



ON MY MIND

THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

by Sandra Williams

The Firing of Dr. Bob Lutz:

Or what happens when you piss off the powers that be in Spokane

Over the years I have done hundreds, if not thousands of trainings or more on diversity and equity and inclusion. Actually, I was talking about inclusion and what the word actually means long before the term became the popular buzz word that it has grown into these days, flowing almost effortlessly off of the lips of people who want to convince me, or more importantly, convince themselves that they are "with me in the struggle." That they are my ally.

A lot of people self-identify as allies, especially on the issue of race. They wear it like a crown. A crown that they have placed upon their own heads. And one that they polish regularly so that it gleams in the sunlight. Always visible, especially to us.

I don't consider those people allies.

To be an ally describes what you do when there is no spotlight. What you do when I am not in the room to see you do it. It describes what you do when there are no visible rays of sunlight to reflect off of the bedazzled jewels in your crown. When there is no recognition. No congratulations. No appreciation.

It describes what you do when you have the privilege of a choice. A choice to do something else. Something that is easier. Something that is safer. Something that is less risky, less uncomfortable, less costly to you personally. But you do that something anyway-- because you can't not do it. That is an ally.

Which brings me to Dr. Bob Lutz.

I was surprised when I was invited to Dr. Lutz' office some time ago to talk. I have done a whole lot of work with the wonderful people at the Spokane Regional Health District who thanklessly go about their business, for the most part unnoticed, doing an amazing job of trying to keep us all healthy.

I know many of the front line folks there, but I had never been invited to the office of the Spokane County Health Officer before. To talk about equity. To discuss ways that the Health District could do a better job of addressing racial disparities in health. To ask how he, the Health Officer, could help professionally-- and personally.

Hmmm, I remember thinking to myself. Is this guy for real? Where's the camera? The spotlight? The witness to give him credit?

But there was none of that. Just a very sincere man who had made up his mind and was convicted in his heart that he was going to make a difference. A real difference.

Uh oh. I should have warned him.

You don't go making a "real" difference in Spokane, the city of choice, when it comes to race and racial equity, when it comes to leveling the playing field, when it comes to using your seat of power to champion the needs of those that don't have any, without there being consequences. Swift. Calculated. Punitive. Callous. Consequences.

I thought about that as I watched that embarrassment of a press conference held by the Spokane County Health Administrator, Amelia Clark in October to announce the abrupt "not-firing" of Dr. Lutz in the middle of a global pandemic, and then as I sat through that hours-long sham of a special Board of Health meeting used to justify the not-firing and then to actually fire him. I thought to myself, Dr. Bob Lutz, what did you do to piss these people off?

Was it the op-ed that you wrote in the Spokesman Review titled "COVID has exposed structural racism in the public health system", that concluded with you saying, "We cannot accept the status quo. We need to acknowledge our history and actively dismantle underlying structural racism that prevents every member of our society from achieving their potential." Or was it pressuring an acknowledgment that racism is a public health issue. Or was it you being the only county official of your stature (that I am aware of) who participated in the Black Lives Matter protest held in downtown Spokane after George Floyd's murder.

Or maybe it was when you did your job and put the health needs of the people who are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 above the financial interests of Spokane's business class, who for the most part are not on the front lines.

But then, maybe it was none of that, maybe as Amelia Clark suggested in her litany of grievances against you, a highly regarded physician was abruptly terminated and locked out of the health department like he was a criminal because he bought some meals for his staff without permission and spent a couple hundred dollars on a wireless hotspot. Maybe that was it.



THE BLACK LENS NEWS

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

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YOU SHOULD KNOW

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

ART AND HISTORY *by Bertoni Jones Bey*

Aida Overton Walker

At just sixteen, Aida Overton climbed aboard the tour bus leaving her family behind to realize her dreams of entertaining crowds. She was now an official chorus member of The Black Patti Troubadours. But little did she know that she would become one of the most celebrated entertainers across the globe.

Aida was born on Valentine’s Day, 1880 in Richmond, Virginia. Her family moved to New York where she studied dance and music. She worked hard developing her singing voice and was soon enlisted as a member of “Black Patti’s Troubadours”, a traveling group of entertainers named after Italian opera singer Adelina Patti. The Black Patti Troubadours consisted of both a musical and acrobatic group of about forty comedians, dancers, jugglers, acrobats, and forty choir members. Amongst the chorus members it was her vocals and natural beauty that made her stand out.

Just a year into touring she met a man she would stay with for the remainder of her life, comedian George Walker. The two married on June 22, 1899, after she left the Troubadours to join her husband’s comedy duo of Williams and Walker. Williams and Walker was unique to vaudeville and minstrel shows because instead of the racially humiliating shows actors were forced to perform, they relied on quality all-Moorish cast members performing ragtime music to comedy, song, and dance routines without all of the demeaning and racist buffoonery.

Aida refused to portray plantation characters or stereotypical mammies for any audience, choosing only positive, strong images of women. George and Aida were one of the most graceful and respectable couples to share the stage. She awed au-

diences with her vocal control and original dance routines. Transitioning from vaudeville to ballroom, her natural dramatic flair and acting grace were all wrapped in the most elegant costumes of her time. One critic wrote: “I have just observed the greatest girl dancer”.

Aida starred in The Policy Players (1899), Sons of Ham (1900), In Dahomey (1902), In Abyssinia (1906), and Bandana Land (1908). When George was ill, she would dress up and perform the male and female leads with tremendous skill. She gained international legend when she performed the “cakewalk” for Edward VII at Buckingham Palace in 1903. The cakewalk was the newest fad in dance and true to form Aida transformed it from dark-lit clubs to a new “modern cakewalk” on stage that the world gushed over. The performance made her an instant celebrity and as a result, she was invited to the homes of many affluent Europeans both at home and Europe.

Sadly, January 8, 1911, George Walker passed away from illness. Aida busied herself choreographing female dance groups on the circuit and producing shows in Chicago. Her death on October 11, 1914 was sudden. African Americans went into profound mourning when they found Aida had passed from kidney failure at just 34 years old.

Aida Overton Walker dedicated her life to the highest levels of entertainment and performance. She took Caucasian expectations and stereotypes and refined and dignified them, all the while forcing a new definition of respect for her complexion and gender on her very own terms.

In her own words – “I venture to think and dare to state that our profession does more toward the



alleviation of color prejudice than any other profession among colored people.” But how are we doing today in entertainment? Have we maintained our dignity while performing for others?

Sources:
Black Heritage Day III – Jamiyo Mack; Encyclopedia.com/media/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/walker-aida-overton-1880-1914

The Thibodaux Massacre (November 23, 1887)

Contributed by KC Washington
Source: *blackpast.org*

The Thibodaux Massacre took place in Thibodaux, Louisiana on November 23, 1887. Black sugar cane workers, determined to unionize for a living wage, chose to combine their minimal power during the crucial harvest season. Instead, their actions sparked a massacre.

With echoes of the bondage their ancestors had experienced during slavery, the cane workers protested the harsh working conditions, long hours, and starvation wages. They were fed subsistence meals and paid as little as 42 cents a day with scrip which could only be used in plantation stores.

The Knights of Labor, one of the few labor unions to organize Blacks, encouraged the sugar cutters to demand better treatment and \$1.25 a day in cash. The Knights had tried unsuccessfully to organize the workers in 1874, 1880, and again in 1883 but had been blocked all three times. But the cutters thought the results might be different in 1887, when the Knights urged them to wait until the rolling season was almost underway to propose making a stand.

During the rolling season, there was a narrow window of time to harvest the cane



Workers cutting sugar cane, LA. Photo by William Henry Jackson, Courtesy Library of Congress (2016817576)

and unlike with cotton growers, the planters were unable to attract enough strikebreakers from out of the area because of the low pay they offered. With this strategy in mind, Junius Bailey, a 29-year-old schoolteacher and the president of the Terrebonne chapter of the Knights of Labor, went directly to the growers with the sugar cutter’s demands.

When the growers refused to negotiate and fired the union members on November 22, the strike was called and for the next three weeks an estimated 10,000 workers (the largest such action in the farming indus-

try) went on strike, affecting four parishes: Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. Mary, and Assumption.

Meanwhile, white vigilantes locked down Thibodaux and went door to door attempting to identify strikers and demanding passes from any Blacks going in and out of town. As morning broke on November 23 shots rang out from a cornfield and two white guards were injured. At that point, the massacre began.

The planters persuaded Governor Samuel D. McEnery, a Democrat and former sugar planter, to unleash several units of the

all-white state militia. Commanded by ex-Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, the militia brought a .45 caliber Gatling gun while the paramilitary groups set up outside of the Thibodaux courthouse. Both the militia and white vigilantes went door to door shooting suspected strikers and those unlucky enough to cross their path.

The indiscriminate killing left approximately 60 people dead. The bodies of many of the strikers were dumped in unmarked graves. Those who survived hid in the woods and swamps as the killings spread to other plantations.

Although the Thibodaux Massacre was one of the deadliest episodes in United States labor history, the Southern white press heralded the action of the militia and vigilantes. Sugar planter Andrew Price, who participated in the attacks, won a seat in Congress in 1888. Statues were erected and public areas named after many involved in the unlawful killings while the workers, including women and children, went anonymous, their murders marked only by their loved ones.

Black farm workers wouldn’t attempt to unionize in earnest again until the 1930s.

NAACP UPDATE:



By Kurtis Robinson

Hello Spokane Family,
Once again, I hope this finds you as well as can be expected under these circumstances. I'm writing to you now in what will be my final article as your Branch President. And as we move into the December and January months, I can say for sure I am so thankful our Branch elections are a done deal. I can also say with much Hope that the good parts of our American system will not fail us in a statement that has been made very clear by the people...We will have a new sworn in President come January!! ...Can I say thank God? Yes I can and I do!!



Yet I do believe it's important to make sure that we understand and learn from mistakes of the past ..that we do not repeat those as a nation and as an NAACP Branch. To that end, I have been very contemplate and intentional about not relying on the training from an American system riddled with racist messaging, oppressive trainings, misinformation, justification for de-humanization and far too many times, flat out sanctifications for the murdering of colored and indigenous people throughout its existence.

I have worked diligently, seeking inspired ways to handle not only what's happening here in Spokane, but also how

to set up this particular branch for impact and sustained success. To that end, I have believed in the need for the organization to continually evolve and I have been consistently working behind the scenes to make sure this was achieved. I say to you now with the utmost confidence that we are well on that path... Can I say thank God again? Yes I can and I do!!

I made it my mission to not do things status quo and as such I will still be positioned intentionally to provide support and energy to the direction of the organization that I was inspired to shift.

Hopefully many of you have seen the new slate of the new NAACP executive committee structure and I say to you that this is only the beginning of the continuing changes that will be made under the inspired leadership of Kiantha Duncan! Myself and others will be right there, providing her support in moving this ball down the court. And although I am much inspired with hope by the direction of our organization, how far we've come and the new hope for our nation, I am critically aware this is no time to celebrate.. it is and will be time to get to work! She is with you, I am with you, We are with you, Lets go!

This national election has revealed many things, but the one thing I am compelled to point out to you is based on discussions that Sandy Williams and I have had on several occasions..."there they are". We are fighting for the soul of our species and the hope of the best ideals behind the

American dream! We cannot rest and we cannot get lost in frivolous celebratory expressions about situations changing that should have never been there in the first place. The baton has been passed to us and it is our job to carry it forward and I challenge each and every one of you to link arms and lean in with us in some of our common goals: Back Lives Matter, Native Live Matter!!

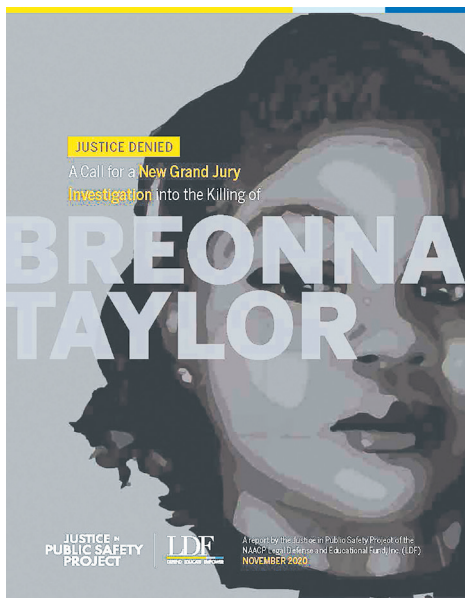
I will close with this:

A message to otherizing, racism and dehumanization:
Heal (ing) is what we land on
It is the Ark in our step,
To never forget that the opposite should we fall into It
Is a hole but not our whole
Our whole is not bound by what they do to us, through us or around us
Or what they surrounded us with
Our whole (ness) is based on Grace...
no more, no less
So if we are to Liberate
From the Plot you tried to Bury us in
Our Healing will manifest as we extricate
from the grave you made
for us and our people... KR, 2020

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas!
Kurtis Stanley Robinson
President 2017-2020
Spokane NAACP, Branch #1137

NAACP Calls for Special Prosecutor and New Grand Jury in Breonna Taylor Killing

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) joined calls for the appointment of a special prosecutor and new grand jury to examine the police killing of Breonna Taylor. Last month, a court ordered the release of the audio files of the proceedings in response to a grand juror request. LDF assembled a team of attorneys – including pro bono support from the law firm of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP – to review the recordings and identify any deficiencies in the Kentucky Attorney General's presentation of evidence to the grand jury and irregularities in the proceedings.



the apartment next to Ms. Taylor's home, none of the officers involved were charged for killing Ms. Taylor.

Since the indictment, three members of the grand jury have spoken out about the nature of the proceedings, including how the grand jury was not presented with full details of the case. LDF's review of the grand jury proceedings found that the Kentucky Attorney General's office's presentation of the case reflected a bias that protected the officers, that the prosecution failed to adequately respond to grand juror inquiries, and did not disclose to the

grand jury all potentially relevant evidence regarding the involved officers' conduct.

"Our thorough review of the grand jury's audio transcripts and LMPD investigative reports not only supports claims by several grand jurors that they were not provided an opportunity to consider all evidence and potential charges that could be brought against the officers involved, but also reveals the need for systemic changes in the investigation of police killings," said Monique Dixon, LDF's Director of the State Advocacy and the Justice in Public Safety Project. "We urge Kentucky's Governor to take actions to ensure that these critical incidents are investigated by independent and impartial prosecutors going forward."

"An exhaustive review of the grand jury proceedings here clearly demonstrates that there is much more work to be done to achieve justice in this matter and restore public confidence in how these troubling police shootings are investigated," said Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP partner Lauren Muldoon, who led the international law firm's pro bono work on the report. "We were proud as lawyers committed to racial and social justice to devote our energies to this report and collaborate with LDF to assemble these vital findings and recommendations."

To read the full report visit: https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/LDF_10272020_Breonna-Taylor-11.pdf

NAACP Legal Defense Fund Files Lawsuit Against President Trump and the Trump Campaign's Attempts to Overturn the Election by Disenfranchising Black Voters in Michigan

On November 20, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), a non-partisan civil and human rights organization, filed a complaint on behalf of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization and three Detroit residents in a lawsuit challenging President Trump and the Trump Campaign's ongoing efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election by disenfranchising Black voters in Michigan.

The lawsuit claims that both the president and his campaign are in violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Exerting pressure on state and local officials not to count or certify voters is prohibited by Section 11(b) because it involves conduct that "intimidate[s], threaten[s], or coerce[s], or attempt[s] to intimidate, threaten, or coerce" people involved in "aiding any person to vote or attempt to vote." Under the Voting Rights Act, voting is specifically defined to include "all action necessary to make a vote effective in any ... election, including, but not limited to ... having such ballot counted properly and included in the appropriate totals of votes cast with respect to candidates for public or party office and propositions for which votes are received in an election."

