactly it means to be Black in a very white setting. So, I was introduced to race, the theory of how race interacts with social constructs, very early.

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ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

My Tank Is Empty

I've been told on many occasions that people turn to this page first to see what it is that I have to say this month. Who am I angry at now? What issue has my blood boiling this week? What am I passionate about or frustrated about or who am I annoyed with this time?

I consider it a compliment that people care what I care about. That matters a lot! So, I try very hard every month to fill this space. It's like a private conversation between me and my readers.

This month there was a lot going on. Between the 100th Anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the One Year Anniversary of the murder of George Floyd and the lack of real change, the commemoration of Juneteenth, the ongoing struggle to address the global pandemic that is COVID-19, and a visit to the Veteran's Memorial Cemetery in Medical Lake to honor my dad on Memorial Day, my brain is fried and my tank is empty.



The paper is finished, hooray. It's late, but it's finished. So right now, I'm going to practice a little self-care and instead of racking my brain to come up with something interesting to say, I'm going to pretend like I'm Facebook and share a cute animal picture.

Awww... Look at that face?

By the way, it's that loving look that keeps me going when I'm sick and tired of racism and racists and even the Black Lens.

Be back next month. :)



THE BLACK LENS NEWS

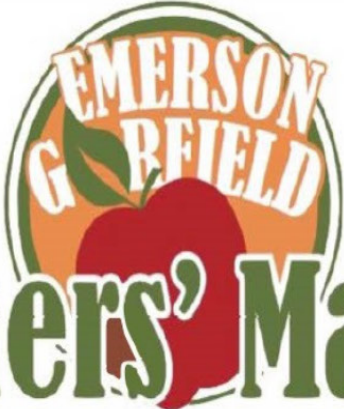
The Black Lens is an independent community newspaper, based in Spokane, WA, that it is focused on the news, events, issues, people and information that is important to Spokane's African American/Black Community and beyond. The paper is published on the first of each month.

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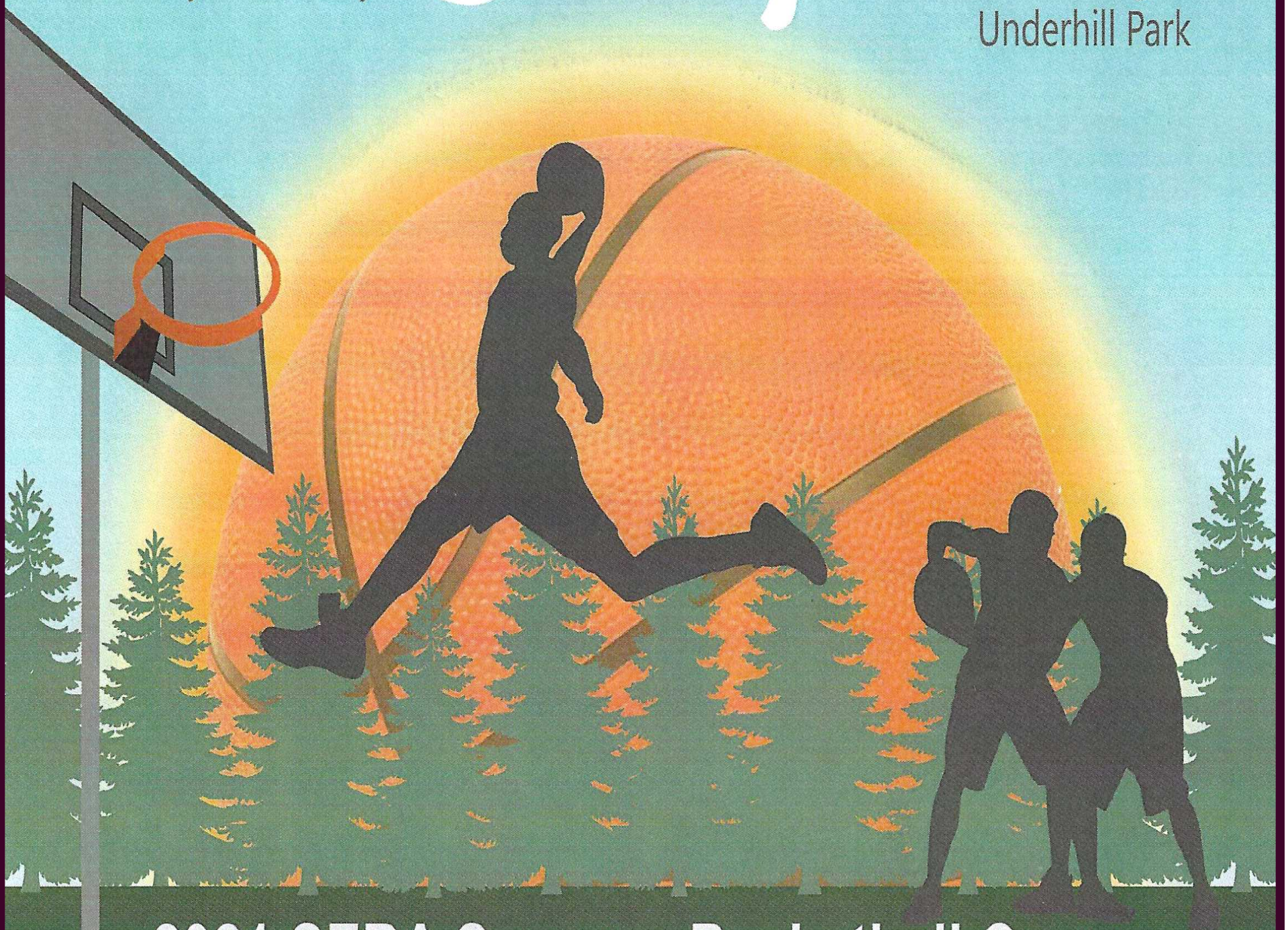
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For more information and to sign up, visit our website
spokaneeastsidereunionassociation.com



YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey

Mongoloid, Caucasoid, Negroid

Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) were the European scientists responsible for the development of racist classification systems in science. The origin of racist structures in the study of man bloomed into a complete pseudoscience, or false science, creating myths such as “black” and “white”.

Known as the “Father of Modern Taxonomy”, Carl Linnaeus’ book, *Systema Naturae* (1758), is considered the origin of European scientific bigotry. In the book Linnaeus creates an artificial classification system for the five “varieties” of “human species”, “varying by culture and place”. In this hierarchal system, it is no coincidence that he placed Africans near the bottom, just above “monsters”:

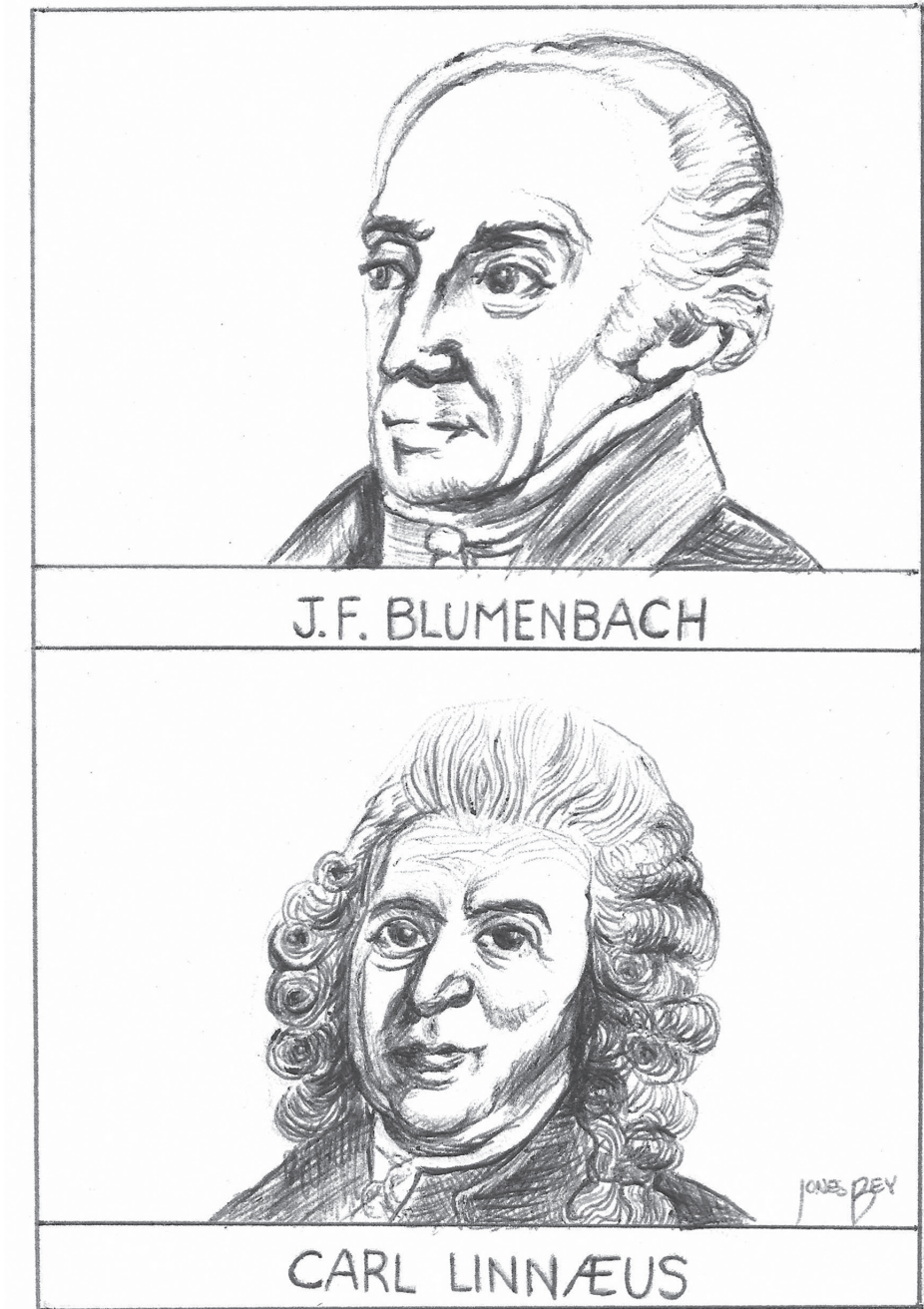
1. Americanus – red, choleric, righteous, black, straight hair, stubborn, zealous, free, painting himself with red lines, and regulated by customs.
2. Europeanus – white, sanguine, brown; with abundant, long hair, blue eyes; gentle, acute, inventive; covered with close vestments; and governed by laws.
3. Asiaticus – yellow, melancholic, stiff; black hair, dark eyes; severe, haughty, greedy; covered with loose clothing; and ruled by opinions.
4. Afer or Africanus – black, phlegmatic, relaxed; black, frizzled hair; silky skin, flat nose, tumid lips; females without shame; mammary glands give milk abundantly; crafty, sly, lazy, cunning, lustful, careless, anoints himself with grease; and governed by caprice.
5. Monstrosus – Homo feralis (Feral man), Juvenis lupinus hessinsis (Hessian wolf-boy, or humans raised by animals), Juvenis hannoveranus (Hannoverian boy), Puella campanica (Wild-girl of

Champagne), Homo monstrosus (Monstrous Man), Patagonian giant, Dwarf of the Alps and the Hottentot. One can find in this classification system the origin of stereotypes that Black people have endured through the ages.

In his published book, “On the Natural Variety of Mankind” (1775 then revised to 1795), anthropologist and zoologist Friedrich Blumenbach first used the term “Caucasian” as a racial classification in 1795, and remarks of the Caucasian variety “....we consider the most handsome and becoming.” Though Blumenbach leaned away from gross stereotypes and sought common unification for all men, he admitted that his system was inadequate, confusing, and generalized whole groups. For example, in his Ethiopian variety, Blumenbach states “...all the Africans except those of the north”, meaning some Africans don’t fit as Africans.

The terms “red”, “yellow”, “white”, and “black”, used by these scientists have no connection to natural science nor any truth in Mother Nature. There is, in fact, no such thing as black or white people. The labels don’t tell anyone where you are from or connect you to a piece of soil somewhere on the Earth land – a national name. Black and white aren’t national identities. They were artificial constructs created by European men for their own purposes.

The caste systems have created more artificial schism and disunity between the peoples of Earth than they have united. We are all one human family, there is only one race of humans on Earth – the human race. Race is the species, and through that one connecting link, the belly button, we are one family. That mark of man is his connection to the “womb-man”, or woman. God and Mother Na-



ture working through woman and matriarchy hold the terms and conditions for our genetic differences. The system that created the terms Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid have nothing to do with evidentiary science nor God’s workings through Natural Laws.

Sources:
artandpopularculture.com/Scientific_racism_in_the_work_of_Carl_Linnaeus
blackcentraleurope.com/sources/1750-1850/blumencach-classifies-humanity
No Such Thing As White & Black People: Jane Elliot Says Drama Persists If We Keep Using Those Terms – Youtube.

Juneteenth Becomes an Official, Paid Holiday for State Employees in WA



(Source: Seattle Medium, seattlemedium.com, juneteenth.com)

A bill (HB1016) that will make Juneteenth a legal state holiday in Washington was introduced by state Rep. Melanie Morgan (D-Parkland), who serves as both Deputy Majority Floor Leader and Chair of the Members of Color Caucus (MOCC).

Morgan, who was disappointed when the bill did not pass out of committee last year, said it was "very disheartening" but that she was "not giving up." She didn't. With bipartisan support, the House passed the measure in February on a vote of 89-9 vote. In April it passed the Senate on a vote of 47-1, and in May, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee's signature will make Juneteenth a legal paid state holiday starting in 2022.

"I am so proud of the State of Washington," said Morgan. "I asked my fellow legislators to pass this bill so that we can show the country that we are serious about equity in this state. Recognizing Juneteenth as a legal state holiday is a down payment towards racial reconciliation and healing. This is just a continuation of dismantling racism, just as when in 2020 the legislature passed the State Office of Equity to bring parity to communities of color. There is

more work to be done and I am excited to bring more civil rights legislation to our legislature."

Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news (Order Number 3) 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. Today, Juneteenth celebrations are held in most, if not all, 50 states.

"When I spoke before the Senate Committee on State Government & Elections on March 10, I stressed the impact of chattel slavery on those who were enslaved, and how it has impacted us today. I want to thank Senator T’wina Nobles for delivering that message and sharing my words so beautifully during final passage in the Senate," Morgan continued.

"Juneteenth is a recognition, a true acknowledgement, that chattel slavery happened in this country. This is how we begin to advocate for true racial equity and real inclusion."

NAACP: Uniting Our Region



Leadership Perspective

By Nicole Jenkins-Rosenkrantz



My mama told me that I came out the womb letting folks know that no one was bossing me. She spent a lot of energy in my childhood reminding me that I am a child and that some adults could indeed boss me. I have never been convinced of this... to this day. If you know me, you know.

As I transformed into adulthood and entered the workforce it became apparent to me as a BIPOC woman my direct communication style was not going to be accepted in professional spaces. Although I was continually passed over for promotions, the feedback I received was always along the line of “we are not offering you the promotion but you sure could run this place someday”.

I sought out professional development and mentorship after many years of being looked over and feeling that climbing the ladder was going to be an impossible feat. Anytime I went to a training, if I saw a woman of color in leadership, I would awkwardly attempt to recruit her to mentor me; they always seemed like unicorns to me because they were so few and far between, especially in Eastern Washington.

Servant Leadership is a leadership style that is often spoken about. Although the word “servant” has always given me pause, the concepts of growing people and building community course through my veins naturally.

I attribute this to being a part of the BIPOC community. At our best, we take care of each other with no questions asked and nothing owed. At our worst, we will take care of each other and keep track of our good deeds on a tally sheet.

