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October 2021

www.blacklensnews.com

Vol. 7 Issue No. 10

Spokane's Black Community News Source

THE BLACK LENSTM SPOKANE

NEWS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Kenyan Delegation Visits Spokane

Black Spokane Leaders Share Equality Strategies with Members of Kenyan Congress

By Amber D. Dodd

At the East Central Community Center, members of Kenya's government visiting Spokane met with a handful of Spokane's Black community leaders on Sept. 14.

Abdifatah Bule, Honorable Maison Le-shoomo, Honorable David Ochieng, Honorable Judith Nayiai Pareno and Honorable Janet Wangabo Wanyama are members of Kenya's parliament. They are members of Kenya's National Cohesion Integration Commission. The NCIC was created in 2008 under the National Cohesion and Integration Act months after Kenya erupted in violence in response to the results of the 2007 national election. The NCIC travels to other countries to view other cultural practices of eliminating discrimination and apply it to Kenyan culture.

Dr. Roberta Wilburn served as the liaison between the Spokane community and the Kenyan parliament members. Wilburn is Whitworth University's Associate Vice President while serving as the Interim Chief Diversity Officer as well. She introduced the Kenyans to different slices of American culture, including cooking up a South Carolina, Gullah rice and beans dish when the Kenyans first landed.

"They said it was very much Kenyan-like when I made the beef kabobs and mustard



Senator Judith Pareno, a member of the Parliament of Kenya, speaks about the difficulties women in politics face in her country during a round table discussion, Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021, at the East Central Community Center. The Kenyan Parliamentarians of the National Cohesion Integration Commission met with Spokane's Black and Indigenous community leaders to engage in talks of diversity, equity and inclusion in policy, media and community endeavors. Colin Mulvany/Spokesman Review

greens with turkey," Wilburn said. "One of the parliamentarian members was interested in how I prepped the beef since she actually raises cows in Kenya."

Through food and politics, Wilburn said the cultural interaction between Kenyans and leaders of the Black Spokane commu-

nity is a great example of diversity, inclusion and equity.

"A key to diversity, equity and inclusion work is building heart and soul connections with people from other cultures," Wilburn said. "That's how you promote cross-cultural understanding. We have to

promote mutual understanding, and that's something that I've been emphasizing the whole time we've been together."

Tuesday afternoon in the East Central Community Center, the Kenyan parliament met with Spokane City Council member Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane Public School Board President Terrall Haynes and Pastor Walter Kendricks of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, who is the Eastern Washington Representative for the Washington State Commission on African American Affairs, as well as the founder of Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR). Pastor Shon Davis and James Wilburn Jr., who both work in the Spokane School District, were also present.

Since Kenya is a mostly homogeneous nation, their problems do not pertain to race. Tribalism, misogyny and media expression are common issues within Kenya, according to the delegation. Spokane's representatives took time to discuss American racial labels, such as "biracial" or "people of color", when elaborating on community actions focused on fighting racism. The Kenyan delegation and Spokane's Black leaders traded strategies and techniques for navigating issues within politics, government and academia.

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Treatment of Haitians at Mexican Border Sparks Outrage



By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

NNPA NEWSWIRE - After over 12,000 Haitian migrants gathered at the Mexican border, shocking footage of them being herded like cattle, whipped with horse lariats and treated in a way unlike any other immigrants entering the U.S. in recent memory became public.

U.S. Border Control Agents on horseback were widely criticized as were the policies behind their actions after video first broadcast by Al Jazeera went viral for all the wrong reasons.

"If we were to close our eyes and this was occurring under the Trump administration, what would we do? The inhumane treatment of the Haitian refugees seeking help is utterly sickening," wrote NAACP President Derrick Johnson on September 21.

"Our nation claims to be better than this... SHOW IT!" Johnson demanded the day before.

"Whips and horses? That's what we do? To people that are vulnerable? Do we see any Haitians with

guns and knives? No! We see them with the clothes on their back and the babies in their arms," said Patrice Lawrence, co-Director of the UndocuBlack Network, during a September 20 appearance on Roland Martin Unfiltered. UndocuBlack Network assists currently and formerly undocumented Black people to find community and access to resources.

"This is cruelty. It's evil... What I saw today was slave patrol — it is shameful and absolutely disgraceful," she added.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus gathered at a reception on the night of September 20 at the National Observatory to celebrate the CBC's 50th anniversary. Though the reception took place at the Vice President's residence, there wasn't a lengthy discussion on the crisis at the border. But members are asking for an investigation into what they saw on video.

America has accepted other refugees from around the world from Syria, Afghanistan and Central America. Policy regarding Haiti appears to be different.

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ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

I’m Out. I’m Proud. And I’m Sixty. Now What? -- Sky Diving.

By Sandra Williams

I was told many, many years ago by some of my older female friends that turning sixty marks a major milestone in a woman’s life. At sixty, a woman, particularly a Black woman, comes into her own, after a lifetime of taking care of the needs of others, her attention begins to turn inwards, towards herself and towards her own needs. Finally. So, look out.

Well, I turned sixty last month.

I had been planning for years to celebrate my 60th birthday by bringing together my closest women friends for a weekend retreat by the ocean. To spend a few powerful days sharing my life with the women who have had the greatest impact on me being who I have become.

For years I had been looking forward to sitting at their feet and soaking up their wisdom, and being surrounded by the kind of love that only women can provide. But when I realized that COVID-19 was not going to be far enough in the rear view mirror for me to risk the health and well being of the people that I love the most in this world, I decided that it was time for a plan B.

For the most part I see myself as a pretty brave person. I am willing to take risks that other people shy away from. I am willing to step into situations that lead other people to run in the opposite direction. I am willing to stand toe to toe and eyeball to eye ball with the things and the people that scare me the most. I’ve always been proud of that about myself.

But my Achilles Heel, my kryptonite so to speak, is my fear of heights. Always has been. Tall buildings. Roller Coasters. Even driving across a bridge can leave my stomach in knots and me feeling like a frightened little child. I hate it!



So what better way to mark my 60th birthday, to kick off the next chapter of my life and signify my focus shifting inwards, than to do a thing that terrifies me.

Skydiving.

When I was asked why I wanted to go skydiving, my answer was simple. Because I’m terrified. And I was. I can’t begin to describe the fear. Even now, sitting safely in my recliner chair, when I think of how it felt to slide over to the open door, turn to say good

bye to my daughter, and then feel us launch into the air, free-falling towards the Earth, I still have to take a few deep breaths.

I can’t believe I did it, but I did. Yay me!

Thank you to my incredibly brave daughter, who is just as afraid of heights as I am, but walked through her fear to jump with me anyway. To my mom and my partner Patricia, and my friends, Theresa, Terrie, Colin and Dawn (who drove over from Seattle) who came to cheer us on.

And a very special thank you to our Tandem jumpers at SkyDive West Plains in Ritzville, who were patient and kind and gentle, and who made a really scary thing a whole lot of fun too. If you’re interested in jumping, they’re great. Here’s their website: skydivewestplains.com and their phone number 509-838-JUMP (5867). Come on, if I can do it, anybody can do it!

Now what? Well, I’m loving 60 so far and I’m trying to figure out what I’m going to do for my 70th. Hmmm. Enjoy the photos!

THE BLACK LENS NEWS

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

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Subscriptions: Delivered monthly by mail - \$45/year

Submission/Advertising Deadline: 15th of the month

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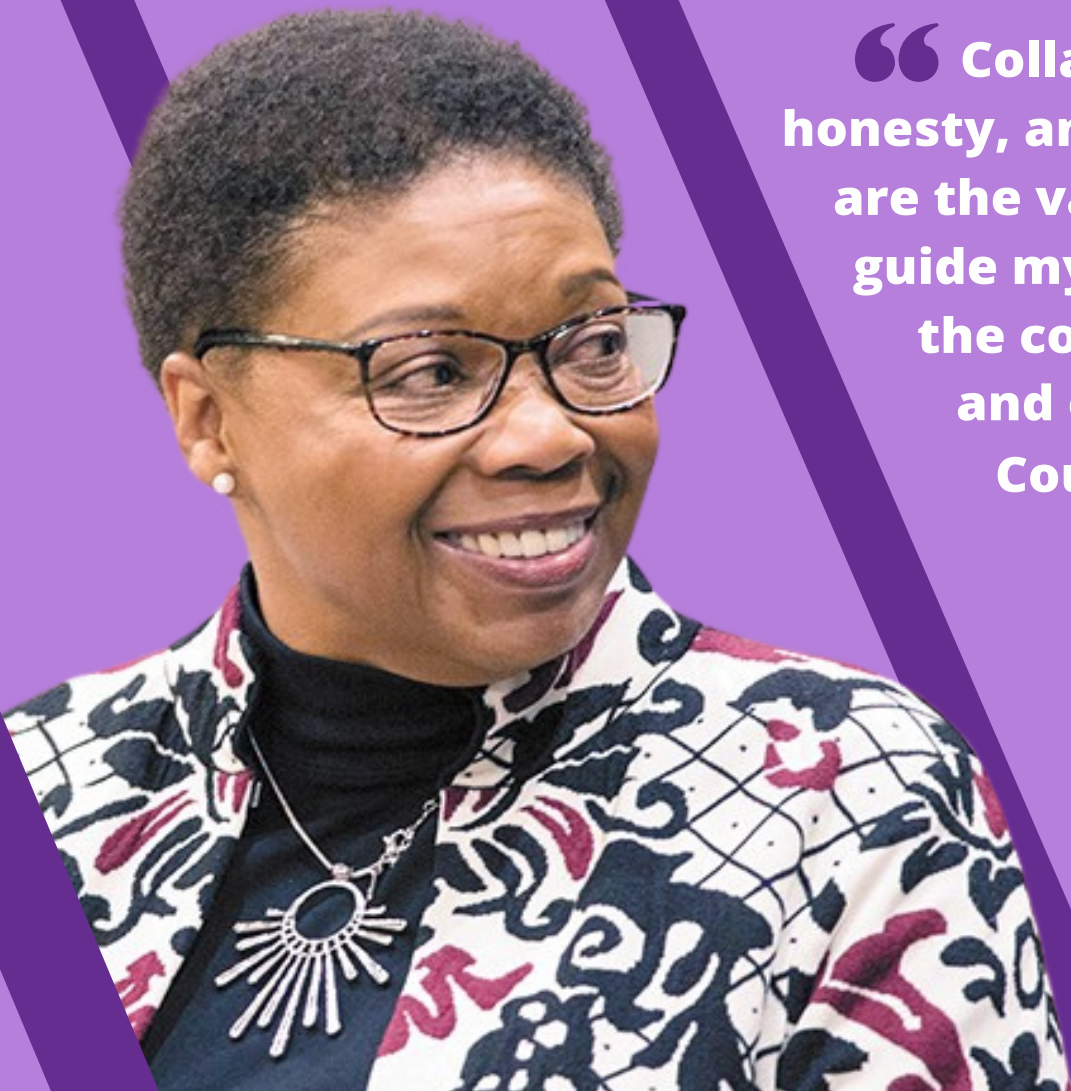
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YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY *by Bertoni Jones Bey*

Ahmed Baba

From her beginning, Europe referred to Africa as the “Dark Continent”. “Dark” more than a reference to the complexion of its people, it referenced what was seen as intellectual inferiority – Forgetting their own Dark Ages. Europe missed the intellectual glories of Western Sudan – a world-renowned center for learning boasting three major intellectual institutions – The Jingaray Ber, Sidi Yahya, and The University of Sankore founded in 989 AD. At the University of Sankore the last scholar/chancellor named Ahmed Baba maintained the scholarly standard.

Ahmed Baba was born October 26, 1556 near Timbuktu. His father Ahmad bin al-Hajj Ahmad bin Umar bin Muhammed Aqit was a teacher. Reading, learning, and study were requirements of the culture for every young man and in Timbuktu books were symbols of blessings, wealth, and power. When citizens built a home, not having a library in the blueprint was unthinkable. They knew that just as you need a kitchen to feed the body, you need a library to feed the mind.

Imam Baba himself authored more than forty books each on entirely separate subjects. He oversaw a university system, which at its zenith boasted twenty-five thousand scholars in a city of one-hundred thousand. The university structure had no central administrative system but was a series of individual schools run by a single headmaster.

In his book, “Timbuctoo the Mysterious”, author Felix Dubois quotes – “They [the scholars of Timbuktu] astounded the most learned men of Islam by their erudition. That these Negroes were on a level with the Arabian savants is proved by the fact that they were installed as professors in Morocco and Egypt. In contrast to this, we find that Arabs were not always equal to the requirements of Sankore.”

Its vast offerings presented great opportunity for all scholars – law, literature, medicine and surgery, Qur’anic studies, geography, history, etymology, mathematics, and art to name a few. A “PhD” required a ten-year commitment. There were trade classes for students to learn business, farming, leatherworks, tailoring, fishing, construction, metal works, and shoe making. Once a student committed to a trade they were taught business codes and ethics for that profession. Each guild craftsman was responsible for upholding a quality of work that was up to par with his peers in that guild guaranteeing a certain standard of quality for the trade as a whole and a chance to build a name and reputation for the individual craftsman.

In 1592 Timbuktu was invaded by Morocco. Ahmed Baba was the first to openly protest Moroccan occupation leading to his arrest, as well as his family, and the leading scholars of Timbuktu. They were exiled to Morocco in shackles, his house was ransacked, and his library of more than sixteen-hundred books destroyed and forever lost. Yet in Morocco, Ahmed Baba’s reputation preceded him. He scolded the Sultan of Morocco, Al Mansur for his bad manners and their poor treatment while detained and said – “I had the smallest library of any of my friends, and your soldiers took from me sixteen-hundred volumes.”

Though his exile lasted twelve years he and his family were released to a high post in the Mosque of Kerifs as a teacher of law, rhetoric, and theology. Upon his departure back home in 1608, he stated to Moroccans: “May God never bring me back to this meeting, nor make me return to this country!”

Ahmed Baba died in his homeland in 1627 as one of Africa’s great intellectual scholars.



Sources:
Timbuctoo The Mysterious – Felix DuBois.
Christopher Columbus and the African Holocaust – Professor John Henrik Clarke.

The Destruction of Black Civilization – Chancellor Williams.
muslimheritage.com/the-university-of-sankore-timbuktu/kentakepage.com/ahmed-baba/



Spokane Faith & Values

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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.

NAACP: Uniting Our Region

By Stacey L Wells
Spokane NAACP Civic Engagement Committee

In Spokane, we are being asked to make pivotal decisions that will have significant impacts on our community. It's time to vote! From City Council members' decisions impacting our health, housing, economic vitality, public safety, and environment, to the Spokane School Board's ability to maintain its race and equity resolution guiding the prioritization of resources, staff training, student voice, access to social and emotional learning, and issues of discipline, our participation in the November 2nd election is crucial to the strength and well-being of all of us.

As a part of your NAACP Branch's commitment to dismantling racism and disrupting inequality, we participated in the founding of the Spokane Coalition of Colors (SCOC) in 2017 to provide substantive candidate forums that allow for meaningful conversations and facilitate deep understanding of our elected leaders' values and intentions.

The Spokane NAACP, in partnership with the Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Spokane (APIC), the Hispanic Business and Professionals Association (HBPA), and Muslims for Community Action and Support (MCAS), will be hosting the 2021 virtual Candidate forums on September 25th, October 2nd, and October 9th at 10:00 AM. While recordings will be available on our Facebook page, we need many of you to join us online in the moment, let your voice



be heard, and get the answers you need to the issues that matter to you.

Even if you have already made up your mind about how you will vote, candidate forums are an opportunity to engage with your community, as well as with the candidates. The questions you ask might yield the answers that someone else needed to hear.

Registration links will be available on our Facebook page or you can send us an email at spokanenaacp@gmail.com to request a link or more information.

Make sure you receive your ballot! Ballots will be mailed between October 13th and 15th. You can check your registration status and confirm your current mailing address by selecting "Track Your Ballot" on the Spokane County website. You can register to vote online and by mail until Monday, October 25th. In person registration can be completed at a Voter Service Center until 8:00 PM on November 2nd.

When we all engage in this critical civic process, we are exercising our power to create a community that prioritizes our most urgent needs. In the words of Derrick Johnson, National NAACP President and CEO, "We must make the demands required for the future we want to see."

