

POINT OF VIEW

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Our Community News Magazine

december 1, 2013



688 Boston Road

THE VOTERS OF SPRINGFIELD HAVE SPOKEN

"I hope my leadership on the City Council over the next two years will inspire you to vote for me in the future or, more importantly, motivate you to participate in future elections knowing that your vote counts and is valued."

By City Councilor-Elect Justin Hurst - 5

MY SINCERE THANKS TO THE VOTERS OF SPRINGFIELD

"I want you to know that I am committed to the Springfield school system and to your children. Although progress is being made, I recognize there is still a tremendous amount of work to do."

By School Committeewoman Denise M. Hurst - 5

REACHING OUT TO MOMS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS...

"Physical activity can improve children's academic performance, how they feel about themselves, their classroom behavior, while decreasing their risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes."

By Sofiya Alhassan, Ph.D - 10

ACTS OF GRATITUDE AS LEADERS

In attempts to appear confident in our competence, it can be easy to not acknowledge the help and gifts we have received from others. We seek to maintain the façade of our awesomeness. But gratitude can be one of the most powerful behaviors that we express as leaders.

By Lora Wondolowski - 13

LOOKING BACK . . . REACHING FORWARD

"Love dominated the installation and celebration of Reverend Joe C. Long, Jr. as the second pastor of Progressive Community Baptist Church in Springfield, Massachusetts on Sunday, November 17th. The love of a congregation for their pastor. The love of a pastor for his congregation."

By Marjorie J. Hurst - 26

MOTHER TO SON . . .

"A black mother has to forewarn her son That he is among the hunted and feared. That while you adore him, America abhors him.

The details have changed but the danger he faces hasn't."

By Brenda's Child - 28



SPRINGFIELD, BE PROUD!

By Frederick A. Hurst

Attorney Justin Hurst and wife, Denise M. Hurst, celebrate after learning of their first place victories in the At-Large Springfield City Council race and the At-Large School Committee race, respectively.

- Left center:** The couple celebrate with supporters.
Right center: Justin celebrates with his dad, *POV* publisher Frederick Hurst.
Bottom left: Denise celebrates with her proud parents: mother, Maria Estrada, and father, Gerald Rosemond.
Bottom right: The couple celebrate with Justin's parents, Marjorie and Frederick Hurst.



See Election Night Photo Array for Justin and Denise on page 35

A few days after the recent Springfield city elections, I had lunch with a friend who asked me about Springfield's at-large elections for School Committee and City Council in which Denise Hurst came in first place for the former and her husband, Justin Hurst, came in first for the latter. He wondered about some of the oddities that characterized the elections. And since I was anxious to tell the story-behind-the-story of the elections

and all the attached intrigue, I launched into a graphic monologue that I intended as a prelude to this article.

Since I wasn't quite certain how to communicate the story-behind-the-story in a useful way, telling my friend gave me an opportunity to crystallize the facts in my own mind as a preliminary to conveying them to our readers. But while listening to myself talk to my friend, I concluded that there was too much negativ-

ity in the back story that would only dampen the joy of all of the winners of Springfield's historical political election results. I decided, instead, to write about the winners and to put off writing the back story until some future date, which means, of course, those whose ill-conceived behavior would have been exposed will be relieved and those of you who urged me to come out 'banging' will be disappointed.

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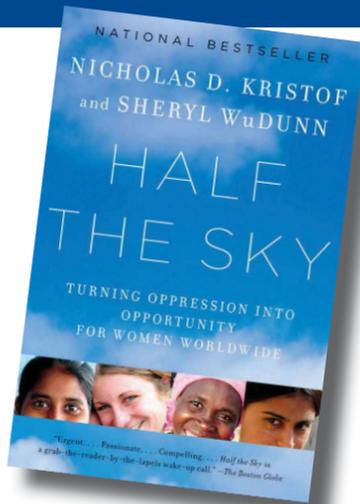
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— Irshad Manji, for the *New York Times*, 9/17/09