There are many leadership programs that tout Servant Leadership as their core belief with an underlying mission of bringing community together. I have participated in several. With the exception of one program, I found myself to be one of very few BIPOC folks accepted, often feeling uncomfortable and tokenized. As I reflect on these experiences, I wonder how can we do better Spokane? How are we lifting up each other and our BIPOC youth with purposeful leadership training to prepare them for adulthood? Are we providing them with chairs to sit at adult tables and giving them true voice? Are we providing the tools to help them navigate a world that will want them to conform to dominant culture standards in order to achieve success?

I am cordially inviting you to join me on this journey of creating Beloved Community. We truly can only be our best when we lock arms with each other and commit to the understanding that there will be rupture but there can always be repair, along with accountability. We are all leaders and it is our role to take care of each other. Won't you join me?

Nicole Jenkins-Rosenkrantz is the daughter of Karen Jenkins, who is the daughter of Gabrielle Liggins, who is the daughter of Iola Sconiers. Full time wife, mother, and daughter while moonlighting as the 2nd VP of the NAACP.

For more information about the Spokane NAACP visit: naacpspokane.org



"Our future must be rooted in a just transition. This involves moving away from a society functioning on extraction to one rooted in deep democracy and to one integrating regenerative processes, cooperation and acknowledgment of interdependence and again, where all rights are respected and honored. We have to get to a place where we can live in harmony with each other and the Earth."
- Jacqui Patterson, Senior Director, Environment and Climate Justice

Environmental injustice, including the proliferation of climate change, systematically impacts communities of color and low-income communities in the U.S. and around the world.

Environmental injustice is about people in Detroit, Ohio, Chicago, Memphis, Kansas City, and elsewhere who have died and others who are chronically ill because of exposure to toxins.

Historically, American society has failed to make the connection in terms of the direct impact of environmental injustices, including climate change, on our own lives, families, and communities, all of whom depend on the physical environment and its bounty.

Help the NAACP address the many practices that are harming communities nationwide and worldwide by submitting our survey to describe the environmental issues of concern in your community and to receive assistance from NAACP's Climate Justice Initiative Technical Assistance Program.

To Complete the Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NAACPClimateJustice>

Black Wall Street and the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921

(Source: Blackpast.org, Contributed by Tricia Wagner)

Greenwood was a wealthy all-Black community on the Arkansas River in northern Tulsa, Oklahoma. In the early 1900s, Booker T. Washington called the town “Negro Wall Street” (now called “Black Wall Street”).

In Tulsa, railroad tracks separated where white and Black people lived. Blacks in northern Tulsa were not welcome to shop at white owned stores and businesses in southern Tulsa. Black citizens decided to form all-Black towns. They spent their money in their own community aiding other Blacks.

By early 1921, over 10,000 Blacks lived in Black Wall Street, centered around Greenwood Avenue. Most Black residents came to Tulsa around the time Oklahoma became a state. Some Blacks were descendants of slaves who had belonged to Native American Indians. They arrived in Oklahoma when the United States government removed the In-

dians to reservations. Some Blacks were descendants of runaway slaves from the South.

Both whites and Blacks moved to Oklahoma when oil was discovered between 1901 and 1905. In 1906, O.W. Gurley founded Black Wall Street. Blacks came from Kansas and the Deep South for an opportunity to get a fresh start and make a good living.

Tulsa was a fast-growing modern town for its time. It boasted a skyline with tall office buildings, electric trolley cars, and beautiful homes. Tulsa had four different railroads, telephone service, and an airport by 1921.

Most Blacks were not usually allowed to work in the oil industry or manufacturing jobs. Many worked long hours for white business owners as unskilled workers. However, Black Wall Street had many bright and talented professionals. Black Wall Street had its own doctors, lawyers, real estate agents, teachers, dentists, and entertainers. There were over two hundred businesses. The town



had newspapers, schools, theaters, restaurants, grocery stores, pharmacies, hotels, parks, churches, a library, and large homes.

Black Wall Street was a symbol of success. It was one of the wealthiest Black towns in America for fifteen years until the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, which burnt the town to the ground.

A mob of white people attacked and murdered Black residents, completely destroying the neighborhood. It is estimated that up to 300 people died in the violent killing on May 31, 1921. Most were Black. More than 1,400 Black homes and business were burned to the ground, 35 square blocks were destroyed, millions of dollars were lost and thousands of Black people were left homeless.

Efforts to try to return Black Wall Street to its glory have been difficult. The town was rebuilt and did well in the 1930s and 1940s. But in the 1950s when desegregation – the separation of Black and white people – ended, Blacks could spend their money outside of their Black community. Talented Black people moved out of Black Wall Street.

In the 1960s urban renewal programs allowed privately owned properties to be taken down and new businesses/ buildings were built. In the 1970s a new interstate highway was built through the middle of the neighborhood, and current development, Black residents say, is not being directed at the Black families who were most impacted.

On the 100 year anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre, the history of Black Wall Street is finally being told.



Photo Credit: The University of Tulsa, McFarlin Library Archives



BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Black Future Co-Op Fund Grants \$1M to Black-led Organizations in WA to Build Black Prosperity

SEATTLE—The Black Future Co-op Fund, Washington’s first all Black-led philanthropy organization, announced \$1 million in grants to 40 Black-led organizations across the state that are leading powerful work to ignite Black generational wealth, health, and well-being.

“Black-led organizations are an integral part of the fabric of Washington state,” says Fund architect and Byrd Barr Place CEO Andrea Caupain Sanderson. “With these grants, the Black Future Co-op Fund is saying ‘we see you,’ and acknowledging the critical work these organizations do every day on behalf of Black Washingtonians.”

The Fund’s vision is a Washington state, working cooperatively, where all Black people are liberated, prosperous, and self-determined to fully live our lives.

Grant recipients are Black-led organizations throughout Washington state that are furthering Black liberation. They are providing culturally supportive education and youth mentoring, powering economic mobility through workforce development and training, advancing civil rights, and supporting healing from racial trauma through creative arts and culture programs.

“We believe Black Washingtonians should have the resources, equitable opportunity, and freedom to live their fullest potential,” says Fund architect and Washington STEM CEO Angela Jones. “These grants invest in Black-led organizations that are creating that path to Black generational prosperity.”



Black Future Co-Op Fund Founders (L to R): T'wina Nobles (CEO Tacoma Urban League), Michelle Merriweather (CEO Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle), Angela Jones (CEO Washington STEM), and Andrea Caupin (CEO Byrd Barr Place).

Spokane "We See You" Grant Recipients include: Carl Maxey Center, Fresh Soul, Heal Spokane, Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, Raze, Takeall Foundation, Terrain, and The HOPE Club (Hold On Pain Ends).

Each grantee will receive \$25,000 in unrestricted funds as an acknowledgment of their work. This initial round of grants were made barrier free, without a stringent application or qualification process, breaking down obstacles to accessing needed resources.

The Black Future Co-op Fund represents a new model for philanthropy — establishing trust and sharing power with Black Washingtonians, following the lead of Black communities, and intentionally investing in Black well-being. For generations, Black-led organizations have been systematically under-resourced. A report by Echoing Green and The Bridgespan Group found that Black-led organizations had 45 percent less revenue and 91 percent less unrestricted net assets than white-led organizations.

“Since its inception in the early 20th century, philanthropy has been based on a lopsided power dynamic,” says Fund architect and Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle CEO Michelle Merriweather. “Donors without connections to the communities they say they want to serve, decide where, when, and how they want to give away funds. We aim to change that with a model that is genuinely informed by the community.”

Inspired by the uprising for racial justice in 2020, the four architects launched the Fund with a long-term commitment to heal from multigenerational trauma and replenish resources for Black Washingtonians.

“The Black Future Co-op Fund is answering a call that has gone unanswered for too long,” says Fund architect and State Senator T'wina Nobles. “With a collaborative, cooperative, and community mindset, we can create prosperity for all.”

For more information about the "We See You" Grant and The Black Future Co-Op Fund visit: blackfuturewa.org.

Maya Angelou and Sally Ride Among the Influential Women to be Honored on U.S. Quarters

Source: Brian Good, diversityinc.com, Photo Credit: Chuck Burton/AP/Shutterstock

The coins you carry in your pocket are about to experience a huge shift in gender equity and representation. A newly announced government initiative will be commemorating up to 20 different women pioneers on the back of U.S. quarters between 2022 and 2025.

Alexa Mikhail of nonprofit newsroom, The 19th, reported that the move to honor significant women in the nation’s history is a national first, adding that the public will even have a role in deciding which women will be minted on the coins.

Rep. Barbara Lee of California has been working on this legislation to get women’s faces on American coins since 2017.

“I wanted to make sure that women would be honored, and their images and names be lifted up on our coins. I mean, it’s outrageous that we haven’t,” Lee said. “Hopefully, the public really delves into who these women were because these women have made such a contribution to our country in so many ways.”

Lee drafted the legislation behind the “Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act,” with Rosa Rios, the Treasury official who oversaw the United States Mint under former President Barack Obama. The legislation creating the new program was eventually signed into law in 2020.

“The program will have the United States Mint circulate up to five chosen women on the reverse (tail) side of the quarter-dollar from 2022 to 2025 — allowing for up to 20 women to have their faces on U.S. quarters by the end of 2025,” Mikhail reported. “The Mint selected the first two women to be in circulation by 2022: the civil rights activist and poet Maya Angelou and astronaut Dr. Sally Ride.”

Future honorees will be selected by a panel that includes Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and representatives from the



American Women’s History Initiative at the Smithsonian Institution, the National Women’s History Museum and the Congressional Bipartisan Women’s Caucus.

In order to qualify for the honor, a nominated woman must be deceased and should be “influential in a myriad of fields and time periods including, but not limited to, civil rights, the women’s suffrage movement, government, the humanities or science.”

“I think it’s important that the public understands and knows how to weigh in on this. That’s a mammoth kind of effort that we’re mounting, but we’re getting the word out,” Lee said. “I think it is a good organizing tool that communities should use and have children kind of tell stories and do the research and come up with who they think would be the woman that should be submitted. It’s about time that people who exchange currency and coins understand that women deserve things. This is long past due.”

The last woman to appear on a U.S. coin was Sacagawea, the Indigenous woman who helped the Lewis and Clark Expedition explore the Louisiana Purchase territory. She was honored in 2000 when gold \$1 Sacagawea coins went into circulation.

Ohio's First Black-Owned Breast Cancer Center Opens in Akron

(Source: Brandee Sanders, newsone.com; Photo Credit: Lavar Jacobs)

An Akron entrepreneur is turning pain into purpose by using his business as a vessel to honor his late mother. According to WKYC, Lavar Jacobs



recently opened a breast cancer center to pay homage to his mom who succumbed to the disease 12 years ago.

The center—dubbed the Kim Jacobs Breast Cancer Resource Center—is the first Black-owned breast cancer facility in the state of Ohio. Jacobs, a social entrepreneur who founded the breast cancer awareness nonprofit organization Not Just October, says after witnessing the hurdles his mother faced while fighting the disease, he wanted to cultivate a space where women facing the same obstacles can receive support and resources.

The center, which officially opened its doors on May 3, will go beyond providing medical care and take a holistic approach towards helping women who have breast cancer navigate their daily lives. It will provide everything from therapy to financial support and home cleaning services. The center honors women who have lost their lives to breast cancer. Photos of the women line the walls as an ode to their strength and resiliency.

Jacobs says he envisioned creating a facility like the Kim Jacobs Breast Cancer Resource Center since losing his mother in 2009. “I’ve always had the vision of the Kim Jacobs Breast Cancer Resource Center,” he said in a statement. “She didn’t get to do everything she had planned. She deserves more of a legacy. She was my best friend. If you knew me while my mom was still living, you knew how close me and my mom were. I know she’s looking down right now like, ‘That’s my baby. Look what my son’s doing. There he is.’”

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Damon Weaver, Student Journalist Who Landed Pres. Obama Interview, Dies Unexpectedly At 23

(Source: Anoa Changa, newsonline.com; Photo Credit: Getty Images)

Damon Weaver was in elementary school when he turned heads with his interview with former President Barack Obama. An inspiration to many, Damon unexpectedly passed away recently. He was just 23 years old.

Before meeting Obama, Damon had one-on-one interviews with professional athletes Dwyane Wade and Anquan Boldin. In a throwback interview with The Palm Beach Post, a young Damon described his excitement at interviewing notable Black celebrities during the 2009 inauguration festivities.

Oprah Winfrey, T.D. Jakes, L.L. Cool J and Chris Tucker were among those dazzled by the charm of the student journalist. Damon also matched wits with Diane Sawyer during an appearance on Good Morning America.

Damon got his big break in 2008 when a teacher wanted students to



join a local news project. He was a natural in front of the camera. Before he interviewed Obama, Damon snagged an interview with then-Sen. Joe Biden ahead of the 2008 election.

After a year of trying and with the help of celebrity friends like Wade, Damon finally got to talk with the nation's first Black president.

A bright kid with an amazing smile, Damon enjoyed being out front. His

sister Candice Hardy described him as "the life of the party".

A graduate of Royal Palm Beach High School in Florida, Damon was a communications major at Albany State University in Georgia. Albany State offered the bright young reporter a full scholarship after seeing his elementary school portfolio, according to the South Florida Sun Sentinel.

It's been two weeks since Damon passed away. His family continues to wait for a final determination as to his cause of death.

Hardy told the Palm Beach post her brother wanted to pursue a career in sports journalism covering the NFL. A trailblazer in student journalism, Damon paved the way for kid reporters to be more than cute novelties.

"A lot of people looked up to him," Hardy said. "With him being so young, he made a way for more students to engage in journalism."

10-Year-Old Nigerian American Is Now A U.S. National Chess Master

Source: Bernadette Giacomazzo, afrotech.com; Photo Credit: Kayode James Adewumi

Nicholas Kristof, who has been covering Tanitoluwa Adewumi's story for The New York Times for many years, broke the news.

"Remember Tani Adewumi, the Nigerian refugee kid I wrote about 2 years ago, who won the NY State chess championship while in a homeless shelter? Now, well housed (thanks to you readers!), he just won a championship and is officially a National Chess Master as a 10-yr-old 5th grader!" he wrote.

Things could have gone many ways for the 10-year-old Nigerian-American. While his family was living and thriving in Nigeria, they were threatened with violence from the Boko Haram terrorists. The threat of violence forced the Adewumi family to flee from Nigeria in 2017.



Adewumi was enrolled in the nearby P.S. 116 school, where a coach by the name of Shawn Martinez immediately showed him how to play chess. Young Tanitoluwa immediately took to the game, and his school was kind enough to waive any entrance fees into the chess tournaments.

When Kristof took the story to The New York Times, it attracted both national and international attention. Readers began a fundraising drive to get the Adewumi family into a home, and now, thanks to his recent win, Adewumi is a certified chess master.

Howard University Names College of Fine Arts After Iconic Alumnus Chadwick A. Boseman

Source: Howard Newsroom Staff, newsroom.howard.edu

Washington — Howard University President Wayne A. I. Frederick is pleased to announce that the newly reestablished College of Fine Arts will be named in honor of alumnus Chadwick Boseman, whose remarkable career as an actor, director, writer, and producer inspired millions around the world. The news comes just weeks after the announcement of alumna and actress Phylicia Rashad as dean of the college. During his tenure at Howard, Boseman led a student protest against the absorption of the College of Fine Arts into the College of Arts & Sciences. Long after graduating, he, along with other alumni, continued to engage in conversations with Howard University administration- their efforts were not in vain. Plans to re-establish the College of Fine Arts were announced in early 2018.

