

THE BLACK LENSTM

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

All the Black Women in Us Are Tired

By Lisa Respers France

Reprinted from CNN.com



(CNN)The other day I shared a meme that stoked a lot of emotion.

In it, there are pictures of three superstar athletes -- tennis player Naomi Osaka,

gymnast Simone Biles and track and field sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson -- along with a sign that reads, "Y'all Not Gone Stress Us Out -- Black Women Everywhere."

They are women of color (Osaka has a Japanese mother and a Haitian father, while Biles and Richardson are African Amer-



ican) and have made headlines recently due to decisions they made to support their mental health. As I wrote in the caption of the meme I shared on Instagram, it's hard being a Black woman. "We are supposed

to save relationships, families, elections, communities, democracy and basically the world, all while exhibiting "black girl magic," but y'all mad when we save ourselves?" I wrote. "Welcome to a new day."

The heavy load is made worse by the fact that as Black women, we are not socialized to give as much care to ourselves as we are expected to give to others.

Black women are literally expected to be super women, from heading households to serving as emotional support for White people who want to be allies, but need our help figuring out how to get there. There is an added layer for Black women athletes who have to compete against more than just their opponents.

A 2018 study titled "Beating Opponents, Battling Belittlement: How African-American Female Athletes Use Community to Navigate Negative Images" from Morgan State University in Baltimore examined how they must navigate both racism and sexism in order to become champions.

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State of Black America 2021: The New Normal



By Marc Morial

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - "Building a fair, representative democracy is how we achieve long-term advances on issues from employment to education, from health care to housing, and from civil rights to criminal justice. It's how we count every vote -- and make every vote count. It is how we advance equality, opportunity, and justice in areas where too many Americans are still let down, left out, and left behind.

The job before us will not be easy; it never has been. But our aims are worth fighting for ...

"Make no mistake, we have the capacity to repair our country and forge a nation that recognizes the dignity of every human being and that finally makes real the promise of America." -- Former U. S. Attorney General Eric Holder, Chairman, National Democratic Redistricting Committee, 2021 State of Black America

Few events have shaped American history and our national perspective on racial inequity as profoundly as the grief, civil unrest, and economic devastation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic didn't simply unmask the stark racial in-

equities in our economic, health care and criminal justice systems and institutions -- revealing not one but three pandemics,

The National Urban League's 2021 State of Black America® report, "The New Normal: Diverse, Equitable & Inclusive," -- released July 15 -- charts a path forward as the nation emerges from these three pandemics.

The United States in 2021 finds itself at crossroads of racial reckoning. One path leads backward, toward the "old normal:"

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ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

I was gifted a book by a new acquaintance. Although I was an avid reader when I was younger and I truly enjoy it, I don't have time for books these days, or much of anything else right now it seems, but the conversation that he and I had about the book left me very intrigued, so I picked it up.



Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change. Changing Worlds.

by Adrienne Maree Brown.

Here's a snippet from the introduction:

My favorite life forms right now are dandelions and mushrooms --- the resilience of these structures, which we think of as weeds and fungi, the incomprehensible scale, the clarity of identify excites me.

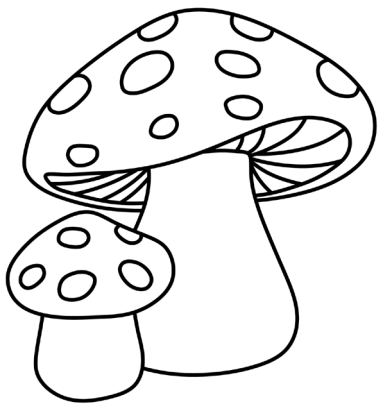
I love to see the way mushrooms can take substances we think of as toxic, and process them as food, or that dandelions spread not only themselves but their community structure, manifesting their essential qualities (which include healing and detoxifying the human body) to proliferate and thrive in a new environment. The resilience of these life forms is that they evolve while maintaining core practices that ensure their survival.

A mushroom is a toxin-transformer, a dandelion is a community of healers waiting to spread... What are we as humans, what is our function in the universe?

I like the idea that my function in the universe is to be a toxin-transformer. I really like the way that sounds. It sounds like a super power to me. I think I want to do and be more of that.

But in order for my new universal function and superpower to work, I would have to spend more time in the transforming part of the process and not, like to seem to do these days, living in the part where I soak up all of the toxins from all around me and I sit and spin and swim in them.

I'm not sure exactly how to move in this new direction, but I certainly feel that it is needed, and that it is long past time. So, here's to transformation-- and to mushrooms.



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.

Contact Information:

Square Peg Multimedia, 1312 N. Monroe St, #148, Spokane, WA 99201 (509) 795-1964, sandy@blacklensnews.com

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YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY by Bertoni Jones Bey

The Pact for the Continuation of Colonization

In 1958, Sekou Toure of Guinea, whose slogan was "We prefer freedom in poverty to opulence in slavery," left the French colonies, opting for independence instead. The French elite were so angry that before they left Guinea they took all their possessions and destroyed hospitals, schools, farms, and slaughtered livestock. Why? Guinea dared to want freedom from European colonizers.

Former French President Francois Mitterand stated in 1957, "Without Africa, France will have no history in the 21st century. In response, before France conceded to African demands for independence in the 1960s, it crafted a so-called "pact" for pseudo-independence called *"The Pact for the Continuation of Colonization"*.

Fourteen African Nations must obey this pact set by France. Those 14 nations are **Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon.**

The terms and conditions of the colonization pact are listed below in eleven points:

#1 Colonial Debt for the benefits of France colonization.

The newly "independent" countries must pay for the infrastructure built by France during colonization. The countries have an outstanding "colonial debt" to France.

#2 Automatic confiscation of national reserves.

France is in total control of the reserves of the 14 nations since 1961 which totals over \$500 billion dollars per year. The 14 countries MUST deposit 85% (65% plus another 20% for financial liabilities) of their monetary earnings into an "Operations Account" in France's Central Bank, leaving them to balance their national budget with the remaining 15%. The French Treasury invests said African reserves in their own name on the Paris Stock market, without the nations' consent, involvement in investment strategies, or how much they earn. If the nations need to borrow money, France lends them their own money back at commercial lending rates

#3 Right of first refusal on any raw or natural resource discovered in the country.

France has first pick to purchase any natural resources found or to be found in colonized lands even with competitive bidding. Only if France says no can the nations have permission to seek other interested partners.

#4 Priority to French interests and companies in public procurement and public bidding.

French companies must have first priority for government contracts regardless of lower bids.

#5 Exclusive right to supply military equipment and train the country military officers.



African military officers are trained either in France or at French training facilities only.

#6 Right for France to pre-deploy troops and intervene militarily in the country to defend its interests.

Under the Colonial Pact's "Defense Agreement", France has the right militarily to intervene in the nation's business. To defend French interest, France may invade the 14 countries at any time without warning. All military bases are completely run by France.

#7 Obligation to make French the official language of the country and the language for education.

The French language is the official language of the 14 nations.

#8 Obligation to use France colonial money FCFA (Franc for French colonies in Africa).

Even though The European Union denounced this evil, France has been forcing Africans to use their French colonial money system (francs) since 1958. These francs are now tied firmly to the euro, taking economic power almost completely out of African hands while cutting them out of the largest commodities market in the world - foreign exchange market (FOREX).

#9 Obligation to send France annual balance and reserve report.

The 14 Nations must send an annual copy of their national balance sheet to France for review.

#10 Renunciation to enter into military alliance with any other country unless authorized by France.

France is to be the supreme "ally" for the nations militarily, all other possible allies must first gain France's approval.

#11 Obligation to ally with France in situation of war or global crisis.

The 14 nations must side militarily with France in France's own personal conflicts.

Every African leader who has tried to opt out of the Colonial Pact appears to have either been assassinated or suffered a coup removing him from power. Dr. Arikana Chihombori Quao, former African Union Ambassador to the U.S., expertly says: "They don't do coups anymore they just simply create instability. So, when you hear of instability in an African country, ask yourself what is really going on. You must agree to this pact if you are going to be independent, maybe we need to redefine the word independence for the French".

The Continuation of Colonization pact has created a legal mechanism under which France obtains a special place in the political and economic life of its former colonies. Those who defend pact argue that it has offered financial stability to the nations since their independence. But critics, according to Global Voice, see the pact as enforced debt and a legacy of dependence on France. The truth is, France has acted very dishonorably toward Africa and has enjoyed untold wealth from Her without

Her agreement, in spite of this so-called "agreement" between France and the fourteen nations.

While we are shown global news reports of France dealing with foreign terrorism at home, why is there is no reporting on France's supreme terrorism of Africa? Everyone in history has betrayed Africa when they came unto Her. It has been often said - Africa is the prize everyone wants, no one can do without, and no one wants to pay for.

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How France Is Stealing Africa's Wealth/Colonization Never Stopped!- Dr. Arikana Chihombori Quao, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0M-OZVt7YqQ.

Los Angeles County Returns \$75 Million Land to Black Family



Visitors to Bruce's Beach in 1920, featured in the book "Living the California Dream," by Alison Rose Jefferson. (Credit: Miriam Matthews Photograph Collection-UCLA)

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire
Senior National Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

Nearly a century after the government allegedly used trickery and eminent domain to seize their valuable property, the family of Charles and Willa Bruce are finally receiving justice.

Officials in Los Angeles County reportedly have decided to return the family's Manhattan Beach property that estimates show might be worth as much as \$75 million.

The beach resort once flourished while welcoming African American visitors in the 1920s – a time when Black people and other minorities weren't allowed on White beaches.

The property famously took on the name "Bruce's Beach." Meanwhile, descendants of Charles and Willa Bruce had fought for years to have the land returned to the family.

"It was a very important place because there was no other place along the coast of California where African Americans could actually go and enjoy the water," Chief Duane Yellow Feather Shepard, the Bruce family historian and spokesperson said in a local interview.

Regularly facing threats and intimidation tactics from the Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacists, the Bruce family maintained their property and kept the resort open.

But in 1924, the city council cited eminent domain as a reason to take the land, reportedly under the guise of building a park. "However, the land remained untouched for years," the Insider reported.

According to media reports, Willa and Charles Bruce fought back legally but received only \$14,000 in compensation. Now, city officials have placed the value of the property at \$75 million.

"When I first realized that the county-owned the property that was once Willa and Charles Bruce's Beach Lodge, I knew that returning it to the Bruce family was the right thing to do," Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn told CBS Los Angeles in a statement.

"But this is the first time a government has done anything like this, and there were a lot of questions about how it would work."

For the family and Shepard, there remains more work.

"Our next step will be, once we get that land restored to us, is to go after them for the restitution, for the loss of revenue for 96 years of our family from the business, the loss of generational wealth, and the punitive damages for their collusion with the Ku Klux Klan in disenfranchising our family," Shepard remarked.



1912 LA Times article about Willa Bruce. Courtesy Bruce Family



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BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Zaila Avant-Garde: First African American Scripps National Spelling Bee Champion

By Kavi Dolasia

(Source: dogonews.com) On July 8, 2021, Zaila Avant-garde, a 14-year-old from Harvey, Louisiana, became the first African American to win the prestigious Scripps National Spelling Bee, when she out spelled 11 finalists to clinch title. Avant-garde is Louisiana's first spelling bee champion and the second Black winner in the national competition's 93-year history. The first was Jody-Anne Maxwell from Jamaica, who won in 1998 at the age of 12.

The mostly virtual competition included 209 regional winners from the US, the Bahamas, Canada, Ghana, and Japan. The preliminaries were held in early June, followed by the quarterfinals and semifinals. The final round, was televised live and held at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida, on July 8, 2021.

Avant-garde and Chaitra Thummala, a 12-year-old from Frisco, Texas, were the only contestants still re-



maining after two hours of competition. Thummala spelled her first two words correctly, but made an error on her third word which opened the door for Avant-garde. She spelled her word correctly, "murraya" — a genus of tropical Asiatic and Australian trees.

Unlike most spelling bee contestants, Avant-garde had only been competing in spelling bees for two years. She told the BBC that she attributes her success to her love of the roots of difficult words and hard work. "I usually try to do about 13,000 words (per day), and

that usually takes about seven hours or so."

In addition to her success with the spelling bee, Avant-garde is also a basketball prodigy. The teenager, who aspires to attend Harvard University and play for the WNBA, is one of the top eighth-grade basketball prospects in the country. If that's not enough, she also holds three Guinness World Records for her ball-handling skills, including most basketballs juggled in one minute (four), the most basketballs dribbled by one person simultaneously (six), and the most dribbles in 30 seconds with four basketballs.

"I'm hoping that in a few years I'll see a whole lot more African American females, and males too, doing well in the Scripps Spelling Bee," Avante-garde In an interview with CBS This Morning following her victory, Avant-garde shared, "I've been working toward that goal for like two years, and so to finally have it, it's like the best possible outcome because it couldn't have gone any better."