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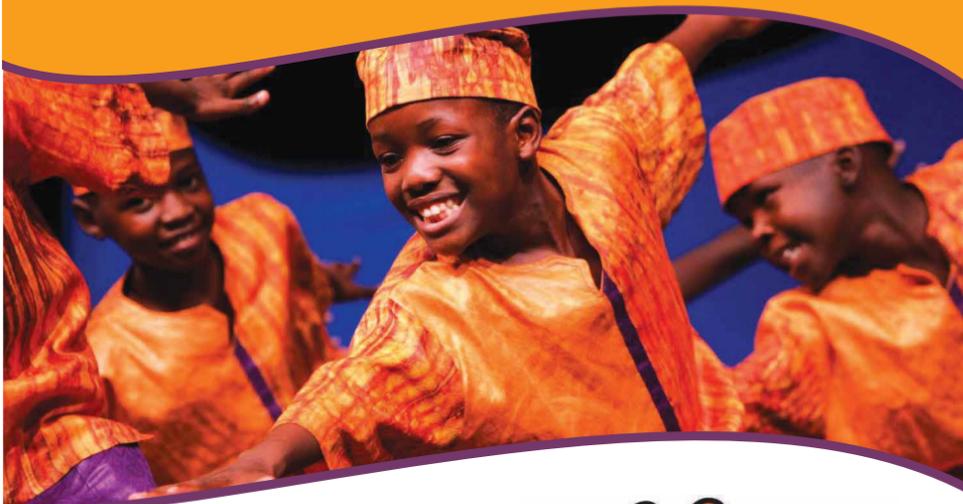


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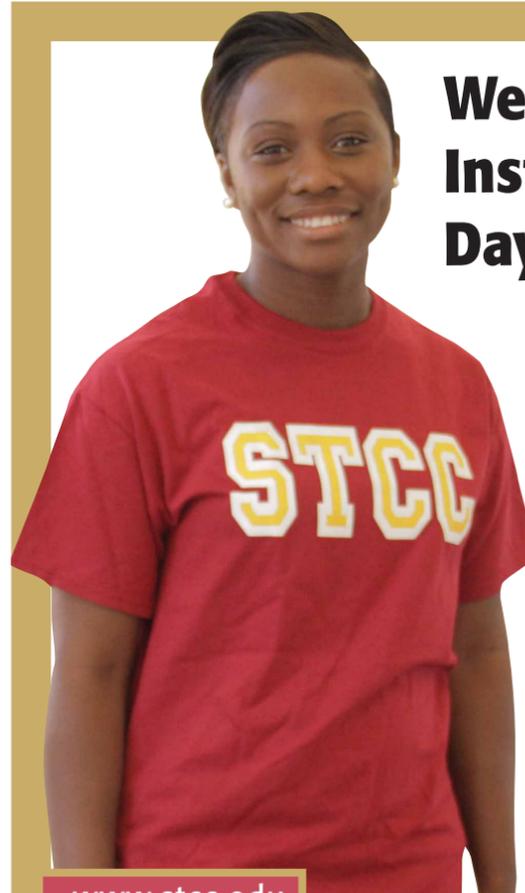
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❖ **SPRINGFIELD, BE PROUD!**

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AF-AM NEWS **b i t s**

By Frederick A. Hurst

CONGRATULATIONS TO JUSTIN HURST

Topping the ticket for Springfield's at-large City Council seat was no small feat for Justin Hurst, given that he was running as a non-incumbent against five incumbents.

CONGRATULATIONS TO DENISE M. HURST

Topping the ticket is nice even if you are an incumbent. Springfield School Committeewoman Denise M. Hurst came in first place even though she faced a serious challenge from seasoned politicians who backed an unseasoned challenger against her.

SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO CALVIN MCFADDEN

Calvin McFadden is an intelligent man and an honorable man who might have run for office more comfortably and more thoughtfully had he researched the history. Nonetheless, his second place finish for School Committee was legitimate and helped make Springfield's School Committee elections historic with two Black folks winning at-large in a three-way race.