"When Chadwick Boseman returned to campus in 2018 to serve as our commencement speaker, he called Howard a magical place. During his visit, I announced our plans to re-establish the College of Fine Arts and he was filled with ideas and plans to support the effort in a powerful way," said President Frederick. "Chadwick's love for Howard University was sincere, and although he did not live to see those plans through to fruition, it is my honor to ensure his legacy lives on through the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts with the support of his wife and the Chadwick Boseman Foundation. I'm also elated to have the support of The Walt Disney Company's Executive Chairman Bob Iger, who has graciously volunteered to lead the fundraising effort to build a state-of-the art facility and endowment for the college."

"We would like to thank President Wayne A. I. Fredrick and the Howard University Board of Trustees for honoring our beloved Chad with the renaming of the reestablished College of



Fine Arts. We would also like to thank Bob Iger for spearheading the fundraising efforts of this development," said The Boseman Family. "Chad fought to preserve the College of Fine Arts during his matriculation at Howard and remained dedicated to the fight throughout his career, and he would be overjoyed by this development. His time at Howard University helped shape both the man and the artist that he became, committed to truth, integrity, and a determination to transform the world through the power of storytelling. We are confident that under the dynamic leadership of his former professor and mentor the indomitable Phylicia Rashad, the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts will inspire artistic scholars for many generations."

"I am extremely pleased that Howard University has chosen to honor my husband in this way and elated that Ms. Rashad has accepted the role as Dean," said Boseman's wife, Simone Ledward-Boseman. "Chad was a very proud Bison — both Howard and Ms. Rashad played integral roles in his journey as an artist. The re-establishment of the College of Fine Arts brings this part of his story full-circle and ensures that his legacy will continue to inspire young storytellers for years to come."

Making History: Simone Biles Becomes First Woman to Land Yurchenko Double Pike

Source: Charlene Rhinehart, blackenterprisemag.com; Photo Credit: NBC Sports News
Simone Biles made history at the U.S. Classic during her special Yurchenko double pike vault performance. She's making a comeback that's gearing fans up for the Tokyo Games.

On Saturday, May 22nd, the five-time Olympic medalist did something no other woman has done, adding another record-breaking title to her name. Biles has been working on the Yurchenko double pike since last year, according to The Washington Post. Her courage and hard work paid off Saturday night at the U.S. Classic held in Indianapolis.

"Never in a million years did I think it was going to be feasible," Biles said. "It was just to play around, be a kid. And I was never mentally strong or



physically strong enough to do it back then anyways. I feel like now that I'm a little bit older, mentally and physically, I feel ready and prepared."

The Yurchenko double pike vault is named for Russian gymnast Natalia Yurchenko. The gold medal-winning gymnast performed the move in the 1980s. Typically, the stunt stops at a single flip. But Biles pursued a higher level of difficulty, adding another flip and making it a double pike. The move involves a roundoff onto the springboard, a handspring onto the vault and a double backflip in a pike position before the landing.

Biles has 19 world medals and 25 world gold medals.

Tina Turner, Jay-Z Named 2021 Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame Inductees

Source: Charise Frazier, newsonline.com; Photo Credit: Getty Images

Eight nominees this year are Black artists which include: Mary J. Blige, Jay-Z, Chaka Khan, Fela Kuti, LL Cool J, Tina Turner and Dionne Warwick and Tom Morello, co-founder of nominee Rage Against The Machine, who is bi-racial.

The hall previously stated the class included the "most diverse list of inductees in the history of the organization."

Jay-Z and Turner beat out a slew of iconic Black musicians like Mary J. Blige, Chaka Khan, Fela Kuti, LL



Cool J, and Dionne Warwick.

Jay-Z and the Foo Fighters will be inducted as first time nominees, while LL Cool J has been nominated six times without being

named as an inductee. Turner was previously inducted in 1991 with her former husband. Khan was also previously nominated, three times as a solo artist and four times as a member of the band Rufus.

The 36th annual ceremony will be held at 8 p.m. ET Oct. 30 at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, Ohio.

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

Volcano Eruption in Congo Kills 31 and Displaces Thousands

Source: Larry Madowo, Saskya Vandoorne and Niamh Kennedy, cnn.com

At least 31 people have died and hundreds of children were feared missing or separated from their families after Mount Nyiragongo erupted on May 22 in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Government spokesman Patrick Muyaya confirmed the updated death toll in a statement, adding it would probably rise as first responders are still searching for people.

Nine people died in a car accident as they tried to flee, four people died while trying to escape a prison and two people died from burns, Muyaya said in an earlier statement.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that chil-



dren were lost amid the chaos as residents fled the nearby city of Goma on Saturday. More than 150 children have been separated from their families and more than 170 children are feared to be missing, the agency said.

Around 8,000 people crossed into Rwanda from the DRC to seek refuge following the eruption, with some returning back a day later, Rwanda's Emergency Management Ministry said. Thou-

sands of residents in Goma spent the night outdoors following the eruption, according to a Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) spokesperson.

A DRC government spokesperson told CNN Monday that they have not officially advised those who evacuated their homes to return, as seismic activity continues to be recorded at the volcano.

The volcano began erupting at 6 p.m. local time on Saturday, May 22, and finally slowed down at 4 a.m. Sunday, according to a statement from the government.

The lava stopped just 1.2 kilometers (approximately 0.7 miles) from Goma's gates, it said.

Six-hundred homes around Goma have been destroyed and five schools flattened, according to NRC estimates.

COVID-19 Pandemic Leads to Drop of Maternal Health Care in Africa



(Source: Stacy M. Brown; Nnpa Newswire, blackpressusa.com; Photo Credit: IStockPhoto/NNPA)

While almost every country has experienced disruption to its health services since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, several countries in Africa have been severely impacted, leading to the suspension of maternal, neonatal, and child health care.

Project HOPE, the nonprofit that has worked to save women and babies' lives worldwide since 1985, issued a news release warning that decades of progress made to prevent maternal complications and deaths across the continent could be reversed.

The organization calls on countries to develop public health responses that ensure women's health services during times of emergency.

"Globally, and in many African countries, women have borne the brunt of the harmful effects of the pandemic. They have had limited to no access to essential maternal and child health services for a significant time period as a result of COVID-19 restrictions and scarce resources in already overstretched hospitals and health centers," Eden Ahmed Mdluli, Senior Technical Officer for Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health at Project HOPE, wrote in the release.

In 2020, the United Nations announced that about 10,000 health workers would receive training to support mothers and newborns in Africa.

The training would occur through a partnership between the UN

Children's Fund, UNICEF, and Laerdal Global Health, the non-profit arm of a Norwegian company that provides innovative training, educational and therapy solutions for emergency medical care and patient safety.

The five-year program aims to improve maternal and newborn health in some communities with the highest mortality rates in Eastern and Southern Africa.

UN officials said it would start the program in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Kenya and later expand to other countries in the region.

According to UNICEF, despite recent and promising progress in maternal and neonatal health over the past decades, maternal and newborn mortality rates in the Eastern and Southern Africa region remain alarming.

In 2017, roughly 70,000 women in those regions died due to complications during pregnancy and birth, while in 2019, more than 440,000 newborns died in the first 28 days after delivery, UNICEF officials noted.

Project HOPE officials noted that while more data is needed to fully document the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on women and children across Africa, some preliminary numbers have shown a drop in utilization of essential reproductive, maternal, and neonatal health services.

Additionally, a recent modeling study across 118 of the world's countries estimated that between 8.3 percent and 38.6 percent more pregnant women could die each month.

NBA Announces All-New NBA Africa

Source: Rédaction Africanews; Photo Credit: Africa News

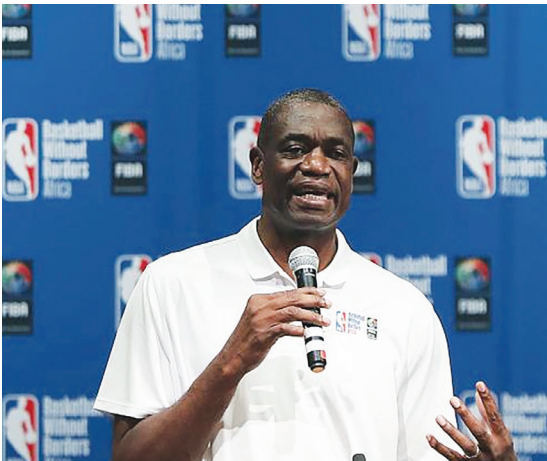
The National Basketball Association announced on Monday that it has formed NBA Africa, which will oversee all league business on the continent, including the Basketball Africa League (BAL).

At least five former NBA players - Junior Bridgeman, Grant Hill, Joakim Noah, Congo native Dikembe Mutombo and South Sudan native Luol Deng - are investors in the venture.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and Deputy Commissioner Mark Tatum will be on the board of directors.

Silver said the current enterprise value of NBA Africa is worth "nearly \$1 billion," though amounts of the league and individual investments were not disclosed.

The league said some of its primary areas of focus with the venture are to grow the BAL and to launch additional NBA academies in Africa, like they have done in Senegal.



"The growth and development is something we're all enormously proud of," Silver said.

There are at least 55 players currently in the NBA who were either born in Africa or have a parent from there.

The NBA has played three summer exhibitions in Africa in recent years and there are hopes for more, but there are no firm plans yet to bring preseason or regular season games to the continent.

The Black Lens is in Africa



On May 24, Theresa Brooks shared on Facebook that she was "on the ground in Freetown", located in West Africa. "It's a pleasure to share Black Lens from my hometown of Spokane, WA", she wrote. "They love each newspaper. Next trip home I would love to gather more." How exciting that my newspaper made it to the continent of Africa. Now it's my turn. Thank you, Theresa!

A Different View

with

Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane City Council

Hello Sistas, Brothas and Supporters of the Black Lens, can you believe it's already June?

That means graduations, parties, some students going back home, some out of school for the summer, for others it's a slower pace and personally for me, now that the days are longer and sunnier, I can get my Vitamin D on. Can somebody tell me where the barbeque is at?

Also, officially here in Washington State, we can proudly say that June means Juneteenth, or Freedom Day! With all of that, there's a lot going on in Spokane, but this month I'm going to speak to you about what happened on the Westside of the Mountains.

Until I took my seat at Spokane City Hall, like a lot of you, I didn't follow much of what was going on in Olympia like I should have. This year's legislative session produced significant and arguably very historic measures on police reform, housing, climate, childcare, taxes and equity, including the aforementioned recognition of Juneteenth as a legal state holiday.

So here are the Cliff Notes version of the bills that were on the Council's Legislative Priorities in the State Legislature:

HB 1054, Police Tactics and Equipment- Bans law enforcement from using chokeholds, neck restraints, and no-knock warrants. The final version of the bill allows officers to use tear gas in the event of barricaded subjects, hostage situations and riots, but only after other methods have been exhausted and the highest elected official in the jurisdiction signs off. (For us that would be Mayor Woodward)

As the city was negotiating the last police contract there were some sticking points addressed in HB 1054. Going forward the state has taken these issues out of contract negotiations and standardized them across the state. So for the City of Spokane and the City of Cheney, Spokane Valley, Rockford and cities across the State, policing standards are the same. These changes will play a role as we negotiate the new police contact this year, so stay tuned for that!

SB 5055, Law Enforcement Arbitration- Creates a panel appointed by the Public Relations Employment Commission to oversee all law enforcement discipline arbitration cases in Washington State and publish their findings. Members of the panel will complete comprehensive training on implicit bias and anti-racism along with education on daily law enforcement experience.

HB 1335, Unlawful Racial Restrictions- Establishes a grant program to review existing deeds and covenants for unlawful racial restrictions to property owners and other discriminatory restrictions and provide notice of such restrictions to property owners and county auditors. It also creates a process for removing unlawful provisions from property titles. (Looking at you Racially Restrictive Housing Covenants)

HB 1236, Just Cause Evictions- Specifies exclusive causes for eviction, refusal to renew, and ending a tenancy under the Residential LandLord-Tenant Act and makes other changes to rights and remedies.

With the Eviction Moratorium currently scheduled to end June 30, 2021 and the current housing crisis with less than 1% vacancy rate in the Spokane Region, this issue has been front and center since before I arrived at Council. There are other supports being put in place such as legal assistance to help us responsibly end this crisis.

SB 5237 Early Childhood Education- Creates a new state account for childcare and early learning purposes and includes spending goals and strategies. Expands eligibility and decreases co-payment in the Working Connections Child Care Program and Early Childhood Education Assistance Program. Provides for increased rates, training, grants, supports and services for childcare and early learning providers. For the parents coming back to work after quarantine, you know how important and expensive childcare is!

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS
Additional investments to address housing stability including \$187 million in foreclosure prevention assistance, \$9 million to create an eviction resolution pro-

gram, and \$21 million for legal aid for tenants in need. Significant funding for housing, including \$1 billion in rental and utility assistance, a permanent revenue source for rental assistance and \$175 million for the Housing Trust Fund. \$2.2 million for Volunteers of America's new Crosswalk location; \$2.0 million for the Proclaim Liberty Affordable Housing site in the South Perry District; \$1.38 Million for a roof replacement at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center at East Central; and \$103,000 for Feast Collective of Spokane.

Finally, in regards to the American Recovery Plan Funding, the City of Spokane will receive approximately \$80 million in direct, flexible, Federal relief funds as well as other critical, targeted fiscal aid that could total more than \$100 million to reinvest into the community.

As the City Council's Finance Chair, I will ensure that these funds are distributed equitably and will lift up our community as we move past the pandemic on the path to recovery. It's true what they say y'all: Follow the money!

Thank you to our leaders in the Legislature. Here in Spokane, most of us are represented by the delegation of the 3rd Legislative District. That means State Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig, State House Majority Whip Marcus Riccelli, and State House Appropriations Chair Timm Ormsby. We are lucky to have them committed to our community, causes and concerns! Please reach out to them to show your appreciation or share your opinion of this historic list of legislative accomplishments. Also a shoutout to our Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Erik Poulson for keeping us up to date on legislation!

Enjoy the sunshine and I hope to see y'all at the Juneteenth Celebration on East 5th!


Warmest regards,
Council Member Betsy Wilkerson
Spokane City Council District 2, Position 2
bwilkerson@spokanecity.org

Canopy Credit Union's Justice Roast Fundraiser Still Brewing!

Proceeds from sales of Canopy Credit Union and Ladder Coffee's new coffee collaboration, the Canopy Credit Union Justice Roast, will go to support non-profit organizations in Spokane.

The Carl Maxey Center, located in Spokane's East Central neighborhood, is the first recipient of the profits from the fundraiser which goes through **June 30**.


Laddercoffee.com


canopycu.com

Both Canopy Credit Union and Ladder Coffee care deeply about supporting non-profits that are engaging in social justice work.

Through their two shared locations in Spokane Valley and North Spokane, Canopy & Ladder aim to provide an approachable and welcoming place for EVERYONE in the community.

Stop by and buy a bag of the Canopy Credit Union Justice Roast at any Ladder Coffee location between April 1st – June 30th and 30% of the proceeds will go directly to the Carl Maxey Center!

30% of Proceeds go to Support the Carl Maxey Center from April 1 - June 30!



Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears

Injustice Anywhere...



In studying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I hear statements like these from politicians and pundits, “The middle east is complicated.” “We need to hear from both sides.” “Israel has a right to defend itself.” I’m tired of these simplistic excuses for not recognizing and confronting the realities of the conflict between Israel and Palestine today. Yes, much of its history is complicated, although an all too familiar colonial, supremacist thread runs through the whole story in modern history. Yes, both sides have a very different story to tell, but the incredibly unequal power dynamics of the struggle speaks volumes. Some things are not complicated at all. They are exactly as they appear.