NY Artist Tanda Francis and Others Turn Plywood from BLM Protests into Public Art

(Source: goodblacknews.org)

Worthless Studios, a not-for-profit space for artists located in New York, organized *The Plywood Protection Project* last summer in the wake of the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, with the intention of making public art that paid tribute to the racial justice movement.

Tanda Francis, one of the five artists who worked on the project with worthless, used repurposed plywood from boarded-up storefronts to create a sculpture now on display in Queens called, "RockIt Black."

"To transform this plywood that was on the streets during the Black Lives Matter actual uprising is...



amazing," Francis told Reuters. "In my work, I actually use the color black and actually try to elevate it, kind of contrast to how it's been sort of stigmatized in our culture."

Behin Ha Design Studio erected their contribution called "Be Heard" in Thomas Paine Park in Lower Manhattan.

"New York City was covered in this plywood during COVID shutdowns and, you know, the peak

of the Black Lives Matter protests," said Neil Hamamoto, founder of worthless studios. "To me, it felt important to recycle the material because of its power and rhetoric."

KaNSiteCurators and Caroline Mardok created "In Honor of Black Lives Matter," which currently stand in Poe Park in The Bronx.

For more information about the Plywood Protection Project, visit: worthlessstudios.org/plywoodprotection



Sheila Edwards Lange Chosen as Chancellor of the University of WA-Tacoma



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

Tacoma, WA - Sheila Edwards Lange was selected to become Chancellor of the University of Washington-Tacoma. Her appointment begins on September 16.

The Tacoma campus of the University of Washington enrolls nearly 4,600 undergraduate students and more than 700 graduate students, according to the latest available statistics from the U.S. Department of Education. African Americans make up 9 percent of the undergraduate student body.

Dr. Edwards Lange has been serving as president of Seattle Central College. She was the vice president for minority affairs and diversity for the University of Washington from 2007 to 2015.

"I was attracted to UW Tacoma's urban-serving mission, commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and its stellar academic programs. That unique combination has enabled UW Tacoma to be an active partner in economic development and prosperity in the South Sound," said Dr. Edwards Lange. "I am excited about being part of this work and look forward to leading the institution at this critical time in its history."

Dr. Edwards Lange earned a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Irvine. She holds a master of public administration degree and a doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies from the University of Washington.

Tennessee State Explores Creating First HBCU Ice Hockey Program

(Source: Vanessa Robertson, hbcubuzz.com)

Tennessee State University (TSU), is exploring the idea of being the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) to add ice hockey programs for men and women.

In a partnership with the National Hockey League (NHL), the Nashville Predators franchise and College Hockey Inc, TSU is currently conducting a feasibility study to determine how viable it would be to have ice hockey programs. Results are expected sometime in the fall.

If the HBCU chooses to add the programs, it would not only be the first



HBCU ice hockey programs, but it would also be the first varsity hockey programs in the state.

"The idea of establishing a collegiate hockey program at TSU is a tremendous opportunity as the nation's first HBCU to take on this endeavor," President Glenda Glover said according to CNN. "This allows us to expand the sport, increase diversity, and introduce a new fan base."

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Whitworth Student to Study in Senegal on Boren Scholarship

Spokane, WA - Whitworth University is proud to announce International Studies and French double major Alexis Dubreuil '23 has been awarded the prestigious David L. Boren Scholarship.

Dubreuil has been admitted to Boren's African Flagship Languages Initiative. During this yearlong academic program, she will focus on French and Wolof language development in Dakar, Senegal. Dubreuil will begin this summer with intensive language and cultural preparation courses provided by the University of Florida and then embark upon the main international portion of the program in mid-August 2021.

"I am so excited for the opportunity to gain cultural and linguistic competency abroad," Dubreuil says. "There are so many doors that may be opened from an opportunity like this, and I can't wait. It is a little nerve-racking because this will be my first time studying outside of the country. However, it is such a gift to be able to immerse oneself into a completely foreign place, take off these clunky America-centered glasses, and see the world and the people that live in it from a completely new perspective."

This is the second time a Whitworth student has received the Boren Scholarship. Political science major Shannon Price '21 received the award in 2019 and studied Swahili at the MS-Training Centre for Development Cooperation in Tanzania.

Boren Awards are funded by the National Security Education Program (NSEP), which focuses on geographic areas, languages and fields of study deemed critical to U.S. national security. The Boren Awards is a federal program and one of the most prestigious study abroad funding opportunities.

Upon completion of the study abroad program, the student recipient commits to working for the federal government for at least one year in a variety of public service sectors that



align with the student's academic background and personal aptitudes.

In 2021, the national nominating panel selected 188 Boren Scholars from more than 600 undergraduate applications. For more information on the Boren Awards, visit boren-awards.org.

In addition to the Boren Award, Dubreuil is also among a group of fourteen students from Whitworth, Washington State University and the University of Washington whose faces appear on one of the newest commercial airliners in the Alaska Airlines fleet. The likenesses of Dubreuil and the 13 other students will be displayed on "Our Commitment," a custom Boeing 737-900 ER, alongside quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. The aircraft, which will fly in Alaska's fleet for up to 10 years, is equipped with custom seatback cards and digital resources with information about the featured students, the company's diversity goals and information on UNCF (United Negro College Fund) as well as historically black colleges and universities..

Whitworth University is a private liberal arts university located in Spokane, WA that is affiliated with the Presbyterian church. The university, which has an enrollment of more than 3,000 students, offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Mickey Guyton Becomes First Black Woman to Host Academy of Country Music Awards

Source: blacknews.com)

Nationwide — Country music artist Mickey Guyton made history in April as the first African American woman to ever host the Academy of Country Music Awards in its 56 year history.

The "Black Like Me" singer says she was overjoyed when she found out about the record-breaking news. Along with being the first-ever Black female ACM host, she is also its second Black host since the late Charlie Pride became the first Black host of the awards show 35 years ago.

Guyton hosted the show with Keith Urban, who specifically chose her following their remarkable duet performance at last year's show of the song "What Are You Going to Tell Her." Guyton also holds the record as the first Black female artist to perform at the ACM awards.

Aside from hosting the 56th annual ACM awards, Guyton also performed her song Hold On, which she wrote herself. She was also nominated for female artist of the year, but lost to Gabby Barrett.



Guyton also received a Grammy nomination in the country music category earlier this year, making her the first Black female soloist to achieve that feat.

Guyton shared that pursuing her career as a Black woman in a white male-dominated industry has been challenging but she is glad that it has been more diverse and inclusive in recent times.

"As the world moves forward, I'm seeing so many people from all nationalities wanting to sing country music. Me standing on that stage with Keith Urban is going to show all of these other people that they can do it, too. And it's just so cool," she told The Tennessean.



Black Girl Duo Wins International Debate Competition

Source: blackenterprise.com

For the first time in the history of the Harvard Debate Council, two Black girls from Atlanta have become the first Black female duo to win the annual summer debate competition at Harvard University.

Each summer, the Harvard Debate Council, one of the oldest campus organizations at Harvard University, hosts a summer residential program for hundreds of gifted youth from over 15 countries around the world who converge on campus for two weeks of intensive study, which culminates in a program-wide debate tournament. This year's residency and competition were held virtually due to COVID-19 protocols.

Jayla Jackson, 16, is a rising junior at Holy Innocents' Episcopal School. Emani Stanton, 17, is a rising senior at North Atlanta High School. Both girls are current members of the Atlanta-based Harvard Diversity Project, an initiative founded by Harvard's award-winning debate coach and author Brandon P. Fleming. In 2017, Harvard accepted Fleming's proposal to establish the Diversity Project as a means



Jayla Jackson and Emani Stanton (Photo Courtesy of Harvard Diversity Project)

to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus.

Fleming recruits underserved Black youth in Atlanta with little to no prior debate experience. He trains them every weekend for one year in Atlanta leading up to the Harvard summer program, exposing them

to higher level academic disciplines. In four years, Fleming has raised over \$1 million to enroll over 100 African-American students into the Harvard debate residency on full scholarship. All four cohorts trained by Fleming's unique curriculum have gone on to win the international debate competition at Harvard.

This year, Jackson and Stanton secured the fourth consecutive championship for the Atlanta-based team with an undefeated 10-0 record. The topic of debate was, "Resolved: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization should substantially increase its defense commitments in the Baltic States."

Fleming emphasizes to his students that the program is "bigger than debate." He states, "The achievements of this program and our scholars reveals to the world the power of educational equity." Jackson remarks about the historic win, "We want to use our platform to show people what's possible when the playing field is leveled for those who need it most."

The Harvard Diversity Project has already accepted a new cohort who will begin training in preparation for the Harvard debate residency of 2022.

You can read more about the story of the program and its founder in Brandon P. Fleming's bestselling book, "MISEDUCATED: A Memoir." For more information, visit www.HarvardDCDP.org or contact info@HarvardDCDP.org.

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

Plundered Artworks to Be Returned to African Countries

(TriceEdneyWire.com/GIN) – Belgium is the latest European country to promise to return artworks plundered from its former Congolese colony, as it seeks to confront its brutal colonial past.

Belgium’s Africa Museum has said up to 2,000 works, including statues, musical instruments and weapons, were acquired illegally during the colonial rule of a swathe of central Africa, mostly the modern-day Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“Everything that has been acquired through force and violence under illegitimate conditions must in principle be returned,” said Thomas Dermine, the secretary of state for science policy.

“Objects that have been acquired in an illegitimate fashion by our ancestors, by our grandparents, great-grandparents, do not belong to us. They belong to the Congolese people. Full stop.”

The Black Lives Matter movement has accelerated Belgium’s reckoning with its colonial past, with statues to former King Léopold II defaced in the wake of the global protest.

From the late 19th century to 1960, thousands of art works including wooden stat-



ues, elephant ivory masks, manuscripts and musical instruments were likely taken by Belgian and other European collectors, scientists, explorers and soldiers.

Following a 66-million-euro (\$78 million) overhaul of the Africa Museum to take a more critical view of Belgium's colonial past, the government is ready to meet DRC calls for restitution. Léopold II ran the Congo Free State as his personal fiefdom from 1885 to 1908, before ceding control to the Belgian government, which controlled the territory until its independence in 1960.

try from the museum in Tervuren, just outside Brussels, unless they are specifically requested by DRC authorities.

That is partly because the museum, which has proved popular since its renovation and attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors before the COVID-19 pandemic, wants to keep these artifacts on display. One option is to pay a loan fee to the DRC.

Meanwhile, Placide Mumbembele Sanger, a professor of anthropology at the University of Kinshasa who is working at the museum in Tervuren, said the process was a simple one.

"These are objects going back to their natural context so I don't see why we should ask so many questions," he said. "It's as if you go out and someone steals your wallet and the person asks you whether or not you are ready to have it back."

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

In July the Belgian government unveiled long-awaited plans for restoring plundered works to the DRC.

"The approach is very simple: everything that was acquired through illegitimate means, through theft, through violence, through pillaging, must be given back," Belgian junior minister Thomas Dermine told Reuters. "It doesn't belong to us."

Belgium will transfer legal ownership of the artifacts to the DRC. But it will not immediately ship art works back to the coun-

Benin's Rare Swamp Forest 'At Risk of Disappearing'

Source: Rédaction Africanews, africanews.com)

In the freshwater swamp forest of Hlanzoun in southern Benin (West Africa), majestic trees hum with chirping birds and playful monkeys.

Home to once bustling flora and fauna, experts now warn that the fragile environment, one of the last of its kind in the West African country and accessible only by canoe, is at risk of disappearing.

The 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) of forest, which takes its name from the river Hlan, is home to 241 plant and 160 animal species including the rare red-bellied monkey, the marsh mongoose and the sitatunga, a swamp-dwelling antelope.

Perched at the top of a gigantic tree squawks a hornbill -- a big bird known for its long, down-curved and colorful bill, similar to toucans.

"Hornbills feed on insects and fruits. They like to follow monkeys around because they force insects to come out when they move around, making it easier for hornbills to catch," explained Vincent

Romera, a French ornithologist and photographer.

With his binoculars, Romera admires a family of monkeys jumping from tree to tree, while keeping a clear distance.

"The animals here have become fearful," he says. He's considering using camera traps to try to photograph them, but also to count the forest's animal population.

"The numbers are in free-fall," he says.

Sometimes, the forest's noisy concert is interrupted by gun shots, he says, probably from poachers. Communities living around the forest "need money, so those who can shoot go and kill animals," explained Roger Houankanrin, a local tourist guide.

Despite steady economic growth in recent years, poverty is widespread in Benin, especially in rural areas, and 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line according to World Bank data.

On the side of the road that lines Hlanzoun forest, lizards, crocodiles and snakes killed by hunters are sold and bought. Monkeys, too, are sometimes sold for meat.



But even more than poaching, excessive logging threatens the forest.

Between 2005 and 2015, Benin's forest cover was slashed by more than 20 percent according to the World Bank, and the deforestation rate continues to be high at 2.2 percent annually.