"For two weeks, the president and his campaign have been spreading misinformation and making baseless accusations of voting irregularities in cities with large concentrations of Black voters who participated in record numbers in this election," said Sherrilyn Ifill, LDF's President and Director-Counsel. "These allegations have been consistently debunked and the campaign's litigation attempts turned away by courts in several states. The president's use of dog whistles to suggest the illegitimacy of votes cast by Black voters in Detroit, Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and Atlanta are an appeal to a dangerous and corrosive racialized narrative of voter fraud.

"Equally alarming have been the president's attempts to pressure state and local officials in Michigan – first with a demand that votes in Detroit not be counted and now, more recently, urging officials to refuse to certify votes from Wayne County. The right of Black voters to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice is protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. That legislation protects against efforts to intimidate or coerce officials to disenfranchise Black voters.

"Our action seeks to protect the integrity of the votes cast by Black voters in Detroit from the president's attempts to overturn the will of voters expressed at the ballot box."

To read the full complaint visit: <https://www.naacpldf.org/wp-content/uploads/Trump-Campaign-Complaint.pdf>.

On March 13, 2020, Ms. Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency medical technician, was shot and killed by Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) officers as they entered her home while executing a no-knock search warrant. After national unrest over Ms. Taylor's killing, a grand jury was appointed to review the case. While former LMPD officer Brett Hankison was charged with three counts of wanton endangerment in the first degree for reportedly shooting into

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

David Dinkins, First Black Mayor Of New York City, Dies At 93

(Source: Bruce C.T. Wright, www.newsone.com; Photo Courtesy MTA of State of New York)

David N. Dinkins, the first and only Black person to hold the post of mayor in the city of New York, died Monday, November 23. He was 93 years old.

The New York Post reported his death first. Dinkins died of natural causes at his home in Manhattan, according to NBC New York.

Even though he only served a single term in office, Dinkins left behind a legacy of decreasing the city’s crime at a record rate, something that many people often incorrectly ascribed to Rudy Giuliani, who succeeded him in 1993.

David Norman Dinkins was born in Trenton, N.J., on July 10, 1927. After finishing high school in Trenton, Dinkins enlisted in the U.S. Marines and ultimately earned a Congressional Gold Medal. Dinkins went on to enroll in and graduate from Howard University before earning a law degree from Brooklyn Law School.

It was from there that Dinkins began to make a name for himself in New York City as a part of Harlem’s famed Carver Democratic Club, which boasted such



legendary members as Basil Paterson, the father of former New York Gov. David Paterson; now-retired longtime New York Rep. Charles Rangel; and Percy Sutton, who was Malcolm X’s attorney before he was killed. Togeth-

er, they became known in the city as the “Gang Of Four,” these men would go on to top political posts within New York and abroad. After several political appointments in New York, including becoming Manhattan’s borough pres-

ident in 1985, Dinkins defeated his Republican opponent, Giuliani, in the general election following a victory in the Democratic primary that surprised many. Dinkins entered the office amid scandal, as the outgoing administration was mired in allegations of corruption.

Dinkins thrived in his post, creating the Safe Streets, Safe Cities program that lowered the city’s crime rate more than any other time in modern history. Dinkins also negotiated with the state legislature to dedicate a tax in hiring thousands of police officers. In addition, he helped to initiate a plan to keep schools open longer in a bid to keep teenagers off the streets.

Dinkins did not win re-election in 1993, losing to Giuliani amid talks by some experts that he failed to connect with Jewish voters. Despite the loss, Dinkins remained active in politics by endorsing candidates and the like. Dinkins also moved on to humanitarian efforts, such as serving on the board of the Jazz Founders of America, which helped work with elderly jazz and blues musicians to find them homes and health care.

Dinkins’ death followed that of his longtime wife, Joyce Dinkins, who died Oct. 12 at the age of 89.

First Black Miss Mississippi Asya Branch Crowned Miss USA

(Source: Cedric 'BIG CED' Thornton ; www.blackenterprise.com; Photo Credit: Twitter)

A new Miss USA has been crowned! Asya Branch, whose first accomplishment was becoming the first-ever Black Miss Mississippi, can now be referred to as Miss USA 2020 according to Good Morning America.

The 22-year-old student who attends the University of Mississippi won the title Monday night at the Graceland Exhibition Center in Memphis, Tenn.

The history-setting winner made history as the first Black woman to be crowned Miss Mississippi USA and on Monday night, she was the first Mississippi contestant to win the overall title.

“I couldn’t believe that my name had been called,” Branch said on “Good Morning America” on Tuesday. “I’m the first Miss Mississippi to have been crowned Miss USA and so, honestly I was just honored and overwhelmed and completely overjoyed.”

In an earlier interview with Miss Mississippi USA before the competition, Branch spoke about how she plans to tackle criminal justice and prison reform during her tenure as Miss USA 2020. Her father being incarcerated for 10 years has inspired her to advocate for reform.



“I will continue fighting for criminal justice and prison reform; that’s something that is near and dear to my heart,” Branch said on “GMA.” “I hope to continue making change within throughout my reign.”

Branch also told the Mississippi Clarion-Ledger, “It’s really an honor to be able to set this example for young girls to know that they don’t have to look like the person that came before them in order to accomplish their goal,” she said. “I truly am grateful to hold this title and continue to be a positive role model for all of our youth to know that their life circumstances doesn’t have to define them and that they’re more than capable of accomplishing anything that they set their minds to.”

NFL's First All-Black Officiating Crew Will Work Buccaneers-Rams Game

(Source: Cassandra Negley, yahoosports.com)

In a historic milestone, an all-Black officiating crew will work an NFL game for the first time in Week 11 when the Los Angeles Rams and Tampa Bay Buccaneers play on “Monday Night Football.” The league combined members of two different officiating crews for the recognition.

Referee Jerome Boger will lead the crew. He’s a former Morehouse College quarterback in his 17th year as a league official. Boger worked Super Bowl XLVII in February 2013.

He is joined by four members of his 2020 crew: umpire Barry Anderson, down judge Julian Mapp, side judge Dale Shaw and field judge Anthony Jeffries. They are joined by line judge Carl Johnson, who lives in Louisiana, and back judge Greg Steed, who lives near Washington, D.C.

The NFL organizes 17 officiating crews before the start of the season and tries to keep them together. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the league organized those groups by home geography so they could drive, rather than only fly, to games.

The Buccaneers are the first team in league history with three Black co-



ordinators: Todd Bowles (defense), Byron Leftwich (offense) and Keith Armstrong (special teams). Harold Goodwin, the assistant head coach, offensive line coach and run game coordinator, is also Black.

Tampa Bay also has two women coaching, the first team to have two full-time women coaches on the staff. Head coach Bruce Arians added Lori Locust (assistant defensive line) and Maral Javadifar (assistant strength and conditioning) in March 2019.

BLACK NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Local, State, National and Around the World

Meet The 12-Year-Old Set To Compose For The New York Philharmonic Orchestra

(Source: Dana Givens, blackenterprise.com; Photo Credit: Instagram; PIX11 Screenshot)

Teaching music to children has been said to offer positive growth during their early development. For one Brooklyn girl, her love for music led her to continue her dream toward composing original work while achieving remarkable milestones.

Grace Moore is a young musician who is poised for greatness and achieved a huge milestone. WPIX 11 reported that the seventh-grader is one of the youngest composers to enter the New York Philharmonic. Moore is enrolled in the organization's Very Young Composers program designed to teach participants as young as 8-years-old how to create original scores. The members of the program will also get to see their work performed by professional musicians in the orchestra.

The student body of Poly Prep in Brooklyn congratulated their fellow student on its Twitter page to celebrate the high accomplishment. "#PolyPrep is so proud of seventh-grader Grace Moore '26" the school wrote in a tweet. "Hear her beautiful music composed as part of the NY Philharmonic Very Young Composers program."

In October, Moore was able to make her debut with the orchestra in a live performance she created for the program. The music organization shared a video of the performance featuring Moore in attendance to hear her music come to life on its Instagram page.



Tennessee Man Exonerated After Serving Nearly 15 Years In Prison

(Source: Demicia Inman, thegrio.com; Photo Credit: JDaniel A. Horwitz ; Twitter @Scot_Blog)

Joseph Webster was reunited with his family after being wrongfully convicted of murder and sent to a Tennessee prison in 2006.

After spending nearly two decades behind bars, a Nashville man is released from prison after a judge ruled he was wrongly convicted.

According to Tennessean, Joseph Webster was embraced by his mother who was overwhelmed with emotion after he exited the detention center a free man. His mom, Marie Burns, waited hours for her son, trying not to cry too much. The news outlet detailed she had to be taken across the street after she collapsed during the reuniting event. The 41-year-old was in prison for almost 15 years after being convicted of the 1998 murder of Leroy Owens.

"Lord have mercy," she shouted, according to the outlet. "I love you. I'm so glad to see you. Oh, it's been so long, baby. Oh, it's been so long."

A Nashville judge ordered his conviction was to be vacated according to Tennessean, which resulted in the dismissal of the murder charge and his immediate release. The District Attorney's Conviction Review Unit uncovered new evidence proving Webster's innocence. The CRU was urged to investigate by attorney Daniel Horwitz.

"For the District Attorney, for General (Glenn) Funk to create a CRU is a bold and courageous step to take in ensuring that our office engages in self-reflection and self-accountability, which is and should be central to how we view our role in the justice system. When we determined we no longer had confidence in the conviction, we had a moral and ethical obligation to act," current



CRU Director Sunny Eaton said in an interview with the news outlet.

"I mean, there is so much that's impossible to overlook in this case," Horwitz said to Fox 17. "That's why I think this case is the one that ended up being the first conviction ever to be overturned here, all of the new evidence.

I hope they find out the person who actually did it," Webster said according to Tennessean. "I do feel sympathy for them. I wish them the best on their situation, too.

Amazon's Dr. Nashlie Sephus Buys 12 Acres to Create Black Tech-Hub in Mississippi

(Source: Angela Dennis, www.medium.com; Rendering Credit: www.dragonflydesign.co)

"Today was the culmination of over 18 months, 12 acres, seven buildings, two downtown districts, three unwilling to do a loan banks, a committed team, a lot of dollars, a solid group of lawyers, and a lot of patience and grit to invest in my hometown of Jackson, Mississippi, bringing technology access for all. Excited for the journey that's about to come!"

These words were part of a post on the Amazon Applied Science Manager's Facebook page, breaking news on a new venture worth 25 Million dollars.

Dr. Nashlie Sephus is part of the Amazon AI team based in Atlanta, Georgia. Her tech career has taken her from Silicon Valley, the South, and afar. Still, her continued travels between Atlanta, where she currently resides, and her hometown of Jackson, Mississippi, to make a change is her most valued journey.

Her other venture, a non-profit The Bean Path she founded in Jackson, whose mission is to sow technical expertise to grow networks and fertilize communities, paves the way for the tech and STEM fields. The non-profit has sown seeds in technical expertise within Mississippi. It provides opportunities for those not formally college educated or experienced in the tech world to get their hands wet.

Sephus received her B.S. in Computer Engineering from Mississippi State University in 2007 and then graduated with a Ph.D. from the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Georgia Tech in 2014.



As if the time isn't ripe enough for Black progress, achievement, and empowerment during a year of COVID-19 and racial uprisings in the wake of police brutality and continued systemic oppression of Black people, Nashlie Sephus' monumental achievement toward a tech district is a breath of fresh air and the smell of Blackness shining.

On September 11, 2020, the STEM Professional broke ground, signing papers to close on a purchase of 12 acres and seven buildings in the downtown Jackson, Mississippi area near Gallatin Street and the historically Black institution, Jackson State University. According to the U.S. Census data, Jackson is one of the most densely populated African-American cities in the nation. Sephus plans to bring a mixed-use development to the downtown district and thrust the city into becoming a tech-hub in the region.

"One of the buildings is going to be called the Arts and Innovation Station, which will serve as a hub for offices and coworking space, and a place for programming to expose the people of all communities to a maker space," she said. A makerspace is a collaborative workspace inside a school, library, or separate public/private facility to make, learn, explore, and share that uses high tech to no tech tools. They provide hands-on learning, help with critical thinking skills, and even boost self-confidence.

"A lot of people don't have access to these facilities or equipment to create, so we want to be that place where they can come and utilize to strengthen their business or even go into tech fields themselves."

Sephus' project will also have a for-profit side, including housing, residential lofts, restaurants, and venue space that residents can rent for events, a wifi hotspot area that will be COVID safe, and where children can access the internet.

My goal is to also make the downtown area more walkable, with more green space. This will be a part of the move to target the younger demographic and mid-career professionals to live in or frequent downtown. We want to help close that gap for the younger generation that's missing in the area", she concluded.

Dr. Sephus is not only paving the way in her hometown of Jackson, but she is also exemplifying the value of giving back to our hometown communities and building Black wealth. Potentially becoming a model for other cities, aspiring Black tech professionals, and entrepreneurs to go after their dream and buy the block.

AFRICA NEWS

News Highlights From and About the Continent of Africa

Sudan Faces New Demands Before Painful Sanctions are Lifted by U.S.

Source and Image: TriceEdneyWire.com
GIN

The U.S. has now conditioned the lifting of painful sanctions on Sudan until it agrees to Washington's Middle East agenda and to normalizing relations with Israel.

If Sudan agrees before U.S. elections in November, sanctions could be lifted, opening the floodgates to desperately needed investment for this economically stressed corner of Africa.

This eleventh hour demand issued by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was met with frustration by local leaders and experts.

Our economy is in shambles, admitted Amjed Farid, assistant chief of staff for Sudan's prime minister. Sudan can't even get COVID aid from international institutions. U.S. sanctions have blocked all transactions using US currency or products, impeding any business with operations in the U.S. from trading with Sudan.

Cameron Hudson of the Atlantic Council, an American thinktank in the field of international affairs, called it a "strategic blunder of enormous proportions." Sudan's democratic transition is fragile, he said, and by making more demands, the U.S. could miss this chance to have a real partner in a dangerous neighborhood.

Sudan's transitional government has been negotiating for the removal of sanctions for more than a year. They have agreed to compensate families of the US sailors who died in the bombing of the USS Cole, as well as to those of victims of terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania. But the Congress has not yet passed the necessary legislation. Plus, many victims not part of any lawsuits are being left out, said Prudence Bushnell, ambassador to Kenya at the time, and Americans will receive more compensation than African victims.



"It's frustrating to see Pompeo focused on getting Sudan to recognize Israel, Bushnell told NPR.

Now, however, some top Sudanese military leaders are urging approval of the Israeli ties. "Whether we like it or not, the removal (of Sudan from the terror list) is tied to (normalization) with Israel," Sudanese Gen. Mohammed Dagalo said in a press interview.

"We need Israel ... Israel is a developed country and the whole world is working with it," he said. "We will have benefits from such relations ... We hope all look at Sudan's interests."

Such comments would have been unthinkable until recently in a country where public hostility toward Israel remains strong.

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

Ugandan Engineer Co-Develops Blood Oxygen Monitor for Apple Watch

Source: Shanique Yates, afrotech.com;
Image Credit: LinkedIn

Thanks to a team of software engineers at Apple led by Dr. Jeofrey Kibuule — Software Engineer, Health at Apple — the company has a new life-saving feature, reports Face2Face Africa.

Apple's newly-released Apple Watch Series 6 comes with a special feature — a blood oxygen saturation monitor. The new blood oxygen app allows users to measure the oxygen level of their blood-on-demand directly from their wrist, ultimately providing them with insights into their overall wellness, per Apple.

For users, the new feature comes right on time with many COVID-19 patients having had low blood oxygen levels.

"During a blood oxygen measurement, the back crystal [under the wrist watch] shines red and green LEDs and infrared light onto your wrist," said Apple in a statement on their website. "Photodiodes then measure the amount of light reflected back. Advanced algorithms use this data to calculate the colour of your blood. The colour determines your blood oxygen level — bright red blood has more oxygen, while dark red blood has less."

Apple says the measurements taken with the blood oxygen app should only be "for general fitness and wellness purposes."