As a person of color in the 21st century, I recognize and resonate with the Palestinian story. Yes, Israel has a right to defend itself, but perhaps they wouldn’t need to if they didn’t discriminate against and oppress Palestinians living both inside and outside of Israel, and if Israel wasn’t determined to take what isn’t rightfully, morally or legally, theirs to take.

There are two major aspects of the current plight of Palestinians in the Middle East. The story of Israel’s ever-encroaching, brutal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is the story that gets the most media attention. The story we rarely hear about is the deeply entrenched nature of Israeli discrimination and repression of Palestinians living in Israel.

I’m going to tell much of this story through the words of other people because they say exactly what needs to be said, and I can’t improve on the telling. Maha Nassar, Associate Professor in the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies, University of Arizona, writes about some of the hard realities for Palestinians living in Israel.

“Discrimination and economic disadvantage continue today. Palestinian towns and villages in Israel face housing shortages and economic underdevelopment. Hiring practices that require job applicants to live in certain areas or to have served in the military – something very few Palestinian citizens do – end up pushing Palestinians into precarious low-wage jobs.

While direct housing discrimination was banned by the courts, Jewish communi-

ties often set up admissions committees that effectively limit the number of Palestinian citizens living in majority Jewish towns.

This de facto segregation is also reflected in Israel’s school system. Students in Arab state schools receive less funding per capita than those in majority Hebrew state schools.

In addition, Palestinian citizens are subjected to “stop-and-frisk” police policies. And professionals face everyday forms of racism from some Jewish Israeli colleagues who are surprised by their level of education.

Palestinian citizens of Israel have been protesting these conditions since the founding of the state, but within limits. In 1964, the Arab nationalist Ard group called for “a just solution for the Palestinian question ... in accordance with the wishes of the Palestinian Arab people.” In response, the Israeli government banned the group and arrested its leaders on charges of endangering state security.”

Dear Indigenous, Black and Brown people, does any of this sound eerily familiar?

The other part of the Palestinian plight, the one that gathers most of the world’s attention is the forced and brutal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel, both areas it does not have an inherent right to occupy. Israel has maintained military rule over some portion of the Palestinian population for all but six months of its 73-year history.

The organization, Human Rights Watch is one of the world’s leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights around the globe. The organization says that while Israel has legitimate security concerns, those concerns do not justify its actions against the Palestinian people, both within its borders and in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza.

A few weeks ago, in a comprehensive report titled "A Threshold Crossed," Human Rights Watch accuses Israel for the first time of "apartheid and persecution," as defined by international conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. It claims the Israeli government perpetuates structural oppression to "maintain the domination of

Jewish Israelis over Palestinians" in both Israel and the Palestinian territories. It also says, “the U.S. and the international community have turned a blind eye to this increasingly transparent reality on the ground.”

“Every day a person is born in Gaza into an open-air prison, in the West Bank without civil rights, in Israel with an inferior status by law, and in neighboring countries effectively condemned to lifelong refugee status, like their parents and grandparents before them, solely because they are Palestinian and not Jewish.”

But what about Hamas, conservative and some mainstream media, politicians and pundits cry. Hamas is a militant, extremist Islamic political organization currently in power in Gaza. Hamas is funded by Iran. Iran supplies Hamas with military weapons. Hamas is not officially sanctioned by the Palestinian State. Although many individual Palestinians support Hamas, many do not.

It’s a fact that both Israel and Hamas have aimed rockets and missiles where civilian citizens live. Let me say categorically, I do not condone nor defend Hamas. But I recognize the huge power imbalance that exists in this conflict. Israel is a first world country, with massive nuclear weaponry capabilities. Israel has the technology to carefully choose targets. Its rockets and missiles hit where they are intended to hit and destroy what is intended to be destroyed. Hamas by comparison has no comparable weaponry and lacks the sophisticated technology to target its rockets, therefore the rockets fall indiscriminately in Israel and the occupied territories, with the predictable result of tragic and unnecessary civilian casualties.

What I write will instantly brand me as anti-Semitic in many circles. I reject that label categorically. I am not anti-Semitic; I am anti-structural oppression. I am anti-systemic discrimination based on color and ethnicity. I am not anti-Jewish, I am anti-authoritarian, nationalist government, which is what the State of Israel is. I am anti-imminent domain and occupation of lands that do not belong to Israel, for the purposes of power and control of the population and the accumulation of territory.

I am also profoundly saddened. The Jewish people have been oppressed for hun-

dreds and hundreds of years; oppressed to the point of an estimated 6-million of them being exterminated by the German Nazi regime just over half a century ago. It breaks my heart and crushes my Spirit when such systematically oppressed people in turn become systematic oppressors of other people.

I was heartened to read an article in the Washington Post about the Black Lives Matter movement in support of the Palestinian people.

“Black Lives Matter activists recently took to the streets of Indianapolis to protest for Palestinians. In Congress, a lawmaker who cut her teeth as a Black Lives Matter organizer and who has compared her clashes with police to those faced by Palestinians tweeted Friday, ‘A ceasefire ends the bombardment — not the violence.’ And during the height of the recent Gaza hostilities, the official Black Lives Matter organization called for ‘Palestinian liberation,’ six years after the group’s early leaders took a trip to the Middle East that planted the seeds for the current alliance. Black Lives Matter, which has grown into a potent political force amid a national reckoning on race, has responded forcefully to the violence in the Mideast to extend its reach into foreign policy.”

As a Black person in America, this fills me with pride. As a Christian, I am filled with the Spirit, because I believe we are called by Faith to be the keepers, the care takers, the supporters of our brothers, sisters and others. We have been and continue to be an oppressed people in our own country. We resonate with the plight of oppressed people everywhere and stand in solidarity with them.

As Dr. King said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

Palestinian Lives Matter.

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



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Honoring Walter Lawson

Historic Monument Dedication for Spokane Police Officer, Buffalo Soldier

On May 20th, a historic monument was dedicated at Greenwood Memorial Terrace to honor Spokane Police Officer and Buffalo Soldier, Walter Lawson. The ceremony, which was attended by representatives from the Spokane Police Department and the Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club, was organized by a group of "like-minded historical enthusiasts" that began the creation and dedication of historic monuments in 2006 to tell the history of the Spokane region. Lawson's is the 28th monument dedication by the group so far, which includes: Fairmont Memorial Association, who have been sponsoring monuments for two decades; Spokane Historical Monuments Committee, Spokane Regional Law Enforcement Museum, Jonas Babcock Chapter NSDAR and Spokane Corral, Pacific Northwesterners.

Walter Lawson was born in Clark County, Virginia, on January 1862. His parents were Thomas and Susan Lawson. Walter Lawson, also known in the military as Walker Lawson, was a private in the 25th Infantry Regiment US Cavalry in the Indian Wars from 1886 – 1891 in Montana. This regiment was a segregated unit of Black soldiers and was referred to as Buffalo Soldiers. The nickname was given to the Black Cavalry by Native American tribes who fought in the Indian Wars. During his time in the military, the 25th Infantry was stationed in the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Montana. The regiment was involved in the Ghost Dance War in 1890 that ended with the Wounded Knee Massacre.

Lawson also spent time in Montana as a cowboy. He married Millie Langford on July 3, 1893, in Helena, Montana and, in 1906 their only son, Walter T. was born.

After coming to Spokane in 1894, Lawson took a job as a porter in the Wilmot Hotel in the downtown area. He was hired as a special police officer. He began work for the police department in a full-time capacity in September 1899 as a mounted officer. He then served as a patrolman for



At the time of his death, Lawson was the only African American serving as a policeman on the West Coast.

"He was absolutely fearless, and his self-control and forbearance in situations made difficult by the fact that he was colored were remarkable. He would go anywhere, and his record as a policeman was above average." This statement was made by Captain George Miles.

According to Police Chief William J. Weir, "Walter was a rare fellow who never intruded anywhere, and he was well liked by all of us. We admired him not only as a man but as a faithful and brave officer."

News articles lauded Lawson as, "one of the bravest officers who ever wore the blue or swung a nightstick." Lawson was a member of the Inland Empire Lodge of Colored Masons and the Eastern Star.



several years. Lawson was the patrol wagon driver for many years when it was a horse-driven vehicle, and finally ended his tenure as the department's chauffeur of the new automobile.

Lawson worked for 18 years on the police department. He was on duty six days before his death when he fell ill with an acute intestinal disorder. At the time, Lawson was Badge #4, meaning he was the fourth longest tenured officer on the police force. Lawson died on May 13, 1917.



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- ✓ Available to anyone 12 years and older at no cost
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- ✓ Go to **VaccineLocator.doh.wa.gov** or text your zip code to **438-829 (GET VAX)** for locations near you
- ✓ Need help? Call **1-833-VAX-HELP (833-829-4357)**, then **press #**.
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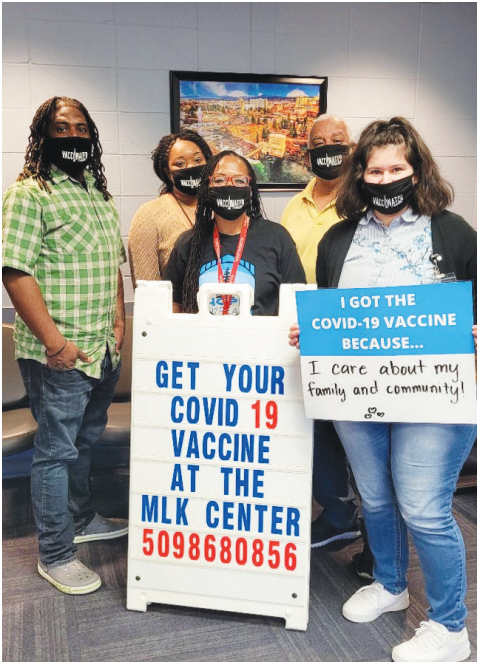
Visit [VaccineLocator.doh.wa.gov](https://vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov) or scan the code.

**Vaccinate
WA** 

MLK CENTER

Spokane's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, located at the East Central Community Center (500 S. Stone Street, Spokane 99202) has been busy providing COVID-19 vaccinations to hundreds of Spokane Residents in a partnership with the Washington State University School of Nursing and the Spokane Regional Health District. The goal of the Center is to make sure that everybody who wants to get vaccinated will be able to get vaccinated.

MLK's next COVID-19 Vaccination clinic will be held on Tuesday, June 8 from 1-3pm. Ages 12 and older are eligible. The MLK Center will also be hosting a vaccination clinic as a part of Spokane's upcoming Juneteenth events. For more information call 509-868-0856. To pre-register for the June 8 clinic visit: <https://prepmo.doh.wa.gov/appointment/en/reg/2653736109>.



COMMUNITY COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINIC

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR
COMMUNITY CENTER
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SPOKANE, WA 99202
TUESDAY, JUNE 8TH, 2021
1:00PM TO 3:00PM

ALL PERSONS AGE
12 & OLDER ARE ELIGIBLE

PRE REGISTER :

<https://prepmo.doh.wa.gov/appointment/en/reg/2653736109>

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

GRANTS FOR SPOKANE ARTISTS AND ARTS PROGRAMMING REQUESTS UP TO \$10,000

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GOVERNMENT/POLITICS

Candidates for Spokane City Council

District 1

District 2

District 3



Luc Jasmin III

Luc Jasmin III has spent years helping children and families in and around Spokane, as co-owner of Parkview Early Learning Center, and more recently, serving as President of the Washington Child Care Centers Association and co-executive director of GLOW Children Early Learning Center. His inspiration and motivation come from the hard-working people in his community, especially the single moms who work multiple jobs while going to school to build better lives for their children.

“Right now, our community is hurting. I believe my proven track record of building collaborations and finding real solutions demonstrates that I can and will help our community heal.”

Luc’s parents, Luc Jr. and Marie Jasmin, who came to the United States as immigrants, also inspire him because he remembers their hardships when he was a child, and how hard they worked every single day to overcome them. Despite their own struggles, they generously shared what they had with others. Lifting people up, he says, “I think that’s why we’re here.”

Jasmin plans to work with local residents, small business owners, educators, public safety officers, local nonprofits, and fellow council members to help solve problems that have held people back for years. Jasmin would also love to continue working with policy makers to help partner childcare centers, local businesses, and the city to increase child care accessibility and affordability for all families. He believes that listening to people is the first step toward any solution and that never giving up is key to helping people.

<https://jasmin4spokane.com>



Betsy Wilkerson

Council Member Betsy Wilkerson is running to maintain her seat on City Council.

“I am proud of the work we have started in Spokane. Together, we approved public funding for attainable housing, invested in our most vulnerable communities, and continue to fight for independant police oversight. However, the hard work has just begun.”

Wilkerson grew up in Spokane and has strong family roots within District 2. She is proud to be the second African American woman to serve as Council Member in the city's 147 year history and has raised two children in the city. She is also a proud, active grandmother of three. Her mother was a minister and co-founded the Mt. Zion Holiness Church. Council Member Wilkerson is dedicated to making sure that every resident of the city has the tools to succeed in life and that Spokane remains a City of Promise that attracts people from all over to make it their hometown.

Betsy currently runs a business that houses individuals with disabilities while working with the Innovia Foundation, making grants that impact communities with basic needs, educational supports and capital monies for improvements in facilities of non-profits. Council Member Wilkerson is familiar with the volunteer and non-profit sector most recently chairing the board of the Carl Maxey Center and leading two capital campaigns to raise funds for the center, which is named after the civil rights icon from Spokane.

<https://electwilkerson.com>



Lacrechia "Lu" Hill

More than four generations of Lu's family have called Eastern Washington home. Growing up in Eastern Washington, she learned about generational poverty, the working poor, and access.

“I knew from a very young age that life was hard and I wanted something different for myself and my family. I wanted something different for all the humans I grew up with.”

Lu became a mother at 16 and decided being a statistic was not an option. She waited tables at Cyrus O'Leary's (a never-to-be-forgotten Spokane landmark) through college to ensure she could provide a stable future for her son. She graduated from Eastern Washington University, then moved to Las Vegas, NV, where she started her career with Boys & Girls Clubs, gaining skills in resource development, community outreach and organizing. Her career eventually brought her back to Spokane and into the field of philanthropy where she was introduced to innovative approaches to solving systemic community issues.

Lu holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and an MBA. She has ownership in cannabis brand lines, owns her own consulting business (Wake the Culture), and is a Yoga Teacher (The Wake Yoga). She currently serves as board president of Spectrum LGBTQIA2+ Center and represents the center on the Spokane Regional Domestic Violence Coalition board. She is on the Inland Northwest Business Alliance (INBA) board and the WA State LGBTQ+ Commission's Economic Development Committee. Most recently, she is working with a group in Eastern Washington to establish a Black chamber of commerce.

<https://www.luforyou.com>



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Hechinger Report: The Share of Black Engineering & Math Graduates Declines

By Melba Newsome

(hechingerreport.org) As a junior studying bioengineering, Amida Koroma was a fixture on the dean’s list at the University of Maryland. Yet Koroma, who is Black, said she felt as if many of her white peers dismissed her as less capable.

“When we’re working on group projects, they’ll say things like, ‘You can do the typing,’ as opposed to getting into the nitty-gritty of how to build this robot,” she said. “Sometimes it feels like I have to prove myself all over again.”

Amida Koroma says she was often the only Black student in her classes in bioengineering at the University of Maryland. “Sometimes it feels like I have to prove myself all over again,” she says.

This semester, Komida changed her major to psychology.

Experiences like this are why advocates are raising the alarm that the proportion of college graduates with degrees in science, math and engineering who are Black is falling, even as demand for workers in those fields grows at double the rate of other occupations. That’s a worrying trend for a profession in which Black people are already underrepresented.

And months after universities and scientific associations pledged to address it in response to the increased focus on systemic racism following the killing of George Floyd, the Covid-19 pandemic appears to be making the problem worse.