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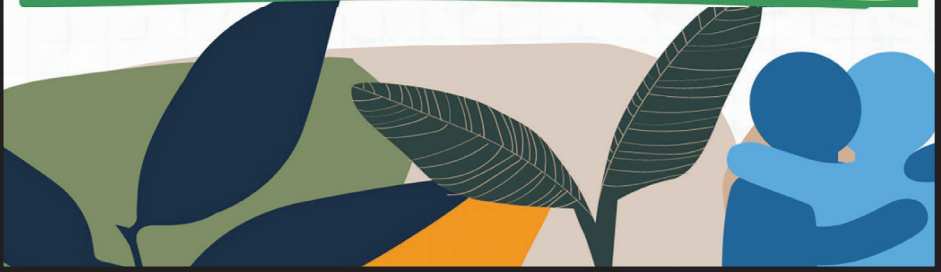
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Kiantha Duncan,
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BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Gymnasts' Demand For Justice Is A Powerful Display Of Courage And Grace



By Marc Morial

U.S. Olympic Gymnastics Champion Simone Biles taking an oath before testifying before the U. S. Senate Judiciary Committee

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - “I sit before you today to raise my voice so that no little girl must endure what I, the athletes at this table, and the countless others who needlessly suffered under Nassar’s guise of medical treatment, which we continue to endure today. We suffered and continue to suffer because no one at the FBI, USAG or the USOPC did what was necessary to protect us. We have been failed, and we deserve answers.” – U.S. Olympic Gymnastics Champion Simone Biles, testimony to Senate Judiciary Committee

Just 17 years old in June of 2015, Maggie Nichols disclosed to USA Gymnastics officials that the organization’s team doctor, Larry Nassar, had been molesting her since she was 15. Furthermore, she said she suspected that Nassar was abusing her friend and teammate Simone Biles as well.

USA Gymnastics waited more than a month to report the allegations to the FBI, by which time a private investigator had identified at least six victims, including McKayla Maroney and Aly Raisman. Af-

ter receiving the report, the FBI did almost nothing. When agents finally scheduled an interview weeks later with McKayla Maroney, then 19, it was only to get USA Gymnastics “off of our back,” according to investigators.

For nearly three hours, Maroney described to FBI agents -- over the phone, in graphic detail -- the six years of sexual abuse she endured at Nassar’s hands. She called it “the most uncomfortable conversation I had ever had in my life.”

The agents who interviewed her took almost no notes and filed no reports. It would be another year and a half, after an Indianapolis Star investigation brought renewed attention to Nassar, before Nichols, Biles, and Raisman finally were interviewed, and a wildly inaccurate and misleading report of Maroney’s interview was filed.

Despite the trauma of their abuse and betrayal by a system stacked against them at every turn, these four young women found the courage not only to seek justice for themselves and the hundreds of Nassar’s

other victims, but also to stand before the U.S. Senate to tell their stories and demand accountability for those who failed them so completely.

The testimony of Biles, Maroney, Nichols and Raisman at last week’s hearing was both heartbreaking and enraging to witness. But it was clear to see that the same fortitude, resilience, and strength of spirit that made them athletic champions also drives their unshakeable quest for justice.

As Department of Justice Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz, whose report revealed the dismal failings of the FBI’s Nassar investigation, testified, “These gymnasts showed remarkable bravery by coming forward to detail the shocking sexual assaults that they had endured from a USA Gymnastics medical doctor (Nassar) at the same time they were competing at the highest levels for our country. And, as you also heard today, these athletes reported this abuse with the hope and the belief that their actions would save other young women and girls from the serial abuse that

they had endured. Sadly, as our report indicates, the response of the FBI agents who received that information betrayed their law enforcement responsibilities and their duties to these victims.”

It is hard to imagine a more demoralizing, disheartening experience than that which these gymnasts endured. They had every justification to surrender to despair and abandon hope. But they could not walk away from the opportunity to prevent what happened to them from happening to other girls and young women. For that, they deserve not only our admiration and respect, but our every effort to hold those responsible to account.

“Nassar is where he belongs, but those who enabled him deserve to be held accountable,” Biles testified “If they are not, I am convinced that this will continue to happen to others across Olympic Sports ... A message needs to be sent: If you allow a predator to harm children, the consequences will be swift and severe. Enough is enough.”



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BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Archbishop Carl Bean: “I Was Born This Way”

Founder of the Minority AIDS Project and Unity Fellowship Church Dead at 77

By The Reverend Irene Monroe

This May, when Lady Gaga celebrated the 10th anniversary of her hit album “Born this Way,” she gave an acknowledgment shoutout to Bishop Carl Bean (May 26, 1944 – September 7, 2021).

“Born This Way, my song and album, were inspired by Carl Bean, a gay Black religious activist who preached, sung, and wrote about being ‘Born This Way,’” Gaga stated in “Today.com.” “Notably, his early work was in 1975, 11 years before I was born.”

To Gaga’s generation and younger, Bean’s name does not compute for them. However, during the 1970’s disco era, Bean was known for the 1977 Motown Record dance hit single “I Was Born This Way.” The song was an instant success appearing for eight weeks on Billboard’s Dance Club Songs chart, and it became a liberation anthem heard in disco clubs across the country.

Bean thanked Gaga for reviving the song, stating how “I Was Born This Way” is relevant decades later for the LGBTQ+ community.

“When Gaga did [hers], I felt the same way, knowing that it’s in the ears of young kids who might have given up and wondering if they should end it,” Bean stated in LosAngelno.com in 2019. “I feel great that it’s in the ears of those who need it most.”

Bean was the first Black openly gay gospel singer to join Motown. However, his time at Motown was short-lived when he refused to croon heterosexual love songs. Bean eventually left Motown in the 1980s, abandoning his singing career.



In 1982, Bean founded Unity Fellowship Church Movement, Los Angeles (UFCLA), the first welcoming and affirming Black Church for LGBTQ+ parishioners with churches today throughout the country and the Caribbean. Bean preached a progressive all-inclusive theology that’s reflected in the church’s mantra “God is love, and love is for everyone.” UFCLA’s one of the most vibrant and vital ministries to LGBTQ+ people of African descent because it embraces Bean’s mission of affirming Black spirituality and sexual identities unabashedly.

“Archbishop Bean worked tirelessly for the liberation of the underserved and for LGBTQ people of faith and, in doing so, helped many around the world find their way back to spirituality and religion,” the church wrote in a press release announcing Bean’s death.

When HIV/AIDs hit the country in the 1980s, Black and brown LGBTQ+ people were impacted disproportionately. In 1985, Bean founded the Minority AIDS Project (MAP), a non-profit based in South Los Angeles for Black and Latinx communities living with HIV/AIDS. MAP provided HIV/AIDS information, prevention, care, and treatment for low-income people of color. MAP started with 15 clients living with AIDS. Today MAP serves the needs of more than 1,200 clients living with HIV/AIDS per month with more than 44 full-time and part-time employees. Early supporters of MAP were then-Assemblywoman Maxine Waters and comedian Richard Pryor. Pryor donated thousands of dollars, on the condition of anonymity, to help launch MAP.

In 2010, Bean published his autobiography titled “I Was Born This Way: A Gay Preacher’s Journey through Gospel Music, Disco Stardom, and a Ministry in Christ” The book became a second Bible for many Black LGBTQ+ people of faith who couldn’t find comfort in their church or left it. The Reverend Troy D. Perry, the founder of the Metropolitan Community Churches, reviewed the book for “Lambda Literary” in 2010 and wrote the following: “There is a wonderful gospel song titled, “How I Got Over,” which I believe exemplifies the life of Archbishop Carl Bean. This book is an amazing testimony of one man’s journey to find himself. In doing so, he became one of the heroes of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender movement and became a major crusader for the fight against HIV/AIDS. Carl’s story will make you laugh and cry. He tells of his life with an honesty that will, I’m sure, shock some readers, but you will not be able to put this book down until the end.”

In 2006, I had the pleasure of meeting Bean because the church invited me to be that year’s Unity Fellowship Convocation speaker. Watching him through the years, I am reminded of a quote by MLK. Martin Luther King said there are two types of leadership: those who are thermometers, which measure the temperature in the room and do nothing, and those who are thermostats, which change the temperature. Bean was a church leader and civil rights ac-



tivist. He unapologetically changed traditional Christian Theology to welcome the dispossessed, the disinherited, the disrespected, and the damned into the Kingdom of God. And in so doing, Bean’s ministry reflected the unending struggle to give voice and visibility to those of us relegated to the margins of society.

Bean’s words and works will live on through his followers.
Rest in Power!

The Reverend Irene Monroe is an ordained minister and a Black-Commentator.com Editorial Board member. 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). She’s a Huffington Post blogger and a syndicated religion columnist. Her website is irenemonroe.com.

Editor’s Note: I met Bishop, that’s what I called him, when I moved to Los Angeles in the mid-90s to attend grad school. I will never forget the first time I attended Unity Fellowship Church and watched a 100-member strong choir of proud and joyful Black LGBTQ+ folks decked out in kinte cloth march into the sanctuary and position themselves under a banner that read “God is Love and Love is for Everybody.” I think I cried for an hour. I am one of those people who had given up on the Black church, and on myself to be honest, but was saved by this man’s love. I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today and would never be the person that I have become without Carl Bean’s presence in my life. I am filled with love and will be forever grateful. RIP

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Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears



I used to make a very clear, if mostly unconscious distinction between the sacred and the secular. I didn't bring my church life and spirituality into my secular life, and I didn't bring my job, or anything related to it into my spiritual life. To my mind, my Faith reinforced that dichotomy; heaven and earth, things of the flesh versus things of the spirit: Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and render unto God what is God's. But the secular world – the sociocultural and scientific world -- also operates in polarities: male and female, mind and matter, subject and object, light and dark, being and non-being, myself and the other, us and them.

I was steeped in both worlds. My Faith life was deeply important to me, and for a long time my career was in government relations and political policy analysis. That seemed about as secular as it gets.

I told myself that my spirituality encompassed every aspect of my life, but it took years for me to become conscious of it. There came a time when I realized it wasn't whether I compromised my integrity on any given day at work, but how much I would compromise it. How could I possibly analyze public policies without considering the moral implications of those policies?

It would take me a while to understand that a city, state, or federal budget is a moral document. Where those numbers fall can mean the difference in whether a 6-year-old is able to attend a well-funded school

The Sacred

or winds up in a well-funded prison. Eventually I became a Faith-based social justice advocate. I was doing the same so-called secular work from a sacred space within me.

My Faith evolved into understanding that although things have very definite distinctions, in the deepest sense, everything is sacred, because life is sacred. I believe that the divine intersects in every part of our lives, in the world, in the universe and extends beyond space and time. In other words, it's all God, and God is relational.

Christians are followers of the only Master whose prime directive is Love. We are followers of Jesus. Love is THE sacred tenet of Christianity, and Love is lived out in our relationships to each other and to the world. Christianity's greatest commandment is that we love God and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

There is dynamic, mutual movement and exchange between us and God. That same movement is happening within and between human beings in relationship to one another, and in our relationship with the planet that supports us. The energy born of this mutual exchange can be the source of either destructive or life-giving power.

Jesus was a master who through his intimate relationship with God, brought hope and transformation to a hurting world. He redefined people's relationship with God. Jesus was a teacher, a mystic, a theologian, and he was a non-violent, radical revolutionary, who as one Pastor says was "just down with the people."

Every aspect of Jesus was in relationship to every other aspect of his life and teaching. He would go off alone to pray, and then he would come back to roam the countryside preaching and speaking truth to power. Jesus unapologetically called attention to the injustice of his day as we must call attention to the injustice of police brutality, mass incarceration, environmental justice, economic disparity, and the erosion of civil liberties today.

We do our inward spiritual work to do our outward spiritual work. Inner and outward work look different, but both operate within the sacred. The connection between our external life and our spiritual life is in our actions. It is a matter of intention. So much of what we do in our lives is external and fleeting because it is not grounded in the sacred.

In the twentieth-century Civil Rights Movement, Black churches were at the forefront of the battle to end racial segregation

and to gain the right to vote. It was a mass movement, organized and galvanized in Black churches throughout the south. People gathered in churches to pray before they took to the streets to face beat-downs, water hoses and vicious dogs. Their direction and strength came from their relationship with the Divine Infinite – with God. Their actions for justice brought God into the streets.

Everything exists within the sacred. Jesus prayed in the garden and drove the money changers out of the temple. Jesus healed the sick and confronted and confounded the hypocritical religious leaders of his day. Jesus was at Calvary and on the bridge in Selma, Alabama. Jesus is with us in the church on Sunday mornings and marching in the streets on Sunday afternoon, proclaiming Black Lives Matter.

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." Psalm 139: 7-10.

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



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87% Nearly 87% of all eligible uninsured children are school-aged.

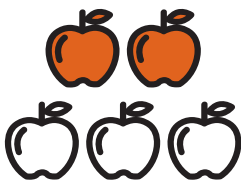
Percentage of school-aged students (ages 6-18) that receive health coverage through Medicaid and CHIP.



37%
ALL STUDENTS



79%
STUDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY



Almost 2 out of 5 school-aged children received their health coverage through Medicaid and CHIP in 2016.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your child may qualify for free or low-cost health coverage through Medicaid or CHIP.

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Children in a household of four earning up to \$56,000 annually may qualify for free medical coverage. Families of four earning up to \$84,000 annually may be eligible for low-cost coverage with premiums of \$20 or \$30 each month for each child (no copays or deductibles).

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SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL

District 1 - Position 2

Jonathan Bingle

1) What professional experience do you have that qualifies you to fill this position? Please give concrete examples.

As someone who owns and operates small businesses, I have successfully created and implemented budgets, systems, regulations, and other essential parts of business for over ten years. As a former pastor, I have labored over questions of morality, right and wrong, and helped people from many different backgrounds and histories to come together toward a common goal.

2) For someone who is not familiar with city government, please explain what a city council representative does?

Our city government is made up of three branches of government in the same way our state and federal government are: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. Spokane's City Council is our city's legislative body. We "control the purse strings", which means we control how the money in Spokane is spent and we are also responsible for the creation of laws in the city.

3) What is your vision for the City of Spokane and what do you see as the role of the City Council in carrying out that vision?

Spokane is growing rapidly and our policies must recognize that reality. My priority will be to focus on how to best accommodate that growth and keep Spokane the way it is as much as possible so as to not push out our current residents. To me, that is drastically increasing the housing supply at all levels and ensuring that all have the opportunity to purchase a home.

4) Give one or two examples, past or present, that describe how you have worked effectively with communities of color in Spokane, and with the African American community in particular.

I have participated in community conversations, such as the reading and discussion of the book, "Dear Martin" with young men and women of color at Rogers High School.

5) What do you see as the most important issue(s) currently impacting Spokane's African American community and what role can the city council in particular play in addressing the issue?

Housing. Currently, 65% of white families own their home in Spokane. In the black community, that number is 24%. Equity isn't being built when families are renting and over 80% of new businesses are started through home equity lines of credit. We can help families build generational wealth by increasing the number of families that own their homes. I want to focus on increasing the housing supply in an affordable price range to see our most vulnerable populations start to change the future of their families.

6) People of color, for the most part, do not see themselves represented in city government, what steps will you take (or have you taken in the past) to represent and engage underrepresented groups in the Spokane community?

It starts in the schools by impressing upon young people how important it is to be represented in government. I try to encourage all individuals interested in gov-



ernment to get involved to make their city better for their families.

7) What grade would you give the City of Spokane for its efforts to address systemic racism? Why?

Spokane leaders have led community conversations to work to build trust, but I think that should be more open so we can have a greater dialogue. Our PAL program with SPD has been a big success and I would continue to look for ways for our city to be better for our community.

8) Please talk about racial equity as it relates to the City of Spokane's hiring practices and contracting?

The City of Spokane has a responsibility to be a good steward of the tax dollars it takes from its citizens. The City should hire on a merit basis to have the best employees and provide the best services to the community.

9) At times, in a community, what is in the best interest of the majority can be in conflict with what is in the best interest of the minority. How would you or how have you balanced that conflict?

Individual rights are minority rights. It's important that we fairly apply the law and fairly write laws to ensure people are never treated differently based on the color of their skin.

10) What are the top three things that you hope to accomplish if elected to the Spokane City Council?

I hope to increase the amount of housing in Spokane, make our community safer, and create new avenues for businesses here in Spokane, especially as we recover from the pandemic.

11) What perception do you believe the general community has of the Spokane City Council? How do you think that perception is similar or different from the perception that people of color in Spokane have?

I think people in general think the city is doing okay. I think the perception is similar in the communities of color in Spokane.

12) Why should a person of color vote for you?

I will work to make Spokane the best place to live, work, and raise a family. If a person of color is concerned with neighborhood safety, housing availability or the ability to have opportunities in the community they live in, then they should vote for me.

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Naghmana Sherazi

1) What professional experience do you have that qualifies you to fill this position? Please give concrete examples.

I currently work at Gonzaga University in the Department of Diversity and Equity. Working in higher education, advocating for BIPOC students, and working to make Gonzaga a more diverse and equitable campus is a huge passion of mine. I have been involved with many local organizations, including Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, NAACP, Greater Spokane Progress, Refugee Connections of Spokane, and Asian Pacific Islander Coalition. I was also a small business owner before I moved to Spokane. My diverse experiences in the work field and in our Spokane community make me qualified for this role on City Council.

2) For someone who is not familiar with city government, please explain what a city council representative does?