Dr. Kibuule, 31, snatched up headlines, particularly in the tech world, immediately following the launch of the Apple Watch Series 6.

According to the Daily Monitor, Dr. Kibuule is among the brains behind the blood oxygen app and the team has been working in Silicon Valley for the last five years.

Thanks to his passion for technology and medicine, Dr. Kibuule, developed a lab reference app at age 23 while still in medical



school. The app is known as Pocket Lab Values and helps to increase the chances of diagnoses accuracy.

Per a report, the groundbreaking app, "catalyzed him [Kibuule] on a global stage to collaborate with medical professionals in Laboratory investigations for health solutions."

Dr. Kibuule comes from a brilliant family. Four out of five of his family members obtained doctorates, according to Face2Face Africa. At just 18-years-old, he became the first-known Ugandan-American to graduate with a bachelor of science degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

In addition to studying medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and earning an M.D. in 2014, he also graduated from the Honors College of Science, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) of Texas at the University of North Texas.

Meet Caroline Esinam Adzogble, the Youngest Woman in Africa to Own an Accredited College

Source: Shanique Yates, afrotech.com;
face2faceafrica.com; Image Credit:
DaughtersofAfrica.org;

26-year-old Caroline Esinam Adzogble has quite a few endeavors under her belt. The entrepreneur is the youngest African and Ghanaian woman to run and own an accredited college — Potters International College. She accomplished the feat in 2016, at the age of 24.

Caroline Esinam Adzogble was a business administration and computer science student when she founded and established the school as an IT Training Institution in 2012 known as AITC. At the time, she majored in courses such as database administration systems hardware and networking, software and web development.

To enable her to run the institution successfully, she decided to continue her



education with an online university to help her balance her career life and not to be restricted by the bounds of attending on-campus schooling, the school's website states.

Adzogble first launched the educational institution in 2016, as a platform where



young students and working professionals could receive career training for future jobs.

Potters College offers a wide variety of training programs including: communications and media, marketing, business management, jewelry design, and web and software development.

Caroline Esinam Adzogble is also the founder of IAES Africa, an international recruitment service and the co-found-

er and president of Caroline University; Kwame A.A Opoku serves as the additional co-founder. Adzogble also serves as CEO of the Caroline Group, a huge educational conglomerate in West Africa, Ghana.

The self-described educationist, business coach, diversity maverick and women's advocate is also the developer of

Admission in 30 Minutes, Everyday Travels and Tours Caroline Technology Solutions, and the Mercy Heart Foundation.

Adzogble was quoted by local media Joy Online saying, "I am on the quest to uplift Education within Africa and beyond. To make Education the most accessible and affordable to students located in over 146 countries."

A Different View

with

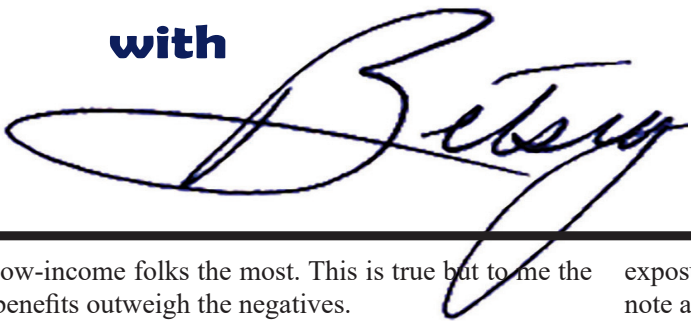


Photo Credit: Maddie Pearson

Betsy Wilkerson, Spokane City Council

Fact: We don’t have enough housing inventory at all levels for everyone who wants to buy a home. 424 houses on the market in October 2020, down from 945 in October 2019.*

Fact: Median price of a home in the City of Spokane for October 2020 was \$287,233. That is a 25% increase from October 2019. In 2017 it was \$209,000.*

Fact: City of Spokane ownership rates: Whites 65.9%, Non-White 44.6% with Blacks at 25%*

Fact: Most areas of the City of Spokane have a less than 2% vacancy rate.*

Spokane frequently ranks as one of the nation’s top places to live for affordability, recreational options, and job opportunities. However, not all residents of Spokane have the same access to these resources. More than one in ten Spokane residents have reported living in unstable and insecure housing. Those individuals are more likely to be either people of color, have earned less than a four-year college degree, be out of work or unable to work, and have very low incomes. The portion of housing-insecure residents jumps to 16.5% when considering only those who earn less than \$35,000 per year.

I wanted to share that information as a basis for my vote on what we are calling the 1590 housing tax. 1590 will provide the Spokane City Council with the power to levy a sales and use tax for attainable housing and related services. A one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) sales tax would raise approximately \$5.8 million a year. So, instead of you paying 8.9% at the grocery store it would now be 9%. This revenue will be used to construct attainable housing and provide supportive housing services. This increase is estimated to cost around \$25.00 per family per year.

So, the challenge/push back that I have received is that this is a regressive tax, and it will hurt very

low-income folks the most. This is true but to me the benefits outweigh the negatives.

These are unprecedented times with the COVID-19 pandemic, massive job losses, yet another economic downturn, kids out of the classroom, fear of the unknown and so much more. Just the cost of living has taken its toll. But the lack of attainable housing has been amplified. This is a housing crisis, and yes, it is a crisis that cannot be fixed by a few new apartments, condos or homes that most of us cannot afford. To me this is where city government can really play its part to help improve the lives of many, many, folks who live in Spokane. Take it from a single mother who benefited from a first-time home buyers’ program from the government called HUD235 that helped me back in the day.

We all know it has been a bottleneck for a long time, and with many folks moving here, it has only gotten worse. It has gotten worse for folks with behavioral health disabilities, for veterans, for senior citizens, for the homeless (or those at-risk of being homeless), for families with children, for persons with disabilities, or for domestic violence survivors. We need housing solutions of all kinds and at all levels, but this is a good place to start.

The Spokane Regional Health District completed a health note at the request of the City of Spokane to understand the potential health implications of the proposed policy decision. Here are several of their findings. The impacts of the tax increase: Possible increased financial insecurity and possible increased stress for very low-income individuals and families. The impacts of expanding access to quality attainable housing: improved child development and achievement, reduced domestic and family violence, possible improved mental and behavioral outcomes, and possible improved health behaviors and chronic disease

exposures . You can read the data from the health note and their findings at https://srhd.org/media/documents/Health_Note-Spokane-Affordable-Housing.pdf.

Stable housing, be it owning or renting, plays an important societal role in our lives. It comes with pride and a sense of belonging. Given this opportunity, as public policy makers, we would be foolish not to consider the immense social benefits for families to use this tool to help. And a priority for me is that we will apply an equity lens to housing and services. This has never been done before.

I will say that there is still lots of work to be done and this is just one tool. And because this is new, there are still a lot of unanswered questions. All of the T’s are not crossed or all the I’s dotted. But don’t let perfection get in the way of doing good. This is a lot of money and trust must be re-built with our residents especially the communities of color. But if there was ever a need, or a time we could all get behind it is putting a roof over our brethren’s head.

The one cannot help the many but the many can help the one. As we enter the Holidays, let us strive to ensure that everyone has the chance to have a warm home to celebrate in.

Happy Holidays and many blessings to you and yours,



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

**Data provided by Darin Watkins of the Spokane Association of REALTORS® from Spokane results of their REALTORS® April 2020 Survey and US Census “Characteristics for Occupied Housing.” 2018*



NORTHWEST FAIR HOUSING ALLIANCE

“Working to Ensure Equal Housing Opportunity for All”

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Tel: 509-325-2665 • Fax: 866-376-6308

Federal and State laws prohibit housing discrimination based on:

Race ○ Color ○ Religion ○ Gender ○
Disability ○ National Origin ○
Familial Status ○ Marital Status ○
Sexual Orientation ○ Military / Veteran Status

Services offered:
Fair housing counseling, advocacy & education

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

CITY OF SPOKANE

HOUSING ACTION PLAN

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR ALL

The City of Spokane is creating a Housing Action Plan to help increase housing options that are accessible and affordable for people and families of all incomes. As Spokane grows, we are facing a gap in housing supply. The Housing Action Plan will provide a strategic approach to address current and future housing needs of the Spokane community. The outcome will be a coordinated vision that supports more residents being able to find a home that meets their needs and income level.

PROJECT APPROACH

Spokane's Housing Action Plan will encourage the construction of additional affordable and market-rate housing that meets the needs of our community. Building on previous community discussions and initiatives on housing, this plan will provide guidance for the City's housing policies, programs, and strategies. The plan will follow a data-driven, community-informed approach with a focus on equity built on inclusive outreach and engagement with residents, partners, and City leaders. The City received a grant from the Washington Department of Commerce to complete the plan, which is expected to be adopted by City Council in April 2021.



Data-Driven



Community-Informed



Focus on Equity

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
MY.SPOKANECITY.ORG/HOUSING**
EMAIL: SPOKANEHOUSINGPLAN@SPOKANECITY.ORG



JUNE 2020



KNOCK OUT THE FLU WITH ONE SHOT

It's more important than ever to get vaccinated against the flu. The flu vaccine can keep you from getting the flu and spreading it to others. This is critical during the COVID-19 pandemic to help keep our hospitals from being overwhelmed.

DID YOU KNOW...

- The Department of Health recommends that everyone aged six-months and older, including pregnant and nursing women get a yearly flu vaccine.
- Most insurance plans, including CHIP and Medicaid, cover the cost of flu vaccine for adults.
- Children aged 18 and under in Washington can get a flu vaccine and other recommended vaccines at no cost.

IS IT COVID- 19?

COVID-19 symptoms may be similar to those of illnesses like the flu or common cold. Contact your health care provider for a test if you have symptoms of COVID-19. Visit www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus.

CONTACT US TODAY!

Our free and confidential services can help connect your family to health insurance coverage, point you toward free vaccine clinics, and much more.

-  (509) 340-9008
-  healthykids@betterhealthtogether.org
-  @BetterHealthTogether



CHAS Health Opens New Dental Clinic in East Central



Scheduling Patient Appointments Now

(Spokane, WA) The first meeting to explore a dental clinic at the East Central Community Center (now MLK Jr. Family Outreach Center) took place back in 2015. Five years later, CHAS Health has officially opened an all-new dental clinic in Spokane's East Central community. CHAS Health East Central Dental Clinic, located at 2211 East Hartson Avenue, has 7 dental operatories to provide additional access to oral health services in Spokane. The clinic is currently scheduling patient appointments at 509-444-8200.

Prior to the clinic opening at this location, the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center was one of the only community centers in Spokane without medical or dental services on campus. The need for services in this location was great and in no small way exacerbated by Spokane's oral health racial equity gap of 21%.

Half of Washington's Medicaid-insured children under 6 do not access dental care, and only 33% of Medicaid-insured 0-2 year olds experience a dental visit. Additionally, 78% of adult Medicaid clients in Spokane County do not use their dental benefit and more than 1 in 4 low-income Spokane adults experience tooth loss.

Collective advocacy and cooperation across federal, state, and city channels made over \$2,000,000 in grants and loans possible to launch this 4,000 square foot facility that will serve over 4,000 patients annually.

The motto of CHAS is *Everyone Welcome* – and that is regardless of their ability to pay. CHAS believes and is committed to ensuring all people are treated with dignity and respect regardless of their situation. Dr. Elisabeth Warder, Dental Director at CHAS Health said, "The East Central Dental Clinic aligns closely with CHAS's goal to remove barriers to care and provide high quality, evidence based care in a place that is convenient - in the neighborhood, where people live, work and play."

Freda Gandy, Executive Director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center added, "The Center is a focal point for our neighborhood and community. Having dental care access on our campus is a health and wellness catalyst for our kids in early learning programs, our families getting help with food security and so many more."

Due to current COVID restrictions, a small, socially-distanced ribbon-cutting event will be held in the spring.



Fresh Soul Gives Away 100 Meals for Thanksgiving

A "generous donation" made it possible for Fresh Soul restaurant to give away 100 meals on Thanksgiving morning.

Owner Michael Brown has been a fixture in the East Central neighborhood for decades, running the Spokane Eastside Reunion Association and offering support to children

and families. So it comes as no surprise that he would spend his holiday filling hungry stomachs with ribs, drumsticks, potato salad, cornbread, and a little bit of love.

The give-a-way was hugely successful and Michael said that he plans to do it all again for Christmas. So stay tuned...



FRESH

Soul

SERA

Spokane Eastside Reunion Association

www.spokaneeastsidereunionassociation.com

FRESH SOUL

Spokane's Best Soul Food

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Also on Uber Eats



COVID COVID & MORE COVID

November 2020



SRHD Reports Significant Increase of COVID-19 in Spokane County African Americans

PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE – CASE INVESTIGATIONS AND CONTACTS:

- A fundamental component of public health epidemiology is the surveillance, case investigation, and follow up for all confirmed cases of COVID-19. We also monitor COVID-Like-Illness using a program called ESSENCE. To control and mitigate this disease, contacting those exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 is an important public health measure.
- Daily case counts are averaging 249 cases reported per day.
 - Reevaluating case investigation and contact tracing efforts to align with new [CDC recommendations](#).
- COVID Health Equity Data:
- While counts are still low among African Americans, there has been a significant increase in the last four weeks. This is not seen in other non-white races.
 - 20-29 year-olds have the highest average number of cases during the last four weeks at 47.6.

COVID-19 TESTING

For information about COVID-19 testing including low and no-cost options visit: <https://covid.srhd.org/topics/covid-19-testing>

COVID-19 and Vitamin D?

In a retrospective study of patients tested for COVID-19, researchers at the University of Chicago Medicine found an association between vitamin D deficiency and the likelihood of becoming infected with the coronavirus.

The research team looked at 489 patients at UChicago Medicine whose vitamin D level had been measured within a year before being tested for COVID-19. Patients who had vitamin D deficiency (defined as less than 20 nanograms per milliliter of blood) that was not treated were almost twice as likely to test positive for COVID-19 compared to patients who had sufficient levels of the vitamin. It’s important to note that the study only found the two conditions were frequently seen together; it does not prove causation.

Half of Americans are thought to be deficient in vitamin D, with much higher rates seen in African Americans. COVID-19 is also more prevalent among African American individuals, older adults, nursing home residents and health care workers—populations who all have increased risk of vitamin D deficiency.

“Vitamin D is important to the function of the immune system and vitamin D supplements have previously been shown to lower the risk of viral respiratory tract infections,” said David Meltzer, Chief of Hospital Medicine at UChicago Medicine and lead author of the study. “Our statistical analysis suggests this may be true for the COVID-19 infection.”

Meltzer and his team have initiated several clinical trials at UChicago Medicine and with partners locally. “Understanding whether treating vitamin D deficiency changes COVID-19 risk could be of great importance locally, nationally and globally,” Meltzer said.

Consult your doctor to have your Vitamin D levels tested and for recommended dose.

Source: <https://news.uchicago.edu>

The COVID Vaccine Decision Awaiting Us

By Glenn Ellis

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - COVID-19 has turned the lives of every man, woman, and child on the planet upside down, and continues to sweep around the world with a vengeance. Here in the United States the virus particularly vicious, as we watch in horror as it becomes crystal clear it’s not going anywhere for the foreseeable future.

To date, the best understanding in the medical and scientific field is that transmission and spread of COVID-19 will not slow down until 50% to 70% of the population is infected. One prominent epidemiologist sums it up by saying, “We will be dealing with this forever”.

The U.S. declared a national emergency in mid-March, and here we are almost six months later; the death toll continues climbing and the human toll of the virus in America has just passed 160,000 lives lost, with all indications that we will most likely exceed 200,000 deaths by the end of this year.

I know, some of you are reading and saying, “Doesn’t this guy know that we are of brink of a COVID vaccine?” Sure, we might have a vaccine soon, but many experts are already stating with confidence, “some communities are not ready to accept it.” Well, I belong to one of those communities, and let me tell why I believe they are right.