Trees are cut down for firewood, and the fermented sap of palm trees is used to make a local alcohol, sodabi.

The damaging practice of slash-and burn agriculture has also become more prevalent, warned Josea Dossou Bodjrenou, director of Nature Tropicale, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works on environmental issues in Benin.

The destruction of the forest habitat reduces areas where animals can thrive, forcing them towards farms to find food and exposing them to poachers.

"This is a location that is at risk of disappearing," said local agricultural economist Judicael Alladatin. "It's a poor area and we can't blame people for wanting to feed themselves," Alladatin said, urging authorities "to create conditions for alternative sources of income."

The government does not officially recognise Hlanzoun forest despite lobbying efforts of several NGOs and scientific papers on the forest since 2000.

But it has started to recognize the importance of safeguarding forests in general, according to the World Bank, with recently updated forest policy and tax systems.

In Hlanzoun, the state "must act quickly" said Bodjrenou, and "support forest communities so that they can continue to make profit... but in a different way" by developing agriculture, trade and sustainable tourism.

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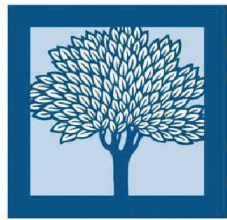


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www.ElectRionAmetu.org

How to Protect Your Black Skin from Cancer

By Merdies Hayes
Our Weekly News

(NNPANewswire) With California fully reopening and with summer here, many people can hardly wait to spend more time outdoors walking, biking, hiking, camping and swimming after more than a year mainly indoors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although that is welcome news for families and outdoor enthusiasts, we cannot forget an important fact: spending too much time in the sun and its harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays is hazardous to your health as it can cause skin cancer, a potentially deadly disease.

This is true for all ethnic groups, including the Black community. According to a 2016 study in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), melanoma, a form of skin cancer that affects all ethnic groups, is more frequently detected in later stages in Black men and women than in any other ethnic group. This can lead to a worse prognosis and higher mortality rates.

The AAD has reported that people with darker skin tones do not receive a diagnosis until the cancer is in its later stages. This tends to be because the symptoms are harder to recognize. Reportedly, the five-year melanoma survival rate for African Americans is 65 percent, compared with 91 percent for White persons.

“There’s a misconception that people with black or brown skin can tolerate the sun more than other people of different racial backgrounds,” said Dr. Joy M. Twersky, a dermatologist with Kaiser Permanente Southern California. “That’s false. Anyone can get skin cancer, and



it’s smart for all of us to protect our skin from UV radiation to lessen our risk.

“It’s important to use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher to better protect our skin, and it should be reapplied as needed, including every 1-2 hours when in the water or when perspiring. It’s important to know that using sunscreen alone isn’t always enough, however. We should also consider taking other steps to protect ourselves.”

The AAD further reports that doctors diagnose around 24 percent of melanoma cases in the regional stage, meaning that cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes. As well, physicians tend to diag-

nose roughly 16 percent of melanoma cases when they are in the “distant-stage” (cancer has spread to distant parts of the body).

Protecting your skin

Dr. Twersky offered the following tips to lessen your chance of getting skin cancer:

- ~Avoid the sun during its peak hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- ~Understand that sand, water and snow can reflect 85 percent of the sun’s rays.
- ~To protect your eyes, wear sunglasses capable of blocking 99 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.

~When possible, wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved clothing to cover much of your skin.

~Wear clothing with the UPF label that helps protect against UV radiation.

~Because their skin is more sensitive, completely shield the skin of babies younger than 6 months from the sun.

“Taking these precautions will help you a great deal in preventing skin cancer,” Dr. Twersky said. “Additionally, following these simple tips will also help keep your skin looking healthier.

Checking your skin

It is important to keep an eye out for new spots or growths on your skin that are changing, such as growing, itching, or bleeding, as these could be early signs of skin cancer, and they can occur even in sun-protected places, like the soles of our feet. Use a mirror to examine difficult-to-see areas, especially on the bottoms of feet and between the toes.

Examine areas most likely to develop skin cancer, such as soles of the feet, inside the mouth, the anogenital region, the palms of the hands, and other areas where skin’s pigment is not as dark.

Black persons should also look for a sore that will not heal (or heals and then reappears). Look for a dark spot, growth or darker area of the skin that is bleeding, growing, or changing in size or shape. Also, look for a dark line around or underneath a fingernail or toenail.

With early detection, skin cancer can be treated more easily. That’s why it’s important to regularly check our own skin. If you find something of concern, have your skin checked by a doctor.



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The Rise, Collapse, and Legacy: HBCU Football and the NFL Draft

The history of Black Football Players from HBCUs in the National Football League

By Dr. Al-Tony Gilmore

(Reprinted from *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, jbhe.com; Photo Credit: footballcardgallery.com)

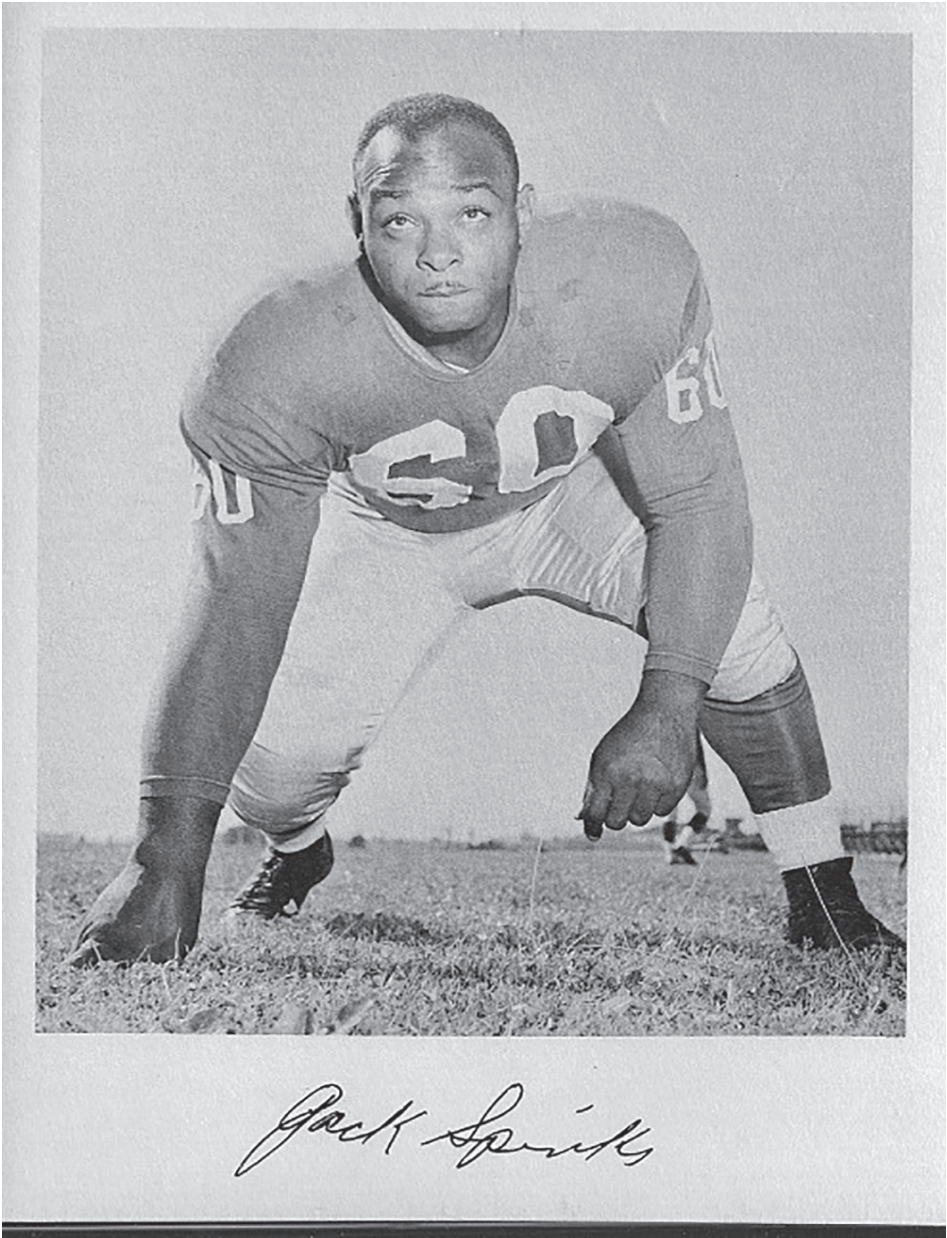
While it is something of a disappointment that not a single HBCU football player was drafted by the National Football League in 2021, it is not much of a surprise. Only one player from a HBCU was drafted in 2020, and none in nine separate drafts since 2000.

Thus, it is somewhat disingenuous to blame the results of the NFL 2021 draft on the cancellations of 99 percent of the Fall 2020 HBCU football games because of the pandemic, or to any other reason that evades an admission that the quality of HBCU athletes consistently falls short of NFL standards. But, it is important and instructive to remember and reflect that it was not always this way.

In 1952 Jack Spinks of Alcorn State University in Mississippi created excitement among Black sports fans when he became the first HBCU football player to be drafted by the NFL, though undrafted Tank Younger of the Los Angeles Rams, who played at Grambling University in Louisiana, had become a prominent player a few years earlier.

For the remainder of the decade a small number of HBCU players were also drafted including Willie Galimore (Florida A&M University) and Charlie Bivins (Morris Brown College) the Chicago Bears; Johnny Sample and Roger Brown (Maryland State) Baltimore Colts and Detroit Lions; Roosevelt Brown (Morgan State University) New York Giants; Willie Davis (Grambling State University) Cleveland Browns; Jack McLaren (Bethune-Cookman University) Pittsburgh Steelers; Deacon Jones (Mississippi Valley State University) Los Angeles Rams; Leo Miles (Virginia State University) New York Giants; John Baker and Chuck Hinton (North Carolina Central University) Rams and Steelers; and Charlie Brackins and Elijah Pitts (Prairie View A&M University and Philander Smith College) Green Bay Packers. Between 1946 and 1962, 173 Black players had played in the NFL but only 42 of those came from HBCUs, and up until 1960 no player from a HBCU was selected higher than the 4th round.

Just as Jackie Robinson’s integration of major league baseball and Brown v. Board of Education ushered in an era of moderate integration, the increased agitation of the Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King, Jr. promoted a racial climate that improved the draft prospects of HBCU players, at a time when a large share of HBCU players met NFL standards, and when NFL owners



better equated HBCU players with winning and revenues.

When the rival American Football League (AFL) was formed in 1960, the best players at HBCUs benefited for two reasons: both leagues drafted from the same pool of players, and the upstart league ignored the etiquette of team quotas for Black players. Its primary goal was to put the best product on the playing field.

In 1960, 75 percent of the NFL’s first-round draft picks signed with the AFL, and its teams stocked themselves with under-publicized but outstanding HBCU players, most of whom were drafted by both leagues, which gave them options in negotiating for the best contracts and improving chances of making the rosters. In 1963, Buck Buchanan of Grambling State University was the overall No. 1 pick of the AFL’s Kansas City Chiefs, becoming the first Black player from any college to achieve that honor. By contrast, with

the more racially conservative NFL, Buchanan was the 265th player selected overall by the New York Giants in the 17th round.

By 1967 the AFL and NFL floodgates had opened so wide that the Super Bowl roster of the Kansas City Chiefs had 13 HBCU players. In the 1969 Super Bowl when the AFL’s New York Jets upset the Baltimore Colts, the Jets’ roster had eight players from HBCUs while the Colts had six.

When the two leagues merged in 1970, no one could deny the role of HBCU players in making that historic event happen. Ironically, in that same year, the implications of what occurred in a single game triggered a reversal in the overall quality of HBCU football recruits and subsequently led to a downward trend in HBCU selections in the draft.

The University of Alabama and the University of Southern California met in the marquee football matchup of that year at Legion Field in Birmingham. The all-White Alabama team

made a last stand for segregated college football teams but was crushed 42-21 by the USC team led by an unprecedented all-Black backfield.

The handwriting on the wall had never been more transparent, college football teams with winning aspirations had to recruit Black players. Four years earlier in 1966, the same had happened in college basketball when an all-Black starting lineup at Texas Western College (now the University of Texas at El Paso) soundly defeated an all-White Kentucky team, then the most dominant college basketball program for over a generation.

In the aftermath of those two games, once segregated college football teams, as well as those that had long-established patterns of recruiting limited quotas of Black players, actively recruited Black players in increasing numbers, raiding what once had been the domain of HBCUs. This was the beginning of the decline in the quality of players recruited by HBCUs, which simply did not have the resources and media exposure to compete with the larger predominately White schools for the best Black athletes.