A City Council representative serves as the legislative branch representative for the City Government. They also serve as a voice for their district. City Council members vote on ordinances, city laws, resolutions, serve on various committees, and approve Mayoral appointees. They can also override Mayoral vetoes and serve as a check on the Mayor. City Council also approves the budget.

3) What is your vision for the City of Spokane and what do you see as the role of the City Council in carrying out that vision?

My vision for the City of Spokane is a place where everyone has a chance to succeed, and the City Council has a duty to improve and better the city. Some of that is in the role of oversight and accountability to the administration, and some of it is in ensuring funding goes to necessary areas of improvement. I believe the City of Spokane's council needs to be committed to equity, sustainability, and improving quality of life in the city.

4) Give one or two examples, past or present, that describe how you have worked effectively with communities of color in Spokane, and with the African American community in particular.

I was the Co-Chair of No Discriminate Spokane, a coalition of more than 26 groups that successfully fought the racist anti-immigrant, racial profiling initiative proposed for the ballot, against BIPOC communities known as Proposition 1. I have volunteered as a translator at the Native Project vaccination clinics helping increase access to vaccination clinics for non native English speakers. Working in Gonzaga's office for Diversity and Equity, I advocate for students, faculty, and staff of color as well as the undocumented community daily.

5) What do you see as the most important issue(s) currently impacting Spokane's African American community and what role can the city council in particular play in addressing the issue?

I see many issues that affect Spokane's African American community, and want to note that income disparity, equal opportunity, anti-racist policies, all must be addressed. However the biggest need in my mind is police reform. I want to have an Office of Civil Rights in the city that houses the Police Ombudsman. African Americans, in particular, have been victims of the justice system historically, and currently. We need



to ensure that we fight systemic racism with accountability and independent oversight.

6) People of color, for the most part, do not see themselves represented in city government, what steps will you take (or have you taken in the past) to represent and engage underrepresented groups in the Spokane community?

As a person of color, it is important to me that underrepresented communities are engaged in all levels of government. From my work with refugees and immigrants, underrepresented communities of color, and the work I do at Gonzaga, I strive to not only be a leader but a listener to these communities. Understanding that there is only one person of color on the Spokane City Council, to me means that we need more diversity in our leadership and the city leadership.

7) What grade would you give the City of Spokane for its efforts to address systemic racism? Why?

I believe that there have been attempts but this administration has fallen short.

8) Please talk about racial equity as it relates to the City of Spokane's hiring practices and contracting?

Racial equity is crucial to the success of the city. The City of Spokane needs to prioritize diversity and equity. The treatment of Cupid Alexander was shameful and likely will decrease interest, and discourage other BIPOC members to consider applying to work for the administration. This needs to be highlighted so we can counter the issues at grassroots level.

9) At times, in a community, what is in the best interest of the majority can be in conflict with what is in the best interest of the minority. How would you or how have you balanced that conflict?

I believe strongly that the minority must be treated fairly. I would balance the interest in the majority by ensuring that City Policy is fair and equitable and does not discriminate. I would advocate for things that will uplift our communities such as supporting minority owned businesses and connecting with them. My greatest strength is building connections in the community. I want to connect those suffering due to lack of resources with the resources they need. When minority communities suffer, it does impact the majority community.

10) What are the top three things that you hope to accomplish if elected to the Spokane City Council?

Rental and Utility relief to those behind in bills due to COVID-19. I am a renter - currently, I am not represented on the Council. Supporting small businesses especially minority owned businesses.

Continued on Page 11

Black Lens 2021 Election Issue Candidate Questions

Each year the Black Lens publishes an election issue. The issue contains questions for candidates that focus on issues that are impacting the Black community. The questions are certainly not comprehensive, but my intention is to try to give you a glimpse into the thinking of each candidate.

Candidate answers are printed verbatim. Candidates are contacted weeks in advance and are given at least one reminder.

Thank you to those candidates from across the political spectrum who respect our community and this publication enough to respond. I make it clear when a candidate chooses not to respond.

I encourage you to read the questions and the answers and to thinking about them when deciding who to vote for. Your vote does make a difference.

For more WA candidate information visit the online voter information website at: voter.votewa.gov

Naghmana Sherazi

Continued From Page 10

Advocating for our unhoused population, ensuring there is adequate shelter space, stopping the sweeps, and connecting the community to resources to significantly reduce the number of people on the streets.

11) What perception do you believe the general community has of the Spokane City Council? How do you think that perception is similar or different from the perception that people of color in Spokane have?

I believe the general community perceives the Spokane City as generally good but not efficient or quick to respond to problems. They see things like poor road quality, lack of infrastructure, homelessness as chronic issues that are not addressed properly by the City Council. I think people of color in Spokane do not feel as connected to the City Council as they would like to be. The appointment of Councilwoman Betsy Wilkerson was a great step towards diversifying the council, but when the council has 6 white people on it and only one member of the BIPOC community, it still feels like it is not representative of the city as a whole.

12) Why should a person of color vote for you?

I am a person of color. I am proud to be part of the BIPOC community and will always consider the interests of POC when I make choices to vote on issues. I will be an advocate for the community on the City Council, and ensure diverse viewpoints are brought to the table.

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peoplefornaghmana.com

SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL

District 2 - Position 2

Betsy Wilkerson

1) What professional experience do you have that qualifies you to fill this position? Please give concrete examples.

I've led multiple nonprofit organizations over the past few decades and own and operate a family business that has served people with disabilities since 1976. I've sat on Council since I was appointed in 2019 and look forward to my first full term.

2) For someone who is not familiar with city government, please explain what a city council representative does?

A City Councilmember listens to the needs and concerns of constituents, debates policy with experts and those impacted, and passes a budget to fund all city programs and staffing.

3) What is your vision for the City of Spokane and what do you see as the role of the City Council in carrying out that vision?

My vision for Spokane is the City of Promise that made my mother's story possible. In 1963 my single mother took her four kids on the train from West Point Mississippi to Spokane, looking for a better life. It wasn't easy, but with accessible government programs and a lot of hard work, she found it. I believe it's Council's role to expand opportunity so folks like my mother can find success and build their family in this wonderful city.

4) Give one or two examples, past or present, that describe how you have worked effectively with communities of color in Spokane, and with the African American community in particular.

I have provided advocacy and support for our African American community for decades. I helped raise \$1.3 million for a renovation of the MLK center and recently directed PPP funding to small and minority-owned businesses that have been historically detached from City programs. I had the pleasure of starting the Minority Ethnic Enterprise to bring together minority-owned businesses to ensure they can take advantage of City and County programs. I'm also proud to have worked with local activists and organizations to rename Whistalks Drive and host Spokane's first celebration of Black History month in downtown Spokane. Elevating people of color to leadership positions through appointments has been another focus during my time on Council.

5) What do you see as the most important issue(s) currently impacting Spokane's African American community and what role can the city council in particular play in addressing the issue?

We need to prioritize attainable housing that our African American community can take advantage of, and remove barriers to embracing businesses of color throughout our city.

6) People of color, for the most part, do not see themselves represented in city government, what steps will you take (or have you taken in the past) to represent and engage underrepresented groups in the Spokane community?

I'm proud to be the second African American woman on Council in the City's 147 year history. But I'm even more proud of the bridges I've built between city government and Spokane's historically forgotten communities. I have brought folks from every corner of the City into the Council's decision-making process and will continue to emphasize voices from communities of color. During the pandemic, I opened pathways between minority-owned businesses and Council so they could take advantage of loans and financial assistance, and will continue to develop those relationships so minority-owned businesses can take full advantage of City programs and contracts.

7) What grade would you give the City of Spokane for



its efforts to address systemic racism? Why?

I would give the City a C—. I've discovered that there are systems in place but little accountability or results. Council and the Administration cannot just provide lip service; we need to be intentional and deliberate to seek out opportunities for change, and monitor progress to find out what is and isn't working.

8) Please talk about racial equity as it relates to the City of Spokane's hiring practices and contracting?

There has long been a mismatch between the City's hiring and contracting practices and businesses/workers of color. Minority-owned businesses haven't known opportunities are present and the City hasn't taken initiative to build those relationships. I am proud to have served as a conduit between the City and minority-owned businesses and will continue to develop those ties to empower minority-owned businesses in Spokane.

9) At times, in a community, what is in the best interest of the majority can be in conflict with what is in the best interest of the minority. How would you or how have you balanced that conflict?

Balancing the needs of different constituents is a central role of a government representative. A nuanced analysis is always needed. We should assess the total benefit for one group compared to the total loss for another, and consider recent and historical examples to help inform the decision.

10) What are the top three things that you hope to accomplish if elected to the Spokane City Council?

1. Build attainable housing that is truly attainable for everyone — attainable for the homeless and the disabled, attainable for youth and for seniors, and attainable for working families and those under the poverty line.
2. Evolve public safety, not tear it down or push its problems under the rug. Investments in mental health and substance resources, targeted recruitment programs, and a more robust oversight department will help keep our neighborhoods safe and our public safety system just.
3. Prioritize small and minority-owned businesses. Creative tax credits will help us revitalize store fronts and bring areas like the East 5th Ave back to life. And as we invest in roads, broadband and other 21st Century infrastructure, the City must tap our small and minority-owned businesses to lead the charge.

11) What perception do you believe the general community has of the Spokane City Council? How do you think that perception is similar or different from the perception that people of color in Spokane have?

I know firsthand from my friends, family and neighbors that people of color often don't feel like the City Council is theirs. I'm trying to change that by including them in the Council's decision making process.

12) Why should a person of color vote for you?

A person of color should vote for me because I've spent my entire career trying to improve our City for people of color and everyone that calls Spokane home. I've helped build Black community and economic power as Chair of the Carl Maxey Center Board and have helped distribute high-impact grants to neighborhoods in need while working with the Innovia Foundation. My seat on Council affords communities of color a strong and forceful advocate, and I am excited to earn your vote.

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SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL

District 3 - Position 2

Zack Zappone

1) What professional experience do you have that qualifies you to fill this position? Please give concrete examples.

As a teacher, I’ve seen the barriers to success that students experience out of the classroom. I understand the challenges working families face in our modern economy and graduate school gave me an opportunity to take a deeper dive into solutions to remove barriers. I’ve used my background in urban planning as a transportation analyst, working to make cities more walkable, bikeable and sustainable. And as a public health worker, I’ve expanded telehealth resources to hard-to-reach communities to expand healthcare options during the pandemic.

2) For someone who is not familiar with city government, please explain what a city council representative does?

A city council member listens to the needs, concerns, and ideas of their constituents and advocates for city policies to improve our community.

3) What is your vision for the City of Spokane and what do you see as the role of the City Council in carrying out that vision?

Our vision for the City of Spokane is to build a vision together to ensure that everyone has a fair shot — where families young and old can find affordable housing; where homeless people get the resources they need to build meaningful lives; where families feel safe and have the health resources they need; and where we invest in 21st Century infrastructure to build a strong economy for working families. Council’s role is to listen to our community, especially those most impacted, to create policy solutions and to advocate for policies to make this vision possible. Council also needs to make sure to address these needs with a foundation of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

4) Give one or two examples, past or present, that describe how you have worked effectively with communities of color in Spokane, and with the African American community in particular.

As a white man, I am aware of my privilege in Spokane and believe the onus is on the privileged to help effectuate racial progress in our city. I want to continue to deepen relationships with BIPOC communities in Spokane. As a teacher, I’ve worked with community members to change school curriculum to be culturally responsive, including authors of diverse identities. I’ve pushed for changes to the school discipline system that produced racially-discriminatory outcomes that reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline. I’ve expanded after-school programs to engage families in their students’ education. And I’ve worked on healthcare policy at the WA Health Benefit Exchange to make health insurance more affordable for hard to reach populations, including the African American community.

5) What do you see as the most important issue(s) currently impacting Spokane’s African American community and what role can the city council in particular play in addressing the issue?

Persisting inequalities and institutional racism continue to impact Spokane’s African-American community. There are hundreds of open job listings in our local economy. The problem is that they’re mostly bad jobs with poor pay and benefits. No one should have 3 jobs to pay the bills. We need to invest in family-wage, union jobs with government contracts and employ tar-



geted recruitment programs. The wealth gap between African-Americans and white is driven in large part by the centuries-long homeownership gap. The City should adopt creative initiatives, loans and other incentives to boost African American homeownership. Finally, police reform. Mass incarceration continues to disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The City needs to continue to push for reform that holds police accountable with independent oversight while investing in community-based services.

6) People of color, for the most part, do not see themselves represented in city government, what steps will you take (or have you taken in the past) to represent and engage underrepresented groups in the Spokane community?

I pledge to use my position to consult with communities of color and to elevate voices of color to the Council’s decision-making process. In addition to talking with leaders of color, I will also look at ways to include more BIPOC voices in the policy making process beyond leaders of color. This includes promoting a racial and social justice framework like the City of Seattle, paying City advisory committee members and recruiting more BIPOC voices.

7) What grade would you give the City of Spokane for its efforts to address systemic racism? Why?

I’d give the City a C. While there are some promising ideas to address systemic racism, there is an absence of follow-through and tangible results. We need to test programs and track results to learn what is and isn’t working.

8) Please talk about racial equity as it relates to the City of Spokane’s hiring practices and contracting?

It is incumbent on the City to ensure minority-owned businesses and workers of color can take advantage of City jobs, contracts and other programs. The City should employ targeted outreach programs and invest in relationships with minority-run organizations.

9) At times, in a community, what is in the best interest of the majority can be in conflict with what is in the best interest of the minority. How would you or how have you balanced that conflict?

Balancing the needs and interests of sometimes-opposing groups is a core responsibility of council members and lawmakers in general. It starts with listening to all sides and bringing folks together to find some sense of common ground to build on. It is also important to listen to and advocate for those who are left out of the system.

10) What are the top three things that you hope to accomplish if elected to the Spokane City Council?

Continued on Page 13

Mike Lish

1) What professional experience do you have that qualifies you to fill this position? Please give concrete examples.

I’ve operated a local small business, D. Lish’s Hamburgers, for over 13 years. I worked my way up from scrubbing the grill and taking out the trash to managing workers and doing payroll. I know what it takes to run a local business, manage budgets, and help employees succeed.

2) For someone who is not familiar with city government, please explain what a city council representative does?

The City Council is the legislative branch of our city government. The Council proposes and passes policies, manages the budget, and votes on what services the City will provide. A Councilmember’s top priority should be to listen and fairly represent their constituents.

3) What is your vision for the City of Spokane and what do you see as the role of the City Council in carrying out that vision?

My vision is to rebuild a city where individuals and families want to stay for generations to come. In order to get our community on the right track from housing to homelessness to recovering from the pandemic, we need a City Council that makes decisions based on common sense, not a political agenda — one that finds real solutions to issues we face every day, rather than continuing to kick the can down the road.

4) Give one or two examples, past or present, that describe how you have worked effectively with communities of color in Spokane, and with the African American community in particular.

With years in the restaurant industry, I have worked with and hired people from all racial backgrounds.

5) What do you see as the most important issue(s) currently impacting Spokane’s African American community and what role can the city council in particular play in addressing the issue?

I believe one of the top priorities of the City Council should be addressing housing. It’s important on all levels, but particularly in making homeownership attainable again. Owning a home is one of the biggest sources of generational wealth. By rezoning and looking at creative ways to allow for more housing of all types, the City can be helping more people in Spokane, including the African American community, improve their economic futures through homeownership.

6) People of color, for the most part, do not see themselves represented in city government, what steps will you take (or have you taken in the past) to represent and engage underrepresented groups in the Spokane community?

In general, we see less public participation in local government. Some Councilmembers have said that they rarely get emails or calls about most issues coming through the City Council. We should be encouraging more participation on all levels from our community members so that their voices are heard and better represented.

7) What grade would you give the City of Spokane for its efforts to address systemic racism? Why?



It would be a barely passing grade. It took almost a full year following protests in Spokane for city leaders to have official community conversations and only opened it to a small group. I’d like to see the entire city be able to give feedback, so that we have more voices at the table.

8) Please talk about racial equity as it relates to the City of Spokane’s hiring practices and contracting?

The City has an obligation to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars. I can’t speak to the interworking of the City’s hiring and contracting as a private citizen on the outside of it, but when I hire at the restaurant I am always looking to hire individuals that are willing to work hard and learn — I hire people based on character. I look for who they are today and not who they were in the past, knowing that people can grow and change for good with support.

9) At times, in a community, what is in the best interest of the majority can be in conflict with what is in the best interest of the minority. How would you or how have you balanced that conflict?

I believe there is always an opportunity to find common ground. I think too often, we continue doing what we’ve always done because it’s easier to follow the status quo. As I have in the restaurant, when something isn’t working I change course and adapt. I look for ways to get creative in order to find a solution. I will take this same approach to the Council.

10) What are the top three things that you hope to accomplish if elected to the Spokane City Council?