The majority of people with little, or no, experience nor insight to the lives of members of these communities, automatically default to the U.S. Public Health Syphilis Study at Tuskegee! Well, the issue is much deeper than that.

We make a huge mistake of resting all of our attention and focus on attributing the mistrust and suspicion on vaccines and Blacks on that one atrocity; there are a plethora of factors!

Perhaps (in the interest of time and space), these “factors” can best be summed up by an article in the Journal of Healthcare for the Underserved, “Several factors that affect the participation of African Americans in studies have been identified, including elements of study design, logistical problems, low levels of health literacy, sociocultural factors, and specific attitudes that hinder research participation. Mistrust of academic and research institutions and investigators is the most significant attitudinal barrier to research participation reported by African Americans”.

All of the issues and conditions that have disadvantaged poor and communities of color in this country, are the very things resulting in the disproportionate burden that Black people all over this country are experiencing with COVID. Discrimination; healthcare access and utilization; occupation; education, income, and wealth gaps; and housing: All, according to the CDC are associated with more COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in areas where racial and ethnic minority groups live, learn, work, play, and worship.

Researchers at the CDC found that 47% of US adults have an underlying condition strongly tied to severe COVID-19 illness. By middle age, 50% of Blacks have hypertension, and 70 percent of retirement-age Blacks.

FDA data shows that Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and others are underrepresented in clinical research in the U.S. According to U.S. Census



data, Black or African Americans represent 13.4% of the U.S. population, yet make up only 5% of clinical trial participants. The disparity is even greater for those of Hispanic or Latino origin. They represent only 1% of clinical trial participants.

If the FDA approves any drug or treatment, it will be prescribed for people of all different ages, genders, races, and ethnicities; so, it is essential that data reflects the effectiveness and potential side effects for all groups. So, if we are not included in the clinical trial, how in the world are we supposed to know that it’s safe and effective for us? How do we make an informed decision?

Lastly, I have to address the issue of rationing. Who will even be offered the opportunity to get the vaccine first? How will we give priority to different groups or communities whose case load and death rate indicate that they are most vulnerable and deserve to be vaccinated first? In an ideal world, the elderly, Black and Brown communities, and essential workers. The overwhelming majority of the “essential workers” in this country are members of Black and Brown communities. Going to work, therefore, could mean being exposed to a virus that disproportionately targets those “essential workers” with underlying health conditions.

The social and structural factors that make Black and Brown people, in this country, especially vulnerable are long-standing and historical. What makes it all so frustrating and tragic is that some of the things that could have fixed them were not done...ever!

Let’s do what’s necessary, and for once focus on health literacy, equitable distribution of healthcare; and full inclusion and retention in the clinical research for COVID-19 vaccines.

I’ll end with this. Health spending totaled \$74.6 billion in 1970. By 2000, health expenditures had reached about \$1.4 trillion, and in 2018 the amount spent on health had more than doubled to \$3.6 trillion. Yet, only one in 10 adults in the United States are health literate. Only about half of Americans say they would get a COVID-19 vaccine; 40 percent of Blacks say they won’t, and 32 percent of Blacks say they are unsure. That represents 70 percent of all Black people! We deserve to be able to make informed decisions about our healthcare, just like everyone else.

Remember, I’m not a doctor. I just sound like one! Take good care of yourself and live the best life possible! The information included in this column is for educational purposes only. I do not dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a replacement form of treatment for physical, mental or medical problems by your doctor either directly or indirectly. Glenn Ellis, MPH is a Visiting Scholar at The National Bioethics Center at Tuskegee University and a Harvard Medical School Research Bioethics Fellow. Visit: www.glennellis.com.

Child Care Grants for Families from the Spokane County CARES Act

Apply Today

- Eligible families must reside within Spokane County
- Families receiving Working Connections Child Care Assistance are ineligible
- Grant awards will be paid directly to providers to cover cost of family tuition
- **Apply by December 10, 2020 - limited funds available until expended**

Easy to apply online
www.community-minded.org/caresactgrant

Questions on eligibility requirements or submitting an application? Call or text:

Nina at 509-362-2521 or Victoria at 509-434-4702





Q & A: HOW COVID VACCINES ARE BEING MADE

How are COVID vaccines being produced faster?



Usually vaccine testing and production are done as separate steps, but because of the pandemic, vaccines are being developed on parallel tracks - meaning we're still doing both steps, just at the same time.

How are the vaccines being tested?



Several different COVID vaccines are in testing right now. Each of them goes through more than one clinical trial; first with a small group of volunteers, then a couple hundred, then thousands.

How will the vaccines get approved?



Not all COVID vaccine versions that go through clinical trials will make it to the final stages of testing and approval. Produced vaccines that do not pass will be destroyed. But for those that do make it past clinical trials, a team of medical experts will examine test results and possible side effects.

If the vaccine works and it's safe, it gets approved. **Then it gets to you.**

Learn more at
CovidVaccineWA.org

DEMOCRACY PERSISTS

Over the past four years we've witnessed some of the cruelest policies in our nation's history, but we've also rallied, flooding the streets, the airports, and the courts to fight for freedom, equity, and equality. With your support and determination, you showed you were more than up for the task. Now, through their vote, the bedrock activity of our democracy, Americans have sent a clear message that they stand against the politics of division, hate, and fear.

Now, we must turn our attention to boldly leading freedom forward, because it's never been about one party, person, or president. The work of defending our rights and fighting for progress started long before the current president was sworn in—and it won't end when he leaves office in January. You have our vow that we will continue fighting for your rights and holding our leaders accountable, regardless of political party. The ACLU sued the Trump administration and his predecessor's administration countless times. Our approach to the Biden administration will be no different.

Together with our partners here in Washington and across the nation, we are actively seeking to reunite the families of more than 650 children who were separated at the border, battling the growth of government surveillance, protecting your privacy, transforming the criminal legal system and policing, representing LGBTQ rights, defending the right to vote, and through all of these efforts and so much more, fighting for racial justice and equity. Because we cannot rest until we've built an America where equity and equality aren't just ideals of our Constitution—they are a lived reality for all people.

We are in this together,



Michele Storms
Executive Director, ACLU of Washington

ACLU
Washington

Tongues of Fire

By Beverly Spears



An Invitation to Brave Space

A friend sent me a joke on Facebook the other day that read, “I will definitely be wide awake at midnight on New Year’s Eve. Not so much to welcome in 2021, but to be good and sure 2020 leaves.” All I can say is, Amen!

It’s traditional to pause and take stock of the outgoing year. As much as many of us may prefer not to do that this year, I think it’s important to take the time to acknowledge both the trauma and the triumph of 2020. More accurately, it was trauma, on top of trauma, on top of trauma that plagued us. 2020 brought fresh hell, with the novel coronavirus – COVID-19 pandemic. As I write, a quarter million people in the United States have died from the virus. There are well over 11 million total cases, and more cases are rising every day. Real souls, real pain, real death. That was overlay to the trauma of four years of an abusive Administration, and a President who I personally feel should be brought to trial for crimes against humanity. All of this is overlying hundreds of years of continued systemic racism, and xenophobia, all of which was brought into stark relief and came to a head in 2020.

2020 was not without its triumphs. The people of America democratically removed a would-be despot from the Office of the President of the United States, through a free and fair election. We’ve elected the first Black and South Asian woman to become the Vice President of the United States. Collectively, America finally became outraged by systemic police brutality against Black people, taking to the streets by the tens of thousands all across the country to declare that Black Lives Matter, and demanding systemic reform and restructuring of law enforcement

institutions.

Any reflection would be incomplete without asking what we’ve learned from it all. From birth to death, life presents constant lessons. The Divine is always putting a mirror up to us. God is always being revealed in both triumph and tragedy.

Watching the painfully slow late results come in between election day and Biden/Harris being declared the winners, I found myself fixated on that Blue/Red election map and its virtually even divide. That ideological divide long predates Donald Trump’s Presidency. He did not create it, but he gave it shockingly destructive powers.

What I realized looking at that map is that this ideological divide has morphed into something that should trouble us greatly. The people on either side now see each other not as opponents, but as enemies. But there were some surprises, like states where results were not as predicted. It gives me hope that as divided as we are, perhaps the line between the two ideologies may be more permeable than we thought.

What do we do with the revelations of 2020? We’re all too aware of the crisis, but what might the opportunities be?

I’ve been listening to the podcasts of an amazing young Brother named Baratunde Thurston. What this extremely gifted, insightful and entertaining man brings to our consciousness through his own vision and the vision and work of the guests on his podcast, is manna to a cultural-war-weary soul.

Baratunde Thurston is an award-winning writer, activist and comedian. He produced Emmy-nominated episodes for The Daily Show, advised the Obama White House,

and wrote the New York Times bestseller *How To Be Black*. He’s the executive producer and host of two podcasts: *How To Citizen with Baratunde* and *We’re Having A Moment*. On the advice of a friend, I started listening to How To Citizen with Baratunde. In it Baratunde helps us recognize the incredible opportunity we have to bring forth from this moment a revolution for radical love and justice.

In the introduction to the podcast he says, “Democracy is at a tipping point. Which way it goes is up to us. Let’s tip it in the direction that gives more justice, and more power for more people.” He sees the pandemic and the evolving political revolution that began this past spring in response to the death of George Floyd, as opportunities to re-imagine and reclaim the way we citizen. To Baratunde, the word citizen is not a noun but a verb; a verb that is “big enough to invite us all to participate in determining our society, how it works and for whom it works; whom being the many, not just the few.”

To me, the foundation of this revolutionary work is relationship. It’s reimagining our relationship to each other and to ourselves. To do this work requires the kind of commitment many of us find difficult to make. It requires courage and bravery and discipline. It requires deep listening; listening to the stories of people like us and people not like us. It requires radical honesty and fierce love. We’re going to have to drop some of our protective armor, particularly some of the steel with which we protect our hearts.

My church congregation has a group called Advocates For Social Justice. One of its projects is “The Diversity Project.” At the start of every meeting we read our mission and our vision out loud. We also

read a statement we’ve adopted from The People’s Supper, an organization that seeks to transform community by fostering hard conversations about our most isolating experiences. It’s become for us both a mantra and a manifesto.

An Invitation to Brave Space by Micky Scott Bey Jones

Together we will create “brave space,” because there is no such thing as a “safe space.” We exist in the real world. We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds. In this space, we seek to turn down the volume of the outside world. We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere. We call each other to more truth and love. We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow. We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know. We will not be perfect. This space will not be perfect. It will not always be what we wish it to be, but It will be our brave space together, and we will work on it, side by side.

I’m relieved to see the sunset on the year 2020, but I’m not without gratitude for its lessons and its gifts. Greatest among them were the hundreds of thousands of people who poured into streets of cities and towns across America for weeks to declare that Black Lives Matter!

As we move into 2021, I invite you into this world of new possibilities and new realities, this world of inclusion and respect, this world where we listen deeply, think critically and love fiercely. I invite you into this Brave Space.

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



SPOKANE FAITH & VALUES

SpokaneFāVS informs and builds faith and non-faith communities through digital journalism, online and offline engagement opportunities.

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If you stick a knife in
my back nine inches and
pull it out six inches,
there's no progress.
If you pull it all the way out
that's not progress.
Progress is healing the wound
that the blow made.
And they haven't even
pulled the knife out
much less healed the wound.
They won't even admit
the knife is there.
~Malcom X
(March 1964)

We Hear You

By Grace June

This series is an artistic response to my observations of inequity in America, specifically regarding governmental systems or institutions that purport equal protection and service to all citizens, where the corrupt are protected rather than held accountable. The concept with the police tape was inspired when I heard of George Floyd’s death. This collection is called *We Hear You* in response to those who have said “I can’t breathe.”

Police brutality is clearly another situation where the corrupt are protected rather than held accountable. I’m not saying it’s a few bad apples or simply a matter of poor training or any of the other things I have learned that propose explanations or solutions. I am no expert. I’m an artist and I’m asking questions. I partially make art to learn and grow, so to see what it would look like and how it would feel, I combined the police tape with the imagery of the Statue of Liberty, Lady Justice, and the Lincoln Memorial. I added the figures of Madonna and Saint Sebastian as well, because those mythic archetypes who sacrificed everything hold true to this day thinking of people who are killed and the mothers who bury them. Combining the tape with those figures is my way of questioning the hypocrisy of our systems throughout history, from the top of our government down to local levels where we witness so many horrors.

I want to generate questions with this imagery. I notice a tendency to rely on answers and certainty (one side vs. another), which closes off possibilities and openness with one another. I hope viewers will bring their unique experiences and perspectives and talk about their interpretations thoughtfully and respectfully. I’m an optimist and believe it’s possible!



Ginger Ewing (Lady Justice)



Cylas Palacios
(Saint Sebastian)



Michelle Michael
(Madonna)



Bethany Montgomery
(Liberty)



Afaria Duke (Lincoln)

Imagine Jazz Still Offering Spokane Programs

Funded by two different grants from Spokane Arts, Imagine Jazz will still be able to offer premium programing this season. The events will be virtual. Throughout the season the public can expect to see a variety of online events including educational workshops and livestreams by local and regional artists in addition to content by internationally renowned guest artists.

The first of these virtual events will occur December 12th with the dynamite line-up of Jaleel Shaw, Carl Allen and Marcus Strickland. Both Shaw and Strickland were finalists in the prestigious Thelonious Monk saxophone competition as well as members of the legendary Roy Haynes Fountain of Youth Band. Allen’s discography includes jazz legends Freddie Hubbard, Benny Golson and Jackie McLean, among others.

In this first zoom workshop the artists will deliver a demonstration on a specific topic followed by a combination of question and answer session and critique and feedback for



local students. Participants will not be on screen, except during the time students are being worked with. For most of the workshop the artist will be the only one on screen.

While all ages and levels are welcome to attend, this first clinic will be geared toward serious music students and professionals. The workshop will be offered for a fee of \$10 per workshop, or \$20 for all 3 workshops. Scholarships are available on a need basis; registration opens December 1st and will close on December 10th.

Imagine Jazz founder Rachel Bade-McMurphy states “The Guest Artist Series is the key to our mission.” Past guest artists have included Jeremy Pelt, Logan Richardson, The Black Art Jazz Collective, Jonathan Barber and more. “We want to create a pipeline in which our local students and community members could learn directly from the masters. We’ve chosen artists that are some of the best in the field who have recorded or toured with some of the most prominent historical figures.”

The full line-up will be released as schedules confirm. One upcoming offering includes a livestream concert of legendary pianist George Cables in a duet format with trumpet player Jeremy Pelt. The duo will be filmed live in Cables’ living room and broadcast to Spokane in early 2021.

Some additional upcoming zoom workshops include Imagine Jazz Artist in Residence Jason Palmer, Seattle



based vocalist Greta Matassa and members of the Imagine Collective Rachel Bade-McMurphy, Brendan McMurphy and Lauren McKinley.

Virtual workshops will be on a variety of subjects from improvisation and instrument specific subjects, songwriting and more. Some of the workshops will be geared towards beginners and young students, while others will be highly specialized towards advanced topics.

Find updates and announcements at www.imaginejazz.org as well as the Imagine Jazz Spokane Facebook and Instagram pages.



A woman with curly hair, wearing a white cardigan, is sitting on a light-colored couch. She is holding a white mug and looking down at an open book. The background is a bright, indoor setting with a window.

Don't let your space heater fool you.

Space heaters can actually increase your winter bill if used improperly. Only use them to heat a single, occupied room, and be sure to lower the temperature setting on your furnace while the space heater’s in use.

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Pictured: Boeey's Gourmet



Pictured: Inter-Tribal Beauty



This program is funded by the City of Spokane with CARES Act dollars.

Buying and Living Local:

What does that mean in the Black Community?