But the HBCUs’ well did not run dry overnight. They continued to produce Hall of Fame and high-quality players who were drafted by the NFL but in increasingly smaller numbers. In 1974, Ed “Too Tall” Jones of Tennessee State became the first player from an HBCU to be selected as the No. 1 pick in the NFL draft. Since that time notable NFL draftees from HBCUs include Walter Payton, Jerry Rice, Steve McNair, Doug Williams, Harry Carson, Michael Strahorn, Shannon Sharpe, and others, some of whom were not drafted but signed and made NFL rosters as free agents.

In 2021 the NFL conducted an HBCU combine for players deserving closer examination by NFL scouts. Unfortunately due to the pandemic those players were in the difficult position of not playing competitively in over a year, with the exception of some Southwestern Athletic Conference schools (SWAC) which competed in a truncated spring football schedule. This may explain why none of the five HBCU players, listed among the 460 by the NFL Draft Prospect Trackers, were selected in the draft.

Black NFL coaches and scouts – many HBCU alumni – are among those whose opinions contribute to draft selections. The goal, again, is to put the best product on the playing field. School pedigree does not necessarily carry weight in the draft process, though the level of college competition works against HBCUs and lower conference schools.

Continued on Page 27

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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.

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The Effects of Racial Trauma on Mental Health:

Deaths Captured on TV and in the Media

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness (nami.org)

Racial tension is once again at a critical tipping point in the U.S. Many people have asked, “Why now? Why was the death of George Floyd the catalyst for this national reckoning on racial injustice?”

The truth is: this movement is over 500 years in the making. Only now, with the widespread use of videos captured on cell phones and posts on social media, has the awareness of injustices outside of those happening within our own neighborhoods become too prevalent to ignore.

While this has allowed for a collective response and an awareness that these are not isolated events, it has also served to re-traumatize people who witness the deaths of Black people at the hands of the police. This serves to fuel hypervigilance and mistrust of a system that vows to protect and serve.

What Is Racial Trauma?

The number of instances of overt disenfranchisement toward the Black community are countless. During slavery, a psychiatric condition was developed to describe slaves who attempted to flee enslavement, which was referred to as “Drapetomania.”

Also, during slavery, Black men were considered only to be 3/5 of a man. Between 1932-1972, the U.S. Public Health Services enrolled Black men into the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, which was disguised as providing treatment for Black men with syphilis. Instead, participants were prescribed vitamins or administered insufficient doses of medications that resulted in a number of unnecessary deaths. These instances — among many other atrocities — have resulted in significant, ongoing trauma to Black people within our country.

Despite being currently five to six generations removed from slavery, the trauma of

enslavement was so severe that it implanted a psychological and social shock in the minds of Black people. Current generations still carry the scars mentally and socially. In addition to knowing that this is the history of Black people in America, the systemic racism that has remained in place since the end of slavery has resulted in ongoing racial trauma and injustices to Black people, such as racial profiling, voter suppression and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. Enduring constant prejudice, discrimination and bias takes a toll on one’s mental health.

Recurring Trauma Through The Media

These psychologically damaging experiences of ongoing systemic racism are further exacerbated through the reoccurring videos and images of Black people dying at the hands of police officers. The number of lives lost doesn’t just include Michael Brown (age 18), Freddie Gray (age 25), Tamir Rice (age 12), Eric Garner (age 27), Ahmaud Arbery (age 25), Atatiana Jefferson (age 28), Breonna Taylor (age 26), Elijah McClain (age 23) or George Floyd (age 46). They include so many more.

There is a collective experience that is felt. It is every Black person realizing that at any point in time, the stories that have become all too familiar could be their story. It is realizing that people in the Black community are dying unnecessarily.

Unfortunately, Black people have always lived with the fear and worry that at any point in time either themselves or one of their family members could be the victim of a negative interaction with law enforcement. Recent events that have been highlighted in the news are not just isolated incidents, but rather a reflection of how this country has continued to undervalue the lives of Black people.

The complexities associated with the re-traumatization of Black people, and



the broadened awareness of social and racial injustices, have ballooned to create a societal awakening. However, becoming mentally overwhelmed and susceptible to extended trauma or other mental health issues related to this continued exposure is prevalent as well.

As the struggle for equality continues, it is critically important for Black people to carefully consider the effect of these repeated images and videos on their mental health. For those who feel repeatedly triggered, it can be helpful to mitigate exposure as much as possible by unfollowing accounts that post these videos and images or setting content blocks and limits on your phone.

Additionally, reach out to family and friends if you feel overwhelmed and need

to talk to someone you trust who understands. And lastly, if your mental health is suffering, it is essential to consider seeking culturally competent mental health care.

Resources

- Black Mental Health Alliance**
blackmentalhealth.com
Develops, promotes and sponsors culturally-relevant educational forums, trainings and referral services that support the health and well-being of Black people and vulnerable communities.
- Black Mental Wellness**
blackmentalwellness.com
Provides access to evidence-based information and resources about mental health and behavioral health topics from a Black perspective.
- Brother You’re on My Mind**
www.nimhd.nih.gov/programs/edu-training/byomm
Raises awareness of the mental health challenges associated with depression and stress that affect African American men and their families.
- Hurdle**
hurdle.health
Provides culturally intentional care and tailored content built on evidence-based practices.
- Boris L Henson Foundation**
borislhensonfoundation.org
Founded in 2018, the Boris L Henson Foundation is a pioneering Black mental health advocacy group that provides access to localized and black-culturally competent therapy resources sourced through a network of clinicians, service providers, counselors, and thought leaders. The foundation is named in honor of Boris Lawrence Henson, father of Academy Award and Emmy nominated actress and founder Taraji P. Henson, who suffered mental health challenges without resources or support.



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“It’s Ok Not to Be OK”

By Cynarra Pleasant

My mind is overflowing.
I’m overwhelmed.
I’m learning new ways to cope with old things.
Peeling away this blanket of pain that I’ve thrown on my emotions.
Frustration and fear roll down my face in the form of tears.
A release.



It’s OK not to be OK

“You’re doing great.” “You’re on top of your game”, this I continue to tell myself.
Those tears are the sign of progress. A sign of strength.
In spite of my guilt.
“I’m learning new ways to cope with all things”
That’s what I keep telling myself.

So why does it feel like I’m running in place and jumping through fiery hoops.
All those old thoughts are stewing inside and I’m not exactly sure what to do except feel.
The feelings I’ve been holding inside not exactly sure what to do except feel.
All those feelings I’ve been holding inside.
To thy own self always be true.

It’s OK not to be OK

I scream that phrase out loud as if I don’t really believe that it’s true!
The tears that stream down of frustration and fear flow straight to my heart and water my soul.
I’m becoming me once again.
This person I lost and buried under pain is starting to see light.
Every day isn’t gonna be great, but I get to be me in the end.
So, I fight for the life that I’m wanting so bad.
I can’t see myself giving in.
I remind myself a thousand times over of the same thing

It’s OK not to be OK

Now, I do 1% better to stay 2 steps ahead.
Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, but I will be back to me by the end. I’m embracing my pain and facing my fears to stand up and be me once again.
My journey is mine and today I’m in control, and I believe with everything in me that It’s OK not to be OK!!

- Don’t get comfortable
- Stay accountable
- Stay willing
- Be honest

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CHAS Health East Central Dental Clinic




Ribbon Cutting Celebration and Open House


CHAS Health will be hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony open house on **August 10th at 4pm** for the new East Central Dental Clinic, located at **2211 East Hartson Avenue**. The East Central Dental Clinic has 7 dental operatories and opened in late November 2020. Due to the pandemic, CHAS Health was not able to host a grand opening or ribbon cutting ceremony upon opening.

Prior to the clinic opening at this location, the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center was one of the only community centers in Spokane without medical or dental services on campus. The need for services in this location was great and in no small way exacerbated by Spokane’s oral health racial equity gap of 21%. Additionally, 78% of adult Medicaid clients in Spokane County do not use their dental benefit. More than 1 in 4 low-income Spokane adults experience tooth loss. The East Central Dental Clinic has held over 5,000 patient visits since opening in November.

The ribbon cutting ceremony will begin at 4:00pm and include local elected officials and community members speaking on the importance of a dental clinic at the community center. Beginning at 4:30pm, CHAS Health will be hosting tours of the new dental facility, back-to-school giveaways, catering from Fresh Soul, and dental giveaways. The event is open to the community.

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of the communities around us,
is to get vaccinated.”*

*Dr. Benjamin Danielson,
Pediatrician, Seattle, WA*



Traditional Food, Clothing, Music, Community.

Sayla-Tec & Carl Maxey Center Partner to Host COVID Vaccination Clinic for Immigrant Community

By Amber D. Dodd

In partnership with The Carl Maxey Center, Sayla-Tec, an industrial support service company, hosted a free vaccination picnic catered to Spokane's African immigrant community on July 17. Sanya Ala, Sayla-Tec's founder, chose the Riverside Park Bowl and Pitcher location as a playground for personal interaction and reconnection.

"What I want to do is get all the immigrants here vaccinated, get them together because the more they know (each other), the better." Ala said.

Partnering with the center named in Maxey's honor was fitting for completing his mission of meeting the community where they were and providing services that may have been out of reach.

"This is a reflection of the work he's done for me and his commitment to the public," Ala said. "He was always extensively involved in the community and I'm happy following those footsteps as well."

High trees, close river view and flat, drought-induced terrain served as a host site for cultures across the world to connect through food and music, two universal languages transcending barriers of language and life experiences. Spokane County Health Administration provided Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson vaccination doses in a mobile clinic station during their two-hour stay.

Kenyans, Afghans, Nigerians, Micronesians, Congolese and Arabs brought their native land to life. Most in attendance wore casual clothes, some sported traditional garments such as Nigerian robes and a fila, a hat worn by African men. Clusters of cultures shared the traditional family recipes to feed patrons under the pavilion.

Nigerians presented dishes like jollof rice, goat stew, and plantains. Fufu, a fluffy soft

and white dough usually paired with meat, stayed warm in aluminum foil. A deep-fried snack made with nutmeg, sugar and milk called chin chin satisfied any sweet tooth.

Marie Jeanne-LuSawba, a Congolese woman who has been in Spokane for six years, smoked fish with tomato, salt, onions and cassava leaves. The Micronesian community whipped up uht sukuuk, mashed bananas with coconut milk, and a side of kimchi with ham marinated in pineapples.

Afghanistan native Massuda Mirzada cooked her traditional favorites such as mantu. The beef dumpling is coated in levels of flavor, starting with a spicy chickpea and tomato combination. Mirzada drizzled yogurt infused with mint and coriander to cool tongues off. A pico de gallo-like tomato salad of cucumber and onion rested atop the creamy, tomato concoction. As she served the dish with wheat-engrained rice mixed with carrots and raisins doused in lemon juice and olive oil, Mirzada sees her traditional culinary practices as a strong link to home.

"We still buy from the halal stores," Mirzada said, a Spokane resident since 2018. "My husband still goes to the farm where they kill the animals, share and pay each other. That stems from how all Afghans usually do at home."

The Neema Choir from the Congolese Community performed African worship songs. An attending Nigerian man blended into the choir from afar, singing Sinach's 'I Know Who I Am' by heart. Arriving at the midpoint of the picnic, Micronesians sat under a white tent and played their own songs too. The Spokane Police Force's Youth Outreach Programs were present, handing out ice cream to children.



Ben Cabildo is the president of AHANA, a non-profit that has invested in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural business owners and working professionals since 1998. He emigrated from the Philippines to Washington at age 14. Already vaccinated, Cabildo enjoyed the multicultural feast under a tent with his wife. AHANA's Vice President, Marvo Reguindin, also attended with his husband.

Cabildo recognized that businesses suffered from the lack of in-person connection during stay-at-home orders. He believes generating community wealth starts with vaccinations. Ala's leadership makes the situation sweeter since certain opportunities "translate easier with members that belong to that community."

"Mainstream organizations don't know how to [reach out or lead minority communities] and they're not trusted to do it," Cabildo said. "[Ala]'s work is vital. Without it, we wouldn't be able to reach the Afri-

can community and the Black community. There has to be leadership. We can't provide leadership to a different ethnicity."

At the end of the event, Ala reflected on what he was hoping to accomplish through his partnership with the Carl Maxey Center: leading a diverse community for a common goal, protecting one another through vaccinations. Eight people were able to get vaccinated during the picnic clinic. Ala passed out extra water and Pepsi, breaking down tents and, in communal fashion, brainstorming a mentoring program for Spokane's Black youth.

"I feel like this cannot stop. It's got to continue," Ala said. "It's like raising a baby. It's got to crawl and it goes to walk, then once it walks it gets comfortable enough to run. Right now we're not even crawling. It's going to take a lot, but I'm hoping (this new generation) will see this and say 'I will continue this.'"



Pop-Up For the People

Terrain and Carl Maxey Center Host COVID Vaccination Clinic at Black Lives Matter Mural



Summer To Do List

1. VACCINATE



2. CELEBRATE

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WA Bridge Proclamation Not an Extension of the State Eviction Moratorium, Renters Need to Be Ready

By Duaa-Rahemaah Williams

This guest editorial originally ran in The Spokesman-Review on Sunday, July 11.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started last year, Governor Jay Inslee has shown tremendous leadership in implementing a statewide eviction moratorium that protected renters throughout Washington from losing their homes and potentially facing homelessness.