IT'S AN AT-LARGE VICTORY AND A WARD VICTORY

I never did like the ward representation set-up and I still don't. Ward representation weakens the power of the City Council as a body. Springfield's 5-8 system beats a pure ward system but it still leaves much to be desired. But, we can't complain too much. Of the five candidates winning at-large for City Council, two are Black and three are White. Of the three candidates running at-large for School Committee, the two winners were Black which made the overall makeup of the School Committee "majority minority" with three Black and one Hispanic along with three White. The one other Black winner and the Hispanic winner ran from their wards. And the City Council is also "majority minority" with three Hispanics and two Black ward winners joining the two at-large Black winners. I think it's fair to say that Springfield is coming of age.

OBAMA SURE MESSED UP!

All the heat that he's taking over the roll out of Obamacare, President Barack Obama deserves. It is incomprehensible how he allowed his signature legislation, that will still probably go down in history as laudatory, to stumble out of the starting block and to make it appear that nobody was (is) in charge. We who support him are enraged and embarrassed at the misinformation he promoted. It feels to us like he went to a black tie dinner in his bathing suit while the whole world was watching! Mr. President, you can apologize until the reindeer come home for breakfast but fix the problem now, not after the first human lands on Mars! You're the most powerful man in the world. Act like it!

OBAMA SURE MESSED UP!

Miami Herald's Leonard Pitts put it in writing as only he could: "It is hardly news that presidents lie. Bill Clinton parsed an intransitive verb to hide his dalliance with a White House intern, George W. Bush claimed he never advocated 'stay the course' in Iraq, Ronald Reagan swore he never traded weapons for hostages to arm the Contras in Nicaragua, Lyndon Johnson escalated U.S. involvement in Vietnam by claiming American warships had suffered unprovoked attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, Richard Nixon said, 'I'm no crook.' But surely you understand by now that you are not just another president. You are rather, the embodiment of a movement, Exhibit A in the argument that a new America is taking shape before our eyes. So, the rules and expectations are different for you. No one who has been buoyed by that movement, no citizen of that new America wants to see you acting like just another president, any more than anyone wanted to see Jackie Robinson strike out at bat or Neil Armstrong stumble while stepping off the lunar lander. Is that fair? No. So what?"

MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN MASSACHUSETTS?

I hold nothing against Massachusetts' new medical marijuana law except for its hypocrisy,

which is why I took such interest in a *Boston Herald* reprint (November 15, 2013) of an article from the *Arizona Republic* on Arizona's medical marijuana law. The author wrote, "So-called medical-marijuana laws are more about normalizing a recreational drug than getting medical treatment to sick people." The author goes on to point out something that is also notable in the Massachusetts law. He wrote, "It opened the door to abuse. If you doubt that, just ask yourself what other medically prescribed pharmaceutical is sold through special "dispensaries" instead of at the drug store. A law that authorizes those who claim chronic pain – a subjective and unprovable assertion – to buy generous doses of an otherwise illegal recreational drug is a farce." Our law in Massachusetts may not be a "farce," but when you look at the number of dispensary locations planned around the state (35) and the substantial upfront investment required for ownership, it is clear that the marijuana to be produced and distributed will far outstrip the supply of medically needy folks. And to suggest that the excess will go anywhere except to those who will use it solely for recreational purposes is hypocritical.

WHITE FOLKS!

Get a kick out of White folks who label me a racist simply because I address issues of racism head on. Their reactions make me know I'm getting through to them whether they want me to or not. When the results of my son's and daughter-in-law's stunning first place election victories poured in for Springfield's City Council and School Committee, respectively, the MassLive perennial White racist went to work distinguishing me and my wife from our kids by labeling us as racist, which simply made the dual victories that much more pleasant. In your faces!

WHICH REMINDS ME

The New York Times Thomas Friedman said it well as reprinted in *The Republican* (November 6, 2013): "...whenever you'd visit China or Singapore, it was always the people there who used to be on the defensive when discussing democracy. Now, as an American, you're the one who wants to steer away from that subject. After all, how much should we be bragging about a system where it takes \$20 million to be elected to the Senate; or where a majority of our members

of Congress choose their voters through gerrymandering rather than voters choosing them; or where voting rights laws are being weakened; or where lawmakers spend most of their free time raising money, not studying issues; or where our Congress has become a forum for legalized bribery; or where we just had a minority of a minority threaten to undermine America's credit rating if we didn't overturn an enacted law on health-care; or where we can't pass even the most common-sense gun law banning assault weapons after the mass murder of schoolchildren?"