By Latesha Wood
Founder of Legacy Learners LLC and board member for the Spokane Independent Metro Business Alliance

This global pandemic has shed a spotlight on the many injustices the Black community has been subjected to and maintained through systemic racism. People are becoming informed and are no longer okay with being complacent. It is simply not alright to be complicit in systems that continue to disproportionately affect the Black community. Big banks, celebrities and major nonprofits have now vowed pledges to support small Black-owned businesses. This is much needed aid but will only help keep Black businesses afloat in the short term. We need long term sustainable solutions.

Although the 2020 Presidential Election is now over, you can make your voice heard through small actions every day: voting with your dollar. It's not as straightforward or as easy with all the complex inner workings of our society. The Black community must consider needs vs. wants, affordability vs convenience, as well as overt and covert discrimination.

We as average consumers can support small businesses, especially Black businesses. Why should this be our goal? Well for one, buying local builds community. The Black community has been and is targeted and looked down upon. We need to get back to building connections and supporting busi-



nesses by and for the Black community. Two, buying local builds wealth. How long does the Black dollar stay in the Black community? Only 6 hours! We can do better in building a vibrant strong local economy. Three, buying local could end up saving you money. Local businesses sometimes offer customers reward loyalty programs.

If our goal is to build a strong diverse local economy we need a plan of action to buy and #livelocalinw.

Plan of Action:
Step 1: Look at the products and services that you already buy and commit to swapping out one product a month and begin buying it from a locally owned business.

Step 2: Get to know the locally owned businesses in your area and find out how you can support them.

Step 3: Volunteer one hour a week to a small business. Majority of small businesses have 0 to 1 employees. Ask a business owner if you can help support them.

How can we accomplish this? As a consumer, reference the LiveLocal directory before you make a purchase. Use the local business directory to find local businesses that offer the services and goods you need.

Secondly, encourage local businesses to sign up in the local directory. And lastly, recommend the business to others.

We have the power to live in a thriving diverse local area.

Content Sponsored By



Business Spotlight: Green Filter Guys

What is Green Filter Guys Inc.?

Green Filter Guys Inc. is a local company that provides smokers a cleaner smoking experience. We use a biodegradable filter material in a two-piece filter tip design called "The Smoke Shield."

What is The Smoke Shield?

The Smoke Shield is a two-piece filter tip designed for tobacco cigarettes and marijuana joints. It is made up of an adapter attached to the end of the cigarette and or joint and a mouthpiece containing our biodegradable filter material. The Smoke Shield provides a cleaner and smoother puff.

How long have you been doing this?

We (Lloyd and Ryan, Co-Founders of Green Filter Guys), first started development of the Smoke Shield in July of 2019, at the Technology Commercialization Academy at Eastern Washington University (EWU).



What recognition have you received?

We competed in EWU's Technology Commercialization Academy, where we received the Most Viable Business Award and were finalists in the Collegiate Entrepreneur Organization competition in

Tampa, Florida. Following that, we competed in the National Science Foundation's I-Corps program through Washington State University and received a customer discovery grant. In 2020, we were accepted into the Wild Card Round of Texas Christian University's Values and Ventures competition, which was unfortunately canceled due to COVID. We were able to compete in EWU's Eagle Nest Pitch Contest, however, and we competed in three elimination rounds and received the award for Best Tech Commercialization.

Would you consider your company to be pro-smoking?

We are neither pro-smoking or anti-smoking! We believe that people will continue to smoke regardless of the toxins that are being inhaled. As a result, we don't encourage people to smoke or to quit smoking, we simply provide those who do smoke with a cleaner way to smoke.



Where can your product be found?

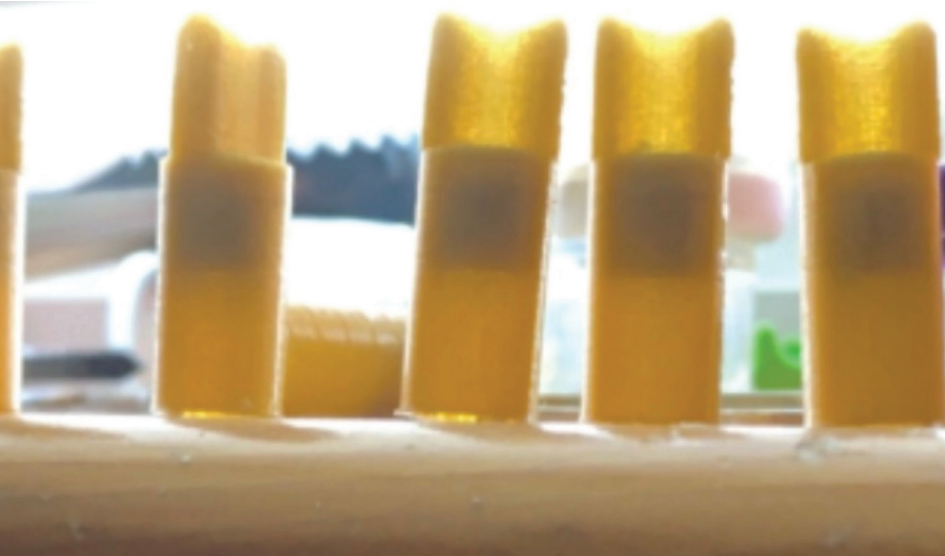
We plan to sell The Smoke Shield in dispensaries within Spokane County. However, as our company grows, we would like to sell our product in tobacco shops and online, as well as through a subscription service.

What does a package of The Smoke Shield include?

An initial purchase includes a reusable adapter, fitted for both cigarettes and joints, and ten disposable mouthpieces. We also offer mouthpiece refills containing 30 filter tips.

How can we contact you and stay informed about your progress and where we can get your products?

You can follow us on Instagram @greenfilterguys and on LinkedIn @Green Filter Guys Inc. You can also follow us on our website greenfilterguys.com and subscribe to our email list there!



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Sponsored by the Carl Maxey Center and the Spokane Black Business & Professional Alliance

Carl Maxey Center Update

With Remodel Underway CMC Hosts Building Walkthrough



Things have been very busy at the Carl Maxey Center since our last update in September. I'm sorry that I haven't been able to do monthly updates as I had hoped, but there just aren't enough hours in the day.

The most exciting news is that Phase I of our remodel is finally underway. The first phase will build out a community gathering space for meetings, training, events and program delivery. Phase I has been fully funded through a combination of donations, private funds and an appropriation of \$350,000 in the WA State Capital budget.

We wanted to show off our progress and say thank you to our state representatives, so we invited Senator Andy Billig and Representa-

tives Timm Ormsby and Marcus Riccelli to join our Project Manager Rusty Pritchard, General Contractor Deacon Band and our Board members for a socially distanced walk-through on November 10. Thank you Andy, Timm and Marcus for your support!!!

It is exciting to see what was once simply plans on paper starting to turn into an actual center that will house some pretty amazing programs for the Black community. The target date for completion of Phase I is May 2021, so stay tuned.

Thanks to the hard work of our outreach specialist, Brianna Rollins, who is focused on offering support to local Black-owned businesses, Spokane now has a Black Business

Directory. If you haven't see it yet, check it out at blackspokane.com. And make sure to spread the word to any Black owned businesses that you know about. We are trying to spotlight as many businesses as we can.

Brianna is also working with a coalition of community members to develop a Black Business and Professional Alliance and we hosted our first BBPA Roundtable via zoom in September with thirty people in attendance. You'll be hearing more about the BBPA soon.

The Carl Maxey Center has also partnered with the Spokane Ministers Fellowship, the Emmanuel Family Life Center and Jesus is the Answer City Church to participate in rental assistance programs that are being of-

fered through both the City and County of Spokane. Our goal is to reach members of Spokane's Black community who are struggling to pay their rent and prevent evictions during this pandemic. *(See the flyer below).*

We have also partnered with Comcast who donated money to create a Student Tech Fund to help students in our community who are remote learning and may be missing the technology supplies that they need.

Finally, a huge thank you to the individuals who keep making donations and to the organizations that have supported our work since our last update: Group Health Foundation, Innovia, US Bank & Better Health Together. 2021 is going to be an amazing year!

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GOVERNMENT / POLITICS

2020 Election Was Historic For Washington State’s African American Community

(Reprinted from the Seattle Medium)

By Aaron Allen

The 2020 election season has been historical for African Americans both locally and nationally. From Kamala Harris, the first Black woman to win the seat of Vice President of the United States, to an unprecedented show of political force as African Americans claimed a record number of seats in the State of Washington.

Over the years, Washington State’s African American community has had its fair share of political accomplishments. From John Conna, the first Black political appointee in Washington in 1889, to Seaborn Collins, who became the first African American elected into an official office in 1892, the push for political representation has been a constant goal of the local African American community. Political pioneers like Charles Stokes, Sam Smith, Margaret Proctor, Ron Sims, Norm Rice and others have helped pave the way for the slate of African American candidates who successfully campaigned during the 2020 election.

“Black leaders in our community have had a presence in Washington politics since the founding of the state in 1889,” says Jamila Taylor, who won her race for State Rep in the 30th Legislative District. “Without a doubt, we have run campaigns focused on equity, shared values and community uplift. This year, we demonstrated our leadership in the face of unprecedented challenges with the public health crisis, economic uncertainty and racial unrest. This leadership is what our communities need. And, this is why we made history in this 2020 election season.”

Headlined by the historic election of Marilyn Strickland to congress in the 10th Congressional District, African American candidates mounted strong showings in the 2020 Washington State General Election.

One race, the State Representative Position 2 contest in the 37th District, had two African American candidates – *Chukundi Salisbury* and *Kirsten Harris-Talley* – going head-to-head to fill the seat vacated by former State Rep. Eric Pettigrew. Talley-Harris went on to win that race to represent the constituents of the 37th District. In her view receiving the trust of the voters was a humbling experience.

“I am humbled so many neighbors are with us in our community campaign,” says Talley-Harris. “As one of ten Black women who ran this and to have so many of us advance, it means so much.”

Two years ago, it was a measure of progress to have five African American legislators in Olympia, and now with African American awareness rising with the Black Lives Movement, and the diversity in the Presidential campaigns, African American political engagement produced a significant number of firsts in Washington State political history.



Former Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland

In the 10th Congressional District, Former Tacoma Mayor *Marilyn Strickland* became the first African American/Korean American from the state of Washington to be elected to Congress, as she posted a 14-point win over her opponent.

“I am humbled and honored by the trust the people of the South Sound have placed in me to be their voice in the United States Congress. I want to say how grateful I am to all those who have stood alongside me in this journey. From the bottom of my heart: Thank you, says Strickland. “It’s time for our community and our country to come together, to show compassion and respect for each other, to beat this virus, and to recover better than before. I know we will.”

This year, the level of African American voter engagement was historic, as African American participation both nationally and locally hit record levels, and the results were well documented.

African Americans won legislative seats in both the 30th and 44th Legislative Districts. *Jamila Taylor* and incumbent legislator *Jesse Johnson* both won over 60% of the vote in their respective races in the 30th District, while incumbent legislator *John Lovick* and *April Berg* had equally impressive victories in the 44th District.

T’wina Nobles, a candidate for State Senate in the 28th District, held on to victory with a slim margin of 50.7% of the votes, to make her the first Black lawmaker in the Washington State Senate since 2010, but *Tanisha Harris*, candidate for State Rep. in the 17th District and *Joy Stanford*, candidate for State Rep in the 26th District, ultimately fell behind in their races.

Incumbent State Rep. *Debra Entenman* garnered 60% of the vote in her bid for re-election and *Melanie Morgan* was re-elected in the 29th District with commanding 64% of the votes.

David Hackney posted an impressive win over incumbent State Rep. Zack Hudgins in the 11th District, which encompasses Renton and Tukwila, as he hauled in 61 % of the votes.

As Chairperson of the Black Member Caucus, incumbent State Rep. Debra Entenman is a veteran of politics in Washington and she is enthusiastic and honored to have won her bid and excited about welcoming all the new elected officials. “I am grateful to have the opportunity and responsibility to go back to Olympia in 2021 and continue to champion our values. Access, integrity and equity. Together we will stand for all and leave no one left behind.”

Historically, the African American community has not been monolithic. Our perspectives are as diverse as the people that make up African Americans. So to see an organic Black consciousness come together, with different backgrounds and different neighborhoods, step up and rise to the occasion particularly in hard times, is a testament of our Black people’s fortitude. Berg attests to the diversity in thought and characters of the people who took on the challenge of bettering our communities through civic duty.

“We did not do this as a coordinated effort. We all jumped into our various races because we wanted to serve our community and as you can see we’re all from really different communities all over the state,” said Berg. “Which means that the Black community is not a monolithic and where we live is not all in one district and so, I’m excited to be serving with such amazing people, I am excited that we are serving the communities in which we live in.”

The voters have spoken this year in a historical and unprecedented manner and the trust of the voters is the foundation in which these elected officials both nationally and locally will work to rebuild a better nation. Entenman expresses her gratitude to the voters and her excitement to get to work.

“We are excited by these historic firsts shared by our Democratic party leaders and our representatives at both state and national elections,” Entenman says. “Voters of all cultures and perspectives were essential in this unprecedented turnout.”

Editors Note: *G. Helen Whitener* adds to the history of this year's election, winning her race to become the first Black woman to serve as a justice on the Washington State Supreme Court. Whitener previously served five years as a Pierce County Superior Court judge and spent 14 years practicing law, including as a prosecutor, a defense attorney and a managing partner of a law firm. Whitener, who is immigrated to the United States from Trinidad as a teenager, is also Washington state’s first Black LGBT judge.

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Yes, the Holidays will be Different

No, that doesn't mean you can't have any fun!
In fact, if you get creative, it might be the best holiday season yet!



Gather Outside with 5 or Fewer

You can still see family or friends, just do it safely by staying outdoors. Outdoor gatherings are permitted as long as they include no more than five people from outside your household in a space where everyone can stay 6 ft (2 meters) apart. Enjoy the crisp air and remember to mask up.



Have Family Game Night

Dust off the old game boards, light a fire (or find a virtual fire online) and whip up some hot cocoa. Board games inspire connection and can help elevate the feeling of happiness.



Go Virtual

- This holiday season, stay safe by going virtual - here are some ideas:
- Cozy up on the couch and reach out to a friend or relative
 - Have a virtual dinner together
 - Learn or cook a recipe together with family and friends in preparation for the big meal
 - Host a remote potluck—assign dishes to friends and family and (safely) deliver to each other's homes and try them together, virtually

Find more ideas for celebrating the holidays
and living life safely at srhd.org/blogs



“Unity”

POWER 2 THE POETRY

EXPRESS, EXPOSE, IGNITE

A Poem by Bethany 'B.Lyte' Montgomery

Founder & President of Power 2 The Poetry

We all created equal
Got good vs evil
We all just people
But it don't seem so
Some put on a pedestal
Some lives seem worth more

Racism, Capitalism, Terrorism
All the ism's
All lives matter
A truth that isn't
Our history is hidden

So now we on a mission
To uncover the truth
They try and bury the proof
Try and change up the rules
Deny us the tools
They want us to lose
Give us guns and booze
Don't cover our news
Force us to move

But here's what we do
Organize, Protest
Resist the resistance
Provide assistance
Run for Congress
Control our dollars
Be entrepreneurs
Our own damn bosses

We betta together
We betta together
We betta together

Less Eulogies
More unity

Less Eulogies
More unity
World Peace

Foundation is everything
Love is surrounding me
Family is proud of me
City in back of me

Support is the key
To get you to wherever you wan-
na be
We can succeed
We can achieve

Only need opportunity
Build up our community
Watch it grow beautifully
Believe

We all come from above
We all connected
All born naked
Blank slate

Then the world affects us

Demonstrations
Cross the nation
On our knees
And we prayin
For changes
We campaignin
Against hatred

This world is what we make it
So let's get back to the basics
Put a smile on our faces
And all sit at the table

We all able
Erase labels
Dismantle systems of oppression
Switch directions
No micro aggressions
Just love and affection

Here's A life lesson
We all connected
Open your eyes
And see the same reflection

Everyone is special

No more division
Or collision
Because our differences
Meant to coexist
We can all be friends
So let's all join hands

Stand up for justice
We sisters and bothers
We need one another
No one should suffer
We live in abundance

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Equipping Families to End the Cycle of Homelessness

FamilyPromise

of Spokane

Focused on Mission of Ending Homelessness

By Craig Howard

Soaking wet and exhausted from walking in the freezing rain, Michael, Hayley and their three kids showed up at Family Promise of Spokane. To Michael, it seemed like a low point. “I wasn’t sure about it at first,” Michael said. “But after awhile, it felt like one, big family.”