My top three priorities are addressing the homelessness crisis and housing crisis, and supporting small businesses, especially as we work to recover from the pandemic. I will work to bring all partners to the table to find real solutions to the homelessness crisis, like better connecting those in need to services. To address our housing needs, we should better streamline permitting and get serious about modifying zoning. We need more supply to keep up with the demand, while taking into consideration the concerns current residents have, such as traffic. Now that the City has a once-in-a-lifetime influx of COVID relief money coming from the federal government, we must ensure that it’s being spent responsibly and prioritized for those who have been impacted the most by the pandemic.

11) What perception do you believe the general community has of the Spokane City Council?

Continued on Page 13



SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE HOUSING FORUM

Hear from the Spokane City Council Candidates about housing solutions as tenants have an opportunity to ask questions

Thursday, October 14, 2021
6:00-8:00 pm on Zoom

Register Online for Zoom Link at:
bit.ly/SpokaneHousingCF

Organized by:
WA Low Income Housing Alliance, Resident Action Project, Faith Action Network, Tenants Union of WA State, Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium, Greater Spokane Progress, APIC Spokane, Latinos en Spokane, SCAR Spokane, and more!

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

October 2
Spokane School Board
Municipal Court Judge Position #3

October 9
Spokane Valley City Council



Are you committed to electing people who are responsive to the needs of **communities of color**?

Do you want to ask candidates questions directly about **equity**?

Join us at the
Spokane Coalition of Color
Candidate Forums!

We believe elected leaders in Spokane and Spokane Valley should prioritize the values and needs of communities of color. These forums will give people a chance to highlight their top concerns and hopes for the future. We hope you will join us! Please visit our Facebook page for more details:
<https://www.facebook.com/SpokaneCoalitionOfColor/events>

The **Spokane Coalition of Color** is comprised of: APIC Spokane; Hispanic Business/Professional Association of Spokane; Muslims for Community, Action and Support; and NAACP Spokane.



Mike Lish

Continued From Page 12

How do you think that perception is similar or different from the perception that people of color in Spokane have?

As I am talking to residents, the perception is that our current council is not visibly working to make our city any better. They voice concerns about the crumbling roads, traffic problems, and the lack of accountability for bad actors. Historically, people of color have been impacted as a result of inactive local governments. We need a City Council that listens and acts for all citizens, no matter their background or race. I think it is a perception that exists with a lot of Spokane’s citizens. The Council has been ignoring the fundamentals of making our city a place people want to live in.

12) Why should a person of color vote for you?

I am committed to working together to find common ground to tackle the real issues facing Spokane. You can find more information about me and my campaign platform at www.mikelishforspokane.com. I humbly ask for your vote.

Contact
(509) 483-0295
mike@mikelishforspokane.com
mikelishforspokane.com

Zack Zappone

Continued From Page 12

1. Address both the demand and supply sides of our housing crisis with grants, loans and assistance to struggling families while incentivising affordable housing and making development quicker and cheaper.
2. Expand transitional housing to get our homeless population off the streets so they can access the mental health and substance abuse resources they need to unlock their true potential.
3. Invest in 21st Century infrastructure to lay the foundation for sustainable growth that supports working families, small businesses, and our planet.

All of these policies must be done through a foundation of equity and inclusion to make sure that BIPOC communities have equal opportunity to benefit.

11) What perception do you believe the general community has of the Spokane City Council? How do you think that perception is similar or different from the perception that people of color in Spokane have?

Most white people in Spokane feel heard and represented while Black folks tell me they do not feel the same. The challenges around housing, public health and safety, and economic development are complex and nuanced. We need to understand the specific needs of communities of color and do a better job addressing them.

12) Why should a person of color vote for you?

From teaching classrooms with mostly students of color to working to expand healthcare services to neighborhoods that have been historically neglected, I’ve shown I am committed to equity and inclusion. I will bring my commitment to this position while continuing to listen, learn, and improve. On Council, I will continue to advocate for those left behind by the current system and fight for everyone in Spokane to have a fair shot.

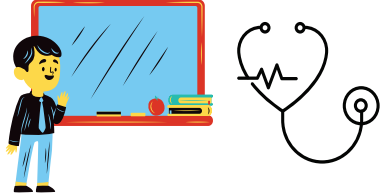
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JOIN THE COMMUNITY VOICES COUNCIL!



WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY VOICES COUNCIL?

The Community Voices Council believes no one in our region should experience a difference in access to care due to their identity, income, or ability. The Council makes recommendations to Better Health Together and local health care leaders to support this vision.



ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

You’re eligible to join the Community Voices Council if you:

- are currently on medicaid (Apple Health)
- have first-hand experience accessing health care or social services and are comfortable talking to others about those experiences
- like to talk to their neighbors and community about what issues are impacting them
- enjoy coming up with thoughtful ideas that help their community and neighbors
- have the time to attend the monthly meeting

WHY JOIN THE COMMUNITY VOICES COUNCIL?

It is an opportunity to make your voice heard, represent your community, and be part of meaningful change in the healthcare field.

Eligible participants receive a stipend for participating in monthly meetings.

HOW DO YOU JOIN?

If you’re interested or have questions, please get in touch with Reese Holford by emailing reese@betterhealthtogether.org.

Apply online: tinyurl.com/rdmrym6f



Learn more about us at www.betterhealthtogether.org

WHO IS DRAWING THE LINES?

SCAR (Spokane Community Against Racism) and Community Coalition Want Equity in Redistricting Map

By Ann Murphy, Jac Archer and Tina Morrison

In Spokane County, we have a historic opportunity. It is not an exaggeration to say that the outcome of the next month will determine our future for generations.

For the first time, Spokane County is going through a redistricting process to switch to a district-based system for electing our county commissioners that ensures constituents get a more responsive government that matches growing populations. The bipartisan Spokane County Redistricting Committee has been hard at work and presented four draft maps to the public that reflect their priorities in creating the five new districts. The final plan is due to the Spokane County Auditor by Oct. 23.

As part of a broad community coalition, we are united in a vision to create five competitive, fair and equitable county commissioner districts and offer the following map which the public can view at spokaneprogress.org/community-redistricting-2/.

Too often, redistricting is ripe for abuse. We have seen “gerrymandering,” a method of distorting representative democracy by allowing officials to select their voters rather than voters to elect their officials. When done for purposes of racial discrimination or to ensure the dominance of one political party, gerrymandering runs counter to equal voting rights.

Everyone’s interests should be represented. For too long, Black people, Indigenous peoples and People of Color (BIPOC) have been mostly excluded from every part of government especially in Spokane County.

That is why we have been working in partnership with BIPOC-led organizations,

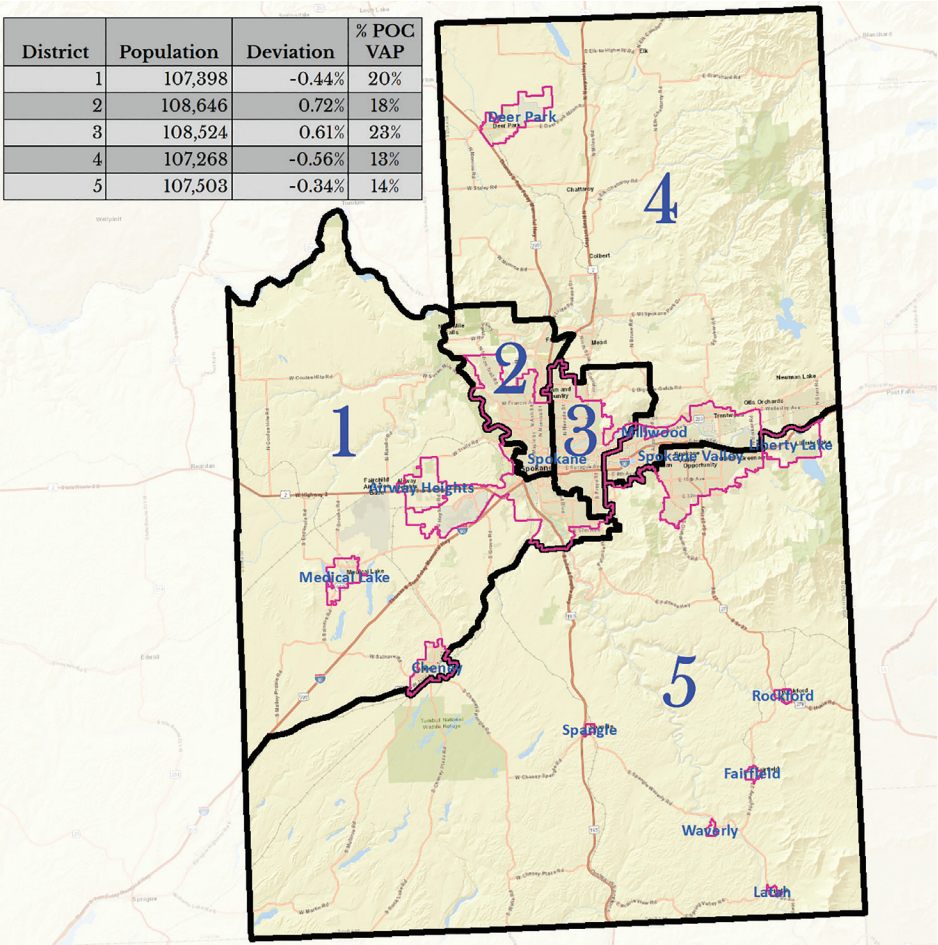
LGBTQ+ organizations and individuals, and other community-based organizations representing diverse constituents across race, place and class within Spokane to come together and develop this community districting proposal for the consideration of the committee.

No one can just sit back and wait. Our county commissioners hold so much influence over our daily lives and futures, making critical decisions about issues vital to all of us, including public safety, housing, climate change, labor rights and public health. This moment is critically urgent as we navigate the road to recovery from COVID-19.

Our coalition has proposed the following goals for creating five Spokane County Commissioner Districts that will elect their commissioners by district: 1) Increase the representation of BIPOC voters and 2) Create competitive and fair districts so elected officials are responsible to their constituents as we are growing from three to five districts. We all deserve accountable and responsive local leaders.

While considering equal population division, it is critical that we are intentional about considering these two goals if we are serious about equity and equality in creating fair districts. This isn’t about politics. It’s not about Democrats or Republicans. It’s about proportional representation.

In drawing district lines, we ask that the redistricting committee incorporate three principles: First, create truly equitable and competitive districts across the county. Second, use existing boundaries such as the natural boundary of the Spokane River and geographic boundaries including Division Street, North-South Corridor and



I-90. Last, connect communities of interest facing growth-related challenges at the edges of urban areas, like where our cities all interface with the Urban Growth Areas and neighboring unincorporated areas. The coalition recommends keeping Cheney, Medical Lake and Airway Heights in one district.

In addition, given the population distribution in the county, we support dividing the City of Spokane, where the majority of the county resides, among three out of the five districts. To ensure people have a more direct voice in their government, which was the goal of moving to election by district with five county commissioners, it is critical the districts are drawn this way.

Voicing our community’s needs and vision for the districts is critical so our communities are adequately represented. Now is the time for us to shape our future.

You, the reader, can help shape that future. Let the redistricting committee know that you support competitive, fair and equitable

County Commissioner Districts in Spokane County.

You can provide input at an upcoming public hearing **Oct. 7** at Northern Quest Resort & Casino and a public information meeting Thursday at Cheney Library. All meetings are 5:30-7:30 p.m.

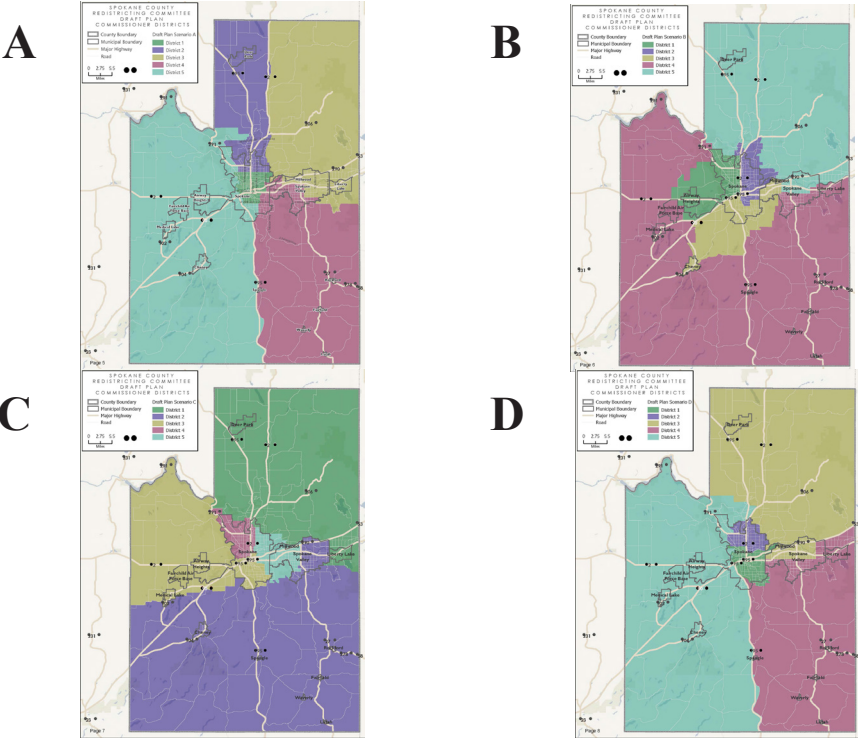
More information on location (with masking and COVID protocols) and virtual participation is available at the redistricting committee’s website: www.redistrictspokaneco.com.

Their website also provides an email portal as well as the email addresses for the committee members for your direct comment.

All comments must be received by Oct. 12. The time to act is now!

Ann Murphy, President, League of Women Voters/Spokane Area. Jac Archer, Program Coordinator, Spokane Community Against Racism. Tina Morrison, Secretary/Treasurer, Spokane Regional Labor Council. Spokesman Review Guest Editorial, Sept. 26, 2021

Spokane County Redistricting Committee Draft County Redistricting Maps



Make your voice heard! Visit RedistrictSpokaneCo.com

Spokane County Redistricting

WASHINGTON

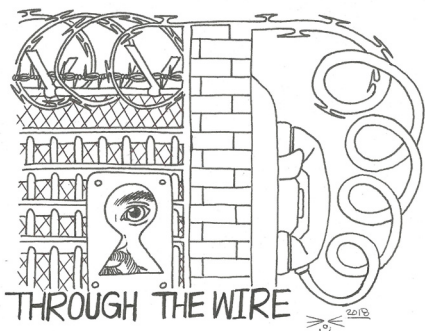
Get engaged with the process to move Spokane County from three to five commissioners in 2022

HELP SHAPE THE REDISTRICTING PLAN

Sept. 30 info session at Cheney Public Library
Oct. 7 public hearing at Northern Quest

Comments due Oct. 12

Learn more at RedistrictSpokaneCo.com



THE BLACK PRISONERS CAUCUS

Airway Heights

Do Young Black Males Have a Right to a Reasonable Bond? A Case Study: J. Fletcher & R. Fletcher

By Harry “Brocq” Whitman

Imagine the following vignette: two young brothers are arrested for the first time and charged with crimes. A day or two later they appear in court. A brief hearing is held. The prosecutor says the defendants are dangerous and will not appear in court. The court appointed attorney says they aren’t and they will. No regularly admissible evidence is received. The judge says, “I sentence you both too, oh, 3, 6, 12 months or more in the county jail.”

Now, this might seem like a mildly amusing sketch in a review lampooning our local bench and bar. Yet, this is actually occurring as we speak in the case of the Fletcher brothers and it occurs routinely and even casually in Spokane County courts, every day.

To be sure, the words the judge utters are different, but the effect is essentially the same. The judge said, “bail is set in the amount of \$675,000 for J. Fletcher and \$500,000 for R. Fletcher...” Which was more than their family could afford to post, and the brothers were taken to jail for months, or perhaps a year or more.

Bail set in an amount that cannot be posted is in effect summarily to impose a sentence, before trial, of a duration equal to the time until the trial, which is sometimes many months or a year or more. If the judge had handed down a sentence before the trial, there would have been universal outrage. But is there a difference, in any real sense, between denying bail altogether and setting bail too high for a defendant to post? And is there any real

difference between that and sentencing them? What is the difference, other than semantics?

These brothers are presumed innocent. They’ve had no trial. They have experienced nothing that could in seriousness be called due process of law. Their mother and father are both working parents struggling like all other parents to raise their children and make ends meet.

This happens regularly to those who are almost without exception relatively poor, predominantly people of color, and mostly young men. No one appears to be troubled by this. Indeed, indignation is aroused only when the court departs from this routine and releases someone else’s child or loved one before trial.

Bail is not a tool of law enforcement, though it is often used that way. It is not a form of punishment, though it often has that effect. It is not a privilege of the wealthy or the well behaved or the white, though in practice it often seems to be. Bail is a right, an absolute constitutional right, and any discussion that begins from any other premise is misguided and treacherous.