As the pandemic is now beginning to end, the state eviction moratorium finally came to a close on June 30. In its place through September is the Governor’s housing stability “bridge proclamation” meant to protect renters as new tenant protections are implemented and rental assistance funds are distributed. While this bridge proclamation provides some important eviction protections, it is very different from the previous moratorium and in fact many landlords are now able to begin eviction proceedings against renters.

First things first: renters are still protected until September 30 if they have been unable to pay the rent. Cities and counties have the ability to pass stronger eviction protections than the state, but so far the Mayor of Spokane and Spokane County commissioners have not taken action.

Under the proclamation that lasts through September, landlords can only evict ten-

ants for unpaid rent during the pandemic if their county has fully operational rental assistance and mediation programs. Landlords also must provide written notice of these programs and can then only start an eviction if a tenant has refused to participate or didn’t respond. Ending the moratorium sooner would lead to a flood of evictions and new people experiencing homelessness, which is why we encourage Spokane County to set up our programs as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In addition, landlords have to offer tenants a reasonable repayment plan. If tenants receive a repayment plan, they don’t have to accept it, but it is important to respond within two weeks. If you have received a repayment plan or eviction notice, the best thing to do is reach out to experts for help like at the Tenants Union of Washington State.

Starting this month, landlords can start eviction proceedings for any of the reasons outlined in the new statewide “just cause” protections, other than nonpayment of rent. The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance worked hard to get this new law passed earlier this year. Before, renters could be evicted without any listed cause.

We all know that the cycle of eviction moratorium extensions cannot be endless. That’s why the federal and state governments have appropriated funds to set up rental assistance programs that will allow renters to pay their back-rent and get back in good standing with their landlords. And

Landlords have to offer tenants a reasonable repayment plan. If tenants receive a repayment plan, they don't have to accept it, but it is important to respond within two weeks. If you have received a repayment plan or eviction notice, the best thing to do is reach out to experts for help like at the Tenants Union of Washington State.

it’s why the legislature put new protections in place to prevent people from losing their homes when pandemic protections are lifted. The good news is those protections will remain in place permanently and renters are more protected from unfair evictions than ever before.

I know from my own personal experiences just how close a person can be to homelessness when they get behind on rent. I’ve had times of housing instability in my life, and have relied on low income housing to make sure I have a home to live in.

Now I’m proud to organize people in Eastern Washington and across the state at risk of homelessness and housing instability. I know that more than anything, renters desperately want to stay out of trouble and make rent - but sometimes, for reasons outside of their control, the money just isn’t there. COVID has made more people live on the edge than ever before. Our state just reopened - while people are starting to go

back to work, they are also racing to catch up while they get their lives back on track.

Ultimately, both renters and landlords will benefit from the distribution of rental assistance funds. Renters will be able to pay their back-due rent, and landlords will be able to receive money again and avoid having to replace a large number of tenants. Like the pandemic, the eviction moratorium is slowly coming to an end - and all of us, renters, homeowners, landlords, service providers, and elected officials - must be ready for what comes next.

Duaa-Rahemaah Williams is Statewide Organizer for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance. She lives in Spokane.



Are you a tenant facing eviction, or a property owner dealing with non-payment of rent?

If you live in **Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, or Thurston County**, find out how the **Eviction Resolution Program** can help you.

About the Program

The “Eviction Resolution Program” (ERP) allows tenants and landlords to meet with an impartial mediator before an eviction lawsuit is filed. The ERP is free to the tenant and landlord.

Participating in the Program

After the state eviction moratorium ends:

- Landlords must give tenants the option to participate in the ERP before the landlord can file an eviction lawsuit in court.
- Tenants may choose whether or not to participate in the ERP.
- If a tenant chooses to participate, the landlord must participate.
- The tenant has a right to be represented by a lawyer. A lawyer may be provided free of charge.



About the Process

- A neutral third party early resolution specialist (ERS) with a Dispute Resolution Center (DRC) facilitates the ERP process.
- The ERS will try to connect tenants to any available rental assistance.
- If the tenant does not participate in the ERP, or if the ERP is unsuccessful, the landlord may file an eviction lawsuit. The tenant may ask a lawyer for help defending them in an eviction lawsuit. There are free Eviction Defense Clinics and Housing Justice Projects in each of these counties.



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“The pandemic has been tough, especially for black and brown communities who have been hit especially hard by unemployment and health issues. If you are facing eviction, please contact the VLP for help today!”
- Natasha Hill, Spokane Attorney

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WASHINGTON NONPROFITS

Study: Black Urban Areas
Are Much Hotter Than White
City Neighborhoods in the
Summer



New research from the University of California San Diego’s School of Global Policy and Strategy finds that low-income neighborhoods and communities with higher Black, Hispanic, and Asian populations experience significantly more urban heat than wealthier neighborhoods.

Researchers analyzed temperature data on 1,056 U.S. counties, which have 10 or more census districts. The authors were able to analyze surface temperature changes caused by urbanization on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood scale by using satellite data.

Through leveraging a pixel-based image analysis to visualize and examine temperatures continuously over a large area, they were able to evaluate heating differences within cities. They compared these statistics to census district demographic information to quantify environmental inequities in urban climates.

In 71 percent of the counties studied, land surface temperatures in communities with higher rates of poverty were up to 4 degrees Celsius, or 7 degrees Fahrenheit warmer, compared to the richest neighborhoods during the summer months.

“The physical features driving surface heat spikes in these urban environments are fairly consistent across the country, even

for cities with very different geographies and histories,” said lead author Susanne Benz, who was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, San Diego while conducting the study.

“Systematically, the disproportionate heat surface exposures faced by low-income communities with larger minority populations are due to more built-up neighborhoods, less vegetation, and – to a lesser extent – higher population density.”

“Particularly in summer, warming in cities due to alterations of the surface energy balance jeopardizes human health and productivity,” said Jennifer Burney, the Marshall Saunders Chancellor’s Endowed Chair in Global Climate Policy and Research at the School of Global Policy and Strategy and co-author of the study.

Extreme heat has been linked to a range of consequences for humans, from premature births, to lower test scores, decreases in productivity, and increased risk of heat-stroke among children and the elderly.

The study, “Widespread Race and Class Disparities in Surface Urban Heat Extremes Across the United States,” was published in the journal *Earth’s Future*.

To access the report visit:
<https://doi.org/10.1029/2021EF002016>



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All the Black Women in Us are Tired

Continued From Page 1

For example, it noted that Serena Williams -- arguably the world's greatest tennis player with more than 20 Grand Slam wins -- has been compared to a "man" and a "gorilla."

Radio host Don Imus called the players on the 2007 Rutgers women's basketball team "nappy-headed hos" after they lost to the Tennessee team in the NCAA final. Osaka, Biles and Richardson have been the targets of racism and sexism before, but even more so recently.

Both Osaka and Biles dropped out of competitions, they said, to protect their mental health and Richardson was disqualified from competing after testing positive for cannabis. Richardson smoked marijuana legally in Oregon and explained that it happened after a journalist whom she didn't know broke the news to her about the death of her mother. The three have been criticized as "quitters," "arrogant," "lazy" and "irresponsible" by some on social media. And those are just the words fit to print here.

Osaka withdrew from the 2021 French Open over a dispute regarding her not wanting to give post-match interviews (she said it stoked her anxiety); Biles withdrew from competitions at this month's Olympics to focus on her mental health. Richardson graciously accepted a ban, which kept her from competing in the Olympics (she tweeted "I'm sorry, I can't be y'all Olympic Champ this year but I promise I'll be your World Champ next year").

All are sending a clear message: They are taking care of themselves.

This trio of athletes is younger than I am and I truly do believe that they are of a generation that has decided to prioritize their mental health over everything else -- haters be damned.

Each of them has already put in the work ethic that has gotten them to the top of their fields and they owe none of us their talents at the risk of themselves. They wouldn't, even if they weren't champions.

A friend reached out privately to express anger that these women couldn't see fit to "push through" and "do the work" as we had been raised to (this friend and I are of the same generation).

To that, I say perhaps they have looked at the older generations and have seen that such a mentality can yield physical, emotional and mental ramifications that just aren't worth it. What good is fame, fortune and medals if unhappiness is the toll to pay to get there? So call it dropping out, quitting or even breaking the rules if you want. What I call it is winning.

Lisa Respers France is a senior writer for CNN's entertainment team and former host of the "Lisa's Desk" franchise. (cnn.com/profiles/lisa-france)



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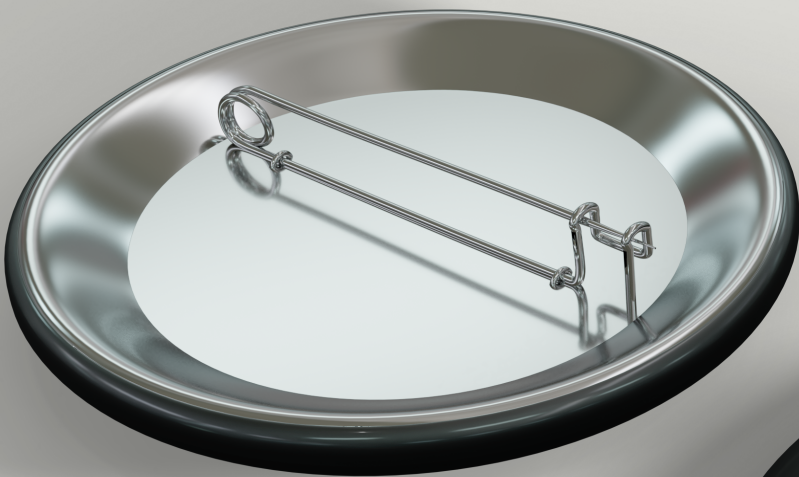
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Book Called “boy.”
Gives Voice to Mothers of Black Sons

By Norma Adams-Wade
Founding Member of the National Association of Black Journalist & Texas Metro News Columnist

Eric Garner’s mother Gwen Carr knows paralyzing grief first-hand. Other Black mothers across the nation say they share a similar mind-numbing foreboding: the possibility of fear or hatred of Black people by police or racists killing their Black sons.

This palpable emotion – ranging from distress to defiance — is expressed in 48 personal letters from Black mothers to America that comprise the book “boy,” also known as “Defending Our Black Sons’ Identity in America.” The book also is commonly referred to as “The Boy Book.”

Compiling author Sherilyn Bennett, who collected the mothers’ letters, is an entrepreneur, consultant in graphic design, branding and corporate diversity, ordained minister, and mother of two adult sons, both school football coaches. She was born in Ocala, Florida and lives in Charlotte, N. C.

Images of watching media reports of the May 25, 2020 murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer would not allow her to rest until she completed the boy. book that she views as a catalyst for change in America.

The book also includes chapters about (a) what your rights are and how to act if stopped by police, (b) a historical perspective about treatment of Black men and women by police, and (c) a licensed mental health counselor’s assessment of lingering trauma from police brutality and/or racist treatment in various settings.

“We must recognize that not all fights against racial inequality happen in the streets,” Bennett said in a promotional piece.

Bennett, Eric Garner’s mother Gwen Carr, and a couple of the mothers who wrote essay letters were in Dallas for a book signing, meet and greet, and to encourage other mothers who have experienced or are experiencing similar traumas of losing sons in police or racist encounters.

Gwen Carr, Eric Garner’s mother wrote the book’s Foreword. Some of Garner’s last words, “I can’t breathe,” became a national rallying cry after the 43-year-old, 6-foot-3, 350-pound, great-grandfather[cq of six died July 17, 2014. He had several existing health problems including severe asthma.

Video recordings show that Garner repeated “I can’t breathe”11 times while Daniel Pantaleo, a White New York police officer, used a chokehold, already illegal at the time, while arresting Garner. Authorities say the police suspected Garner was selling cigarettes illegally on the street in Staten Island. The medical examiner ruled the death a homicide, but a Richmond County grand jury refused to indict the officer who was acquitted.

New York City later reached a \$5.9 million out-of-court settlement with Garner’s family. Five years later, the Justice Department refused to bring criminal charges against the officer but under a New York Police Department disciplinary hearing, Officer Pantaleo finally was fired in August 2019. Garner’s mother said the five-year ordeal transformed her. She now pushes for legislation beyond street protests.