At the Open Doors Family Emergency Shelter, food, clothing and steady helpings of encouragement brought reassurance and hope. The family was connected with resources to help them both survive and thrive. “If it weren’t for Family Promise, we would’ve ended up hungry and cold,” said Hayley.

Michael was able to find a job at Walmart in the Garden Center and within less than a month, the family had transitioned into a rental house with a backyard and a fireplace.

These days, Michael and Hayley are both students at Spokane Community College, studying for careers in nursing and law, respectively. Looking back, they express gratitude for the support and compassion provided by a shelter on a rainy winter’s afternoon. “Family Promise has helped me for life,” Michael said.

Since 1997, Family Promise of Spokane has been equipping families and communities with the tools to end the cycle of homelessness. Last year, the nonprofit supported 386 families – 1,152 moms, dads and kids – along the path to stability. Collaborating with close to 100 local resources, Family Promise works to eradicate homelessness through a wrap-around approach that focuses on self-worth and potential, treating each family with dignity and respect. Around 80 percent of the staff has experienced homelessness themselves. Families receive mentoring and support for two years after leaving the shelter into housing of their own.

“We are focusing on the hidden homeless,” says Family Promise Executive Director Joe Ader. “It’s probably what most people don’t think of when they picture homelessness. These families are living out of their cars, in motels or with family and friends. But the impact of not having a permanent home is real.”

Family Promise has been part of the local social service landscape since 1997. It began humbly as the Interfaith Hospitality Network with a collection of area churches providing shelter space and help with transportation and food. Linda Barnes was the catalyst, helping Spokane become the 49th Family Promise chapter in the nation. There are now over 200 chapters in 43 states.

Steve Allen, who served as executive director from 2008 to 2013 said his predecessor Madelyn Bafus set the stage for what Family Promise would become. “That foundation and that grit really defines the organization,” Allen said. “Family Promise invests in people so they can go on and do things they never thought were possible.”

Open Doors now operates out of the former Cassano’s grocery store on Mission and Napa. It is the only permanent, low-barrier, 24/7 drop-in shelter for families in Spokane. Family Promise has a 94-percent success rate of families not returning to homelessness. “We keep families together and leverage the strength they already have,” Ader said. “The reward is seeing them be happy and successful on their own.”

To learn more about Family Promise of Spokane, visit www.familypromiseof-spokane.org or call 509-747-5487.

Photo courtesy Family Promise of Spokane

Building Multigenerational Wealth: Lessons from 2020

By Barry Simmons

(Source: blackenterprise.com)

It's been a tough year for many of us, no doubt. The emotional and financial toll of the pandemic, followed by a full-blown recession, hurt many U.S. families.

While we all are still grappling with the spread of COVID-19, studies already show that for Black families, many of the existing inequalities have been exacerbated due to the pandemic.

Even though it may not seem this way now, the economic disruption and the ongoing uncertainty we've faced this year also taught us a few valuable lessons when it comes to building multigenerational wealth. And reflecting on those lessons today may help us be better prepared for the next time the unexpected happens.

Start talking now

Not being able to build on the financial knowledge of their parents and grandparents, many first-generation wealth builders grew up unaware of money management strategies. Today, we have made strides in acquiring wealth, plus building the knowledge base necessary for smart money management techniques. So it's essential that we share that knowledge, by openly talking to our family and loved ones about our finances—even if it may seem uncomfortable at first.

For instance, you can ask your parents what would they have done differently in terms of budgeting, saving, or investing. Or you could start by explaining the basic financial concepts to your children. This communication can help ensure that the financial knowledge you acquire today gets passed on to generations to come. And of course, there are almost unlimited resources available for continually educating yourself and others about building multigenerational wealth, including various financial publications, apps, or free courses.

Review your budget and your credit

In the past months, we were forced to take a long and hard look at our spending. For those of us that were able to keep jobs, we had a chance to reevaluate our spending priorities and assess what our needs are. But it shouldn't take a pandemic to force us to reassess our budget, including any outstanding debt.

To take a fresh look, make sure you have a clear view on how much money comes in and out monthly, starting with how much debt you have. Having to pay—and especially fall behind on—high interest debt like credit cards, for instance, can have long-term implications on your financial wellness.

Already, studies show that Black households are far more likely to be burdened by credit card debt. This increases the risk of potentially missing a few payments and negatively impacting your credit, which in turn can affect what you pay for different types of insurance, or hurt your chances of qualifying for a mortgage, for instance. So try budgeting within your means and, when you

can, set aside an emergency fund.

Prioritize emergency fund and automate savings

Despite income gains for Black families in the U.S., their wealth is still on average about one-tenth that of white families. Most American households don't have cash set aside to cover sudden shocks, such as job loss or emergency repairs. The prolonged impacts of the pandemic—including the health crisis, heightened unemployment, and market uncertainty—underline the importance of being ready for lengthy financial shocks.

We hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us, but to be ready for whatever may come next, try prioritizing the creation of an emergency fund that would cover three to six months of your expenses. Setting aside even \$25-\$50 of each paycheck will eventually get you to where you need to be. And in order to stay on track, try automating this process.

Once you have a solid emergency fund, keep at it: continue saving, with your retirement in mind. About 60% of white families have at least one retirement account, while just 34% of Black families do. If you have an employee-sponsored 401(k), aim to contribute at least the amount that your employer matches, if any. You can then slowly build up to contributing 15% of your annual income toward retirement. You'll thank the power of compounding over time.

There is no way around investing

Black investors have a tendency to be more risk-averse. Many may prefer saving, instead of investing, while others often prioritize other expenses—including caring for family and loved ones—and as a result may have less money to invest. But the fact remains: history has shown that the best way to build multigenerational wealth is to get invested, invest consistently, and stay invested.

And you don't need to start big: buy \$200 worth of an investment, such as an ETF or mutual fund, and watch the price movements. Get used to the ups and down, and continue dipping your toe further. You have to be in it—and I mean for the long-haul—to win it. And the longer you delay, the less likely you are to meet your financial goals. If you start investing at 35, instead of 25 for instance, you could end up with roughly half the amount by the time you are 65. Talking to a financial adviser can also help you properly evaluate the risks versus rewards of investing.

Bottom line: 2020 is almost gone, but some of its money lessons should stick, especially if you want to be able to create multigenerational wealth. Regardless of where you are in your financial journey, you should think about whether or not your strategy is positioned to withstand potential adversities. This starts with creating a solid budget, investing (and staying invested), and building up your retirement savings.

This article was written by Barry Simmons, Managing Director, East Division for Chase Wealth Management, J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.

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How to Boost Your Credit Score: Advice for First-Time Home Buyers



Photo Credit: stockshares/iStock

By Jamie Wiebe

Are you a first-time home buyer wondering how to improve your credit score? If you need a mortgage, a good credit score, also called a FICO score, is essential—and it's within your control. In a nutshell, a credit score is a simplified calculation of your history of paying back debts and making regular payments on loans. If you're borrowing money to buy a home, lenders want to know you'll pay them back in a timely manner, and a credit score is an easy estimate of those odds.

Here's your crash course on this all-important little number, and how to whip it into the best home-buying shape possible.

Pull your credit report

There are three major U.S. credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion), and each releases its own credit scores and reports (a more detailed history that's used to determine your score). Their scores should be roughly equivalent, although they do pull from different sources. For example, Experian considers on-time rent payments while TransUnion has detailed information about previous employers.

Assess where you stand

It's simple: The better your credit history, the higher your score—and the better your opportunities for a home loan. The Federal Housing Administration requires a minimum credit score of 580 to permit a 3.5% down payment, and major lenders often require at least 620, if not more. So what can you do if your credit report is in less than shipshape? Don't panic, there are ways to clean it up.

How to improve your credit score with error disputes

A 2013 Federal Trade Commission study found that 5% of credit reports contain errors that can erroneously ding your score. So if you spot any, start by sending a dispute letter to the bureau, providing as much documentation as possible, per FTC guidelines. You'll also need to contact the organization that provided the bad intel, such as a bank or medical provider, and ask it to update the info with the

bureau. This may take a while, and you may need documentation to make your case. But once the bad info is removed, you should see a bump in your score.

Erase one-time mistakes

So you've made a late payment or two—who hasn't? Call the company that registered the late payment and ask that it be removed from your record. "If you had an oopsy and missed just a payment or two, most companies will indeed tell their reporting division to remove this from your credit report," says Forrest. Granted, this won't work if you have a history of late payments, but for accidents and small errors, it's an easy way to improve your credit score.

Increase your limits

One no-brainer way to increase your credit score is to simply pay off your debt. Not an option right now? Here's a cool loophole: Ask your credit card companies to increase your credit limit instead. This improves your debt-to-credit ratio, which compares how much you owe to how much you can borrow.

Pay on time

If you're often late with payments, now's the time to change. You have the power to improve your credit score yourself. Commit to always paying your bills on time; consider signing up for automatic payments so it's guaranteed to get done.

Give yourself time

Unfortunately, negative items (such as those habitually late or nonexistent payments) can stay on your report for up to seven years. The good news? Changing your habits makes a big difference in the "payment history" segment of your report, which accounts for 35% of your score. That's why it's essential to start early so that you're sitting pretty once you're shopping for homes and find one that makes you swoon.

Once you've set your credit on a better path, it's time to tackle the next major hurdle: saving for a down payment.

Source: Realtor.com



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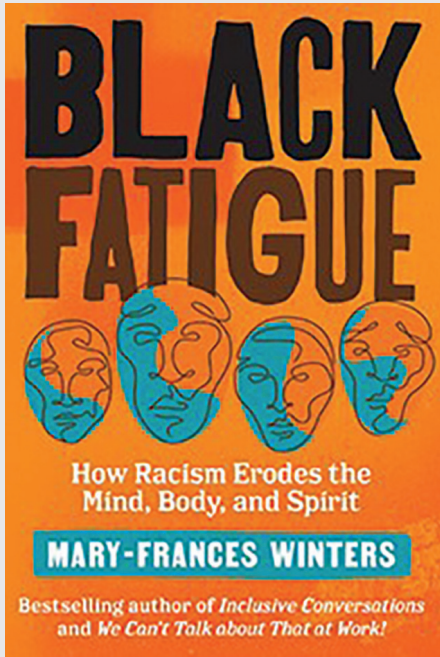
BLACK FATIGUE

Black Fatigue: How Racism Erodes the Mind, Body and Spirit by Mary-Frances Winters (Berrett-Koehler Publishers) is a beautifully written treatise on the effects of racism on the Black psyche. Drawing from her own experiences as a first-generation American born of African Canadian parents, her endurance of racism in education and in corporate America, and deeply researched facts and statistics, *Black Fatigue* examines the collective phenomenon of having had enough of the gut-punch of continued institutional racism.

Winters empirically proves that “Black children often grow up too fast” because of their social circumstances and stereotypes that they are less innocent than white children. The mass incarceration of Black men greatly contributes to the striking statistics on how few of them marry. And the most striking of her findings is the startling connection between Black people and their psychological and physical health challenges as a result of enduring racism.

According to Winters, the racist system is not just killing Black people; it is tearing the whole nation apart. In every aspect of life, from socioeconomics to education, the workforce, criminal justice, and very importantly, health outcomes. *Black Fatigue* is a step-by-step guide designed to educate the reader on the overlooked and forgotten history of discrimination and discontentment and what we can do about it.

Mary-Frances Winters is the founder and president of the Winters Group Inc. She was named a top ten diversity trailblazer by Forbes and a diversity pioneer by Profiles in Diversity Journal. Winters is also the author of 'We Can't Talk about That at Work', named by Forbes as one of 11 books for leaders to read.





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Meet the Nine Black 2020 MacArthur “Genius” Fellows

Source: goodblacknews.org

Every year, the MacArthur Foundation Fellows Program awards "no strings attached" fellowships in the amount of \$625,000 to talented "geniuses", individuals who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction. The grant is an investment in a person’s originality, insight, and potential so they may continue to “exercise their own creative instincts for the benefit of human society.” In 2020, nine of the 21 McArthur Genius Fellows that have been selected are Black.

Monika Schleier-Smith is an experimental physicist advancing understanding of how many-particle quantum systems behave. She works at the interface of atomic, molecular, and optical physics and quantum information science with the goal of harnessing the properties of quantum systems for such applications as powerful new computing paradigms and ultra-precise sensors.

Ralph Lemon is an artist generating interdisciplinary modes of artistic expression. He created Geography Trilogy over the course of a nine-year span on three continents, undertaking intensive research in the form of cultural immersion in communities in Africa, Asia, and the American South. Dancers and musicians from these communities performed the resulting works, which explore the intersection of art, race, spirituality, and self-discovery through movement, music, language, and visual installations.

N. K. Jemisin is a speculative fiction writer exploring deeply human questions about



Top L to R: Monika Schleier-Smith, Ralph Lemon, N.K. Jemisin, Jacqueline Woodson; Bottom L to R: Fred Moten, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Catherine Coleman Flowers, Tressie McMillan Cottom and Thomas Wilson Mitchell; photos courtesy macfound.org

structural racism, environmental crises, and familial relationships while immersing readers in intricately imagined, fantastical worlds. Jemisin is an award-winning author who wrote the science fiction series *The Broken Earth Trilogy*.

Jacqueline Woodson is a writer redefining children’s and young adult literature in works that reflect the complexity and diversity of the world we live in. In nearly thirty publications that span picture books, young adult novels, and poetry, including *Brown Girl Dreaming* and *Harbor Me*, Woodson has crafted stories about Black children, teenagers, and families that evoke the hopefulness and power of human connection even as they tackle difficult issues such as the history of slavery and segregation, in-

carceration, interracial relationships, social class, gender, and sexual identity.

Fred Moten is a cultural theorist and poet creating new conceptual spaces that accommodate emergent forms of Black cultural production, aesthetics, and social life. Moten’s diverse body of work coheres around a relentless exploration of sound and its importance as a medium of Black resistance and creativity.

Cécile McLorin Salvant is a singer and composer bringing historical perspective, a renewed sense of drama, and an enlightened musical understanding to both jazz standards and her own original compositions. Classically trained and steeped in jazz, blues, folk, musical theater, cabaret, and vaudeville traditions, with a nearly

four-octave vocal range, Salvant locates her renditions of standards and new original compositions within a Black, feminist, global framework.

Catherine Coleman Flowers is an environmental activist and founding director of the Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice (CREEJ), bringing attention to the largely invisible problem of inadequate waste and water sanitation infrastructure in rural communities in the United States.

Tressie McMillan Cottom is a sociologist, writer, and public scholar shaping discourse on pressing issues at the confluence of race, gender, education, and digital technology. McMillan Cottom’s most recent book, *THICK: And Other Essays* (2019), is a collection of essays that offer a powerful treatise on the perilous cultural space occupied by Black women in America.

Thomas Wilson Mitchell is a property law scholar reforming longstanding legal doctrines that deprive Black and other disadvantaged American families of their property and real estate wealth. Through his continuing advocacy and his national law reform and policy work, Mitchell is remedying a major factor in the racial wealth gap and creating mechanisms for many more disadvantaged property owners and communities throughout the country to secure their land and preserve their wealth.

To read more about these and the other Fellows visit: <https://www.macfound.org/programs/fellows>



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As COVID-19 Increases the Digital Divide, the Black Community Faces Yet Another Threat to Tech Access

By Hazel Trice Edney



(TriceEdneyWire.com)
– As COVID-19 wreaks havoc on a digital and educational divide that has already severely impacted African-American and other children of color, yet another situation on the horizon could further increase disparities by hindering access to crucial technological tools, according to experts.