Black enrollment in STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and math — is among the issues that urgently demand attention, said Cato Laurencin, CEO of the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science. “We need to move from talking about the issue of Blacks in STEM and systemic racism to making concrete changes,” Laurencin said.

The proportion of bachelor’s degrees in science awarded to Black graduates remained flat at about 9 percent from 2001 to 2016, according to the most recent available figures from the National Science Foundation; in engineering, it declined from 5 percent to 4 percent; and in math, it dropped from 7 percent to 4 percent.

More recent figures released in April by the Pew Research Center show that, in 2018, Black students earned 7 percent of STEM bachelor’s degrees.

College-going trends that have occurred during the pandemic threaten to lower these proportions even further. Total Black undergraduate enrollment at universities and colleges is down by more than 7 percent this semester from where it was last spring, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reports.

This decline in the number of prospective Black scientists, engineers and mathematicians is occurring even as demand increases. Employment in STEM fields is projected to grow twice as fast in the next decade as for all occupations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. STEM jobs also offer comparatively higher salaries and benefits.

Black people hold 7 percent of jobs in these areas requiring bachelor’s degrees, the Pew Research Center reports. That’s about half their proportion of the population.

Their absence could have consequences that are not just economic. Workforce diversity ensures that products will work equally well for everyone, said Virginia Booth Womack, director of the Minority Engineering Program at Purdue.

If people of color aren’t involved in the development of facial recognition, for instance, the software may misidentify Black people, Womack said. Different experiences, perspectives and approaches lead to greater scientific innovation, growth and competitiveness, she said.

“The decision-makers and innovators should consist of a diverse group,” Womack said. “In order to reflect the needs of the entire society, you need people who can innovate in that space and represent the needs of their culture, their community and the world.”

The decline in the number of Black graduates in STEM disciplines is partly due to bans in some states on the use by public universities and colleges of race-based affirmative action, according to research conducted at the University of Michigan that suggests these bans reduced the number of such degrees earned by Black, Hispanic and Native American students by 12 percent since they were enacted.

Broadening the idea of diversity has also diluted the degree to which some programs help Black students, said Laurencin, who has spent four decades mentoring students and creating programs to make science more inclusive. *Continued on Page 19*

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TEL 509-960-7281
action@altcew.org
www.altcew.org or facebook.com/AgingLTC



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Black Engineering and Math Graduates

Continued From Page 17

“Pretty much 95 percent of people in the country are now a part of these different programs,” Laurencin said. “Rural is a group, urban is a group, first generation and veterans are groups. Blacks are often referred to as the reason the programs are needed, but we end up having the lowest representation in them.”

Black, white and Hispanic students declare STEM majors at roughly the same rates — 18 percent, 19 percent and 20 percent, respectively — according to research conducted at the University of Texas at Austin and Florida International University. But the numbers diverge when it comes to degree completion.

Fifty-eight percent of those white students earn a STEM degree, compared with 43 percent of Hispanic and 34 percent of Black students. Black and Hispanic students tend to switch majors or leave college in higher numbers, according to the same study.

The proportion of bachelor’s degrees in science awarded to Black graduates remained flat at about 9 percent from 2001 to 2016; in engineering, it declined from 5 percent to 4 percent; and in math, it dropped from 7 percent to 4 percent.

The proportion of participants in a bridge program run by the University of Maryland’s Center for Minorities in Science and Engineering who stay from their first to second years is 92 percent, higher than the 89 percent of all engineering students who do so, according to the university. At Purdue, students who participated in 2013 in a similar initiative, a summer academic “boot camp” run by the Minority Engineering Program, had a six-year graduation rate that was 11 percentage points higher than the rate for the College of Engineering.

These programs also try to create more welcoming environments for students who feel isolated or marginalized in institutions that are majority white. Students of color in STEM majors are less likely to continue if they feel excluded, isolated or have discouraging academic experiences, a study by researchers at the universities of Illinois and Utah found.

“There are brilliant, highly gifted Black people who should be leading scientists in STEM,” said Cato Laurencin, CEO, Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science. “But systemic issues imbued with racism keep these promising students out.”

On a practical basis, he said, “we are not only hurting the competitiveness of our great country on the world stage, but we collectively are losing out on great discoveries, new insights and new technology that Blacks in STEM could provide.”

This story about Black students in STEM fields was produced by The Hechinger Report, a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education. The goal is not only to replace or supplement what’s been lost, but to push education reporting to new levels of quality, clarity, depth and breadth, to explain why education policy matters and how it’s affecting young people. For more information or to sign up for the higher education newsletter, visit: hechingerreport.org.

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Carl Maxey Center Files Motion to Submit Amicus Brief to Remove Racial Covenants

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The Carl Maxey Center, with support from the Spokane NAACP, Spokane Ministerial Fellowship, Hispanic Business & Professional Association (HBPA), Asian Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC), and SCAR (Spokane Community Against Racism), jumped into the legal fray between Spokane County and homeowner Alex May.

When May purchased a home in the Comstock Park neighborhood of Spokane in 2017, he discovered a racially restrictive covenant attached to the deed. Although, the covenant is no longer enforceable, May wanted to racist language removed.

In 2018, after County Auditor Vicky Dalton refused his request, saying she was not allowed to alter property records, homeowner Alex May sued Spokane County to have the restrictive covenant “stricken” from the title to his property.

In April 2019, May requested that the Spokane Superior Court order Dalton and Spokane County to “fully remove the racist covenant from the public record” and “eliminate the provision from the title or lease.” In May, 2019 the court ruled against May, so he appealed.

In February, 2021, the Washington Court of Appeals ruled against May 2-1, with the majority stating that removing the covenant from May's property would be “whitewashing public records” and would put the public at risk of “forgetting” and “denying” the “ugly truth of racist housing practices.”

The lone dissenting opinion on the Appellate bench, Judge George Fearing, strongly disagreed, arguing, “the continued existence of these covenants and restrictions is repugnant to many property owners and diminishes the free enjoyment of their property.”

The Carl Maxey Center agreed with Judge Fearing and when Alex May stated that he would be appealing the ruling to the Washington State Supreme Court, the Carl Maxey Center filed a motion with the Washington State Supreme Court on May 24 to submit an Amicus Brief in support of May's appeal.

The Carl Maxey Center's motion, citing attorney Carl Maxey's decades long challenges to racial covenant discrimination in Spokane, argues that the Appellate Court's decision perpetuates discrimination against African Americans and Communities of Color.

"Denying a homeowner the ability to eliminate racist language from their property's record turns a home that should be a symbol of accomplishment and achievement into a symbol of America's bigotry and discrimination," the motion states. "For this to be justified in order to preserve the 'living history' and 'historical evidence' of racism is equivalent to forcing a Black person who enters a public restroom today to walk past a sign that says, 'For Whites Only', with a sticky note on top that says the sign is no longer enforceable."

The Carl Maxey Center concludes by requesting that the Court "reverse the Court of Appeals' majority opinion in the strongest terms."

The Carl Maxey Center's motion was granted by the Chief Justice on May 28 and has been filed with the court. The Center is currently waiting for word from the court on the progress of May's case and that the full Amicus Brief can be filed.

The attorney's representing the Carl Maxey Center are Dennis C. Cronin, Debbieann Erickson and Kenneth H. Kato.

60% Black Homeownership: A Radical Goal For Black Wealth Development

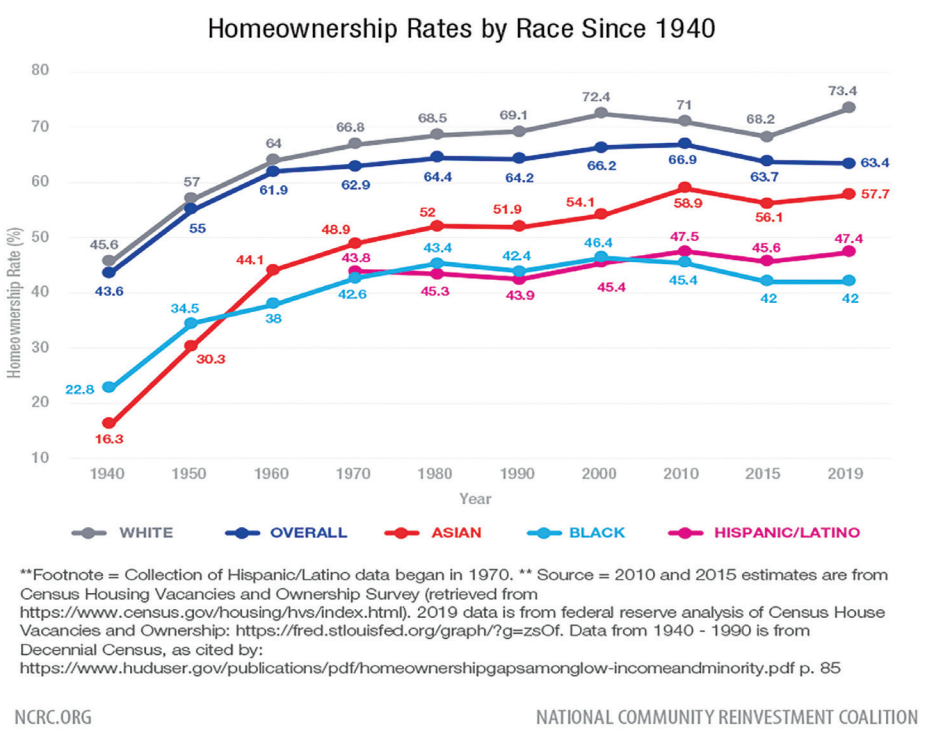
By Dedrick Asante-Muhammad, Jamie Buell, Joshua Devine

A new report published by The National Community Reinvestment Coalition

A radical increase in Black homeownership is needed to see progress in bridging Black and White homeownership and wealth inequality. This report highlights historic Black homeownership rates, and underscores the need to significantly increase homeownership rates for Black Americans. We believe reaching a 60% Black homeownership rate will address significant barriers to housing access and wealth creation for the African American community.

For most Americans, homeownership is the largest component of their wealth. Disparate rates of wealth and homeownership are symbiotic issues that persist and continuously leave Black households behind in building generational wealth. One of the most vital ways to combat the racial wealth divide is increasing Black homeownership rates. Yet, there has been a lack of progress in increasing Black homeownership for most of the last 60 years and a similar lack of progress in bridging the Black/White homeownership divide for more than 100 years. The failure to include the majority of African Americans as homeowners is not new but requires a renewed sense of urgency.

Today's Black homeownership rate is one of the lowest homeownership rates for African Americans in decades. Rates have been steadily declining from a peak of 49% in 2004, before the 2008 housing crisis.[2] This decline in homeownership rates, however, began before the housing crisis. In fact, in the past 15 years, Black homeownership has seen the most dramatic drop of any racial or ethnic group, and the Black homeownership rate in 2019 had descended to nearly as low as it was when discrimination was legal.[3]



Currently, the average Black homeowner likely owns more in mortgage debt than their White counterparts on a house with less value. While the average first home of a Black purchaser is valued at \$127,000, they also average \$90,000 in mortgage debt. In comparison, White first-time homebuyers have an average home value of \$139,000 with \$75,000 in mortgage debt.[4] So African Americans go into greater debt for a lower-valued asset thus weakening the returns for this fundamental investment. This is an example of how even when African Americans acquire wealth-building assets like homeownership and higher education they have less of a return on their investment thus limiting the positive effect of these assets.

Since the turn of the century, homeownership rates for Black Americans have steadied and slowed more significantly than other racial groups. Therefore, a focus on advancing Black homeownership is paramount to achieving a more equitable economy.

Of all the assets that lead to wealth, homeownership is often the first step (and, in some cases, more obtainable asset) for many Americans. It can also be a launching pad to true asset diversity and wealth. If having a diverse and balanced portfolio of assets ensures wealth and economic stability for White households, then strengthening the pathway to homeownership is only one of many ways to achieve true, meaningful wealth for Black households. It is therefore imperative that homeownership is not only increased among African Americans but home values – and the ability to leverage this value – is also on par with White households’ return and increase on wealth.

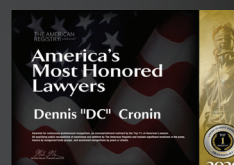
Dedrick Asante-Muhammad is Chief of Race, Wealth and Community at NCRC
Jamie Buell is Racial Economic Equity Coordinator at NCRC
Joshua Devine is Director of Racial Economic Equity at NCRC

To read the full report visit: <https://ncrc.org/60-black-homeownership-a-radical-goal-for-black-wealth-development>

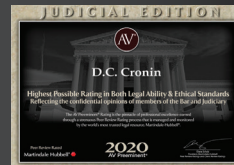
The National Community Reinvestment Coalition and its grassroots member organizations create opportunities for people to build wealth. We work with community leaders, policymakers and financial institutions to champion fairness and end discrimination in lending, housing and business.NCRC was formed in 1990 by national, regional and local organizations to increase the flow of private capital into traditionally underserved communities. NCRC has grown into an association of more than 600 community-based organizations that promote access to basic banking services, affordable housing, entrepreneurship, job creation and vibrant communities for America's working families.

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COVID-19 Disparities Inspire More Blacks to Eat Healthy

By Marnita Coleman
Special to the AFRO

(Afro.com) The pandemic has awakened sleeping Americans to the disparities and inequalities that exist in minority communities. In a nation where African Americans make up about 13% of the population, the number of Blacks who died due to COVID-19-related illness was a whopping 24%. According to the Color of Coronavirus Project, that percentage equates to over 73,000 African Americans. Deficient health, obesity and diabetes were major contributors to the barrage of fatalities in the Black community.

It is no surprise that African Americans are turning to plant-based eating for optimal health. The Black community is consciously stepping away from meat, disease-causing products to shift the trajectory of their well-being.

According to a Pew Research Center survey, 8% of Black Americans are strict vegans or vegetarians, compared to just 3% of the general population. This disputes the narrative that veganism is a “White people thing” or an “animal-rights thing,” although many support strict vegan practices. Veganism can be traced back to Africa, pre-slavery.

On the other hand, vegetarianism was practiced throughout the 1960s and 1970s by Black activists who wanted a healthier lifestyle to endure the cause of their fight. Dick Gregory wrote a book titled, Dick Gregory’s Natural Diet For Folks Who Eat: Cookin’ With Mother Nature, wherein he shared how a vegetarian lifestyle and fasting led to his dramatic weight loss. He also developed a diet drink called



“Bahamian Diet Nutritional Drink” and went on TV shows advocating his diet and to help the morbidly obese.

Nowadays, celebrity vegans like Samuel L. Jackson turned their plant-based way of life into a compelling feature-length documentary titled Eating You Alive, which addresses how poor health can be reversed with a plant-based diet. Kimberly Elise is also proactive about her veganism and tells why, “With the deletion of meat and animal products from my diet came a physical blossoming I never planned on. My skin cleared up, my hair grew thicker and stronger, my moods became more peaceful and more joyful.” Elise’s website Natural Living highlights plant-based living with delicious vegan recipes.

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine reported that in a study of more than 25,000 people they found that vegetarians have a much lower risk of getting diabetes than meat-eaters. According to PCRM.org, the consumption of animal products has been conclusively linked to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, and osteoporosis.

When you know better, you are supposed to do better. So, what does the transformation of omnivore into vegan really look like?

The AFRO spoke with Thierry Lamour, a Baltimore resident and committed vegan of 21 years, about his personal trek to veganism and his recommendation to help others pivot into this standard of living.

MC: What motivated you to become a vegan?

TL: Observation and practicing the lifestyle. I was a pescatarian, eating fish and dairy. I attended a seminar introducing veganism. The presenter was diagnosed with kidney failure and told she would be a dialysis patient for the rest of her life. She became a vegan and reversed the kidney failure.