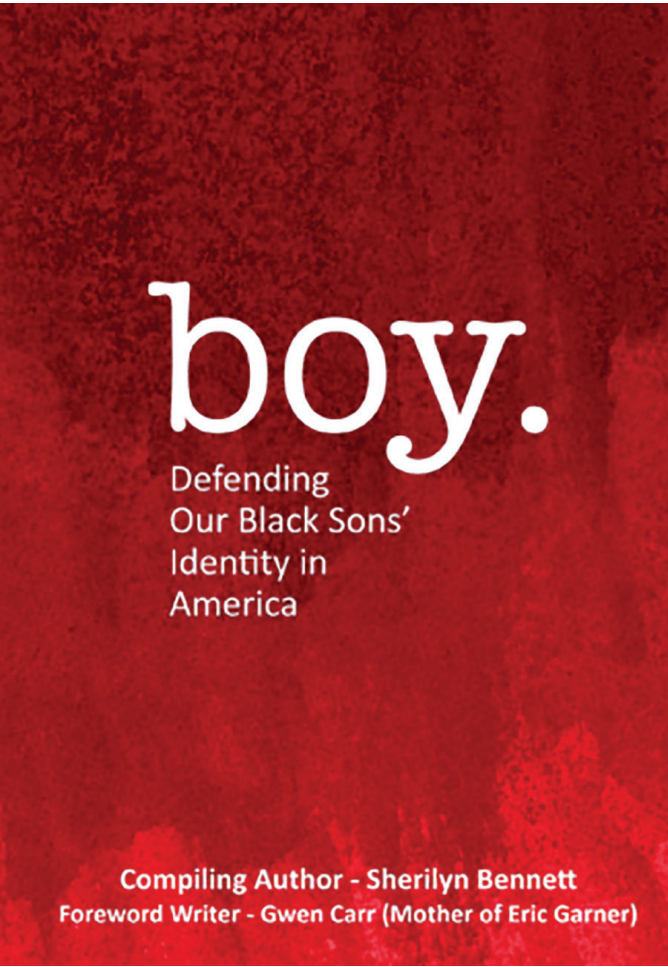
“I chose to be a catalyst for change because I refused to be a culprit of complacency,” Carr wrote in the Foreword. “I transitioned from mourning to movement and from sorrow to strategy! ...Eric’s name is one of too many names belonging to Black males that have been murdered by police officers who were acquitted.”

Rhonda Willis of Fort Worth wrote one of the letters. Her husband Fred Willis is helping promote the book. She tells of their son Joshua, now 11, earlier in grade school when a White classmate told her son that he (the White student) was better than her Black son. When her son shared the story, she said she and her husband immediately began to regularly affirm their son’s worth to counteract any possible damage to his self-esteem.

“I used to think that racism didn’t start until boys were teenagers or young men but this really opened by eyes...,” she wrote in her letter.

Besides the book signing, the book also is available through Amazon and at some major retail book departments including walmart.com. To learn more, visit www.boybooknation.com.

Norma Adams-Wade, is a proud Dallas native, University of Texas at Austin journalism graduate and retired Dallas Morning News senior staff writer. She is a founder of the National Association of Black Journalists and was its first southwest regional director. She became The News’ first Black full-time reporter in 1974.



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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.

The Rise, Collapse, and Legacy: HBCU Football and the NFL Draft

Continued From Page 12

Tennessee State University, Hampton University, and North Carolina A&T State University have broken long-established tradition and left historically Black athletic conferences for larger and more competitive conferences in efforts to improve the quality of their programs, which will enhance their ability to recruit more players who may prove to be of NFL quality.

Enthusiasm and excitement have been generated among followers of HBCU football over the recent hirings of high-profile coaches Deion Sanders at Jackson State and Eddie George at Tennessee State, two programs with storied traditions and a host of celebrated NFL alumni. It is hoped that the football acumen and name recognition of Sanders and George will improve the recruiting of better athletes while bringing wider media exposure to their teams and increasing revenue for their programs. Both have solid reputations, strong NFL relationships, and intricate knowledge of the requirements and developmental processes for making a NFL roster. Neither, however, has had collegiate head coaching experience, and both will be judged more by their ability to produce winning football teams than by producing NFL draftees.

Sanders and George are not the first former NFL players to become coaches at HBCUs, and will

have to do much better than Super Bowl-winning quarterback Doug Williams, whose recent brief stint as head coach of Grambling University’s inadequately resourced program fell short of expectations. However, as a Washington Football Team senior advisor and trustee of the Black College Football Hall of Fame, Williams has admirably leveraged his considerable influence in helping secure the NFL’s support for a collegiate all-star game for HBCUs, which will debut in February 2022 in New Orleans. This showcasing of the best HBCU players, along with the NFL’s HBCU combine, may result in better draft dividends, though it may be mitigated by other developments.

The NCAA transfer portal is a lurking threat to HBCU football and may serve to siphon the best players to schools with more athletic resources and larger football profiles. Introduced in 2018, the portal is designed as a safety net for student-athletes who are displeased with coaching changes, coach relationships, playing opportunity, stockpiles at their position, or systems and schemes deemed incompatible with their styles of play. But for HBCU players, the portal takes on new meaning, especially for those who blossom and emerge as NFL draft prospects. To cite one recent example, two of Grambling’s premier linemen —one an all-conference selection — have decided to place their names in the portal. If this emerges as a pattern, HBCUs could soon become

farm teams for larger football conferences, further diminishing the number of potential NFL draftees.

All things considered, the best explanation for the absence of HBCU players in the 2021 draft, is that it mirrors the bitter truth about the price that HBCUs have been forced to pay because of the integration of NCAA collegiate sports. No doubt, there will be other HBCU players who will be drafted or signed as free agents and make NFL rosters in future years, but they will be fugitives against the law of averages.

The odds are unfavorable that the past will repeat itself. The history of HBCUs in the drafts of the 1950s and 1960s is a unique snapshot in time, and it reflects the dynamics of segregation and early integration which no longer exist, one which drained an athletic talent pool where HBCUs once had a monopoly. Currently, nearly 10 percent of Black players in the NFL Hall of Fame are alumni of HBCUs. That percentage, too, will inevitably decline, but that history, too, cannot be erased. HBCUs were in the vortex of the racial transformation of the NFL.

Dr. Al-Tony Gilmore is a Distinguished Historian Emeritus of the National Education Association. He has researched, lectured, and published widely on the intersection of sports and society, including his seminal book, Bad Nigger: The National Impact of Jack Johnson (Associated Faculty Press, 1975). He has been a history professor at Howard University, the University of Maryland, and a Visiting Scholar at George Washington University.



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Schools Struggle with Reopening Amid Pandemic Surge

Local officials test an array of approaches that offer hope for safe reopenings

By Hazel Trice Edney

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - With coronavirus cases rising across the U.S. as a result of the highly contagious Delta variant, school districts nationwide are moving quickly to implement public-health precautions in preparation for fall reopenings.

The scramble to put these precautions in place reflects the intense pressures that school districts around the country are under to reopen amid growing concerns that many students have struggled to keep up academically during months of virtual learning. That pressure only intensified with the recent guidance the federal Centers for Disease Control issued urging schools to fully reopen in the fall, even if they are unable to put in place all the precautions needed to contain the coronavirus.

These measures include an array of new cleaning regimens, social distancing protocols, contact tracing procedures, and revamped classroom layouts. The concerns are particularly acute in school districts serving low-income Black and Latino communities that were among the hardest hit by the pandemic.

More than that, many school districts, particularly those in low-income communities of color, are facing the ardu-



Photo:Trice Edney File

ous task of creating safe environments in buildings that are aging with poor ventilation and in grave need of maintenance. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a disturbing report in 2018 that found low-income students, including Blacks and Latinos, are forced to learn in “low-quality school facilities” that are poorly maintained. The commission concluded that the situation poses a threat to the health of students.

More than that, schools that serve high-poverty populations – those with at least 75 percent of students

receiving subsidized lunches – operate in buildings whose average age is nearly 50 years old, according to the most recent data available. Experts say that these schools have had problems with air quality long before the pandemic struck.

As a result, many school districts are moving aggressively, and creatively, to field-test a variety of safety measures, protocols, and equipment. In the process, these schools are providing something of a roadmap for other districts scrambling to safely reopen.

Some school districts are working to ensure safe in-person learning with local campaigns that encourage community vaccination for all who are eligible. Others are leveraging innovative technology – including robots designed to identify and kill the Covid-19 and other viruses and germs -- to clean and disinfect classrooms.

And some are even teaming up with design professionals who are exploring ideas on how to revamp classroom layouts and other spaces in the age of Covid.

At Arizona’s Phoenix Union High School District, for example, school leaders organized a pop-up vaccination event at 15 schools in the district, teamed up with ride-hailing service Lyft to provide free transportation to the sites, and successfully vaccinated more than 3,000 people.

Philadelphia’s school district, whose student population totals more than 200,000, has taken a similar approach, launching a Philly Teen Vaxx campaign to encourage students to be inoculated.

The Biden administration has also moved aggressively to help schools struggling to put safety measures in place, particularly those in inner cities.

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Charles E. "Chuck" Siler's works feature a variety of themes ranging from New Orleans' lively and unique jazz scene to its lively and equally unique political scene. He uses his art and political cartoons to comment on life's complexities, warts and beauty marks. Siler's creations include fine watercolors and acrylics and pen and ink cartoons. His cartoons are featured on a regular basis in The Louisiana Weekly. Siler is a Katrina evacuee who has spoken on New Orleans history across the USA at universities and cultural events. (Source: blackcommentator.com)

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Deen Centric

A Column from Spokane's Black Muslim Community



By Marcus (Hakim) Stephens

HOW TO EMBRACE ISLAM!!!!

When a person expresses his/her wish to embrace Islam they should recite the Ka-limatu-sh-Shahadah, but one should have the five and six down before hand.

A person who accepts Islam is called a Muslim. It mean 'one who surrenders'. A Muslim is required to do all that Allah (The exalted and the great) and his Mes-senger(Blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) have ask to do and to keep away from doing things which Allah told us not to do, and that's why the five and six is im-portant to a Muslim.

The Five Pillars of Islam and the Six Arti-cles of Faith are important when becoming a Muslim.

- The Five Pillars of Islam**
- 1) **Eeman:** To believe in the heart and de-clare as described above Kalimatu-Sh-Sha-hadah.
 - 2) **Salaah:** To perform Salaah five times a day.
 - 3) **Zakat:** Paying 2.5% obligatory aims if financially capable.
 - 4) **Saum:** Fasting the whole month of Ra-madan.
 - 5) **Hajj:** Pilgrimage to Makkah once in a lifetime if one is physically able and can afford it.
- Six Articles of Faith**
- 1) Believing in Allah.
 - 2) His Angels.
 - 3) His books.
 - 4) His prophets.
 - 5) The day of Judgment.
 - 6) In the resurrection after death.

I've recently just completed a 27 year sen-tence and I accepted Islam while incarcer-ated, so it was important for me as a Mus-lim to write about the five and six cause this is ones foundation when becoming a Muslim.

Today, I am a free man that is still striving in the cause of Allah, but I am not perfect by far. I too have my faults, but as a Mus-lim in society I try to do more right than wrong.

In conclusion I would like to close with this Sura; 2;285-286. May Allah continue to reward you.

Assalam Alaikum.



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Schools Struggle with Reopening Amid Pandemic Surge

Continued From Page 28

The administration is partnering with 75 of the largest urban school districts and local pharmacies to help provide resources to staff pop-up vaccine clinics on school campuses.

Other schools are taking far more unorthodox approaches. In Delaware’s Christina School District, for example, school administrators are making a peculiar bet: that newly designed COVID-19 killing robots will provide an extra layer of security – and ease the concerns of students, parents, and teachers. Adibot, a tall cylindrical robot with high-grade cleaners, spends approximately three minutes in each room, emitting UV-C light and spraying disinfectant, which helps to clean surfaces and the air.

In discussing this approach, the Delaware Department of Education’s chief equity officer, James Simmons, said that the Christina School District was an ideal place to test out the robot’s effectiveness given that the district primarily serves a low-income population that has been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19.

Some school districts are using this moment to go beyond simply addressing the dangers posed by Covid-19. They are also assessing the overall health and safety of their buildings, many of them in need of an overhaul to create conditions that promote learning and creativity.

“The pandemic has underscored the need to rethink public spaces and other shared spaces,” said Paul Scialla, founder of the International Well Building Institute (IWBI), a company that uses scientific-based approaches to designing buildings that promote the health and well-being of occupants. “This is an opportunity for many schools to address the immediate concerns stemming from the pandemic as well as the long-term health and safety of the school’s shared spaces.”

Indeed, the IWBI is in the process of partnering with schools and communities throughout the country to ensure students, teachers and faculty can safely return to full-time, in-person learning. The IWBI is reviewing the health and safety protocols against the high standards of its WELL Health Safety Rating. Those standards were developed by over 600 health and public space experts to provide the guidance needed for organizations to improve indoor health and safety.

Some of the schools that have achieved the WELL Health-Safety Rating include the Fairfax County, Virginia school district, where administrators collaborated with the IWBI to help safeguard against Covid-19 throughout its 219 school facilities, as well as the Upper St. Clair School District, located in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

According to recent reporting of a study conducted by the Well Living Lab in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota, air filtration systems can add an extra safeguard that limits the aerosol spread of viral particles. The researchers built an experimental classroom and observed how adding portable air purifiers to a classroom may result in up to five times lower particle concentrations in the air throughout the entire room. The study also observed that adding portable air purifiers provided a significant reduction in the rate at which infectious particles deposit on surfaces compared to using an HVAC system (with MERV filtration).