Two cases pending before the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) are being watched by educators and lawmakers who describe them as deeply troubling. Many big names in technology are under attack - including Amazon, Apple, Asus, Dell, HP, Lenovo, LG, Microsoft, Motorola, Samsung, and Sony – and tech experts say the outcomes of these cases are absolutely realistic threats to the ability to obtain certain mobile communication devices – an outcome that would increase the digital divide even further during this unprecedented time of online learning.

In a nutshell, Neodron, a company just recently created in Ireland, is seeking to block the import of more than 90 percent of mobile touchscreen devices, like smartphones, tablets and touchscreen laptops, that come into the United States. Neodron doesn't design or manufacture products within the U.S. Its business plan is to acquire patents and then sue for infringement.

The cases have caught the attention of members of Congress, and those in the tech world express major concern.

“When we talk about digital divide, you’re talking primarily about the availability of high speed internet and its distribution across our nation. The big problem with this patent infringement claim is that the vast majority of inner city schools still have barely sufficient internet connection,” says Michael Russell, the lead instructor for information technology, security and forensics at the Pittsburgh Technical College since 2002.

Russell points out that “the majority of young people who access the internet today access the internet from their smartphones.” Particularly low income children often use their smartphones in order to get on the Internet.

He believes the Neodron case could impact their educational lives.

Russell used the term “patent pirate” when describing the activities of companies like Neodron which acquires patents for the purpose of financial gain. Neodron recently obtained patents from Microchip Technologies, possibly with the motive of filing petitions asking the ITC to investigate and close the U.S. market to nearly all smartphones, tablets, and laptops. In short, Neodron is putting the devices that people rely on at risk amidst a season when they need them most.

According to a statement by the ITC, the complaint “alleges violations of section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930 in the importation into the United States and sale of certain touch-controlled mobile devices, computers, and components thereof that infringe patents asserted by the complainant. The complainant requests that the USITC issue a limited exclusion order and cease and desist orders.”

Restricting the import of these devices into the United States would cause educational and personal hardships for people largely dependent on their smartphones and other affected devices.

The issue is so dire that two members of Congress formed a bipartisan partnership to deal with it. Suzan DelBene (D-Wash.) and David Schweikert (R-Ariz.) introduced the Advancing America's Interests Act to stop patent abuse through the ITC and to assure that the agency adheres to a high standard of public interest.

“The ITC was established to protect U.S. companies and consumers from unfair foreign competition, but in recent years, patent licensing entities have abused the ITC process for financial gain,” said DelBene in a joint release. “This legislation addresses this problem and helps protect American businesses from unfair and unjustified claims.”

Schweikert called the legislation “an important step in the right direction towards reforming the ITC’s unfair imports process to ensure that American businesses have equitable access to protection for their ideas.”

This potential impact of this case cannot be overlooked as African-Americans and other racial minorities have been so disproportionally impacted by COVID-19. As lives have become almost totally dependent upon access to the internet and remote services, the impact of an ITC exclusion order would have a broad reach.

Instead of rushing to get children out the door to catch the school bus and then driving into work, many parents now struggle to manage their children's education as schools have shifted to remote learning and parents work from home. Government services of all types are now online, from job applications to business licenses to unemployment claims. And

then there's access to health care. Throughout the pandemic, it has become clear that telehealth is surging and is a crucial resource that allows people to protect both their community as a whole and the healthcare workers providing their critical services.

According to a recent study, up to 42 million people may not have access to broadband, a figure that is disproportionately made up of African-Americans and other people of color. But without the devices necessary to even access the internet, the problem becomes worse and communities of color are at a great disadvantage.

A key concern is that since the COVID-19 pandemic, an already serious struggle for low income students of color, has been exacerbated.

The Greenlining Institute, a 27-year-old multi-racial organization in Oakland, Calif. that aims to end economic discrimination such as redlining, conducted a survey of Oakland and Fresno, Calif. residents before COVID-19. The findings were as gloomy as expected. But all of the common themes were “made more urgent by the pandemic”, the Institute reports on its website.

Those common themes include “Internet access is not a luxury; Lack of access creates significant hurdles for everyday life; Smartphone access is insufficient; Internet plans designed for low-income families are inadequate; Lack of access is a barrier to academic success.”

Russell says if Neodron prevails, these issues could expand and get even worse for more people across the nation.

"I'm not only talking about just young people," he said. "I'm talking about the elderly needing to monitor their health care, making appointments with the doctor and things of that nature. All of those things could be adversely impacted. Mostly inner city; mostly Black and Latino families would continue to have the largest impact."

As the issue spirals, even more considerations will come into play.

“The educational, financial and personal need for the internet could lead to an even greater conflict than the inability to get online,” says Russell, who also teaches regulatory compliance.

"I do believe that technology has a potential of being another form of warfare," he says. "I'm really concerned about that. Like economic warfare. We have a company located in another country filing a claim against American corporations that could adversely impact the way we live and do business. That's a real deal."



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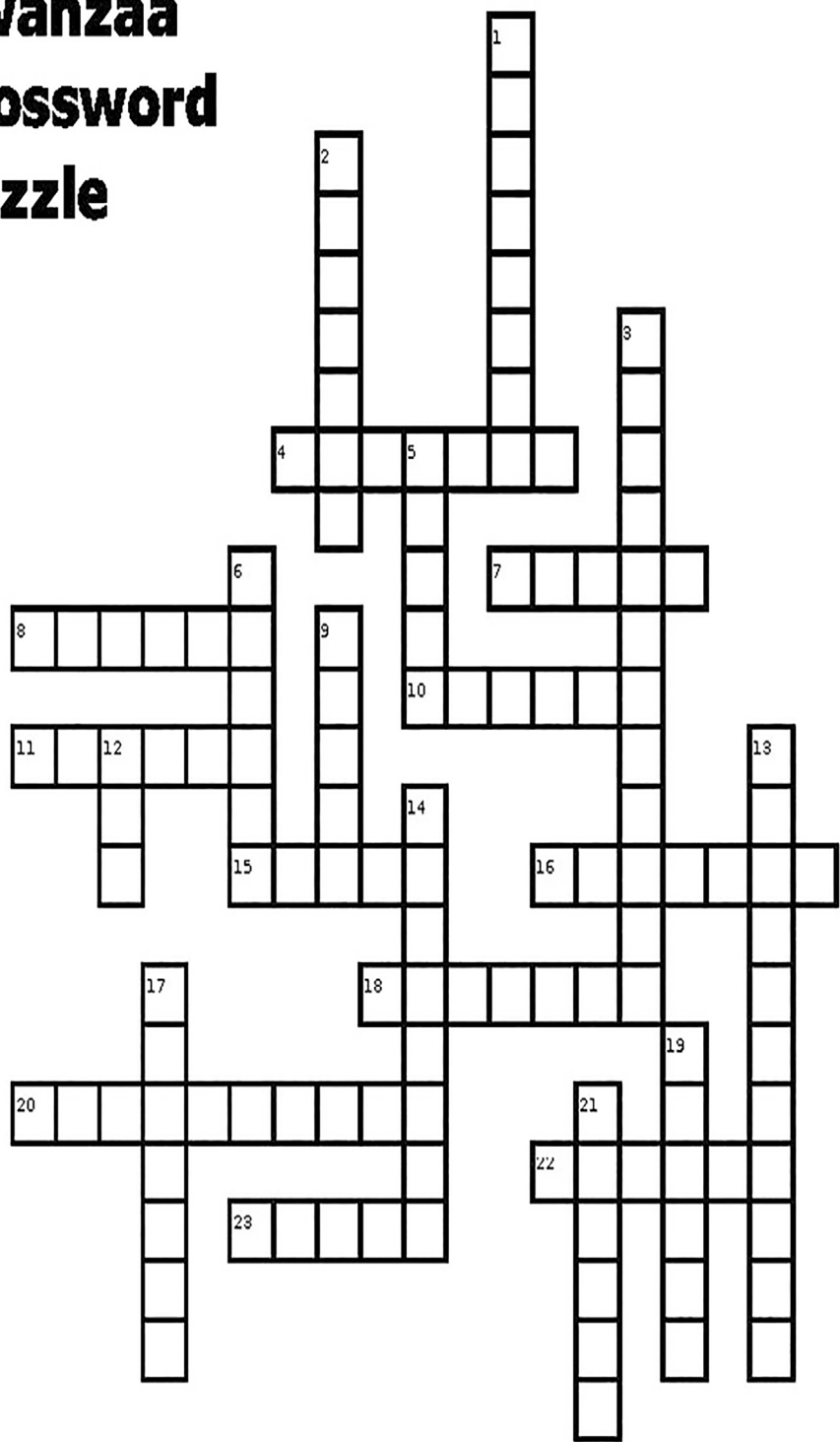


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Kwanzaa

Crossword

Puzzle



Down:

1. Kwanzaa begins on the 26 day of this month
2. a seven day cultural festival
3. the second principle of Kwanzaa that means self-determination
5. the third principle of Kwanzaa that means collective work and responsibility
6. the gifts that are exchanged during the Kwanzaa celebration
9. the first principle of Kwanzaa that means unity
12. the fifth principle of Kwanzaa that means purpose
13. Kwanzaa is modeled after these African harvest celebrations
14. a drink poured out as an offering
17. language of Kwanzaa
19. the fourth principle of Kwanzaa that means cooperative economics
21. a colorful wrap

Across:

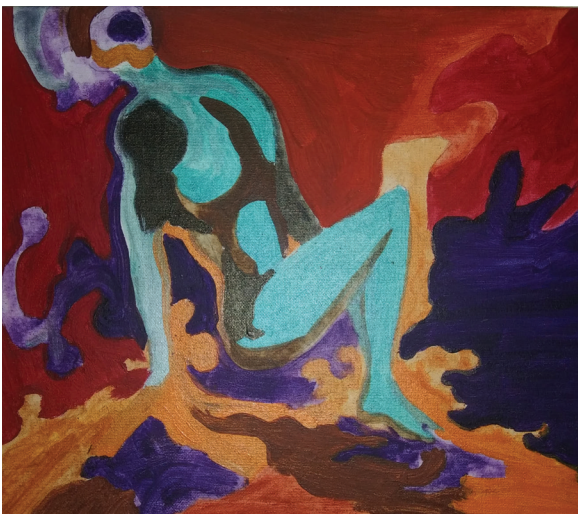
4. Kwanzaa ends on the first day of this month
7. this color along with red and green are the Kwanzaa colors
8. the sixth principle of Kwanzaa that means creativity
10. Kwanzaa celebrates the African American culture and connection to this continent
11. a candle holder with seven candles
15. the seventh principle of Kwanzaa that means faith
16. along with family and community this is celebrated during Kwanzaa
18. last name of American who founded Kwanzaa
20. Swahili greeting said each day during Kwanzaa that means how are you
22. a large feast celebrated on the last day of Kwanzaa
23. the number of principles celebrated during Kwanzaa

Answers on Page 33

Build your own custom worksheet at [education.com/worksheets-generator](https://www.education.com/worksheets-generator)
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For more information about Kwanzaa visit: <https://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org>

Salik Seville: Art Sale



Spokane artist Salik Seville, who is widely known for hosting art sales during Black History Month to collect food donations and to raise money for local charities, is hosting a holiday art sale. Any two pieces of art will go for \$50. Proceeds will go to help support Salik during these challenging times. For more information or to purchase one of the art pieces give Salik a call at 509-481-1613.

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New Washington Grant Makes College Affordable

The new Washington College Grant (formerly the State Need Grant) makes education and training beyond high school affordable. More low- and middle-income families now qualify. An eligible student from a family of four making around \$50,000 or less per year would receive a full award. Partial grants are available for families making up to the state’s median family income, around \$97,000 per year.

What does it cover?
The maximum award amount will cover full tuition at any approved/eligible in-state public college or university, including community or technical colleges, or provide a comparable amount toward tuition and other education-related costs at an approved private college or career training program.

Who is eligible?
Amounts vary based on income, family size, and the school or program attended. Students and families can use the financial aid calculator to estimate their potential WCG award. Recipients must meet program requirements and attend an approved institution or program. Learn more about WCG eligibility and awards.

How do I apply?
There is no separate application for the Washington College Grant. Students should complete a state or federal financial aid application, which colleges will use to determine eligibility and make awards. Financial aid applications for the 2021-22 academic year are now open. It's not too late to apply for winter or spring quarter of 2021. For more information visit: <https://wsac.wa.gov/actionplan>.

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Voters of Color Turn Out in Record Numbers

Continued From Page 1

Latinx voters also made their presence known in Florida, handing Biden victories in Miami-Dade, Tampa Bay, Orlando, and Broward County. In Miami, Cuban Americans threw their support behind Trump.

Nuño warned about taking some outliers, like the Cuban vote in Miami-Dade and a couple of counties near the border in Texas where Trump did much better with Latinos, to project that into the larger narrative. “Yes, Latinos are not a monolith, and yes, they are a monolith, they do respond to certain types of messaging and at the national level, seventy percent of Latinos voted for Biden. That’s a clear pattern”, he said.

Theodore Johnson, a senior fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice, said that a summer of protests for racial justice along with the disproportionate numbers from COVID-19 and record levels of unemployment in Black communities, galvanized Black voter turn-out in record numbers to remove Donald Trump from office. “That explains why we’re seeing Atlanta change, Michigan, Philadelphia change Pennsylvania, Milwaukee change Wisconsin, and Detroit change,” he said. “That’s the enthusiasm and power of the Black vote.”

Overall Black voters were pragmatic, Johnson noted, pointing to South Carolina where they opted for Joe Biden over Kamala Harris or Corey Booker. “They picked the candidate they thought had the best chance of winning over white voters.” Johnson attributed the small increase in Black males voting for Trump to those Black Republicans who had opted to vote for the first Black president in 2008 and 2012 and who were now returning to the Republican Party.

Asian Americans turned out in significant numbers for the 2020 election, said John C. Yang, president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice/ AAJC. Some 300,000 were first-time voters. Exit polls, plus pre-election polls showed there was much more enthusiasm to vote, Yang noted. Between 65%-70% of AAPI voters supported Biden, with 30 percent voting for Trump, consistent with voting patterns in 2012 and 2016.

While one-third of Asian Americans live in the 10 battleground states, and it would be easy to attribute the margin of victory in Nevada, Arizona, Georgia and Pennsylvania to the AAPI vote, Yang said it was the common values that brought Black, Latinx, Native and Asian Americans together that provided the margin of victory for Biden in those states. Yang recalled June 16, 2015, when Trump rode down an escalator at Trump Towers to announce his bid for the White House. “That was a defining moment for me and changed my career path. When he talked about illegal aliens being rapists and gangsters and criminals, he was talking about me because I was at one point an undocumented immigrant.”

Mark Trahant, editor of Indian Country Today, discussed the impact of the Native American vote, indicating that a large number of Native Americans ran for elected office and that next year’s Congress will have a caucus with three Republicans and three Democrats. “This will give a bipartisan spin on Native issues,” he said. Native Americans were also elected to state Legislatures including Arizona and Kansas.

Sharry, of America’s voice, said that the massive vote by minorities was also a rejection of Trump’s flagstone issue: xenophobia and racism.

“An American public was forced by Donald Trump and his extremism to choose, and they chose to come down on the side of refugees and immigrants. This is a statement of what a multiracial majority in America said through this election. They said ‘we want to be a welcoming country. We don’t like Trump’s separation of families.’”

Kwanzaa Crossword Puzzle Answers

From Page 31

Down:

- December
- Kwanzaa
- Kujichagulia
- Ujima
- Zawadi
- Umoja
- Nia
- First Fruits
- Libation
- Swahili
- Ujamaa
- Kaftan

Across:

- January
- Black
- Kuumba
- Africa
- Kinara
- Imani
- Culture
- Karenga
- Habarigani
- Karamu
- Seven

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OUR VOICES

What Biden's Black Agenda Should Be for the First 100 Days

By David A. Love, JD
(Originally published by The Griot, thegriot.com)

What should the Biden-Harris agenda for Black America be for the first 100 days?