The Washington Constitution provides in Article 1, Section 14 “excessive bail shall not be required...” This is substantially identical to Amendment VIII of the United States Constitution, but the following language in the Washington Constitution’s Article 1, Section 20 is not: “all persons charged with crime shall be bailable by sufficient sureties, except for capital offenses when the proof is evident, or the presumption great.”

This is the crucial provision, and it has been astonishingly neglected by lawyers and judges in this county. It is straightforward enough or seems so. All persons are entitled to bail before conviction. The situation is essentially this, the law and theory in Washington by clear Constitutional command, by statute, by rule, and longstanding Supreme Court precedent is that all persons charged with crimes are bailable. The practice and reality here, however, are something quite different. Spokane County has a form of de facto and ad hoc preventive detention in which the law and the constitution are being ignored, and in being ignored, violated.

Prosecutors are the least to blame for this state of affairs. They are advocates and they represent the public at large in an adversarial process. It is to be expected, therefore, that they will routinely seek the highest bail and most restrictive forms of release. A prosecutor must not, of course, willfully deny or violate a defendant’s rights.

The defense bar bears a heavier responsibility, for it is they who, in this adversarial system, that must identify defendants’ rights and do all they can to vindicate them. As to the constitutional bail question, defense lawyers rarely mention either the Washington Constitution or the several important judicial decisions on the issue. This is a serious and widespread failure of advocacy.

Perhaps the explanation for the silence of the lawyers on this important issue is to be found where ultimate responsibility and therefore ultimate blame lies, that is, with judges. For

the duty to protect and enforce the constitution is of course ultimately with judges. What point can there be to the job, indeed what point can there be to a constitutional system, if judges do not first and always recognize when the constitution is implicated in a situation and then enforce that constitution according to their best information and understanding and with courage?

At the very least, and contrary to popular belief, the constitution creates a very strong presumption that every defendant should be released before trial. In other words, that bail should be set in an amount he or she can post. A very heavy burden rests (or should) with anyone who would seek to justify another result even in the most serious cases. Why should simple justice be denied any citizen, however fallen, degraded or guilty, he may be?

The chief end of government is the protection of the rights of all, the bad no less than the good. It does not require a constitutional scholar to perceive the immediate applicability to the Fletcher Brothers case. It is simply a matter of protecting the most basic rights of those who our society apparently thinks least deserves them, young black men...

Founded in 1972 by African American men incarcerated at the Washington State Reformatory in Monroe, the purpose of the Black Prisoners’ Caucus (BPC) is “to provide a medium for Black prisoners to work collectively to improve our family relationships, our facility, and the communities that we are absent from but still belong to.” For more information visit: blackprisonerscaucus.org or on Facebook @blackprisonerscaucus.



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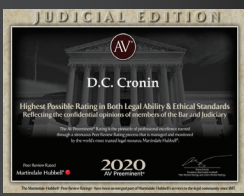
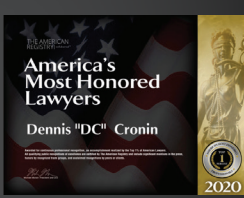




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Deen Centric

A Column from Spokane's Black Muslim Community

By Br. Talib

All Praises To Allah ~



In the above, let us come together and reason, with wisdom. Accommodation for each other’s forgetfulness, and the shortcomings of All of Our very Human Condition.

It is an honor and a pleasure to greet everyone who may read this article, in the universal Islamic greeting of “PEACE BE UPON YOU & YOUR FAMILY!”

So, when asked to come forward and present something for the possible edification of

us here in the Spokane area, I simply did not know what to write. My greatest challenges being that I am an African American, southern-bred Yankee/Convert to Islam, who was raised in the Watts/Compton area of Los Angeles, California. Thus, I am not versed in the social norms and graces of the area.

So how could I say anything pro-Islamic, to a non-Islamic reader who is FROM this area, which He/She may enjoy hearing??? As it turns out, the opening of the Friday-congregational prayer provides the answer:

(The translation states: “I, ALLAH (to WHOM all praises are due) created man from a single soul ~ And from him, his mate. And from them scattered many men and women. So fear ALLAH, through whom you demand your mutual rights. And show reverence for the wombs that begot you...”.

This declaration in the Mother Of The Book has a profound affect upon those who recognize it for WHAT IT IS! Indeed, we are advised in the Quran that “ALLAH is not loathe to use the similitude of things....”

In that Ayat, the children of Adam are informed about many things ~ the three that I believe to be most useful for this discussion are as follows;

Who the Human species IS and, exactly How we came to be. The third question it answers is that WE are truly One Race. In spite of the stereo-types provided to Us by the treasonous likes of Jefferson Davis and John C. Calhoun, Human Beings are of a single class.

The evidence which I believe fully supports this proposition can be readily found in the fact that We apparently do our greatest and most beneficial work when We share one mind in the common cause. Which is also made clear in the three major Western Religions, notwithstanding the fact that violence is used to clearly mark this paradox of the Human Condition.

After all, it is only a wicked and diseased heart that can construe such violence as a pretense for even greater violence???

Anything wrong that I have said is from My Own hands. Any truth that I have spoken is from ALLAH. May HE see fit to rectify My shortcomings and provide me with only my righteous deeds, ameen.

(Surah 49, Al-Hujurat, Ayat 13 as translated: “O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another.”)

Kenyan Delegation Visits Spokane

Continued from Page 1



Kenyan delegation meets with Black leaders in Spokane at the East Central Community Center on September 14, 2021. Colin Mulvany/Spokesman Review

Haynes discussed his role as the first Black president for the Spokane Public School Board. He explained how he created safe educational environments for students of color in Spokane’s 56 public schools.

“We’re arresting less than 100 students a year, and we’ve hit an all-time high for graduation rates for students of color three years in a row now,” Haynes said. “We created the Achievement Gap Intervention program to concentrate on students with low attendance, discipline issues and low GPAs.”

Ochieng found the way American public schools hire teachers and other staff interesting. He discussed the similarities between Haynes’ appointed role and how Kenyan schools have parent congregations similar to America’s PTO boards.

“Every primary school must have a board of arrangements and that’s for every school, but also a parents association, but they are separate,” Ochieng said. “The government actually elects teachers. The only public elections are for teacher unions.”

Sen. Pareno of Kenya’s Orange Democratic Movement explained the need for more women in leadership within the country’s parliament. The common issue of women not having the education or opportunity to fulfill those roles hinders female inclusion. In addition, Pareno brought up an issue within the Kenyan government that pertains to her own position. Since she received her role through appointment, it bans her from participating in elections.

“Some of the discriminations that women face are quite subtle and sometimes hidden in so many ways,” Pareno said. “The barriers for women in politics are there and women have a hill to climb to govern. Some of them are culture based with women marrying and having children.”

Councilwoman Wilkerson discussed her multi-communal role as a Black councilwoman, parent and grandparent in Spokane. She touched on the reasons behind her run for public office and what she saw as an urgent need for a person of color on the city council. When Kenyans asked why there weren’t more people of color trying to run, Wilkerson discussed the issues with taking up public roles.

“For people of color who don’t have access to those types of (financial) resources or connections, that’s a specific barrier,” Wilkerson said. “Then (race) and gender are a target. People say, ‘That’s not how I want to live my life under a spotlight 24/7.’”

Wilburn believes both parties’ desires for equality reflect the current needs for many people around the world. She was honored that the Kenyans chose Spokane and Whitworth for help, showcasing universal issues everyone is trying to solve.

“This is a rare opportunity, and Whitworth historically being a white school to host such dignitaries? I think it was very significant and worth it,” she said. “I’ve been so pleased that the Spokane community has rallied around to be involved. We have to promote mutual understanding and that’s something that I’ve been emphasizing the whole time we’ve been together. It’s not just for you, it’s for us to understand you. It’s for people to understand.”

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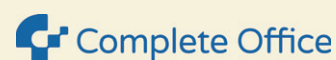


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LILLAN "SUG" VILLELLA

Center Director
Southeast Day Care Center

Sug Villella has played many roles during her lifetime. A daughter, a sister, a veteran, a wife, a mother, a grandmother, a great grandmother, a devout Christian, and a community leader. When Sug became the director of the historic Southeast Day Care Center in 1987, it was facing financial difficulties. She and the League of Women for Community Action Non – profit, credit the Lord for the donations and other financial resources, that kept the lights on and the daycare operational year after year. The daycare has now been operational for 53 years, thanks to her strength, empathy, compassion, dedication, and faith in the Lord. She has left her mark on the hearts of hundreds of children and families that she has nourished and supported throughout the Spokane community.

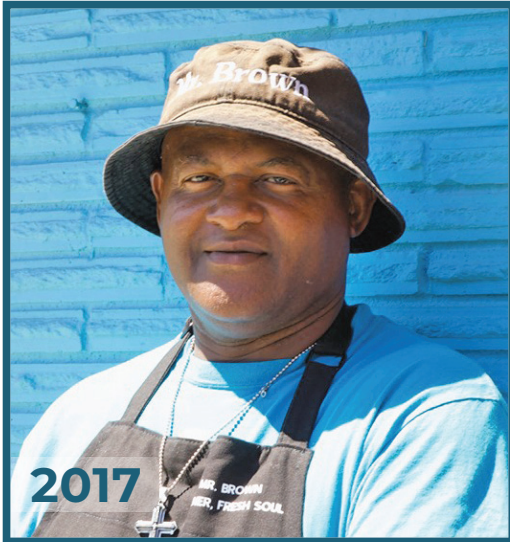


Debby Ryan

Community Assembly Representative
East Central Neighborhood Council

As the Community Assembly Representative and treasurer, Debby works closely with the East Central Neighborhood Council. A member of East Spokane Business Association. Former COPS volunteer and graduate of the Citizens Academy. Her professional career was spent in Public Health. Six of those years were at the East Central Community Center, with the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program. She serves on the boards of East Central Community Organization, East Spokane Kiwanis and the Washington State AARP Executive Committee.

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At Her Father’s Side: Public Health Expert Finds Herself Facing Real Life Crisis

Need for Stroke and Seizure Education in Black Community Underscored on World Heart Day

By Hazel Trice Edney

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Since she was a little girl, Thometta Cozart has looked up to her father as hard-working, humble and soft-spoken; yet a fun-loving man who is often the life of the party.

“He’s always been the center of our family for events, parties and celebrations,” she recalls. “And he gives to his detriment,” she said, describing his generosity and self-sacrificing nature.

Named partially after him, Thomas, and her mother, Loretta, Thometta is their only child. She recalls him working long hours on construction sites to install electric poles and lines. In her mind, he a pillar of strength and hard work.

But in May of 2019, their relationship changed forever when he suffered a hemorrhagic (bleeding) stroke. In a sense, they drew closer with the uncertain prognosis. Would he face long term paralysis? Would his speech be slurred? How much would this debilitating stroke affect the future of a man who has served as a surrogate father to so many?

Because of her job as multicultural outreach and health equity director of the Epilepsy Foundation, Thometta Cozart knew how to prepare for potentially the worst outcomes. With proper nutrition, intense physical therapy, cardiac care and medication, her father had a fighting chance to recover and live a good life. Because he decided to put his health first for a change, Mr. Cozart, now 67, is still progressing.

“My dad experienced some cognitive delays, slurred speech, and a weakening of his limbs, which caused him to need physical, speech and cognitive therapy afterwards. After the stroke, he retired from



his job and went on Disability. With therapy, he regained his strength to take care of himself and speak clearly. His memory has also improved. But he does need some things to be explained to him multiple times or slowly explained to him.”

A realist who often leans on her faith, she also knew that the kind of stroke that her father had suffered - the ischemic stroke

caused by blood clots- increased the chances that he might experience seizures in the future.

Seventeen months later, on Oct. 10, 2020, her fears were realized. Thomas Cozart, with no history of seizures or epilepsy, had a seizure while at home watching TV with a friend who noticed that his eyes had rolled to the back of his head, he had begun to con-

vulse and was in a state of confusion. His friend called an ambulance, and was able to recall the seizure first aid resources Thometta had offered her family.

Once again, her education and experience kicked in. Because she knew that strokes are a major contributor to how African Americans develop epilepsy, as her father’s chief medical advocate, she had to make sure that he had a neurologist, who was knowledgeable about seizures, on his medical team.

Although his doctors did not directly attribute the seizure to the stroke, the implication was clear, she said. “His doctors advised that he more than likely had a seizure as a result of his stroke.”

In addition, there were still issues with managing his blood pressure, and there was atrial fibrillation (Afib), she said, which is a quivering of the heart or irregular heartbeat, which may have also contributed to him having additional seizures if he hadn’t seen a neurologist right away.

He was given Keppra, an anti-epileptic medication known as a first line of defense against seizures. Largely because of that, she said, not only has he not had another seizure nearly a year later, but neither does he have epilepsy.

Thomas Cozart is fortunate that his daughter’s profession has empowered her with knowledge that has gone miles to help her with his care and health advocacy. But millions of people around the nation know little about the connection between seizures and stroke. And health disparities among African-Americans are sometimes due to a lack of knowledge about how to prevent a stroke; much less the seizures that might result from one.

Continued on Page 29

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SPOKANE SCHOOL BOARD - POSITION 3

Melissa Bedford

Daryl Geffken

1) What do you see as the top challenge(s) currently facing Spokane Public Schools and what qualifies you to address those challenges?

Two challenges I see currently facing SPS are (1) equitable access to education and (2) opportunities within education. Using the past year as an example, we saw inequity in access to distance/online learning as well as opportunities for students to engage with their education in ways that are most meaningful to them. As a former public school teacher, current teacher educator, and scholar in the field of Education, my experience qualifies me to help address these challenges.

2) Give two examples of how you have engaged with communities of color in the past, particularly Spokane’s African American community.

Throughout my teaching career I have engaged with communities of color, particularly the communities at my schools. Back in Nevada, I coordinated our school’s annual fall carnival and spring talent show where students and families were invited and welcomed to showcase their cultures. Since moving to Spokane in 2019, COVID has made it a bit challenging to engage with the community; however, I was very excited to attend the Juneteenth celebration at the MLK Center and have been able to start connecting more with various organizations, such as APIC-Spokane and SCAR.

3) What do you see as the primary need(s) of African American youth and youth of color in the Spokane school system and how can the School Board specifically address those needs?

I see our youth of color needing more district and community leaders advocating on their behalf. When students step into their schools, they shouldn’t have to worry about seeing symbols that are tied to racism, feel singled out in a classroom activity, or wonder if they will be reprimanded just because of their race. As I’ve connected with students of color in our community, I’ve heard their call for more support in ensuring safe learning environments. Ways to address these needs include teaching history in a culturally responsive manner along with civic education to teach our students how they can use their voice, providing district leaders, teachers, and staff with continued training and support on culturally responsive pedagogies, and regularly listening to our students of color.

4) Despite the best efforts of Spokane School District administrators, African American students continue to be disproportionately impacted by discipline rates in our local schools and are lagging behind in graduation rates. What does SPS need to do that it is not currently doing to address these issues?

We need to reimagine how to discipline students. A first step is to reframe our view of “discipline” and look at it as “educational opportunities”. We know an initial step along the “school to prison pipeline” is disciplinary action in P-12. Employing more preventative, supportive, and corrective services will help our students in the long run. Additionally, building home-school partnerships will further support our students. As educators, we know building rapport with our students can help reduce unwanted behaviors, so why not extend those relationships to our students’ communities and create an even bigger team to help our students succeed!

5) What concrete actions do you see yourself taking as a school board member to represent and engage parents of color?

To help represent and engage parents of color I will connect with members of those communities by doing continuous outreach throughout the year and actively listen to what they have to say. I believe home-school partnerships are



essential to support our students during their P-12 careers.

6) What does Spokane Schools need to do to recruit, hire and retain a more diverse workforce?

While recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce in schools is not a unique scenario to Spokane, I believe SPS needs to create, promote, and sustain a welcoming and inclusive work environment for not only its students, but its staff and teachers as well. Since Washington state took the steps to pay teachers a salary closer to what they deserve, we need to ensure our work environments are places and spaces where diverse teachers and staff feel welcomed and included!

7) What is your understanding of the school to prison pipeline?

The “school to prison pipeline” refers to the trend of students exiting the P-12 school system and entering the prison system. Students of color, students with disabilities, and students from low-income backgrounds -- these demographics often intersecting -- are disproportionately represented among the “school to prison pipeline” population. Much work has and continues to be done to combat this trend, including the increased implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices and wrap-around services to support behavior concerns, but we still have a ways to go.

8) Currently, there is controversy surrounding the idea that students are learning Critical Race Theory in public schools. What is Critical Race Theory and how do you think SPS needs to address the controversy?

First and foremost, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework -- not a curriculum -- so students are not learning CRT in public schools. At its most basic level, CRT is a way to look at how race has impacted, and continues to impact, society on a daily basis. There are folks who choose to not recognize the fact that race does influence our everyday lives, but sadly that is not the case -- race affects our lives. Every. Day. To address this controversy, I believe there should be more opportunities to educate the public on what CRT actually is in a way that is understandable for all.