The findings from the WELL Living Lab’s study were similar to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School districts are responding to this breadth of research on particle transmission by investing in air filtrations systems. For example, the New York City Department of Education purchased over 100,000 portable air purification units from the leading wellness technology company, Delos.

IWBI’s Scialla says they are in talks with dozens of other districts and are particularly focused on low-income, minority populations that have been ravaged by the pandemic.

Said Scialla, “Teachers and school administrators have enough on their plate. We hope that the WELL Health-Safety Rating will give students, parents and communities at large the peace of mind they need to fully return to the classroom.”

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IN SPOKANE

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State of Black America 2021: The New Normal

Continued From Page 1

a return to the marginalization, discrimination, and segregation that left Black and Brown Americans exceptionally vulnerable to a deadly virus and economic desperation. The other path leads toward a “new normal”: a nation where police approach the communities they serve as allies and collaborators, and not hostile combatants; where every citizen has equal access to the ballot box, where fatal complications in pregnancy are just as rare for Black mothers as for as white mothers, where the value of a home is not determined by the race of its owner.

The New Normal: Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive makes the case that dismantling structural racism - identifying and repairing the cracks in our national foundation – will result in more resilient and dynamic institutions that expand opportunity for everyone. To quote a flippant sentiment frequently shared on social media, “Equal rights for others does not mean less rights for you. It’s not pie.”

Perhaps the most vivid illustration of the tension between the forces competing for the soul of America was the January 6 insurrection, when a violent mob dissatisfied with the results of the 2020 Presidential Election stormed the U.S. Capitol in an effort to overturn it.

Led by white supremacists and right-wing extremists, the insurrection represented both a counterresponse to the ongoing protests against racial injustice and an almost perfect example of the injustice that inspired them.

In the months leading up to the insurrection, peaceful racial justice protesters around the nation had been met with the aggressive tactics of militarized police, clad in fatigues and armor, assaulted with tear gas and rubber bullets, buffeted by the violent winds of swooping helicopters.

The extremists who stormed the Capitol on January 6 had openly plotted the insurrection on social media, declaring their intentions to “storm the government buildings, kill cops, kill security guards, kill federal employees and

agents.” Yet they were met with no troops in riot gear. no military helicopters. No tear gas was deployed as the mob shoved its way past barricades. Vastly outnumbered police stepped aside and allowed the mob to storm the Capitol.

The mob was motivated by furious resentment over historic Black and Brown voter turnout that contributed to the loss of their preferred candidate, Donald Trump. Baseless claims of fraud sought to tarnish the integrity of elections in Black and Brown communities, and lawsuit after lawsuit sought to invalidate votes in those jurisdictions. The “Big Lie” - the myth that the election was “stolen” -- succeeded largely because it blamed voters of color for stealing it. It frames the promise of a multicultural, pluralistic democracy as an act of theft from the dominant white majority.

Whether we are to achieve a “New Normal” that is truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive will depend in large measure upon our response to the “Big Lie.” A capitulation on voting rights is not only a fast track back to the “old normal,” it would further entrench the white supremacist ideology that has warped our society over centuries.

Compelling analysis from our 2021 research partners – the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity, the Center for Policing Equity, and the Brookings Institution – turns some conventional wisdom on its head. Did stop-and-frisk programs not only fail to curb juvenile crime, but contribute to its increase? How does easing financial hardships affect health conditions like hypertension? Can a smartphone app lift unbanked households out of poverty and help repair their credit?

As Jordan wrote in the very first State of Black America, “It is our hope that this document will pierce the dark veil of neglect that has thus far smothered efforts to right of the past and the present. It is presented as an alternative to failed public policies. I hope that it will be read closely in the White House and in the Congress, and that it may influence decision makers to open their eyes to the plight of Black Americans.”

Visit www.StateOfBlackAmerica.org to view the full report. Our dynamic Virtual Event, which includes in-depth discussion of the issues raised by the report, can be accessed at <https://soba.iamempowered.com/2021-virtual-series>



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OUR VOICES

The Topic the Black Church Dares Not Speak of Honestly

By the Reverend Irene Monroe

(blackcommentator.com) - Every once in a while a reader will ask me to please respond to their question in my column. This reader asked, "What should be the mandate for today's Black Churches?" The question suggests someone wants a comprehensive response. I am hoping maybe a church, a homophobe having second thoughts, or an LGBTQ + Christian struggling to come out.

One of the mandates for today's Black Churches is to address its ongoing struggle with the spectrum of human sexuality.

In 2021, I am still asking these three questions: Why can't we as an African American community tell the truth about our sexuality? What price do we pay in telling the truth? And what role does the church play in perpetuating not only unsafe sexual behavior but also demonizing its members of the LGBTQ+ community?

The Black Church purported to preach and practice a prophetic social gospel. However, in truth, it preaches and practices a heteronormative conservative gospel tethered to a model no longer relevant to a younger generation that embraces LGBTQ+ social justice issues.

The Black Church played a part in the death of African Americans with AIDS. While its silence on the issue was appalling and unconscionable, so too, was its various forms of homophobic pronouncements that denigrated both LGBTQ+ people and women.

Sexuality has never been a comfortable topic of discussion in the African American community. This is due primarily to slavery, and what we appropriated from the dominant culture about sexual behavior to

deem ourselves human beings in our oppressors' eyes.

First bred as cattle during slavery, and later either touted as sex sirens or taunted as sex predators, Black sexuality has never had a chance to evolve in a milieu free of abuse, violence, and stereotypes. The raping of Black women and the lynching of Black men in this country by white men have always kept the control of Black bodies away from us. In carving out a racial identity, African Americans have done it at the expense of leaving our bodies and sexualities behind.

However, with the embrace of fundamentalist Christianity embedded in its tenets and an asexual theology, African American bodies, and sexualities that were once systematically usurped by white slave masters are now ritualistically harnessed by the Black church with a "politic of silence." Sadly, this was viewed as a revolutionary act against the oppressive white gaze. But what happens in churches, communities, and families where people lose touch with their bodies and sexualities?

One answer is that the Black Church continues to stay on the "down low." The most significant factor that keeps the Black Church on the down-low are closeted, homophobic ministers. Pastor Donnie McClurkin- a three-time Gospel Grammy winner and the former poster boy for African American ex-gay ministries - is one example.

McClurkin's sexuality has been an open secret, but now, at 61 years old, McClurkin is lamenting about growing old and being alone. While the Black LGBTQ+ community would applaud someone of Mc-

Clurkin's status telling the truth about his sexual past, many of us can't care because of decades of damning and damaging messages he hurled at us.

However, there might be some light at the end of this tunnel. This month, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest Black denomination church, dating back to 1787, will convene a committee to study LGBTQ+ issues by examining Scripture and doctrine, and hearing testimonies of LGBTQ+ individuals. Some of us in the LGBTQ+ community feel the effort is more than "a day late and a dollar short" because a younger generation has left. However, I am hopeful.

Our bodies are our temples, and as our temples, they house the most sacred and scariest truth about us: our sexuality. Sexuality is an essential part of being human. It is an expression of who we are; it is a language, and a means to communicate our spiritual need for intimate communion—human and divine. However, our silence, shame, and stigma around issues of sexual identity, gender expressions, and sexual practices have allowed for behaviors of denial, neglect, and abuse. Also, the lack of pastoral care contributes to high-risk sexual behaviors and the transmission of HIV/AIDS in the African American community.

Right now, Black Churches are in a crisis. The AME Church is now the first to admit openly. The church has contributed to the culture of the "politic of silence" because it not only lacks the language to talk about sex, but it also sees sex as a private and personal matter and not part of the business of the Black Christian community as a way of loving God and ourselves.



However, the Black church is also uniquely positioned to significantly affect knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within congregations and, by extension, the entire African American community. The Black church can help its congregants live their sexual lives by devising an African American faith-based sex education curriculum where churches embrace the concept that sexuality is God-given, an integral part of being human, and at the core of how we interact with one another.

Research has shown that sexuality education programs in Black churches would delay the onset of sexual activity among teens, reduce the number of partners among teens and adults, as well as significantly decreasing the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies, and gay-bashing.

The Reverend Monroe, a member of the Black Commentator Executive Board is an ordained minister and motivational speaker. Rev. Monroe does a weekly Monday segment, "All Revved Up!" on WGBH (89.7 FM), on Boston Public Radio and a weekly Friday segment "The Take" on New England Channel NEWS (NECN). A native of Brooklyn, NY, Rev. Monroe graduated from Wellesley College and Union Theological Seminary at Columbia University, and served as a pastor at an African-American church in New Jersey before attending Harvard Divinity School for her doctorate. For more information visit Dr. Monroe's website at irenemonroe.com.

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OUR VOICES

“Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda” Will Turn Racism Upside Down

By Marcela Howell

As the U.S. Supreme Court reviews abortion cases that could overturn *Roe v. Wade* – the 1973 decision that legalized abortion – there is a lot of attention being paid to abortion rights but not enough emphasis on the full range of reproductive health and rights issues.

Every pregnant Black person faces systemic racism that makes us “three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white women.” When our children are born, we face the everyday reality of battling racism and the toll it takes on Black lives.

This past year, the deadly impact of racial discrimination couldn’t have been more evident as the pandemic devastated our communities, with Black and Latinx people accounting for nearly 43 percent of COVID-19 deaths. As if that’s not bad enough, Black and Latinx women have paid the economic price for the pandemic, bearing the brunt of the “shecession.”

That’s why more than 30 Black women’s organizations and Reproductive Justice activists created the “Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda” — innovative, proactive solutions to address the disparities and discrimination faced by Black women, femmes, girls and gender-expansive individuals. The “Black Reproductive Policy Agenda” is a comprehensive policy approach to the systemic racism that threatens our lives.

Now, a lot of people hear “Reproductive Justice” and think birth control and abortion. But nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Reproductive Justice (RJ) is a collective framework grounded in human rights, social justice and Black Feminist theory that centers the intersectional impact of race, class and gender in one’s ability to live free from oppression — so we can create and nurture the family of our own choosing and achieve optimum mental, physical, community and economic health.

Reproductive Justice was birthed by 12 Black women in 1994, as the U.S. contemplated universal health care with-



out acknowledging or rectifying the health care system in place, which was — and continues to be — riddled with deadly racism. Since then, RJ has grown into a full-fledged movement that fights not only for the right to health care — including full access to birth control and abortion — but also equity in housing, education and employment. RJ doesn’t leave anything — or anyone — behind. It is the comprehensive movement we need to disrupt and dismantle the deeply ingrained, systemic racism that plagues this country.

Black women, femmes, girls and gender-expansive individuals have been marginalized for far too long. We have been fighting for our survival while others stood by and

watched — or worse, while they actively participated in our oppression for their own gain. No more!

We are tired of seeing our children, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers and loved ones senselessly killed by the very people who are sworn to protect us. We are fed up with not being safe in our homes, neighborhoods and churches. We demand more than one moment of reckoning.

The Black RJ movement has a policy agenda that will hold law enforcement, politicians, corporations, voters and all people living in the U.S. to account. It is an expertly informed compendium of 25 issue areas, each with effective policy recommendations. We believe that the Agenda addresses the social, economic, political and health needs of Black women, femmes, girls and gender-expansive people — so we can live our lives fully and decide for ourselves if, when and how to have and raise our families.

We hope that Congress will embrace the Black RJ Policy Agenda and work with us to pass it so that Black women, femmes, girls, and gender-expansive people can live in full autonomy, with equality and justice for all. But we know that will only happen if every Black and Brown person demands it. For white people — especially white feminists — who want to be good allies, this is their chance; they too should make implementing the Black RJ Policy Agenda a priority.

The Black RJ movement has a plan to dismantle white supremacy. I challenge and encourage you to join us in demanding that elected officials and policymakers embrace and implement the Black RJ Policy Agenda now.

Marcela Howell is president and CEO of In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda. To learn more about the Black RJ Policy agenda, visit blackrj.org.

The post “Black Reproductive Justice Policy Agenda” Will Turn Racism Upside Down first appeared in Oakland Post on Post News Group.

Whitewashing History and Suppressing Voters Go Hand in Hand

By Ben Jealous

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - There’s been a lot of news about the Democratic legislators in Texas who fled the state to prevent Republicans from pushing through sweeping new voter suppression laws. Gov. Greg Abbott has threatened to have them arrested to force them to attend a special session of the state legislature. Now it turns out that voter suppression is not the only “special” project Abbott has in mind. He and his fellow Republicans are pushing a far-reaching “memory law” that would limit teaching about racism and civil rights.