MC: Why are Black Americans following vegetarian, pescatarian and vegan habits now?

TL: More information is available, unlike decades ago when it wasn’t as popular. If you research, you will find information, articles, videos, and recipes about plant-based eating. These are real facts with benefits. We see with COVID the difference in eating, when you’re a vegan, the immune system is stronger to fight diseases, and an added



Thierry Lamour
Baltimore resident and committed vegan of 21 years

bonus is you don’t age as quickly as others.

MC: Were you always a healthy eater?

TL: No. I grew up eating fast foods. I ate pork, beef, lamb chops just like everyone else. I am the only one turned vegan. My family praises my success but they are not indulging in veganism because they love meat too much.

MC: What is your recommendation for someone transitioning into a plant-based lifestyle?

TL: I recommend a 30-day vegan challenge, feel the difference, and see the difference. Begin adjusting your diet with diminishing meat and increasing fruits and vegetables. Do the research and set the goal. Discipline yourself. Go for it.

Becoming a plant-based practitioner is an important decision. Vegetarian, pescatarian and vegan eating in the Black community is a trend in the right direction. The plant-based food category was valued at \$5.6 billion in 2020 and expected to exceed \$10B billion by 2027. It is here to stay. Wellness is a connection of paths: knowledge and action! (Joshua Holtz) (Courtesy Photos)



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Let's Not Forget to "Reopen" Our Children

By Glenn Ellis

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Is anybody thinking about what our children and youth are going through during these times?

I mean, I know that we are all adjusting to the disruptions, and in some cases devastation, the past year has brought us. But, have we stopped long enough to really pay attention to what all of this is doing to the generation, which represents all of our futures?

Just think about the major things that have happened in the lives of young people in the past few months: 1) an abrupt closing of schools; the major center of the educational and social lives of students; 2) being forced to "shelter in place", indefinitely, cutoff from friends and extended family; 3) most likely, experiencing the illness or death of a loved one from the virus; 4) hearing about some strange symptoms of COVID-19 that only happen to children; 6) the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Rayshard Brooks, and others, 7) the protests and violence; 8) getting "the talk" from adults who have a never-seen-before fear and sense of urgency in their eyes; 9) schools, playgrounds, pools, and camps being closed; 10) being cut off from a consistent source of breakfast and lunch and; 11) being petrified with the thought of having to go back into a school building. I could go on, but I won't.

As you can see, the point is that we have undeniably, and unfairly, ignored the well-being and mental health of our children and young people, while we are all going in circles trying to figure out our own lives.

It has been well-documented that collective trauma is a real phenomenon. What would make us think that, collectively and individu-

ally, our children are not subject to the same principle? This is especially true for Black people, and in this case Black children and youth.

The Washington Post, in a May 29th Opinion column, said "a 2019 study in the Lancet found that when police kill an unarmed Black person, other Black people in that state suffer tangible harm to their collective mental health. The study found no similar effect with white people". We all really need to learn more about collective trauma.

The impacts are also emotional and behavioral. Traumatized people are at higher risk for depression, anxiety, PTSD, eating disorders, substance abuse, aggression, and future victimization. Over 90% of adolescents hospitalized for psychiatric problems have a history of trauma, and more than 70% of adults in substance abuse treatment programs have had at least one traumatic experience. Most relevant to this piece: more than nine out of every ten young people involved in the juvenile justice system report trauma.

Trauma sticks with us for life; it doesn't go away. Trauma sticks in the body, and contributes to dysregulated emotions, troubled behavior, relational problems, and physical illness, making it difficult for traumatized young people to thrive.

This is so important for Black boys and Girls. Trauma of the magnitude these young folks are experiencing happens through the lens of their cultural experience of being an African American; their background, their community, and their methods of communication and language.

The research shows that there are three (3) ways trauma is related to race, and Blacks hit

the trifecta with trauma. First, African Americans experience specific events of danger related to race that overwhelm the nervous system and require us to recover. These dangers may be real or perceived discrimination, threats of harm and injury, police incidents, and humiliating and shaming events.

Secondly, African Americans also experience danger in witnessing harm and injury to other African Americans because of real or perceived racism (collective trauma).

A third way African Americans experience danger related to race is living in difficult social conditions because of poverty and race, and traumatic events occur because of these conditions. Segregation by race and social class is common everywhere in the United States. Living in Black and poor neighborhoods increases one's risk of experiencing traumatic events like community violence, police incidents, and domestic violence, and it increases the risk of experiencing secondary traumas in witnessing these dangers.

As always with this column, "it ain't rocket science". Our young people have been so neglected, and like everything else, the times are "pulling back the covers", and revealing all that is terribly wrong and broken in this country. Our precious children have been collateral damage in a bitter war between racially polarized adults, who consistently make bad decisions on their behalf.

Alas, all is not lost! We are creating "New Normals" in every aspect of our lives. We can easily add the most important treasure to our vision boards. We only need individual and political will, and recovery from trauma can be achieved with specific interventions that improve coping skills and decrease re-experiencing the trauma.



In the immortal words of Gil Scott-Heron, "We've got to do something to save the children. Soon it will be their turn to try and save the world. Right now they seem to play such a small part of the things that they soon be right at the heart of...we've got Save the Children."

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

Glenn Ellis, MPH is a Visiting Scholar at The National Bioethics Center at Tuskegee University and a Harvard Medical School Bioethics Fellow. He is author of Which Doctor? and Information is the Best Medicine. Ellis is an active media contributor on Health Equity and Medical Ethics. For more good health information visit: www.glennellis.com

The information included in this column is for educational purposes only. I do not dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a replacement form of treatment for physical, mental or medical problems by your doctor either directly or indirectly.

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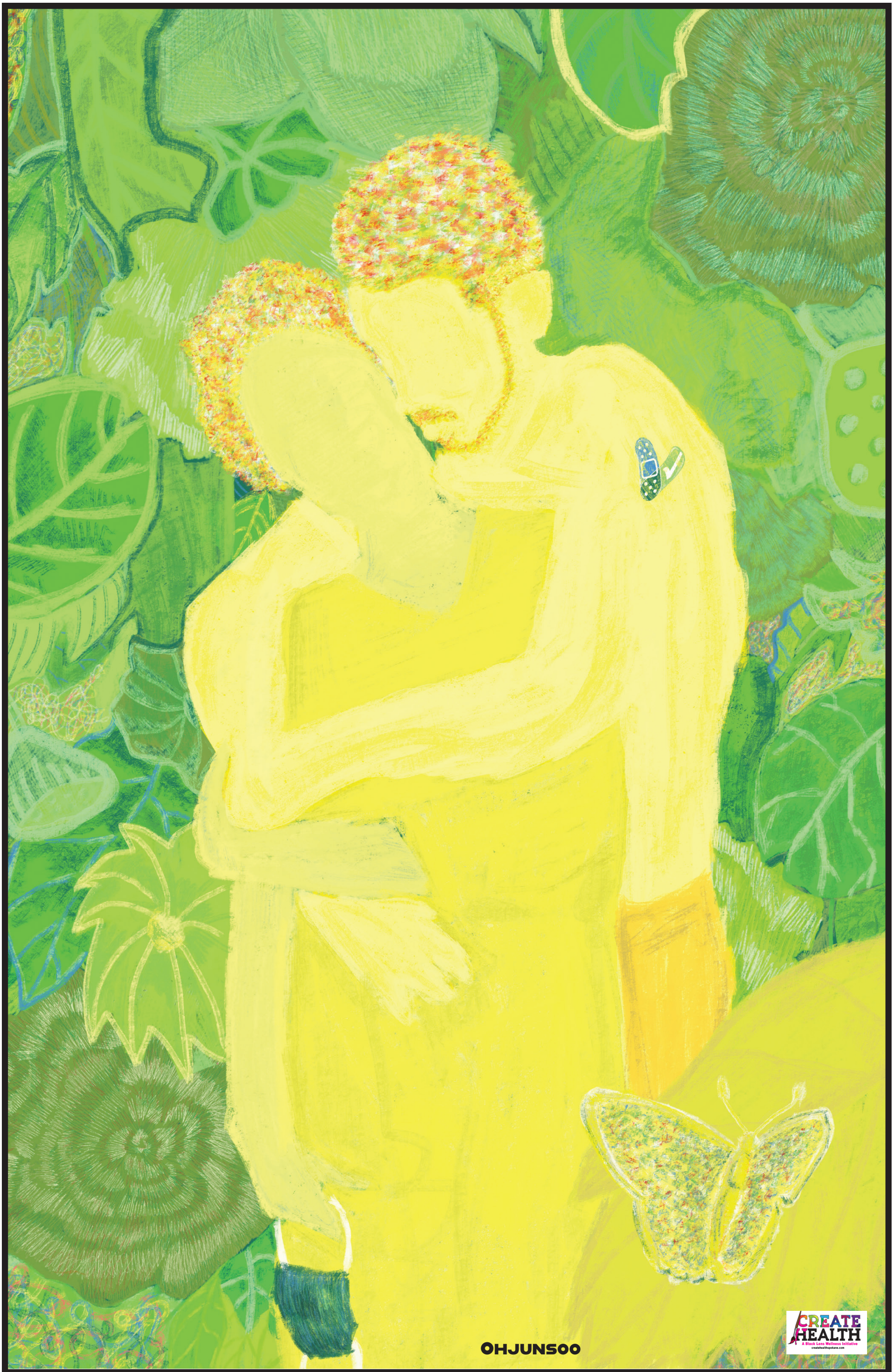
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Amber Dodd: Spokesman Review Racial Equity Reporter

Continued From Page 1

Were you aware of race then or did you just recognize that you were different?

We were the first Black family in 20 years on that block, so it was pretty rough for me. I was very aware that this is a Black child and how class and race both combine. How poor whites and rich whites were different from each other. Also, how poor whites kind of took their anger out on the Black people in the neighborhood. I feel like that has kind of manifested into a consciousness of having the racial lens always be open for me. It's like my third eye now.

So were you a studious kid, a quiet kid, an extroverted kid? What kind of kid were you?

Growing up, I was very quiet. I'm the only girl in my family. I have two brothers, so I was just very, to myself, and very introverted. That was mostly because I never really knew how to build my own personality, so I think I was kind of like in the cocoon, kind of watching and observing everything. I was very much in the background. But as a child, I had the advantage of writing and reading. I was always a reader. I was always a writer. My whole family are all athletes and I was the only person who didn't play sports growing up.

I went to a STEM Charter school for middle and high school, which is kind of ironic because I'm a writer. Those years were pretty eye opening and it was an awesome, out of the box experience as well, that just kind of influenced

my creativity and how I execute my creativity as well.

Before I came into general assignment journalism, I was a sports journalist for 7 years. There is a lot of community in sports, so I think I kind of blossomed socially within the sports world.

So what was the first thing that got you into journalism specifically?

When I was a senior in high school, I was working for an all Black group called Voyce Sports. So, by the time it was time for me to pick my major, I knew I wanted to be a writer. I thought, I'm already doing sports broadcasting, I might as well just do sports journalism. So, it wasn't like a light bulb moment, it was like a decision that was made.

I've never been the type that was like, I love journalism. Journalism has never been that safe haven for me. But I like to do the work. I like to study. I like to research. I like to talk to people, and that's the basic core values of great journalism. So, journalism is a very natural place for me.

So why did you apply for this job?

I think for me, I've always been big on community work. Community work has always been a huge thing for me. I've always been the individual that's not inside the box, and I think that I've always been subconsciously observing culture, observing people. I've always been in that space.

Seeing the world as what it is from my point of view, as a Black, queer woman, from our point of

view, is not on the forefront. So to have the opportunity to put myself on the forefront for other people and to tell their stories without whiteness as the focal point is such a rich opportunity.

Yes, I've moved 2500 miles, but the opportunity is just so fertile and my name is on that. I just felt like it was a perfect opportunity for me to go get it and for me to not apply would be for me to miss a point in my life to transition into the work that I really want to do.

Your first day is on Monday June 14th, so what happens on day one?

I feel like I don't want day one to be boring. I want to go talk to people on day one. I don't want to be cliché and just go around on that Saturday before that Monday and shake hands with everybody and talk to everybody. I really want to immerse myself in the culture because I feel like, yes I will be a reporter, but I'm also a part of a community now. I'm gonna go to church. I'm gonna get my clothes done somewhere. I'm gonna get my hair done somewhere. I'm gonna get my nails and my eyebrows done somewhere. So, I really want to be able to see the culture for what it is and start talking to people and learning who everyone is.

Not even just on a journalism tip, but to really meet everybody for who they are, because yes I am analyzing the culture of Spokane, but I'm also being a part of it. I'm also part of the community, so I really wanna be able to show up as myself first and then start the journalism process.

How Did the Spokesman Review's Racial Equity Reporter Happen?

"We've been working on a version of a grant proposal for this position for at least two years, and probably more like three years," said Rob Curley, the Spokesman Review's Editor.

"At some point it became clear what would make something like this very special would be to truly make it a community position — not just funded in some way by our community, but with the community also actually owning the work done by this journalist."

Curley vision not only included a partnership with the Spokane community, but also a partnership with the Black Lens, Spokane's Black focused Newspaper.

"Partnerships in journalism are often pretty powerful alliances in not only making the actual journalism, but also in giving it a much wider and different view of a community," Curley added. "At some point, it just felt obvious that a position like this could help our community understand itself better and what was happening around us if a journalist with this sort of focus could be integrated into a daily news operation and a region's Black newspaper."

But that was easier said than done, according to Curley. Examples of philanthropic-funded race reporters who would report to two completely dif-

ferent sets of editors, both at a daily news operation and at a community's Black newspaper, was "non-existent". But in some ways, Curley said, "trying to figure it out on our own made it better."

As the country began dealing with a racial reckoning, prompted by the death of George Floyd and protests that had spread across the globe and into downtown Spokane, the Spokesman Review and Black Lens, had already begun working together.

"By the time we started running multiple pages of stories from The Black Lens in The Spokesman-Review, some people really began to notice the unlikely partnership," Curley said. "We ended up getting a message from a local individual who was impressed by all of this and wanted to talk with us more about it."

It turns out that the individual wasn't just interested in talking, but wanted to fund the position, and Curley says he was "floored".

"It was such a huge commitment by this individual to make sure there just wasn't a new reporter position like this in Spokane, but that it would be here for a long time."

But there was a catch, Curley said. *Continued on Page 29*

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How the Spokesman Review's Racial Equity Reporter Happened

Continued From Page 28

For the first two years of the position, there had to be matching funding coming from the community. So, Curley reached out to the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund, and after one phone call, "we knew we had found others with a similar vision."

Why did the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund decide to step in to provide funding for the position?

According to Lerria Schuh, the Fund's Executive Director, because "more and more people are being left behind by the burdens of inequity and the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund works to tear down barriers for people and groups often locked out of the system so they can achieve the power necessary to not only survive, but thrive."

The Racial Equity Reporter was in alignment with the Fund's commitment to equity. "Without question, the Inland Northwest lacks equity in journalism, and we want to help change that. Journalism should come from an authentic voice and reporters should be allowed

to work without restriction to serve as a true community voice. This race equity position will work with both The Spokesman-Review and the Black Lens News, while not being owned by any entity. The opportunity for the reporter to work as a community voice is important to us. Knowing they will help tear down previous barriers and represent voices from a perspective not heard often enough is vital to the continued growth of our community. Funding this position is a small effort in the vast amount of equity work that needs to be done in this region, and we are glad we can do it."