The victory of President-elect Joe Biden over incumbent President Donald Trump - thanks in no small measure to the efforts of Black people who quite literally voted for their lives - means America has a fighting chance to become a real democracy where Black people are treated like human beings with full citizenship. Biden will have a lot on his plate when he steps into the White House, and the needs of Black people must be on his agenda. While there is much to be done, these are highlights of what an agenda for Black America should look like in a Biden White House:

COVID RELIEF

The U.S. is still mired in a crippling pandemic made worse through Trump’s callousness, negligence and incompetence. This plague continues to ravage the nation, and African Americans are among the hardest hit in terms of health complications, deaths and the related socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus. Nearly half of Black-owned businesses have gone under, and more are expected to shutter. And Black folks are disproportionately suffering from unemployment, poverty and homelessness.

While the Republican Senate believed a new Supreme Court justice was more important than saving lives, America needs COVID-19 relief now, and Black America needs it yesterday. Amid massive joblessness and deprivation, the Biden administration should enact what other countries have implemented to curb the pandemic, which is some variation of a universal basic income, including monthly direct payments to people. And given the ways in which college loans prey on Black people, now is a perfect time to erase student debt.

REPARATIONS

Biden said he supports a bill to study reparations to Black people for slavery. Legislation would establish a commission to study the impact of slavery and discrimination from 1619



until the present, and develop proposals for reparations to the descendants of the enslaved. The Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, the largest social justice movement in U.S. history, cry out for action on this nation’s original sins of slavery and genocide. Confronting the crimes that built America means repairing 400 years-worth of damage, making amends and making Black people whole through policies, programs and payments.

POLICE REFORM

Now is the time to rein in law enforcement agencies and departments across the country for their abuses, brutality and racial violence. The federal government can use the purse strings to set standards on how police departments conduct business and employ the use of force, ban military equipment for the police and so-called nonlethal weapons such as teargas and rubber bullets.

Groups such as the Movement for Black Lives, Campaign Zero, President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and others have already mapped out proposals such as the BREATHE ACT, which would divest tax revenue from racist policing, re-imagine public safety and invest in communities. Further, the Biden Justice Department must get back into the business of holding police accountable through consent decrees that force change, and use the law to punish bad cops and root out white supremacists in law enforcement. The days of the slave patrols are over.

VOTING RIGHTS

Since the U.S. Supreme Court declawed the Voting Rights Act, Black people once again have become second-class citizens under Jim Crow 2.0. The Republican Party has relied on voter suppression and intimidation, voter purges and gerrymandering as their weapons of choice to disenfranchise Black voters. Biden must sign the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which passed Congress and stalled in the Senate. This legislation would restore the Voting Rights Act, reinstate federal oversight of state election laws and dismantle barriers for voters to access the ballot. A fight for racial justice in our elections also means eliminating corruption and unlimited money in politics, in which a relatively small group of white men have paid for the policies that continue to oppress the poor and people of color.

Biden and the Democrats must also seek reform of the undemocratic Electoral College and U.S. Senate, institutions created to support slaveholding states and distort their power. Other statehood for the District of Columbia and the Caribbean and Pacific islands that are U.S. territories, yet whose 4 million American citizens cannot vote in federal elections.

THE COURTS

America’s judicial system cannot provide equal justice when it does not reflect the diversity of the nation, and it becomes the captive of a narrow ideology of white Christian nationalists. With the confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett, the Supreme Court has a 6-3 conservative majority. Outsourcing its judicial selection process to a shady dark money operation known as the Federalist Society, the Trump administration stacked the courts with extremist political operatives, mostly young white men, often unqualified, and united in their opposition to civil rights and social justice.

If Biden has any chance of making his policies stick, he requires a reformed and balanced federal court system, with more seats on the Supreme Court and the lower courts to increase diversity and inclusion, term limits, and a code of ethics for Supreme Court justices. Everything should be on the table.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

People of color are disproportionately impacted by climate change. In an era of environmental degradation brought on by climate change, and economic depression resulting from years of inequality exacerbated by a year of COVID-19, Biden must fight multiple pandemics at once. A green jobs program or Green New Deal would wean America off fossil fuels, build a badly needed green infrastructure, create millions of new jobs and repair the historic environmental injustices visited upon indigenous people, the poor and communities of color.

INVESTIGATE TRUMP

Finally, the Biden White House must find out where Trump buried all the bodies. We may not know the full extent of his potential criminality and corruption for years to come. From potential tax fraud, the intentional mass deaths of Americans under COVID-19 - under the assumption that people of color would suffer the most - to sabotaging the post office, and from the forced sterilization of Black and Brown migrant women by the kidnapping of children in ICE detention centers, crimes and violations have most certainly been committed. Part of disinfecting the White House for the future use includes a presidential crimes commission to get to the heart of what Trump did in our name.

Black voters need an agenda, and we must take that agenda to the soon-to-be President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. A Biden victory does not mean Black America can afford to take a nap until the 2024 election. Democracy is not an armchair spectator sport, and the past four years have taught us as much.

As the old Teddy Pendergrass song goes, “Wake up everybody, no more sleepin’ in bed.”

David A. Love, JD serves BlackCommentator.com as the Executive Editor. He is a journalist, commentator, human rights advocate and an adjunct instructor at the Rutgers University School of Communication and Information based in Philadelphia, and a contributor to theGriot, AtlantaBlackStar, The Progressive, CNN.com, Morpheus, NewsWorks and The Huffington Post. He blogs at davidalove.com. To contact him e-mail davidalove@gmail.com.

Exhale. Inhale. Roll Your Sleeves Up.

By Julianne Malveaux

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - It took five days for the 2020 election to be called for former Vice President Joe Biden. Five days with me peeled to the television and the internet. Five days holding my breath. Five days, meditating and praying for strength. I could not imagine four more years of Trump. I actually started going through my belongings, trying to decide which one would make the cut for my move to Ghana.

At 11:34 on Saturday morning, the good news trickled down. Biden won. Kamala Harris is Madame Vice President (MVP). People were sending funny and smart text messages. From one friend – ‘ladies keep your shoes on, there is glass on the floor. Exhale. Savor the feeling. Kamala’s win is a “dancing in the street” victory for Black women, for all women, for our nation.

From Psalm 30:5, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.”

Well, on November 7 joy came in the morning, the afternoon, the evening. All around

the country, people celebrated. Some of us were buoyed by the celebrations, especially their intergenerational, multicultural, masked participation. But as horns honked, people hollered, and people hoisted “you’re fired” signs outside the White House, some of us wondered how much change, exactly, we could expect from Biden-Harris.

Inhale. Inhale the fact that Donald John Trump was an extreme symptom, but not the cause of the structural inequities that plague our nation. Inhale the fact that all the executive orders in the world can’t fix the racism that is baked in the cake we call the United States. Inhale their names, the disturbing roll of Black folks killed by white so-called “law enforcement” officers. Inhale the macro and micro aggressions that impact our lives.

I will not be pessimistic in this optimistic moment, nor will I ignore the amazing history we experienced in this election. I will simply say, as I often do, that voting is not the most, but the least we can do. This election reminds us that Black Votes Matter, that

Turnout matters, that, in the words of Rev. Jesse Jackson, “the hands that picked peaches can pick presidents.”

There was no blue wave, this was a scrappy contest, with margins, in some cases, less than one percent. There was no takeover of the Senate (yet), and Democrats lost seats in the House of Representatives. And more than 70 million people affirmed Donald Trump, which reveals the stark division in our nation.

Exhale (relief). Inhale (recognition). And then just roll your sleeves up and get to work. Yes, there is much work to do. There are two elections for Senate seats in Georgia. They’ll be decided on January 5, and if Democrats can pull both off, President-elect Biden will have the Senate he needs to make policy changes.

Meanwhile, 45 has seventy days to wreak havoc on our nation. He can randomly fire folks, mismanage agencies (more so than he already has), develop harmful executive orders. As of this writing he has yet to concede

the election, even though he has no possible chance of winning. His refusal to smell the coffee slows the transition process, but since this is about him, not about our nation, he really doesn’t care.

Yes, we have work to do. We need to roll up our sleeves and get to it. Civic engagement is not a seasonal thing, it’s an all the time thing. We get the government that we choose to participate in.

So kudos to the folks like Melanie Campbell (National Coalition of Black Civic Participation), LaTosha Brown (Black Voters Matter), Stacey Abrams (Fair Fight) and the many others who raised awareness, got the vote out, and then protected it. Inhale. Exhale. Get to Work!



OUR VOICES

How the F*#k Did Trump’s Black Vote Grow in 2020?

By **Bonsu Thompson**
(Reprinted from level.medium.com)

There is a branch of Islam referred to as the Five Percent Nation. Its name derives from the belief that the world population is broken down into three percentages. Eighty-five percent of people are ignorant to the evil of the world in which they live and the fact that the original man is the Black man. The 5% — the Five Percenters — know the truth within and around themselves and aim to “civilize” the 85% with education. Then there’s the remaining 10% of the population. They are as aware as the Five Percenters, except their agenda is to curate practices and systems that keep the masses “deaf, dumb, and blind.”

While the Five Percent Nation was created by and for the betterment and protection of Black men and women, it’s an unfortunate fact that a significant portion of the 85% includes Black men and women.

The 2020 presidential election was a prevalent reminder. More than 70 million Americans voted for Donald Trump. Of those voters, an estimated 10% are African American. (Poll numbers range from 8% to 12%.) In 2016, 6% of all Trump voters were Black. Incredible that in 2020, the president most associated with White supremacy, and unapologetically vocal on where his allegiances and biases stood, raised his African American numbers.

While the percentage of Black women who backed Trump remained in the single digits, it’s still concerning that it doubled from 4% in 2016.

The high-wattage shocker is that Trump’s largest Black support comes from men. Four years ago, 13% of all male African American voters chose Trump as their leader. In 2020, an estimated 18% desired another four years of his regime. That is as deflating as it is infuriating. Voting for Donald Trump while Black is a race crime. Black-on-Black crime, in fact.

These are the same impaired African Americans who proclaim that Trump has done more for Black people than any U.S. president since Abraham Lincoln. (Let’s be clear: Any Black person who paints Lincoln as an abolitionist or civil rights leader is not on the side of abolitionists and civil rights leaders.) Trump called for a nationwide implementation of former New York City Mayor Bloomberg’s racist “stop and frisk” policy. In 2020, Trump won the states with the largest Ku Klux Klan presence.

The dumb breathed oxygen into the pathological liar who is their president. He was allowed to mask himself as a curator of their best interests. He manipulated where they’re most vulnerable: their wallets. My people love shiny shit, and that Platinum Package promised too good to be cubic zirconia.

Unbelievable that fully grown humans believed 45 would create a stimulus package dedicated to the prosperity of Black economics. Even if Trump wanted to see Black people excel financially in some alternate universe, one should recall his recent failure to pass through Congress a \$500 billion package for pandemic relief. In the United States, Covid-19 absolutely trumps the colored.

The fact is that cash still rules everything around people without it. Those who rarely see money become blinded in



its presence. I was a preteen when I first learned that Black men will sacrifice a decade of their freedom for years outside of poverty. It still surprised me how susceptible they were to a mascot for their subordination seizing attribution for a healthier American economy. Read the next sentence slowly: Donald Trump did not make America’s coin great again.

Yes, the economy was approaching record-level expansion and unemployment lows at the top of 2020, but any progress scored on Trump’s watch was residual. Most Americans grade a president’s efficacy as rigidly as the four years allotted to the position. Any good fortune experienced — like, say, a new job — is automatically credited to whichever prez occupied the Oval Office at the time. Professional terms are traditionally immovable, but economies are fluid. A POTUS inherits the good ebb along with the bad flow. The truth is that the ascendance of America’s economy began during Barack Obama’s first term and, fortunately for Trump, peaked during his presidency.

How do you vote for Trump without factoring in the present state of the economy? Today’s unemployment rate is nearly 8% — doubled from when Trump first took office (3.5%). The good news is that it’s now half of its 2020 peak. April saw unemployment climb to 15%—unseen since the Great Depression. The economy’s decimation, however, is not residual. That is a direct effect of Trump’s negligence at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Outside of the almighty dollar, Black Trump supporters were fooled into believing that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were more racist than their president. The Donald’s marketing execution was twofold. First, he reminded the forgetful of his token work — his HBCU contributions and the handful of African American prisoners he pardoned. The legislation for which 45 receives the most praise from minorities is the First Step Act. Because in the United States, a greater percentage of Black people are imprisoned than White, it appears that First Step (similar to the Platinum Package) is designed as some sort of judicial reparations. Yet, anyone could notice that the plan never specifies qualification. Prisoners only benefit by earning in a point system insistent on them meeting various subjective criteria and behavioral expectations — a potential mirage.

The second installment of Trump’s diversion strategy was to shower voters with Biden/Harris slander — both base and baseless — while spotlighting the Black bodies that swing from the résumés of both the former vice president and district attorney. Trump’s transgressions are such fixtures in the daily conversation that Biden’s fingerprints on the infamous 1994 Crime Bill and Harris’ reputation for burying Black men in the Bay faded his dirty work out of focus.

Noteworthy that 45’s attack was assisted by Biden’s quotables from past and present. The president-elect is on record refusing to acknowledge any regret for facilitating the Crime Bill, as well as saying, “Poor kids are just as bright as White children.” A specific Trump ad replayed a Breakfast Club interview in which Biden asserted that any Black person confused about whether to vote for him or Trump was, in fact, not Black.

Trump doesn’t possess as many buried bones as his political opposition, because he never had the power. As a citizen, he used his own money to take out ads requesting that Black boys be put to death — innocent boys who, after having their childhood shattered and being exonerated, were denied any empathy from Donald. Can you imagine the decades of carnage had Trump been playing politician since the 1980s?

Donald once bragged that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and folks would still support him. Trump’s reaction and absence when Blacks were shot in the streets during his presidency should illuminate his horns for everyone. Although finger-pointing is his favorite pastime, he refused to place guilt on White supremacists for the Charlottesville hate crimes. He bathed in the fact that the teenager who murdered innocent protesters at a BLM protest in Wisconsin was a fan.

Where were the conversations between the U.S. president and the grieving families of Ahmaud Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, or Rayshard Brooks? How does sports journalist Cari Champion speak with Jacob Blake’s father before the POTUS does?

Years before Donald Trump’s American stock was distilled down to being the antithesis of the Obama administration, he was an esteemed ambassador for American racism. The real estate tycoon spent thousands in attorney fees to prohibit Black people from residing in his properties. On more than one occasion, he referred to African Americans as “lazy” and African and Caribbean countries depleted by Western colonization as “shitholes.”

It was no surprise that as a decided politician, Trump built his entire campaign on Muslim xenophobia and good ol’ boy machismo. After all, his MAGA campaign slogan was a promise that America would return to yesteryears when those devoid of protective pale skin had fewer rights and fruit, yet more victimization.

So how does a person of color, after eight years of a Black president, choose the Gerry Cooney of White Supremacy? By being dumb and forgetful.

Bonsu Thompson is a writer, producer, Brooklynite and 2019 Sundance Screenwriters Lab fellow. Visit: bonsuthompson.medium.com or on Twitter @DreamzRreal.



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Moreover, in keeping with our tradition of having vendors at our festivals, this year's Virtual Festival will have a Festival Market Place where you can shop for unique and very special items. The Festival Market Place will appear on our website beginning Saturday, November 14.

Among a wide variety of artists on the festival line-up is Frankie Ghee. Frankie has been creating and performing music for over 30 years



and has been a favorite at the festival for several years. Frankie writes and sings memorable and interesting melodies, but more than anything she is a poet. Her newest album is *I-90 to Spokane... Then Left on Sherman Street*. Her music can be found at frankieghee.com.

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