Abbott already signed a bill last month restricting how racism can be taught in Texas schools. But he and other Republicans in the state don’t think it went far enough. The Republican-dominated state-Senate has voted to strip a requirement that white supremacy be taught as morally wrong. Also on the chopping block: requirements that students learn about civil rights activists Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta.

It’s not just Texas. Just as Republicans are pushing a wave of voter registration laws around the country, they are also pushing laws to restrict teaching about racism in our history, culture, and institutions. CNN’s Julian Zelizer recently noted that such laws downplay injustices in our history and lead to teaching “propaganda rather than history.”

Here’s a good example: Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said the new legislation is meant to keep students from being “indoctrinated” by the “ridiculous leftist narrative that America and our Constitution are rooted in racism.” If Patrick really believes it is a “ridiculous” idea that racism was embedded in our Constitution from the start, he has already put on his own ideological blinders. And he wants to force them onto teachers and students.



Some of these state memory laws specifically ban teaching that causes “discomfort, guilt, anguish or any other form of psychological distress on account of the individual’s race or sex.” As educators have noted, that’s a recipe for erasing and whitewashing history.

“Teachers in high schools cannot exclude the possibility that the history of slavery, lynchings and voter suppression will make some non-Black students uncomfortable,” history professor Timothy Snyder wrote in the New York Times Magazine. Those laws give power to white students

and parents to censor honest teaching of history. “It is not exactly unusual for white people in America to express the view that they are being treated unfairly; now such an opinion could bring history classes to a halt.”

Snyder also explained how new state “memory laws” are connected to voter suppression. “In most cases, the new American memory laws have been passed by state legislatures that, in the same session, have passed laws designed to make voting more difficult,” he wrote. “The memory management enables the voter suppression.”

“The history of denying Black people the vote is shameful,” he explained. “This means that it is less likely to be taught where teachers are mandated to protect young people from feeling shame. The history of denying Black people the vote involves law and society. This means that it is less likely to be taught where teachers are mandated to tell students that racism is only personal prejudice.”

As I wrote in *The Nation*, far-right attempts to suppress honest teaching about racism is meant to “convince a segment of white voters that they should fear and fight our emerging multiracial and multiethnic democratic society” and to “help far-right politicians take and hold power, no matter the cost to our democracy.”

That’s also what voter suppression bills are designed to do. We cannot tolerate either of these assaults on democracy.

Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO of the NAACP. He is a graduate of Columbia University and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and he has taught at Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania.

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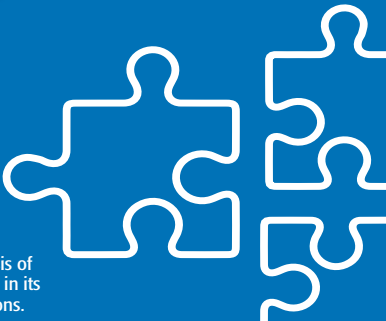
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- Custodial
- Clerical
- Production
- Warehouse

humanix.com
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509-467-0062

Your door
opener
for great
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with great
companies!

SPOKANE FORKLIFT

Skilled Technicians

Spokane Forklift and Construction Equipment is a fast-growing, small business based in the Inland Northwest. We specialize in Forklift repairs, sales, & rentals but we work on all heavy equipment, telehandlers, box trucks, semis, etc.

We are currently seeking additional skilled technicians in the Spokane & surrounding areas. Candidates with an aptitude in technical trades & background in field service or heavy machinery are preferred.

If interested, please email your resume to ryan@spokaneforklift.com or drop off at 4907 E Trent Ave. Spokane, WA 99212.

EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

City of Spokane Jobs

Are you interested in building a career at the City of Spokane? Do you enjoy work that has a positive impact on your community? If so, apply for any or all of the positions listed.

The City of Spokane will be accepting applications and testing for the following positions:

- Custodian I
- Park Caretaker
- Meter Reader
- Radio Operator I
- Laborer I
- Refuse Collector I

Contact information
Phone: 509-625-6160
Email: civilservice@spokanecity.org

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.

Build a BETTER Spokane



Need a Job?

Get a new job in 12 months

Try a Career as a Paralegal
Annual Salary starting at **\$38,000**

Learn more at [Spokane.edu](https://spokane.edu)



Community Colleges of Spokane



Community Colleges of Spokane does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation or age in its programs, activities or employment. Marketing and Public Relations.

LEARN, GROW, AND THRIVE

CAREERS AT THE YMCA

THE YMCA IS HIRING!

Are you or someone you know seeking fulfilling, challenging, and rewarding employment?

Apply online: ymcainw.org/careers

Full-time, part-time & summer only positions

- Lead Teacher - Early Learning Center
- Lifeguards
- Assistant Teacher - Early Learning Center
- Bus Driver
- Maintenance Technician
- Custodian
- Youth Leader
- Camp Reed Counselors
- Teen Center Staff
- Group Exercise Instructors
- Karate Instructors
- Member Services Representative



the YMCA

Employment at the YMCA of the Inland Northwest includes these benefits:



- Free YMCA membership
- Flexible hours
- Training and advancement
- Leadership opportunities

Equal Opportunity Employer

CHAS Health is Hiring!

Clinical and non-clinical positions

Be part of our amazing team caring for the community.



Everyone Welcome

Visit chas.org/careers for more information.

COVID-19 VACCINE

SATURDAY

AUGUST 28TH

12-3PM

State v.

Blake/Voter

Registration

Vaccination

Clinic



FOOD/BEVERAGES/GIFT CARDS

FREE



WHERE:

Emmanuel Family Life Center

631 South Richard Allen Ct

Spokane, WA 99202

come join the

50+

MOVEMENT CLUB



Would you like to take easy Hikes,

or have fun on bikes, swim,

play pickle ball,

or take a brisk walk and talk?

If you answered yes to any of these

questions then join the 50+ Movement Club.

For schedule:

Contact - Patt@BlackLensNews.com

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

EVENT:

UPLIFTING THE SPOKANE

BIPOC COMMUNITY

Presenters:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Outreach Center

Northwest Justice Project - Native American Unit

Washington State Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs

The Way to Justice

Gonzaga University School of Law - Clinical Aid Program

Carl Maxey Center

... and more!

Learn about local non-profits and other organizations that serve the Spokane Area BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community. Community leaders will be there to provide information about the vital resources and services they offer. Join us in-person or on Zoom! Registration required.

Date:

8/17/2021

Time:

5:00-7:00pm

Location:

MLK Jr. Community Center

500 S. Stone St.

Spokane, WA 99202

Hosted by:



Register at:



forms.gle/4PwiJagPY3ouYYop8



AUGUST EVENTS

- AUGUST 5**
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE HOSTS SECOND PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION
The Independent Redistricting Committee (IRC) overseeing Spokane County's process to draw five new county commissioner districts is hosting its second public information session on Thursday, Aug. 5. Attendees will hear a brief update on the redistricting process and can ask questions and talk with IRC members.
5:30 - 7:30pm
Northeast Community Center, 4001 North Cook St., Spokane, WA 99207 (Lower Level, Assembly Room)
Find additional details, including virtual meeting information, at www.RedistrictSpokaneCo.com.
- AUGUST 6**
76TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI: GATHERING FOR A NUCLEAR FREE WORLD
The format will be open mic sharing and symbolic placing of flowers in the river.
5:00 - 6:00pm
334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd, Beside the Spokane River in Riverfront Park. Meet on the steps on the north side of the First Interstate Center for the Arts (Opera House)
Call Teresa McCann for more information, 509.389.5965
- AUGUST 6**
TRACY POINDEXTER-CANTON: "REIMAGINED: NEW MIXED MEDIA WORKS"
In this solo exhibition, local artist Tracy Poindexter-Canton presents an imaginative collection of new mixed media works using collage, assemblage and reinterpreted objects. The show opens officially with a **First Friday event - August 6th 5-9pm** (Art will be on display until August 28th)
Liberty Gallery - Pottery Place Plus
203 N Washington St, Spokane, WA 99201
In the Liberty Building Facing Washington Street, looking East
- AUGUST 11**
FUSE DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB
The Revolution According to Raymundo Mata by Gina Apostol (novel)
PEN Open Book Award winner, Gina Apostol's riotous second novel takes the form of a memoir.
6:30pm-8pm
Virtual Discussion
Visit the Fuse Book Club Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fusediversity>
Send information about upcoming community events to sandy@blacklensnews.com or call 509-795-1964 with information.
- AUGUST 14**
LILAC CITY LEGENDS
Home Game - Pacific NW Vets
Spokane's Professional ABA Basketball Team
7-9pm
For information visit lilaccitylegends.com
- AUGUST 15**
CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH: PASTOR'S & WIFE'S ANNIVERSARY
Celebrate the 47th Anniversary of Pastor CW Andrews and First Lady Doris Andrews
10am (Sunday morning service)
Calvary Baptist Church
203 E 3rd Ave, Spokane, WA 99202
Guest speaker is Rev. Dr. CW Andrews, Jr., Asst. Pastor, Freeman Tabernacle, Missionary Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama
- AUGUST 16**
NAACP GENERAL MEETING
Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting. *For more information please check social media at facebook.com/spokane.naap or contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 or visit naacpspokane.org.*
- AUGUST 24**
WE GON' BE ALRIGHT
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: <http://ow.ly/dzCd50FaS4v>
- AUGUST 28**
STATE V BLAKE/VOTER REGISTRATION AND COVID VACCINATION CLINIC
Food. Beverages. Gift cards.
Noon - 3pm
Emmanuel Family Life Center
631 S Richard Allen Ct, Spokane, WA 99202.
- AUGUST 28**
UPLIFTING SPOKANE'S BIPOC COMMUNITY
Learn about organizations and non-profits that serve the Spokane area BIPOC (Black Indigenous, People of Color) Community.
5-7pm
MLK Center Family Outreach Center
500 S Stone Street, Spokane 99202



Farmers' Market

Every Friday from 3 to 7pm

2310 N Monroe (at the Adult Education Center)

June 4 to September 24

Fresh, locally grown seasonal fruit & veggies!

Free Kids Activity and live music EVERY week!

Plus: Baked goods including breads & sweets • Honey • Teas • Health & beauty items • Hot food • Specialties • Cheese • Jewelry & leatherwork

EBT/credit/debit accepted • Plenty of free parking

More info at market.emersongarfield.org



Spokane Eastside Reunion Association

www.spokaneeastsidereunionassociation.com

FRESH SOUL
Spokane's Best Soul Food
BBQ Ribs • Fried Chicken • Fried Catfish
Mac & Cheese • Collard Greens • Fried Green Tomatoes and more!
First Fridays try our Seafood Gumbo

3029 E 5th Ave, Spokane, WA 99202
Eat In, ToGo, Order Online or
Call to Order 509-242-3377
Also on Uber Eats

Career, Education and Health Fair

Cultural Village

Activities for All Ages

Join us for the 27th Annual

UNIT

in the

COMMUNITY

Region's Largest Multi-Cultural Celebration

Live Entertainment

Free K-8 School Supplies

Free Kids Helmets (while supplies last)

Senior Resource Area

Saturday, August 21st · 10am to 4pm · Riverfront Park

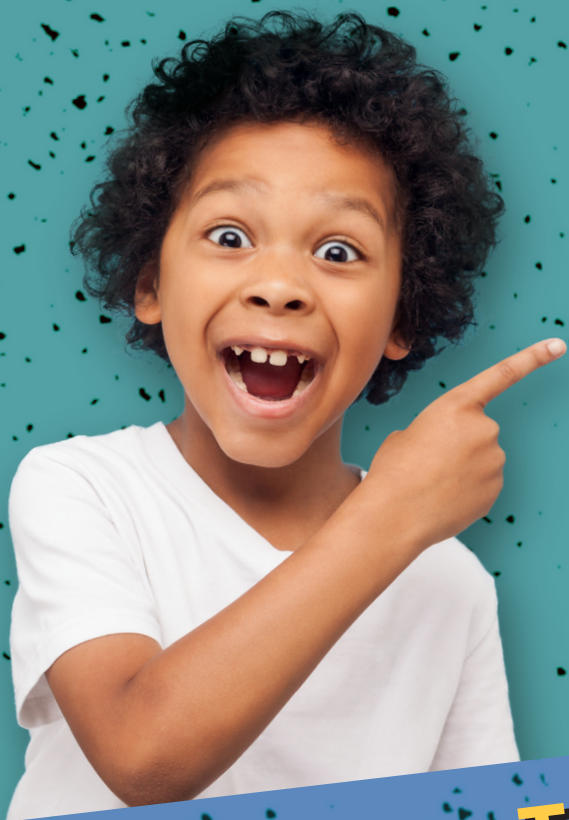
nwunity.org

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



 **Spokane Transit**

SUMMER PASS



***Unlimited free rides on
STA for youth age 6-18
and K-12 students!***

**Pick up your pass at
local libraries in the
STA service area.**

[SpokaneTransit.com/SummerPass](https://spokaneTransit.com/SummerPass)