9) Do you support a COVID-19 mask mandate for Spokane Public Schools? Why/why not?

Yes, I support a mask mandate for SPS because I believe we need to listen to medical experts and do all we can to ensure the safety of our teachers, staff, and most importantly, our students. As of September 2021, we are seeing a surge in COVID cases, specifically the Delta variant, among unvaccinated folks, which includes almost half of PK-12 students, since those under the age of 12 are currently ineligible to receive the vaccine. We should always be ensuring the safety of our students when they are in school and I believe a mask mandate is needed to ensure that safety during these times.



This candidate did not respond.

10) What is one thing that you would change about Spokane Public Schools that you feel would increase student achievement?

I would look into increasing more choice options for students to help increase student achievement. Education is not a “one-size-fits-all” system and we need to continue to work towards providing more options and opportunities for students to engage in their learning.

11) What is working well in Spokane Public Schools right now and how would you build on it?

What I see working well in SPS right now are the steps the current board has taken to promote equity in our district. The unanimous passing of the Equity Policy was a wonderful first step in ensuring we are creating diverse, equitable, and inclusive schools, and I look forward to being elected to the school board to continue this work!

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SPOKANE SCHOOL BOARD - POSITION 4

Kata Dean

Riley Smith

1) What do you see as the top challenge(s) currently facing Spokane Public Schools and what qualifies you to address those challenges?

The top challenges facing Spokane Public Schools are dealing with the many effects of COVID-19 on our children’s education and mental health. I am uniquely qualified because I have seen the impacts firsthand as a mother of 5, this is personal. Just as mothers (parents) understand with each of our children, our efforts will need to be individualized to get our children caught up academically and mentally.

2) Give two examples of how you have engaged with communities of color in the past, particularly Spokane’s African American community.

I have dedicated much of my life to volunteering in my community and I have a particular passion for working with youth. My community involvement has afforded me the opportunity to work with youth from all walks of life and racial backgrounds, including those in the African American community. My volunteer experience has included, but not limited to, coaching youth sports and regularly volunteering in the classroom. I gained insights as I served and deepened my understanding of our community.

3) What do you see as the primary need(s) of African American youth and youth of color in the Spokane school system and how can the School Board specifically address those needs?

I feel the primary need for African American youth and youth of color in the Spokane School system is the primary need for all children—a quality education. By keeping kids in school full time, 5 days a week, we can help them overcome the education gap left by pandemic schooling. All children deserve the opportunity to succeed and I’m committed to working with fellow board members, school administrations, and families to overcome racial disparities in education.

4) Despite the best efforts of Spokane School District administrators, African American students continue to be disproportionately impacted by discipline rates in our local schools and are lagging behind in graduation rates. What does SPS need to do that it is not currently doing to address these issues?

So often, behavioral issues and graduation rates are symptoms of a larger problem. We cannot continue to have disciplinary policies that don’t deal with the individual. We would do well to support these children in the areas they need by getting to know them personally, affording them opportunities to thrive, for example, by accurately accessing in-school therapist access to children.

5) What concrete actions do you see yourself taking as a school board member to represent and engage parents of color?

As a mother I find it imperative to support families. I will work to listen, communicate and collaborate with families, board members, staff, and students to facilitate a safe environment in all facets of learning.

6) What does Spokane Schools need to do to recruit, hire and retain a more diverse workforce?

Spokane Schools is dedicated to having a talented and diverse workforce. SPS will function optimally as we have diversity. Listening and collaborating will give us the best teachers to retain and hire for Spokane Schools.



7) What is your understanding of the school to prison pipeline?

It is a process to which students are pushed out of schools and into prisons because of disciplinary policies and practices within schools. I fully believe that Spokane Schools should be a place where children are set up for success, not failure, regardless of background.

8) Currently, there is controversy surrounding the idea that students are learning Critical Race Theory in public schools. What is Critical Race Theory and how do you think SPS needs to address the controversy?

I firmly believe that our children need to learn the history of our country, warts and all. Children need the truth about slavery, racism, and bigotry in America. We need a curriculum that gives them that. However, many parents are rightly concerned about certain tenets of CRT. With the many loose definitions and confusion around CRT, SPS needs to be specific and transparent with parents about what is being taught in the classroom.

9) Do you support a COVID-19 mask mandate for Spokane Public Schools? Why/why not?

Our children need to be in school full time, 5 days a week. To do so we need to mask up. I can get behind the masking so our children can be in school full time. I want all children and parents to feel safe in our public schools as we continue to follow accurate science and data.

10) What is one thing that you would change about Spokane Public Schools that you feel would increase student achievement?

Trust. Whether it be the new stadium, the boundary changes, the recent dog park closure on South Hill, families feel like their voices are not being heard. I want to work to establish trust between SPS and families. The elected members of the School Board work for the community. Trust will come as board members communicate on behalf of the stakeholders and work to enhance education.

11) What is working well in Spokane Public Schools right now and how would you build on it?

Our children are back in school full time. This supports learning, teaching, development and opportunity. I am excited the School District is working hard to provide a safe environment for our students to remain in school full time. We can keep up on safety measures and do all that we can to keep them in school.

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1) What do you see as the top challenge(s) currently facing Spokane Public Schools and what qualifies you to address those challenges?

There’s a crisis of mental health in our schools. A whopping 40% of Spokane youth recently told the WA Department of Health that they are depressed. How can we expect pre-teen and teen students to learn and develop in our classrooms when they’re experiencing depression and mental distress? We need broad investments in mental health resources now, not later, to help students address their challenges and unlock their true potential. Our students also aren’t seeing the many avenues to success after school that don’t necessarily involve college. I think most families agree that a student’s grades aren’t the sole determinants of their capabilities. We need to invest in creating more alternate career pathways through apprenticeships and trade schools for students who may not be as successful in a traditional classroom setting, or students who are unable to afford conventional colleges and universities.

2) Give two examples of how you have engaged with communities of color in the past, particularly Spokane’s African American community.

Earlier this year I worked with local vaccination clinics to help inoculate African-American communities and communities of color across Spokane. I worked closely with Councilwoman Wilkerson, my mentor and boss, to help put on the Juneteenth event this summer. And I’ve started collaborating with Spokane Community Against Racism to help combat the right-wing’s fear mongering over “Critical Race Theory” and promote progressive race education in our schools.

3) What do you see as the primary need(s) of African American youth and youth of color in the Spokane school system and how can the School Board specifically address those needs?

The crisis of mental health is even more acute for African American students and students of color in our system. We should pursue targeted programs to ensure students that have been historically neglected know what resources are available. And we should make sure non-English language resources are available as well. African American students have also seen race education politicized for personal gain. We should teach an honest account of American history that discusses our sins while emphasizing the incredible perseverance and contributions that African Americans have made and continue to make. Our curriculum should empower students of color.

4) Despite the best efforts of Spokane School District administrators, African American students continue to be disproportionately impacted by discipline rates in our local schools and are lagging behind in graduation rates. What does SPS need to do that it is not currently doing to address these issues?

The racially-discriminatory school discipline system is another cog in our horrific school-to-prison pipeline that has seen grotesque incarceration rates in our African American communities and communities of color. We cannot wait to reform our system. Instead of sending students who are acting out to the principal’s office, for example, let’s send them to a mental health counselor to address the underlying reasons why they’re acting out. Comprehensive teacher training and School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SPBISP) will also help reform the system to bring students up instead of tear them down.

5) What concrete actions do you see yourself taking as a school board member to represent and engage parents of color?

For too long, parents of color haven’t enjoyed the same influence as their white counterparts in our children’s education. The onus is on the School Board to engage with these parents — we should meet them where they’re at to listen to their needs and concerns and invite them into the Board’s decision-making process. I will run routine town halls at community centers in communities of color and record live Zoom forums



so everyone can engage.

6) What does Spokane Schools need to do to recruit, hire and retain a more diverse workforce?

A more diverse school staff can better engage our student body and build stronger school community. We should reach out to communities of color specifically with job opportunities, and explore incentives to build a diverse workforce, such as providing spousal job opportunities, job training and career development, and other avenues to truly empower diverse staff.

7) What is your understanding of the school to prison pipeline?

Year after year, day after day, students’ futures are jeopardized by the school-to-prison pipeline. It’s truly a crisis. Empirical research has demonstrated the racial gap in discipline rates, which feeds into achievement and graduation gaps, and consequently reduces career and job opportunities post-school.

8) Currently, there is controversy surrounding the idea that students are learning Critical Race Theory in public schools. What is Critical Race Theory and how do you think SPS needs to address the controversy?

Our schools are not teaching “critical race theory,” a legal framework found in graduate-level courses. I find it rather sad and unfortunate that some candidates like my opponent are resorting to fear tactics to raise money and get elected. I believe SPS should continue to teach about racism and provide students the information they need to think for themselves.

9) Do you support a COVID-19 mask mandate for Spokane Public Schools? Why/why not?

Yes, I support mask requirements in our schools. I’m not an immunologist or expert on COVID-19 transmission, but I will follow the science and the regional health department to ensure we are keeping our kids and teachers safe while continuing to prioritize in-person education.

10) What is one thing that you would change about Spokane Public Schools that you feel would increase student achievement?

Students can learn and develop better if they can address the social and emotional challenges that are holding them back. We need staffing and resources dedicated to providing mental healthcare in our schools.

11) What is working well in Spokane Public Schools right now and how would you build on it?

The School Board was to pass the equity resolution to ensure we’re giving all students the opportunity to succeed. Now, it’s time to put policy behind the words and follow through. I will work with other Directors to find out how we can close the achievement gap and engage parents in their children’s education.

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Gentrification and the End of Black Communities

By Margaret Kimberley
BAR senior columnist

Reprinted from Black Agenda Report
(blackagendareport.com)

Brooklyn, New York is the epicenter of gentrification, the displacement of Black people from cities in this country. Recently released census data shows that neighborhoods like Bedford-Stuyvesant, which was nearly all Black for decades, no longer has a Black majority. Bedford-Stuyvesant’s white population rose by 30,000 from 2010 to 2020 while its Black population decreased by 22,000.

The devastation has been wrought by finance capital, which has once again upended life for Black people. Money was taken out of the cities in the 1950s and 1960s, creating what was known as “white flight” to the suburbs. Now the same forces have reversed themselves and are putting money back into the cities, and Black people are the losers. Neighborhoods that were once afterthoughts and the butt of jokes are suddenly declared “hot” if real estate speculators target them for change.

The how-to of moving Black people out of a community isn’t difficult at all. The median price for a home anywhere in Brooklyn is now \$900,000. A well-kept brownstone in Crown Heights or Bedford-Stuyvesant can now fetch seven figures. Home purchases which once required living wage employment and thrifty habits now require a small fortune that Black people rarely have.

What is now called gentrification is the latest salvo in a long history of making the Black population disposable and dependent upon the whims of racist reaction and capitalism. Urban renewal, known as



Negro removal, destroyed entire communities. Financial institutions used red lining to determine where a mortgage could be obtained. Often these rules were used to keep any Black person out, regardless of financial circumstances.

Those circumstances are usually tenuous. Living wage jobs are no longer plentiful, as the same finance capital interests sent manufacturing jobs to other countries, leaving nothing but low wage jobs or even so-called gig work, which guarantees nothing but the precarity that the system demands.

Gentrification even impacts the criminal justice system. An increasingly white jury pool in Brooklyn means that defendants, mostly people of color, are more likely to be convicted. Civil cases are less likely to be decided in favor of plaintiffs and awards are smaller as the borough’s income and education levels rise.

Generations of culture are being lost, families are dispersed, and even home sellers who can make the proverbial killing are saddened that their good fortune only accelerates the process of displacement. Everyone laments the process but they are silenced because their losses are rarely acknowledged.

We are told that people have the right to live where they want. But that right exists only for those with access to lots of money. The average Black working person depends on a salary. Even those with higher incomes don’t have access to cash or to a family legacy of wealth, and they are automatically out of the running.

The problem of course is capitalism itself. Black people shouldn’t be blamed for not pulling themselves up by imaginary bootstraps when the paths to success are closed to them by discrimination and when the

rules they were told to follow are suddenly changed. Even a college education is no longer a ticket to success. Student loan debt is a burden to people who believed they were helping themselves when they took on what was once a key to success. Black college graduates now start off their lives deeply indebted while also relying on incomes that are less than those of their white counterparts. They are worse off than their parents’ generation and they will be left out of home ownership and other opportunities they thought they would have.

Of course Brooklyn and Harlem are less and less Black. Washington DC, once known as Chocolate City, is now more of a cafe au lait city, as its Black population is no longer in the majority. The political system offers no solutions. Real estate interests are big political donors, and they decide who will and who will not be in office. Politicians won’t bite the hands that feed them and people who expected to get what they were promised if they played by the rules are left out of contention.

At the very least we can name and shame the bankers and the developers and the craven politicians. They are causing the deaths of communities and the destruction of a people. There should also be no hesitation in naming racism as the culprit of Black peoples problems. Capitalism and racism make one gigantic, two-headed monster behaving as it always has. No one should shrink from pointing out that fact.

Margaret Kimberley’s Freedom Rider column appears weekly in BAR, and is widely reprinted elsewhere. She is the author of Prejudential: Black America and the Presidents. Her work can also be found at patreon.com/margaretkimberley. Ms. Kimberley can be reached via e-Mail at Margaret.Kimberley(at)BlackAgendaReport.com.





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Entrepreneur Uses Coffee to Teach Black History



By Tai Saint-Louis
(Source: blackenterprise.com)

When Catrice Hixon decided to open a coffee shop in the Southern Alabama town of Opelika, she knew she wanted it to serve three purposes: to educate, inspire and unite.

The education and inspiration are built into Melanin Café’s offering of coffee, smoothies and pastries. Each of the 38 beverages on the menu is named after a prominent historical Black figure. But not the ones we’ve all been reading and hearing about since childhood.

There’s the “Big Bank,” named for businessman and investor Bernard S. Garrett; the “Sci-Fi,” paying homage to Octavia Butler; “The Resistance,” in honor of Geronimo Pratt, and many more.

“I wanted to bring forward people we don’t really know about, people like inventors, scientists and doctors,” Hixon tells US News & World Report.

“I just want to bring all of those people to the forefront so we know who they are and what they contributed to this country. It’ll inspire us to do things because representation matters. If we’re not seeing people that look like us do different things, we’re not really inspired.”

Beyond inspiration, Hixon also shares the not-always-pretty history of Alabama: one item on the menu is a green smoothie called Kowaliga, named after a long-gone African-American community. The town of Kowaliga, AL, which was home to the first Black-owned railroad, was flooded in 1926 when the Martin Dam was built. It now lies at the bottom of Lake Martin.

The unity she hopes to bring to Opelika is built into the space and the staff. It’s easy for her to create a sense of family for guests because Melanin Café is fully family operated. Each day, Hixon works alongside her husband Jakyra and her sister Crystal Slaughter.

Hixon says she wants the café to feel “inviting and relaxing,” to the extent that she doesn’t even care if visitors buy anything. You can even learn the meaning behind Melanin Cafe beverages without visiting the shop, by checking out the Culture Corner on the shop’s website.

“I just want this place to educate people, inspire people and bring everyone together,” she explains. “If we learn about each other, we can coexist with each other.”

For more information visit: <https://melanin-cafelc.com>.

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COVID Worsen’s America’s Racial Wealth Gap

Blacks Own 22 Cents for Every Dollar Held by Whites

By Charlene Crowell

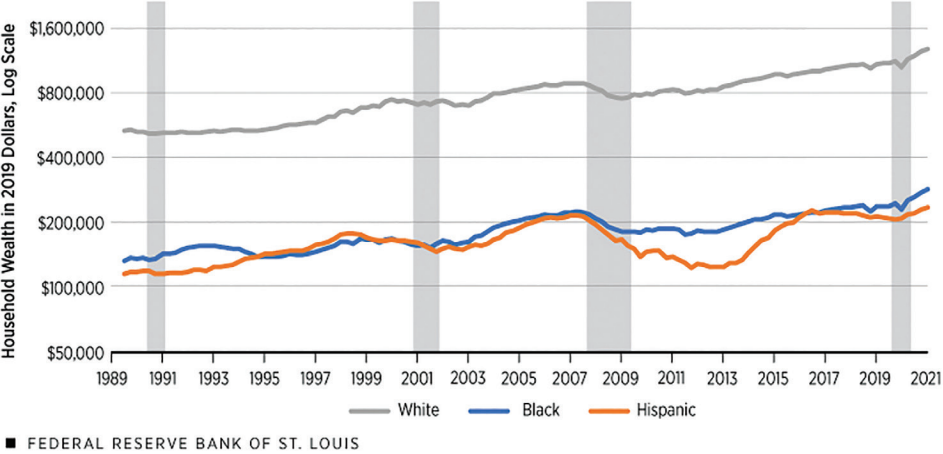
(TriceEdneyWire.com) - As the global pandemic continues to take lives and infect multiple generations, virtually every dimension of life is challenged. And people with the fewest financial resources before COVID-19 are being challenged more than ever before.