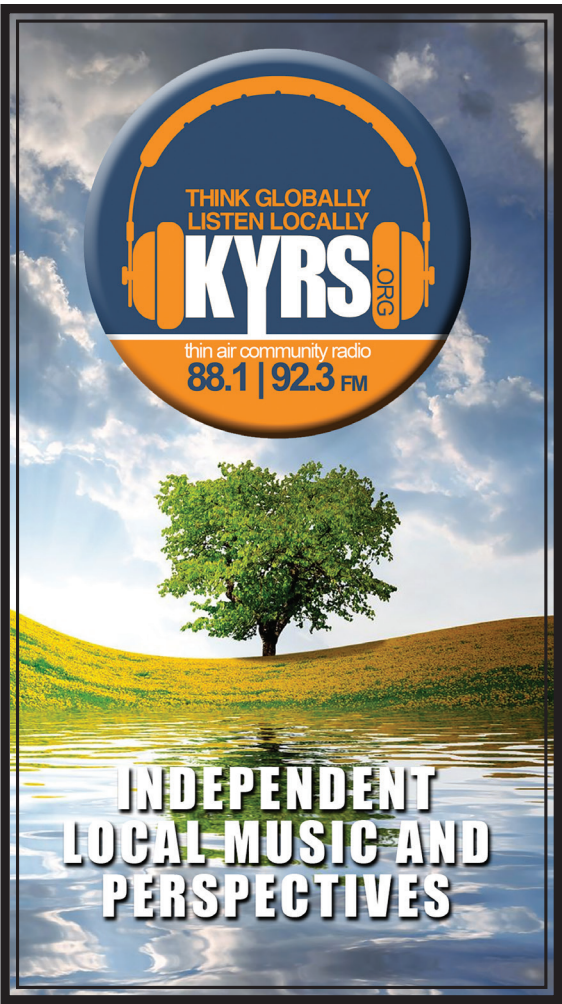
With support from the Smith-Barbieri Progressive Fund, the position was fully funded. But that meant the challenges were just beginning, said Curley.

"Now that the position is real, it feels like the real challenges lie ahead. The responsibility of it all feels so much more real now because of how others across our community have said, 'not only do we believe in this, we want to help make it a reality by funding this type of journalism.' You just want to do all you can to show that a journalist like this can

make an impact in the community. That doesn't mean this journalist has to be an advocate for anything. What it means is that we now get to tell those stories we always wished we could. The stories are truly what matter. People are smart enough to figure out on their own what those words mean and what changes we could make to help our community not only grow, but be stronger and better tomorrow than we are today."

Although the position is housed at the Spokesman Review, Curley says he doesn't feel like it is a Spokesman-Review reporter.

"This is one of the first and best examples of a community saying it wants to own its story, and that local journalism is its best when its owned by its community and not by a corporation. This racial equity reporter not only gives our community the ability to understand itself better, but also to show the rest of the world that there might be a completely different way for journalism to go forward. And, if we do it right, that new way might be way better than the old way, anyway."



No More Menthol
FDA to Ban Menthol Cigarettes

After 11 years, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) agreed to ban menthol in cigarettes and all flavored cigars. Menthol is typically used to mask the unpleasant flavors in these products. Quite literally, "menthol makes the poison go down easier" said Dr. Gardiner, tobacco researcher and co-chair of the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council.

Hmm. Sounds interesting but why should I care?

Tobacco companies have historically targeted African Americans. These predatory behaviors include handing out free menthol cigarettes (yes, you read that right), sponsoring music festivals, and making large financial contributions to African American groups and political leaders. Today, tobacco is a leading cause of death of African Americans. Smoking is a major cause of heart disease, cancer and stroke. By rallying around banning menthol, hundreds of thousands of lives will be saved from tobacco-related illness and death. This is particularly true for those most affected by these products including communities of color, low-income populations, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

Okay, you have my interest. What happens next?

To be frank, lots of paperwork and meetings. Even though the FDA is throwing their weight behind a ban on menthol, the implementation may take years to go into effect. Experts recommend that work continues at the local level to ban sales of menthol in the meantime.

Now I'm riled up. How can I help?

There are a few ways that we all can do to support the ban of menthol: Get involved! It is your constitutional right to contact your elected officials.



By writing an email, making a call, or sending a tweet, you can let our leaders know that this issue is important to you. More noise brings more attention to the issue which can lead to more lives, specifically Black lives, being saved.

If you or someone you love uses any kind of tobacco product, there are cessation resources available. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW**, text **READY** to **200-400** or visit **quitline.com** to start on a tobacco-free journey for everyone, with or without insurance.

Locally, Inland Northwest Health Services offers Quit for Good, a four-week class that is offered in person or online. Participants can receive patches and gum if it is not covered by insurance.

Talk to youth about stopping smoking before they even start. For advice on how to start the conversation, visit **www.starttalkingnow.org**.

To stay updated on public health issues within Spokane County, visit **srhd.org**



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Ashia Campbell

Continued From Page 1

In relation to helping fix the concern of cultural competency, Dumas was asked if it would be more helpful and practical to give mental healthcare providers more training on cultural competency and sensitivity, or to start getting more Black folks working in field.

Her answer was simple. “Both are needed.”

BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) individuals seeking mental help have different life experiences than their white providers, and as a result white mental healthcare providers would benefit from training to become more educated and comfortable talking about this. Along with training, Dumas indicated that going forward, more opportunities and resources for Black people to become therapists are needed to aid in getting rid of hurdles (financial and otherwise) and to help get them through school. She also brought up the very important step of normalizing amongst the Black community that mental health is important, expounding on the value and power of self-care and self-love.

The existence of inequalities within our mental healthcare system may look dreary, but there are an abundance of steps that can be taken now and in the future to address the inequalities.

Looking at the bigger picture, historical factors going all the way back to slavery have contributed to modern issues within the Black community, like homelessness, poverty, substance use issues, etc., which have all been proven to impact mental health.

When asked if it would be fair to ask large institutions such as education and healthcare to put more emphasis on providing care specifically to Black folks in the future, Dumas had an easy answer.

“Absolutely. I think that there needs to be more investment in Black people, and specifically more investment in the organizations and the leaders who are trusted and respected by Black people and who are doing the work and who have been doing the work to provide support to Black people.”

She went on to cite organizations such as the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center and the Carl Maxey Center. “Those organizations have been doing work and are continuing to do work, and so I feel like yes, education institutions and just in general the healthcare system need to invest more money into providing resources, but also really listening to the organizations that are for Black people, and in general people of color, and are run by people of color.”

Dumas communicated the belief that large institutions investing in organizations that are “already known and respected by Black people here in Spokane to continue to grow and create better opportunities and resources for mental health” would be a powerful step in elevating the influence these organizations have. The idea of marginalized groups being brought to the forefront and direct investment being made to give these groups larger platforms has been brought up and successfully used in all kinds of social movements throughout history.

While the modern disparities within our healthcare institutions are considerable, opportunities are available to bridge these gaps on both personal, local, and large-scale societal levels. As our communities continue doing their own personal healing, by creating healing spaces on local levels, like Dumas is doing at Better Health Together, and holding our social institutions accountable for the disparities and overt discrimination within them, the changes that are needed to take care of the mental health needs for ourselves and our communities become more and more conceivable.

With more opportunities for in-person social interactions and events opening up in the near future, as well as new remotely accessible resources being created in response to previous lockdowns, Dumas agrees that more space will be and is being created for Black mental health healing.

“I think as the vaccinations are coming out and people get vaccinated, I’m sure that there will probably be more opportunities for people to come together in person to even just share spaces with one another and hold each other in love and encouragement.”

Ashia Campbell is 17, turning 18 on Juneteenth (June 19th). She is a senior at The Community School and has completed a year of Running Start at SFCC. She spends a lot of time reading, exercising, journaling, making jewelry, and taking care of her plants. “They’ve all become their own sort of self care rituals for me.” After graduation, Ashia plans on spending a lot of time working so she can move to Southern California and further pursue her creative career goals.

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Jada Richardson

Continued From Page 1

Data showed that from 2013-2014, only 20 percent of female pre-schoolers were Black, but Black girls made up 54 percent of female preschool children with one or more suspensions.

Unfortunately, it is easy to predict that as we begin to age, adultification begins to play out in other areas of one's educational experience. In 2019, The National Women's Law Center's report "Dress Coded: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools" concluded that dress code policy enforcement unfairly targets Black girls, explaining that every aspect of Black girlhood, from hair to attire has the ability to be penalized.

Adultification creates a pathway for the sexualization of young Black girls to take place, leading to disturbing amounts of sexual assault and physical violence amongst Black women and girls.

According to the American Psychological Association, "One in four Black girls will be sexually abused before the age of 18," "one in five Black women are survivors of rape," and "17% of Black women in the U.S. experienced sexual violence other than rape by an intimate partner during their lifetime." Black girls have become forgotten survivors of sexual assault and are disproportionately targeted due to the false narrative that we have more knowledge about sex, contraception, and are more adult-like.

The adultification of Black girls is deeply rooted in the issues of racism and sexism. Creating trauma in both public and private areas of our lives. Addressing adultification and what it leads to is not an easy task, but in order to protect the upcoming generation of Black girls, it is an issue that we must tackle. There are no easy solutions to addressing centuries old practices, however discussing these topics brings us one step closer to ensuring that the childhood of Black girls is preserved and protected.

Jada Richardson is a 17-year-old high school senior, who is committed to the liberation of Black youth in the greater Spokane area and beyond. She is a passionate advocate for policy reform around issues such as: chronic absenteeism and adultification. Her social justice work is seen on both local and statewide committees, commissions, and boards. Her propensity for Black excellence and community-minded education continually inspires her peers, veterans of the work, and generations to come. Next year, she will be attending Fisk University to study Political Science and continue her work in areas of injustice.

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OUR VOICES

It Turns Out, All Those 'Woke' White Allies Were Lying

By Michael Harriot
(Reprinted from The Root: theroot.com)

When the country collectively witnessed the brutal May 25, 2020 death of George Floyd, white people were forever changed. Millions took to the streets, arm-in-arm with their fellow brethren, offering their support for justice and equality. Corporations changed their policies. Individuals joined the movement. To prove their commitment, companies pledged billions to the struggle for racial equity. This multiracial outpouring of sympathy and solidarity transformed the country.

And then, white people went home and kept being white.

This harsh realization is not an opinion. It is a factual statement based on the research and analyses of multiple organizations. And before we get to the “not all white people,” part of the conversation, let’s be clear, the reports are based on studies that showed that the vast majority of white people didn’t just not do anything. According to stuff like math and science, the levels of white support are lower than they were before demonstrations swept the country last summer.

For instance, remember all those corporations who pledged to donate money to social justice organizations? Well, it turns out that the companies employed a very complex loophole called “lying like a MF” to get out of actually doing what they said they would. According to a review of pledges compiled by Creative Investments Research, businesses have donated less than one percent of the money promised.

“American corporations have pledged to spend \$50bn on racial equity since Floyd’s murder,” reports the Financial Times, “The funds were to be spread between donations to civil rights organizations, targeted investments in communities of color and overhauls of their internal recruiting and

training programs. Yet only about \$250m has actually been spent or committed to a specific initiative, according to an analysis by the research consulting firm.”

In a review of transcripts of investors’ meetings and earnings calls, Sentio (a financial and corporate research platform) noted a tenfold increase in mentions of “systemic racism” and “Black Lives Matter” before it returned to previous levels. And, while many of these companies promised increased diversity and inclusion, less than one-third of America’s largest companies bothered to even look at the disparities in how they paid employees of different races, Just Capital reports. In fact, many agreed to diversity training but refused to release data on employee demographics or pay equity.

It’s not like all the negroes in America pulled up to Wall Street and demanded money and equality. These corporations volunteered these lies. But it isn’t just the nameless, faceless corporations who did this.

Recent polling numbers show that the support for Black Lives Matter has severely declined. Despite the litany of evidence, a May 21 PBS NewsHour/NPR/Marist poll insinuates that most white people still don’t believe Black people are treated differently by law enforcement officers. But when analysts examine the data, it shows that ethnic minorities’ support for the movement and for other key indicators for racial justice are higher than they were before George Floyd’s death. However, white people’s support has declined to levels lower than they were a year ago.

The New York Times reports:

After Mr. Floyd’s death, Republicans reported much stronger support for Black Lives Matter than they had earlier in 2020. For a party often characterized by its racial insensitivity and antagonism toward racial minorities, this increase in support



White people hopped on the bandwagon when systemic racism was trending and hopped back off when they realized they were gonna have to actually do things.

~Michael Harriot

was striking. But perhaps even more striking is its rapid decline.

We observe a similar trend when we separate the data by racial group. Like other racial groups, white Americans were more supportive of B.L.M. following Mr. Floyd’s murder. This sentiment, however, did not last long and, as with Republicans, support eventually plunged. This movement among Republicans and white Americans helps us understand why aggregate support for Black Lives Matter has waned since last summer.

In both cases, the deterioration in support is noteworthy because we do not merely observe a return to pre-Floyd opinion levels. Rather, since last summer, Republicans and white people have actually become less supportive of Black Lives Matter than

they were before the death of George Floyd — a trend that seems unlikely to reverse anytime soon.

However, there is an easy explanation for how this happens. Kim Kardashian’s cornrows. White women voting for Trump. Wedge Heels. It was a fad. White people love Black people like they love TikTok dances and acid-washed jeans and liberty and justice for all. Have you never seen a white woman cry on cue or a Democrat campaigning in a Black barbershop? You really believed that shit? Even after the most white people in the history of America voted for a white nationalist authoritarian?

History teaches us that white America loves to be seen as good, well-meaning people who say they believe in shit. But there has never been a single moment in the history of this country where the majority of white Americans have supported any cause for justice and freedom of anyone else. They did not support the anti-lynching movement. The majority of white America opposed the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King Jr. It has never happened.

White people hopped on the bandwagon when systemic racism was trending and hopped back off when they realized they were gonna have to actually do things. You can just ask Google Trends.

Since the number is getting smaller every day, we must also acknowledge that these indisputable facts don’t apply to all white people... Yet.

Michael Harriot is the Senior Writer at TheRoot.com where he covers the intersection of race, politics, and culture. His work has appeared in the Washington Post, The Atlantic, NBC and BET. Harris is a frequent political commentator on MSNBC and CNN, and the recipient of the 2019 NABJ Award for digital commentary, as well as the NY Association of Black Journalists’ Trailblazer Award for “innovations in poetry, podcasting, journalism, and commentary.” For information visit: michaelharriot.com.

Celebrate Bro. Malcolm X’s Birthday with Positive Action

By A. Peter Bailey

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - In the introduction of my upcoming book, “Brother Malcolm X’s Visionary, Strategic Pan Africanism: Why It Enraged the U.S. Government,” I salute him as a great human being, a great black man and a master teacher. The following quotes from some of his speeches and writings will show why the most positive and productive way to celebrate his May 19th birthday is to be involved in positive action.

The first quote says, “The adult Afro-American community should immediately get together and set up a guardian system so that any black child in trouble or who has a problem can come to them for help. If any more Afro-American children are shot down in the New York City streets, the adults will have to share the blame.”



education and for job retraining programs that will emphasize a changing society in which automation plays the key role. We intend to use the tools of education to help raise our people to an unprecedented level of excellence and self-respect through their own efforts.”

In remarks to 37 Black young people who were visiting him in Harlem, he said the following:

The second quote says, “We must establish all over the country schools of our own to train our children to become scientists and mathematicians. We must realize the need for adult education

“I was approached, I think we were at the United Nations, and I met Mrs. Walker about two or three years ago, and she said that a group of students were coming up from McComb, Mississippi, and wanted to know if I would meet with you and speak with you. I told her frankly that it would be the greatest honor that I had ever experienced...It’s been my great desire to either go there or meet someone from there.”

He then moved on to talk about intense white supremacy in their state.