It is both a challenge and an opportunity for leadership in the Biden Administration, Congress, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, along with the private sector address to effect policies and practices that reverse the nation’s still-growing racial wealth gap. Tried and true wealth-building tools like targeted homeownership and expanded small business investments together would bring sustainable and meaningful changes to those who historically have been financially marginalized.

In an effort to better understand and solve the dual sagas wrought from centuries of racial discrimination and COVID, major universities, government agencies, public policy institutes and corporations are releasing new research that analyzes the pandemic’s added challenges that exacerbate historical racial inequities.

For example, from January through March of this year, Blacks on average had 22 cents for every dollar of white family wealth, according to the St. Louis Federal Reserve’s Institute for Economic Equity These substantial gaps have remained largely unchanged since 1989 to the present, according to the Institute.

Average Real Wealth by Race and Ethnicity



The gap’s disparities are also reflected in findings from research conducted by Harvard University. This esteemed Ivy League institution drew a key distinction between America’s income and wealth inequalities.

“Income is unequal, but wealth is even more unequal,” said Alexandra Killewald, professor of sociology at Harvard, who studies inequality in the contemporary U.S.

“You can think of income as water flowing into your bathtub, whereas wealth is like the water that’s sitting in the bathtub,” she said. “If you have wealth, it can protect you if you lose your job or your house. Wealth is distinctive because it can be used as a cushion, and it can be directly passed down across generations,” providing families more choices and greater opportunity in the present and the future... white Americans are benefiting from legacies of advan-

tage...The typical white American family has roughly 10 times as much wealth as the typical African American family and the typical Latino family.”

While the issues raised by the Federal Reserve and Harvard may sound like variations on an old theme, a 150-year-old global financial firm, Goldman Sachs, urges targeted and sustained investment by both the public and private sectors to erase America’s racial wealth gap. While the report focuses on Black women, its projected outcomes would benefit Black men as well.

“If the improvements benefit Black women and men alike, we estimate larger increases in U.S. employment of 1.7 million jobs and in U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2.1%, which corresponds to \$450 billion per year.”

Titled, Black Womenomics: Investing in the Underinvested, the March 2021 report calls for access to capital, education, equitable earnings, health care, and housing to lay the groundwork to reverse historical disadvantages, while creating financial independence and personal wealth.

Most importantly, the report calls for the participation of Blacks – and especially Black women -- to shape their own futures.

“[A]ny efforts to effectively address the issues can only be successful if Black women are actively engaged in formulating the strategies and framing the outcomes. Moreover, addressing discrimination and bias will be fundamental to real and sustainable progress...The large wealth gap faced by single Black women is particularly important because Black women are more and increasingly likely to be single and breadwinner mothers...Among Black mothers, more than 80% are breadwinners compared to 50% of white mothers,” states the report.

How existing financial disparities leave Black women more financially vulnerable is found in the report’s data points:

- Black women face a 90% wealth gap;
- The wage gap of Black women widens through their whole work-life, and especially rapidly between ages 20 and 35;
- Black women are five times more likely than white men to rely on expensive payday loans;
- Black women are nearly three times more likely to forego prescription medicine, and also much more likely than white men not to see a doctor because they cannot afford it; and

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 OneUnited Bank.



Simply stated, Critical Race Theory, or CRT, explains how the collective struggles of Black Americans are the result of systemic racism and not just “a few bad apples” or well-publicized racist incidents.

As the largest Black owned bank in America, OneUnited Bank applauds CRT scholars who are interrogating the role that systemic racism plays on the everyday lives of the Black community, including its impact on the racial wealth gap.

CRT recognizes that racism is not a bygone relic of the past. Instead, it explains how the legacy of slavery, segregation, and the imposition of second-class citizenship on Black Americans and other people of color continue to permeate the social fabric of America.

CRT is a body of legal scholarship and an academic movement of US civil-rights scholars and activists who critically examine the intersection of race and U.S. law.

CRT originated in the mid-1970s in the writings of several American legal scholars, including Derrick Bell and Kimberlé Crenshaw. It draws from thinkers such as Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and W. E. B. DuBois, as well as the Black Power movement. The first formal meeting centered on critical race theory was the 1989 “New Developments in Critical Race Theory” workshop organized by Kimberlé Crenshaw which effectively created the field.

CRT emphasizes that formally color-blind laws can still have racially discriminatory outcomes and that race can intersect with other identities, such as gender and class, to produce complex combinations of power and advantage for white Americans, while denying power and advantages to Black Americans.

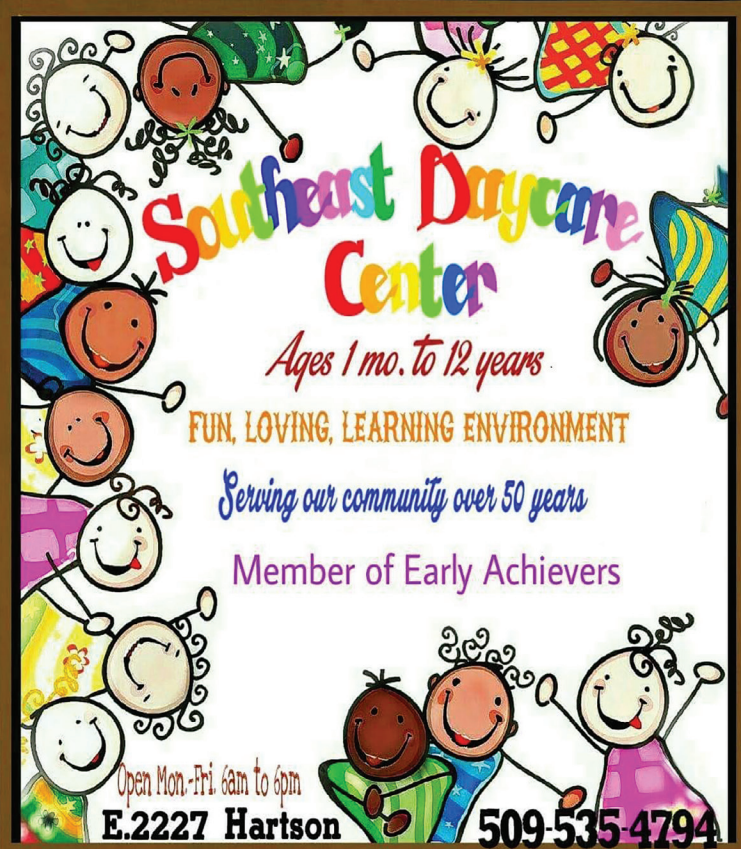
A few key tenets of Critical Race Theory include:

Continued on Page 27

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COVID and the Racial Wealth Gap

Continued from Page 24

The median single Black woman does not own a home, and single Black women are 24 times less likely than single white men to own a business.

Additionally, the nation’s shortage of affordable housing translates into 85% of Black women with families facing housing costs ranging from more than 30% to 50% of their incomes. Once the monthly rent is paid, these housing-burdened households have little left to cover utilities, food, childcare or other household needs.

Even Black families earning a median income will need 14 years just to save a 5% home down payment, according to a recent analysis by the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL).

A legacy of historically modest incomes and little inter-generational wealth available to be passed down by families leaves most Black Americans without the comparable financial advantages enjoyed by other races and ethnicities.

These and other circumstances lead many women – especially women of color -- to turn to high-cost loans of only a few hundred dollars. Although the typical payday loan of \$350 is marketed as a short-term fix to an unexpected expense, the reality for many with modest incomes is that the high-cost loan – which can come with interest as high as 400% -- becomes yet another long-term financial burden that worsens financial strains with every renewal.

“Predatory, high-interest lenders pull people down into financial quicksand, making them more likely to experience a range of harms, such as losing their bank account, defaulting on their bills, losing their car, and declaring bankruptcy. It is low-income consumers, and disproportionately communities of color – whom the lenders target – that are being harmed,” said Ashley Harrington, of CRL in testimony this summer before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee.

The harms of wealth inequality also extend to the broader U.S. economy, according to the Goldman Sachs report. In its view, expanding

opportunities for Black women who are often on the bottom rung of the economic ladder can create a pathway to individual and national prosperity. “Overcoming these adverse economic trends would make for not only a fairer, but also a richer society. We estimate that confronting the earnings gap for Black women could create 1.2-1.7 million U.S. jobs and raise the level of annual U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) by 1.4-2.1% each year, or \$300-450 billion in current dollars.”

The sum of these findings underscores the frustration felt by much of Black America. The Civil War ended slavery and promised the emancipated 40 acres and a mule. The civil rights laws of the 1960s promised to eliminate discrimination in voting, housing, and public accommodations. Next, the affirmative action programs of the 1970s promised equal opportunity employment in fields that had been previously barred to Blacks and other people of color.

It is time for this nation to make good on its age-old promises. Creating neighborhoods of opportunity from poverty pockets would strengthen cities and suburbs alike. If corporate leadership would join with the Administration and Congress to ensure that Black America and other people of color share in the nation’s prosperity, everyone would be better off.

No person and certainly no community will ever beg its way out of poverty. But down payment assistance for first generation, mortgage-ready homebuyers would build family wealth. Similarly, creating an equity investment fund targeted to struggling small Black businesses would preserve neighborhood opportunities, including more permanent jobs. .

In the timeless words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “All we say to America is, ‘Be true to what you said on paper.’”

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org.

THE THREE QUEENS

By Stephen Pitters

Three queens not seen before
graced my pallet with quiet charm.
Their daily call, sways the appetite,
with the ring of a loud alarm.
They were like the wise men
whose culinary gifts announces
their visit.
The surrounding wilderness bristles.

Horses in the bush neighed.
They too knew
the sweet scent the ladies blew.

Their radiance traveled at a fast clip
like a ship rocking on the mounting
waves to and fro
daring the sailor to right its course.
Would land be reached or
Davy Jones Locker
swallow its attendant?

The delightful fragrance that fanned
about the room
was not met with dubious
consternation.
Uncertainty felt the need
to capture the role communication
might yield.
In the balance, one sentence,
one unquestioned look
proved the liberator on the plate
with the tasty food we ate.

Their open hearted good-
will glances
rebounded each time eyes wondered
left to right, high and low.

The pot was stirred, disturbed by
friendliness.
The aura which commanded
peaceful nuances
set the tone for the good tidings
which encircled the four walls
of the grand eating hall.

The three, auburn, black, and blonde,
haired maidens,

who
constantly
beamed,
ruled
their do-
main with
great care,
efficiency
and
steady
hands.
Within
their habi-
tation

Life, was a privilege to be savored,
one not indifferently squandered.

The combination of interior satiation
and visual uplift was a gracious
reward
supplanted only by the close of
nightfall.

Blessed are we
that the dawn of a new day
would repeat our stay once more
in their present and future attending.

Thought it be shortened,
the exchange was stamped in emo-
tional gold,
to be restored when the mind travels
back in time
to gather the faces of the three queens
seen here again in these paltry
rhymes,
ringing their morning, noon, and
evening iron chime.

How sad to leave them behind,
in the land of “colored red” (Colo-
rado).

“The Three Queens” is in Stephen Pitters’ new book #10 “Restoration” which is the third in a four part series about the virus. The poem has also been made into a song by singer/songwriter Frankie Ghee and can be heard as a free download on Stephen’s Soundcloud.com page under poet Stephen Pitters.



Nominate A Woman Of Achievement

Categories: Arts and Culture, Business and Industry, Carl Maxey Racial and Social Justice, Community Enhancement, Education, Government and Public Service, Science, Technology, and Environment, Young Woman of Achievement

Deadline: Nov 1, 2021 | ywcaspokane.org/woa | 789-9305

YWCA Spokane’s 2022 Woman of Achievement awards (Save The Date For March 24, 2022) provides an opportunity to honor and celebrate the outstanding contributions of women in our community who demonstrate leadership through their work or service to the community. Selected honorees embody the mission of YWCA Spokane by giving generously of themselves to make Spokane a better place for all. **Submit your nominations today!**

What is Critical Race Theory?

Continued from Page 25

· Race is not biologically real but a social construct. Science refutes the idea of biological racial differences. In other words, whiteness is a made-up construct.

· Racism is a pervasive feature of society, embedded within systems and institutions, like the legal and banking system, that replicate racial inequality.

· Systemic racism bears primary responsibility for reproducing racial inequality.

· Claims of meritocracy or “color-blindness” are false. Racism is often cloaked in terminology such as “mainstream,” “normal,” or “traditional” values or “neutral” policies, principles, or practices.

· Racist incidents or domestic terrorism are not aberrations or about a few “bad apples”, but instead are the continuous result of structural and systemic racism, which instills fear in the Black community.

· People’s everyday lives and the lived experiences of Black Americans, including those preserved through storytelling, must inform how systems need to be reconstructed.

In summary, race trumps wealth or systemic racism impedes Black Americans from reaching their full potential.

As we encourage our community to focus on OneTransaction to close the wealth gap for their family, we must also focus on public policy changes that are needed to address systemic racism.

To view One United Bank’s Race Trumps Wealth YouTube Series visit: <https://www.youtube.com/user/oneunitedbank>.

To view videos from the One Transaction Financial Conference visit: <https://www.oneunited.com/onetransaction-2021/>

For information about One United Bank visit: <https://www.oneunited.com/>



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To request CDF, you must be:

- A currently unaccompanied youth/young adult (age 12-24), OR at risk of becoming unaccompanied
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For More Info, Contact:

Julius Henrichsen,
Youth Homelessness Community Coordinator
jhenrichsen@voaspokane.org



Have You Gotten Your Child Tax Credit?

Financial Support Available to Families: Must Sign Up by October 15

By Denisse Guerrero
Field Organizer, WA Community Alliance

We all know that families have been some of the hardest-hit during COVID: millions of Americans were already struggling under the financial weight of raising children, when the economic disruption of the pandemic pushed many to the brink of economic catastrophe.

We are one of the only developed countries without an established child allowance (in which families receive direct payments from the government to support their children).

Sign up by October 15!

If you don't normally file taxes, you still have time to get financial support through the Child Tax Credit! This money does not have to be repaid.



You can receive up to:

- \$3000** Per child over 6
- \$3600** Per child under 6

Sign up by October 15 at
GetCTC.org

Child poverty has been made worse by the pandemic: but it has been a crisis in the US for a long time. That's why the expansion of the Child Tax Credit in July was such a big deal. Families are receiving thousands of dollars in direct support when it's needed most. This new law is set to reduce child poverty in the United States by as much as 40%.

Already, this has been a huge help to millions of families around the county - but many more families don't even know that they qualify for it, and are about to miss their chance.

Here's what happened: when Congress passed the American Rescue Plan earlier this year, they increased the amount of money families receive through the Child Tax Credit (CTC), and made it a lot easier to get.

Now, most families can get up to \$3000 per child (and up to \$3600 for children under 6). Instead of waiting for their tax return next spring, families can start getting this money through direct payments **now**. This isn't a loan: it doesn't have to be paid back and it won't be taxed.

Most families have already started getting these payments. Anyone who filed taxes in the last two years will receive the payments automatically. But the Child Tax Credit (CTC) is

Financial support for your family is here

Sign up now for the Child Tax Credit!

- Almost all families are eligible
- It's not a loan - you don't have to pay it back
- If you file taxes, you'll receive it automatically
- Even if you haven't filed taxes, you can still claim the money - but you have to sign up by October 15!



You can receive up to:

- \$3000** Per child over 6
- \$3600** Per child under 6

Sign up by October 15 at
GetCTC.org

also available for families that make little or no income, and don't typically file taxes.

Non-filers just need to fill out a short form at **GetCTC.org** to sign up to get their CTC benefit.

However, the deadline for people who don't file taxes to sign up is October 15. So if your family hasn't gotten your CTC payments yet, don't wait!

Visit: **GetCTC.org** before October 15.

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Haitians at Mexican Border

Continued from Page 1

The scenes were reminiscent of illustrations from the early 1800s during slavery in the U.S. when runaway slaves were tracked down by bounty hunters and overseers on horseback. When the footage was shown widely on social media the outrage was quick to follow.

Haiti has recently experienced an earthquake and a presidential assassination. Many are asking why Haitians at the Mexican border aren't eligible for political asylum.

On September 21, the Vice President responded to the controversy.

"What I saw depicting and treating human beings the way they were was horrible. I fully support what is happening right now which is a thorough investigation into what is going on here — but human beings should never be treated that way," said Vice President Harris during a trip to Maryland.

"These are human rights abuses, plain and simple. Cruel, inhumane, and a violation of domestic and international law," Rep. Ilan Omar (D-Minn.) tweeted. "There needs to be a course correction and the issuance of a clear directive on how to humanely process asylum seekers at our border."



Though Mayorkas appeared before a Senate committee last week, he is likely to have to answer many more questions in the weeks to come.

Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is a political analyst who appears regularly on #RolandMartinUnfiltered. She may be contacted at LBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at @LVBurke

At Her Fathers' Side

Continued from Page 19

"I do this work every day - talking about inequities and injustices in the health care system," she said. Studying notes and charts, she has learned much. "But, this situation has caused me to have to live it," she said. "There is a bias in the health care system where if you don't have people advocating and holding people accountable, the patient may not get adequate care." This is due to various factors, she points out. "But it's often because of race and implicit bias of some healthcare providers."

On World Heart Day, September 29, 2021, the statistics remain clear:

"Nearly one in 10 stroke survivors will experience a seizure, which is why the Epilepsy Foundation and the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, have teamed up to educate stroke caregivers and their loved ones about how to recognize both stroke and seizures as medical emergencies and what to do in these situations," says a press release announcing the first-time collaboration. A Seizure Recognition and First Aid Certification training on World Heart Day will occur as part of the collaboration between the Foundation and Association.

"Epilepsy and strokes are two significant public health issues that have serious risks, yet lack awareness," said Brandy Fureman, Ph.D., chief outcomes officer, Epilepsy Foundation. "Our collaboration with the American Stroke Association is important to provide stroke survivors, particularly older adults, with the tools they need to improve their quality of life, as well as educate their loved ones on Seizure First Aid."

Like most health disparities, racial and ethnic individuals living with epilepsy may experience poorer health outcomes. A survey by the National Health Interview Survey (2017) and National Survey for Children's Health (2018-2019), concludes that more than 578,000 Black Americans have been diagnosed as having epilepsy or a seizure disorder. The Epilepsy Foundation

estimates that over 25,000 Black Americans are diagnosed with seizure disorders or epilepsy each year. As published in the Epilepsia Journal, stroke is the cause for around 11 percent of adult epilepsy cases, and nearly 45 percent of new epilepsy cases are in those 60 and older. Stroke is one of the leading causes of epilepsy in adults.

To remember the warning signs of a stroke, remember F.A.S.T. That stands for Face drooping. Arm weakness. Speech difficulty. Time to call 911.

Would you know what to do if your loved one had a post-stroke seizure? Remember: Stay.Safe.Side. STAY with the person and start timing the seizure. Keep the person SAFE. Turn the person onto their SIDE if they are not awake and aware.

For African-Americans, there are often specific ways to prevent stroke and heart disease. For example, Mr. Cozart made lifestyle changes that have improved his heart and life astronomically.

"My father no longer drinks alcohol, he reduced his consumption of pork and high sodium foods, and his retirement helped him to not work as hard or be as stressed," Thometta says. "However, ultimately, my dad needed an ablation procedure to address his Afib heart condition, which he finally received on March 30, 2021."

She adds, "All African-Americans who have a history of strokes in their family and/or a stroke survivor should be advised about seizures immediately after their stroke and should be offered Seizure First Aid Training, along with their families and caregivers."

Finally, "We are making sure that he has routine and preventative care which a lot of Black men don't do."

Otherwise, "He's doing really good now," says Thometta. "He has been weaned off of home health care. Our family realizes his situation definitely could have been another way."

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OUR VOICES

Who Gets Flexibility?

By Julianne Malveaux

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - I had not planned to have a policy conversation when I boarded my connecting flight from Detroit to DC. But the young white woman, totally professionally dressed, seemed to want my ear. She was coming to Washington to do “advocacy,” she said, around workplace flexibility and “reimagining work.” I thought girlie just wanted to hear herself talk, so my responses were minimal – um hum, okay. But I was more interested when she wove her policy thoughts into her own story – a young mom who COVID challenged to ensure that her children didn’t fall behind.

The exchange sustained us for the scant hour or so of the flight, but I went another perspective as we began to exit the plane. We were in row 15, just five rows out of first class. As we left, I observed several women, mostly Black and Latina, and one African man, frantically cleaning the plane’s first-class cabin. It was clear that they were also waiting for the rest of us to get off the plane so they could go to the back and continue to clean.

The airlines promise cleaning between flights, and these folks were doing their

jobs. Watching them, though, made it clear that the flexibility my seatmate was advocating for is not flexibility that trickles down. Those who write, talk, think, and compute for a living have the privilege of flexibility. Those of us who clean, sit behind a cash register, pick up garbage, or more, don’t have the same benefit of flexibility. Too much of the policy conversation centers around providing flexibility for some. What accommodations are we prepared to offer others?

For example, at hotels these days, guests are told that we should sleep on the same sheets and use the same towels for days, only asking for housekeeping services when we need them. But when we do not have housekeeping services, there’s a sister who has less work. She can’t clean our rooms from home, so her work week, once 40 hours or more, is now shortened. Her paycheck is smaller. Her benefits may disappear. Where is flexibility for her?

Our policy lens is distorted by our privilege and class situation. Desk jockeys advocate for desk jockeys, folks who can easily do their jobs from their desk or the office. Folks who can’t desk jock or advocate are left on their own. Too many of those who don’t have the

luxury of flexible work are Black or Brown. A conversation about flexible work reeks of privilege and sidelines too many in the labor force.

According to the Brookings Institute’s Dr. Kristin Broady, about 13.4 percent of the workforce teleworked. Nearly a third of Asian American workers teleworked, compared to 12.4 percent of whites, 11.2 percent of Black people, and a scant 7.9 percent of Chicano/Latinx people. I’m not casting any shade on Asian American workers. Still, I’m wondering about other workers and how we reimagine work for those who aren’t sitting at the policy table.

Simple arithmetic suggests that when we pay people more, we get more effort, that many won’t mind the three-day workweek if they can be paid for it. Some of the workers, most of whom are women, won’t mind spending more time engaged in their children’s education, perhaps volunteering at their schools. Others might like the time to upgrade their skills, possibly enrolling in classes that augment their already proven skills with management possibilities. Or, they might choose to chill, work less complicated, and embrace the notion that their lives should only be dictated by work and survival.



Predatory capitalism extracts surplus value from workers, exploiting them because they have no choice but to work at substandard conditions for the capitalists to maximize their profits. Covid reminded us of our interdependence, of the many ways we must rely on each other. For many privileged workers, it has meant that the terms and conditions of their work can be re-examined. What about the workers we rely on for our health care, transportation services, grocery shelving, and more. It will be a classist tragedy if the few folks at the top only enjoy workplace flexibility. Workplace flexibility, and the pay that goes with it, must also be a privilege of those at the bottom.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is an economist, author and Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies at Cal State, LA. Reach her at julianne@malveaux.com.



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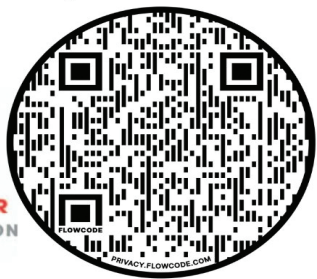
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OUR VOICES

Pro-Life Should Really Mean Pro Life

By David W. Marshall

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Belhaven is a small rural town located along the coast of eastern North Carolina. This majority-African American community has a median income which is three times less than the state median. Many of its approximately 1,700 residents lack health insurance. From 2005 to 2017, Adam O'Neal served as the town's Republican elected mayor in this largely Democratic community. And like so many rural communities around the nation, in 2015 Belhaven experienced the closure of its one and only hospital which served over 20,000 people throughout a two county area. The 65-year old hospital closed in part to the decision of the governor and state legislature to reject the expansion of Medicaid under Obamacare.

Last year, rural hospital closures hit a record high with 20 closed in 2020. Throughout the United States, 136 rural hospitals have closed since 2010, according to the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research. Over the past decade, the state of Texas leads the nation with 21 rural hospital closures.

The COVID-19 pandemic is now producing even more financial pressure and further threatening the ability of rural hospi-

tals to maintain healthcare services. Even with the backdrop of struggling hospitals, lawmakers such as Texas governor Greg Abbott previously failed to give hospital relief by following recommendations by federal health officials. Those recommendations would have reduced the surge of new patient hospitalizations. Most of those individuals now being hospitalized are unvaccinated. Many hospitals are exceeding their capacity and stretching their staff beyond limits.

Ironically, many state governors and legislators who reject mandating vaccines and the wearing of masks actually call themselves "pro-life". For these lawmakers and their ardent supporters, "pro-life" is conditional and tied to only one issue, abortion. When you look up the definition of "pro-life" it refers to the right to life and advocating the legal protection of human embryos and fetuses. This limited version of "pro-life" is driven more by ideology and culture. Which explains why many people vote solely on the issue of abortion.

Pro-life should really mean the protection of all life by having the unconditional quality of being humane to all people in all situations. Meaning when you hear that 634,250 individuals in the U.S. died

of COVID-19, you encourage people to get vaccinated as a means of protecting life and limiting further deaths. If you were truly pro-life then one should promote mask wearing in public indoor spaces and urge universal masking in schools. If you were truly pro-life then you would fully understand that black lives matter. And lastly, if you were truly pro-life you would follow the example of the former mayor Adam O'Neal.

Six days after the closure of the Belhaven hospital, a local resident unable to make it to the nearest hospital by helicopter, died of a heart attack. As a result, the Republican mayor made an unpopular pro-life decision which was beyond the issue of abortion. He took a 15-day, 273 mile walk to Washington DC to draw attention to the failure of Republican leaders in his state to accept the Medicaid funding the hospital needed in order to remain operational.

"If the governor and the legislature don't want to accept Medicaid expansion, they need to come up with another program to assure that rural hospitals don't close," O'Neal said. Otherwise, he continued, "they're allowing people to die to prove a point. That is wrong, and I'm not going to be a party to that."



Pro-life is more than ideology. It means at times you put aside race, economic class and blind party loyalty in order to unconditionally protect and preserve all lives.

David W. Marshall is founder of the faith based organization, TRB: The Reconciled Body, and author of the book "God Bless Our Divided America". He can be reached at www.davidmarshallauthor.com



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS SCHEDULE:

- October 7, 6pm – How to Plan an Action
- October 14, 7pm – KYR: Jail Support
- November 4, 7pm – KYR Jail Support
- November 18, 6pm – KYR Police Encounters

Join us to learn more about your rights -- including how and when to exercise them in stressful situations -- from police encounters to jail support. Find out more at: scarspokane.org/take-action

Become a Member

Becoming a member of Spokane Community Against Racism allows you to support the work of holding Spokane's systems accountable. We want to remain a community driven and supported organization so that we are held accountable to the community that we serve.

To become a member, make a \$25 donation for the year, or become a recurring donor for as little as \$5 monthly.

Details on how to receive your welcome kit at <https://www.scarspokane.org/membership>

To learn how you can become a member through volunteering, email admin@scarspokane.org



To become a business sponsor email us at admin@scarspokane.org

PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP *forum*

SOLD OUT!



LESLIE ODOM, JR.
Performing with the Spokane Symphony
Friday, Oct. 15, 2021 | 7:30 p.m. | Fox Theater

An award-winning vocalist, songwriter, actor and author, Odom captivated audiences as Aaron Burr in the Broadway musical *Hamilton*, earning him a Tony Award. In the new critically acclaimed film *One Night in Miami*, he performs the legendary songs of Sam Cooke. He has released four highly lauded albums and performed on esteemed stages from the White House to the Super Bowl. In 2018, he published *Failing Up: How to Take Risks, Aim Higher and Never Stop Learning*.

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OCTOBER EVENTS

OCTOBER 2

LET'S TALK: THE EFFECTS OF COVID ON OUR FAMILIES

Sponsored by Links, inc & Deltas, Inc. Facilitated by Kiantha Duncan. Panel includes: Faith Washington, Simone Gardner, Dorothy Whitman, Ivan Corley, Susan Poindexter.

1 - 2pm (Virtual)

To register, e-mail linksspokane@gmail.com or spokanealumnae-chapterDST@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 2 & 9

COALITION OF COLOR CANDIDATE FORUM

Are you committed to electing people who are responsive to the needs of communities of color? Do you want to ask candidates questions directly about equity? 10/2 - School Board & Municipal Court Judge #3 candidates 10/9 - Spokane Valley City Council

10am

For more information visit: [facebook.com/spokanecoalitionofcolor/events](https://www.facebook.com/spokanecoalitionofcolor/events)

OCTOBER 13

FUSE DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

Breasts and Eggs by Mieko Kawakami

Breasts and Eggs tells the story of three women: the thirty-year-old Natsu, her older sister, Makiko, and Makiko's daughter, Midoriko, painting a portrait of contemporary womanhood in Japan.

6:30pm-8pm (Virtual Discussion) Visit the Fuse Book Club Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fusediversity>

OCTOBER 14

TRANSITIONS PEOPLE WHO CARE FUNDRAISER

Celebrating 30 years of serving women and children experiencing homelessness in our community!

Noon (Zoom)

Visit: [Help4Women.org/PWC2021](https://www.help4women.org/PWC2021)

OCTOBER 14

CANDIDATE HOUSING FORUM

Hear from Spokane City Council Candidates about housing solutions as tenants ask questions.

6 - 8pm (on Zoom)

Register: bit.ly/SpokaneHousingCF

Organized by WA Low Income Housing Alliance, Tenants Union, APIC, Latinos en Spokane and more!

OCTOBER 17

WORD OF FAITH CHRISTIAN CENTER - 22ND ANNIVERSARY

Pastor Otis & Jarretta Manning invite you to a dinner and fellowship celebration. Theme: We've come this far by faith.

Noon

Word of Faith Christian Fellowship

9212 E Montgomery Ave, #202, Spokane Valley, 99206

Seating is limited. Please call 509-919-4150 if you plan to attend.

OCTOBER 18

NAACP GENERAL MEETING

Join the NAACP for our monthly general membership meeting. Meetings are currently online.

For more information please check social media or contact the NAACP at 509-209-2425 or visit: naacpspokane.org.

OCTOBER 19

BUDGET MATTERS

Join advocates, community leaders, policymakers, and more to talk about what is next for progressive economic policy in Washington State.

For more information and to register visit: [budgetmatters.org](https://www.budgetmatters.org)

OCTOBER 24

HOLY TEMPLE COGIC 40TH PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY

Join Holy Temple Church of God in Christ as we celebrate our 40th Pastoral Anniversary. Theme: Living a Life That is Pleasing to God. Guest Speaker: Pastor Sammy, Pasco, WA.

11am

Holy Temple

806 W Indiana, Spokane

(Per state mandate: masks required)

OCTOBER 29

WE GON' BE ALRIGHT

A Space for Black Healing

Facilitator Kiantha Duncan,

Co-facilitator Alethea Dumas.

This is not a space for allies.

5:30-7:30pm

Virtual Discussion

To register visit: [http://ow.ly/V8de50GaQTW](https://ow.ly/V8de50GaQTW)

OCTOBER 24 - 30

KYRS RADIO FUND DRIVE

Ghosts, Goblins, Monsters

and Community gather to raise funds for Thin Air Community Radio

Join Live at 88.1 or 92.3 FM

or stream at [KYRS.org](https://www.kyrs.org)

WORD OF FAITH
CHRISTIAN CENTER

*Open your heart
for love*

22nd Church Anniversary

We've Come This Far By Faith.

Sunday, October 17th

12 Noon

Word of Faith Christian Center

Pastor Otis & Jarretta Manning

9212 E. Montgomery Avenue, Suite 202
Spokane Valley, 99206

This is a Dinner & Fellowship Celebration!

Seating is Limited: If you would like to attend please call 509-919-4150 and confirm your attendance.

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

October Is Domestic Violence Action Month

Oct 6

Chalk Walk

Community kickoff in Riverfront Park.

Oct 13

YW Table Talk

Businesses & leaders step into action.

Oct 20

Survive To Thrive

The healing journey of a local survivor.

Oct 27

Pathways Forward

What we each can do to help.

Join Us: [ywcaspokane.org/dvam](https://www.ywcaspokane.org/dvam)

eliminating racism
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SPOKANE

SAVE THE DATE

Celebrating Our 40th Pastoral Anniversary

Superintendent
Ezra Kinlow

First Lady
Eleise Kinlow

Holy Temple Church of God In Christ

806 W. Indiana Ave., Spokane, WA

Sunday, October 24, 2021

11:00 A.M.

THEME: "Living A Life That Is Pleasing To God"
Deuteronomy 28:1-13

*NOTE: Love Tokens accepted in person, thru Givelify App and by mail to Holy Temple COGIC, P.O. Box 2543, Spokane, WA 99220

~Guest Speaker~ : Pastor Sammy Trotter
Friendly Temple COGIC, Pasco, WA

PER STATE MANDATE - MASKS ARE REQUIRED



WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK

STA is drafting a new fare collection policy to:

- ✓ Increase access to public transit
- ✓ Reduce financial barriers
- ✓ Modernize fare collection to be faster and more convenient

Take STA's fare policy survey starting in November



Spokane Transit