“In studying the process of this so-called progress during the past twenty years, we of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), realized that the only time the Black man in this country is given any kind of recognition or even listened to is when America is afraid of outside pressure or when she’s

afraid of her image abroad. So we saw that it was necessary to expand the problem and the struggle of the Black man in this country until it was above and beyond the jurisdiction of the United States...I wanted to point this out to you because it is important for you to know that when you are in Mississippi, you are not alone.”

A recent quote I found by Bro. Malcolm is also something that should be a guideline for action:

“If your mind is armed, you are never unarmed.”

I repeat, the Brother was great human being, a great Black man and a master teacher.

A. Peter Bailey, author of Witnessing Brother Malcolm X, the Master Teacher, can be reached alfonzop.bailey@gmail.com.

OUR VOICES

Black or black? And Yes, it Matters.

The Language of Liberation

By Ajah Hales

(Medium.com/the-shadow) - Six years before I was born, James Baldwin gave a speech at UC Berkely about what it means to be a Black writer.

“What a writer is obliged at some point to realize is that he is involved in a language which he has to change. For example, for a black writer, especially in this country, to be born into the English language is to realize the assumptions of the language, the assumptions by which the language operates, are his enemy.”

The English language, at its default setting, is inherently racist. It is also inherently transphobic, homophobic, ableist, sexist, and misogynistic. Much like our actions, our words liberate or oppress. When writers are careless with our words, we affirm the racism, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, sexism, and misogyny that are baked into our language.

English is, as Audre Lorde would put it, “the master’s tools.” As a writer, precise and intentional use of language is one of my tools, my chisel with which I chip away calves from the iceberg of white supremacy. I don’t have it all figured out, but I do have a few ‘style tips’ for writers looking to become more intentional about their craft.

Black, black, and white

Every once in a while, a commenter will call me out on capitalizing Black but not white. This is a conscious choice on my part, and according to the Associated Press, it’s the right one. Here’s my rationale.

Black with a lowercase ‘b’ and white with a lowercase ‘w’ both refer to people from different cultures, ethnicities, and nations of origin who share a common skin color. Whether you come from Scandinavia or the United States, white is white. Whether you come from Ghana or India, black is black.

Don’t believe me? Consider the 1922 Supreme Court case United States v. Thind. Bhagat Singh Thind was a former Acting Sergeant that served in World War One. Thind identified as an Aryan Caucasian, which he felt entitled him to be classified as a “free white person.” At that time, only Africans and free whites could apply for citizenship. Thind was denied citizenship on the basis that even though he fell within the ‘scientific definition’ of whiteness, he wasn’t white by ‘common understanding.’ Because Thind looked like an Indian person, they ruled that legally, he was an Indian person, and therefore could not be white. It would take Thind almost twenty years to gain citizenship based on his status as a veteran.

United States v. Thind shows how whiteness as a social construct is a matter of color, not culture.

Black with a capital ‘B’ refers specifically to Black Americans as a culture. Because Black Americans are descendants of enslaved people from throughout the continent of Africa, many of us do not know which countries our ancestors came from. Even if we did, it’s unlikely that



someone Black could claim a single country — it’s not like enslaved people were sent to plantations based on their national origin.

Enslaved black people from different countries, cultures, religions, and continents gave birth to a distinct culture, Blackness. That culture gave us country, jazz, rock and roll, reggae, funk, Motown, R&B, Neo-soul, hip-hop, and rap. Just like Indigenous Americans, Black Americans share a common culture, one forced upon us by colonial genocide. Just like indigenous, white is an adjective describing status, not identity.

Female is an adjective, not a noun

It’s been a while since I took a grammar class, but I do remember that a noun is a person, place or thing (shoutout to School House Rock) and an adjective is a descriptor that modifies the noun. For example, ‘black’ and ‘white’ are adjectives, while Black is a proper noun.

The same concept applies to the word female. According to Webster’s dictionary, female is “of, relating to, or being the sex that typically has the capacity to bear young or produce eggs.” A female could refer to any type of animal or plant with certain reproductive equipment. A womxn is a person who identifies as a woman. Get the difference?

Using female as an adjective is still okay. For example, you might say “only female mosquitos bite,” or “all fetuses are female until they are about six weeks old.” In both cases, the word female is being used to modify and describe the nouns (mosquito and fetus, respectively), not as the noun itself.

Stop conflating sex and gender

Plan International has an awesome video explaining the difference between sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC for

short). As a cisgender womxn, this took me a minute to fully understand. Here’s the cliff notes version.

Sexual orientation is who you are attracted to. In America, we use the words ‘heterosexual’ and ‘homosexual’ to describe sexual orientation. Not only does this erase the identity of bisexuals, pansexuals, demisexuals and others on the ACE spectrum, it’s imprecise language that adds a layer of unnecessary confusion to something many of us struggle to understand in the first place. If a transgender man starts dating a cisgender man, is he gay or straight?

I met an amazing guy last year who introduced me to the terms androphile, gynephile and ambiphile. These are behavioral science terms that describe the gender expression of the person someone is attracted to, instead of the sexual orientation of the person who is attracted.

Gender identity describes the way we perceive ourselves. Like race, gender isn’t a biological reality (although it has an irrefutable impact on those who are marginalized within our patriarchal society). We know this because what it means to be masculine or feminine varies widely across cultures and time periods. Gender identity is how we feel in our heads. Just as many Afrolatinx people don’t identify as black, many people have gender identities that are contrary to their birth-assigned sex characteristics.

Gender expression refers to the way others perceive us based on our appearance. For example, music superstar Prince’s gender identity was a man, but his gender expression was feminine. Here’s another example: A non-binary person has a gender identity that exists outside of the gender binary, but people perceive ENBYs (non-binary) based on their gender expression, which leads to binary identified people misgendering ENBYs.

Finally, sex characteristics are the equipment we are born with. It’s assumed that people with XX chromosomes are female and people with XY chromosomes are male, even though babies are not chromosome tested at birth and it has been proven that there are chromosomal combinations outside of this binary. Intersex persons are people born with sex characteristics of both sexes.

Changing your word usage won’t cure racism, mysogny, ableism, transphobia, or homophobia. What it will do is make you pay attention the language you use, whether writing or speaking. Privilege creates blind spots, intentionality helps us see what’s in them. As we become more intentional with our words, our writing and conversation shift, and we begin to see how American culture and the English language itself are ‘enemies’ of marginalized individuals.

We can win the war against systemic oppression of all types, but no one can fight an enemy they can’t see (except maybe Matt Murdock). If we are unwilling to speak, write, and act with intention, we might as well lie down and accept defeat.

Ajah Hales is a writer, social thinker and small business owner from Cleveland, Ohio. To read more of her writing visit: <https://medium.com/@ajahhales>.



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Spokane Black Business Directory



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The Carl Maxey Center is excited to share Spokane's Black Business Directory at www.BlackSpokane.com. The businesses are listed in alphabetical order and searchable by category.

This is just the beginning. Our goal is to eventually make this a comprehensive snapshot of Black Spokane, including Black businesses, organizations, professionals, churches and events.

If you are an African American professional or a business that is at least 51% Black owned and would like to be included in the directory, please contact the Carl Maxey Center at carlmaxeycenter@gmail.com.

To add your business call 509-795-1886.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

POETRY PROSE INTERVIEWS

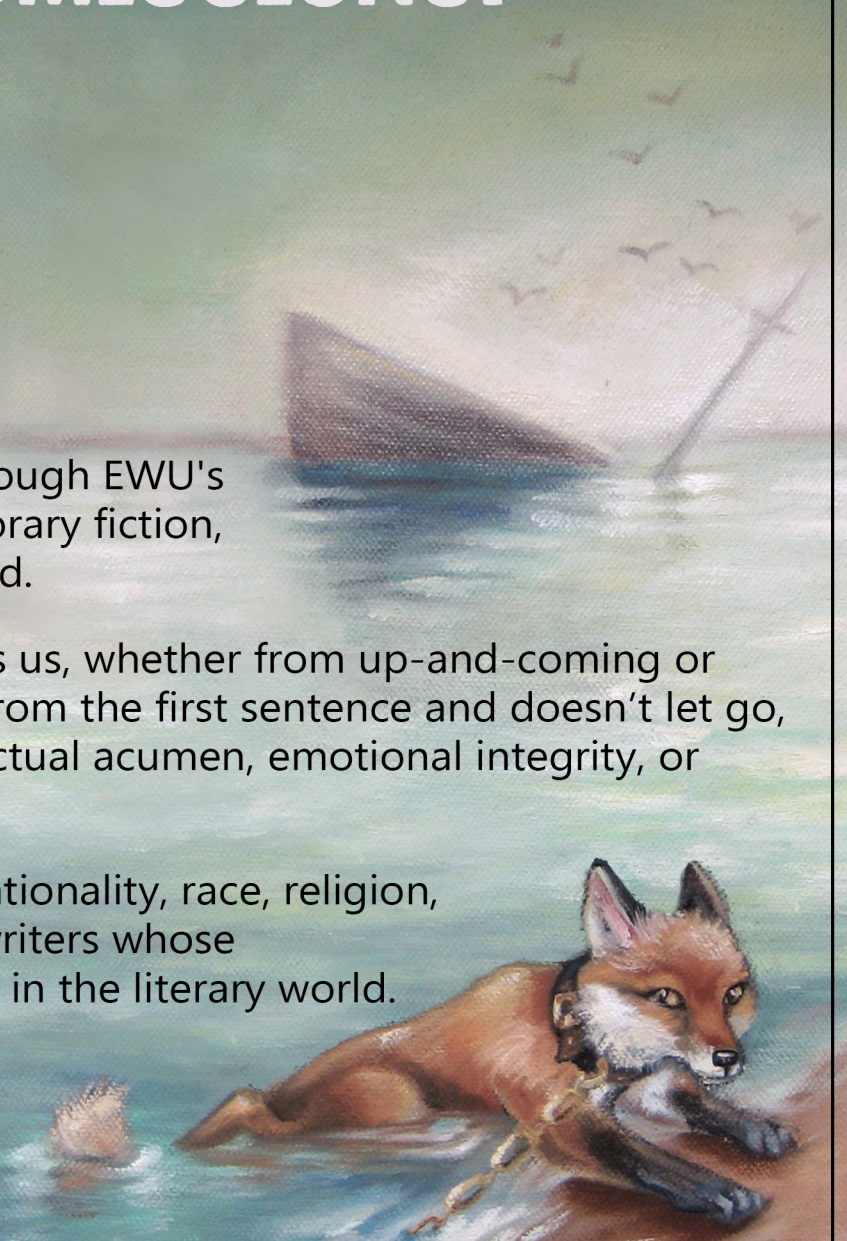
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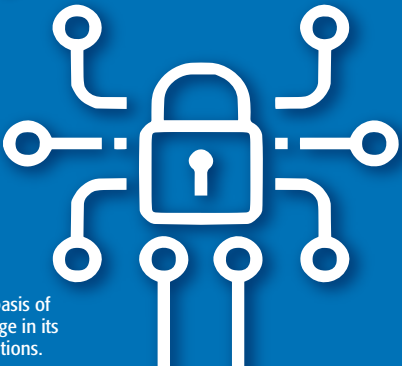
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Step 1: Apply online at <https://my.spokanecity.org/jobs/classified/> between **June 21, 2021 to July 13, 2021**. You will be able to apply for multiple positions at the same time!

Step 2: After you apply and pass the minimum qualifications you will be invited to schedule your Civil Service test.

Step 3: Schedule your Civil Service test, you will be able to take multiple tests on the same day. Testing will take place the week of July 19, 2021 to July 24, 2021 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

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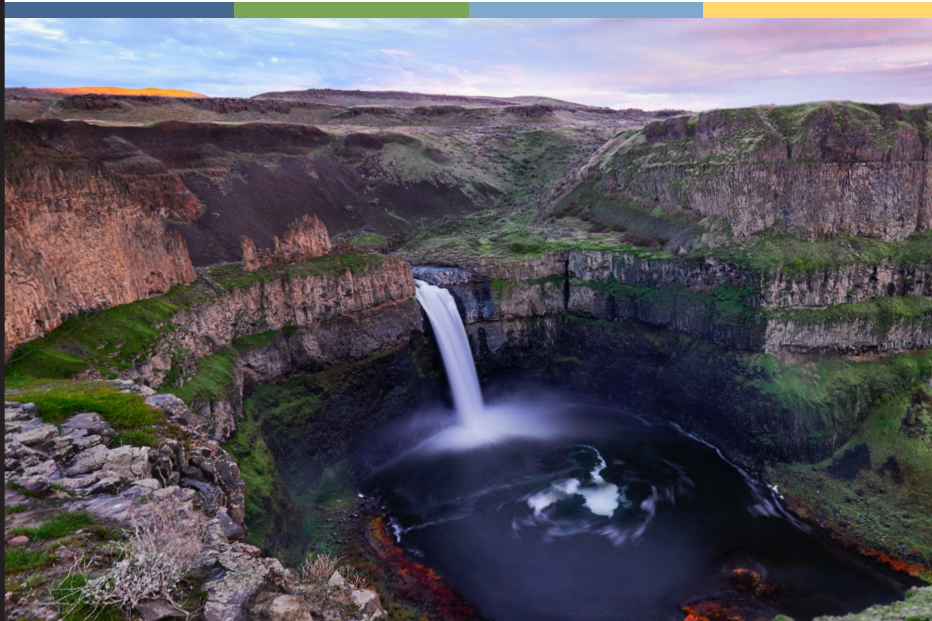


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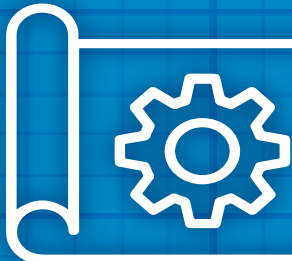
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Inland Northwest Juneteenth Coalition



10th Annual

JUNETEENTH

Celebration

18 JUN

COMMUNITY PILLAR AWARDS
VIRTUAL AWARDS SHOW
STREAMED ON INWJC.ORG, YOUTUBE, FACEBOOK, CMTV14 MOBILE APP
7- 8:30PM

18 JUN

MOVIE IN THE PARK
UNDERHILL PARK
9 - 11PM


19 JUN

BLOCK PARTY
MUSIC BY DJ K-PHI
MLK CENTER @ ECC, 500 S STONE ST.
11AM - 6PM

20 JUN

PRAISE IN THE PARK
LIBERTY PARK
11AM - 1:30PM

20 JUN

FATHER'S DAY BRUNCH
"DRIVE UP & PICK UP"
EMMANUEL FAMILY LIFE CENTER
2 - 4PM

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JUNE 18-20

2021 JUNETEENTH EVENTS

Join the Inland Northwest Juneteenth Coalition, Martin Luther King Jr. Center, City of Spokane, Spokane Ministerial Fellowship, Carl Maxey Center and the Black Lens as we celebrate Juneteenth in the East Central Neighborhood.
See Flyer on Page 38

JUNE 21

NAACP GENERAL MEETING

Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting. For more information please check social media at facebook.com/spokane.naACP or contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 or visit naacpspokane.org.

JUNE 25

WE ARE NOT OKAY

A Space for Black Healing

Facilitator Kiantha Duncan, Co-facilitator Alethea Dumas. This is not a space for allies.

5:30-7pm

Virtual Discussion

To register visit: <https://bit.ly/3dj4Fdk>

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



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Center for
CIVIL & HUMAN RIGHTS
at Gonzaga Law

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*THIS IS NOT A SPACE FOR ALLIES

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CO FACILITATED BY: ALETHEA DUMAS

FRIDAY, JUNE 25TH 5:30-7PM

VIRTUAL ZOOM SPACE

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Juneteenth

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