BACK IN THE DAY WE WOULD HAVE LAUGHED MARTIN OUT OF TOWN

Jonathan Martin of the Miami Dolphins ought to be ashamed. He weighs more than three hundred pounds and is justifying leaving his teammates in a huff because he was "bullied" by a White teammate (Richie Incognito) who weighs a bit more than him. This guy Martin must have been raised with a silver spoon in his mouth. He should try being a 150 pound guy raised in the "hood" who responded to intimidation by bigger guys by kicking butt, win, lose or draw. Pain, if you fight back, does not only impact the loser. The winner suffers, too! And he won't likely offer himself up again. I know because I've never been much more than 150 pounds and have had little problem with "bullies"— physical, political or intellectual — after a first encounter.

"TEACUP" WAS MY FRIEND

When I opened the newspaper I was startled to see a picture of Edward Samuel Fredericks staring out at me. We were born in the same year, attended the same schools and shared friends. We nicknamed him "Teacup." I don't recall why. Sometimes we just called him "Eddie." He moved to California years ago. Every once and awhile we met up and our friendship never waned. Marge and I have a picture hanging on our living room wall that he sent us from his art gallery in Oakland that celebrates his appreciation of the close relationship between me and my wife, whom he also knew for many years. He was a good friend whose picture I had no reason to expect to see in the obituary section. He will be missed. ■

POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - SPRINGFIELD**THE VOTERS OF
SPRINGFIELD HAVE
SPOKEN!***By Justin Hurst, City Councilor-Elect*

Justin Hurst
City Council
At-Large

To all of the voters who cast ballots for me on November 6th to be your next at-large City Councilor, I sincerely thank you for your support and I look forward to serving the city of Springfield. And, to those of you who may have left me off your ballot this year or simply failed to make it to the polls, I hope my leadership on the City Council over the next two years will inspire you to vote for me in the future or, more importantly, motivate you to participate in future elections knowing that your vote counts and is valued.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank *An African-American Point of View* for their unequivocal endorsement and for their continued service to the community. In all honesty, however, *Point of View's* endorsement pales in comparison to the wisdom and guidance that both the editor and publisher of this newspaper have provided me during my life. My mother, Marjorie Hurst, set the standard for serving in elected office with dignity and grace for over a decade and I will aspire to do the same during my political career. And without the leadership and vision of my father and patriarch of the Hurst family, Frederick Hurst, this victory would not have been possible. He is the person to whom much of my success in life is attributed and will likely be the one who convinces me to further my political career in the future.

Reflecting upon this election I am reminded that the results, while surprising to many, truly illustrate that the voters of Springfield were ready for a change that was long overdue. While I,

along with many others, am excited that the voters saw fit to ensure that the diversity of our City Council and School Committee reflects the make-up of our demographically changing city, to stop there would not fully do justice to the message the voters were sending. Springfield's voters emphatically made it clear that they were aware of the candidates' stances on issues that affect their daily lives and sent a decisive message with the levers they pulled. Tired of the "status quo," voters supported candidates who appealed to their vision of what Springfield can be and who empathized with the struggles facing families in our urban city. It was gratifying to see that the effort put forth by candidates during this election to convey a new message resonated with voters and was reflected in the result.

It is now our task to help transform this city and give our citizens what they have asked for—a government committed to advocating on behalf of all of Springfield. As part of my commitment to make government more inclusive, beginning in January, I will be writing a monthly column for *Point of View* informing citizens of City Council issues that are important and that impact us all.

Once again, I thank the citizens of Springfield for your overwhelming support and for the message that you sent to all of our elected officials. Your voice should set the foundation for a greater Springfield. ■

**MY SINCERE THANKS
TO THE VOTERS OF
SPRINGFIELD!***By Denise M. Hurst*

Denise M. Hurst
School Committee
At-Large

We did it together and I am truly grateful for the support you showed in re-electing me to the Springfield School Committee. Because of your votes, I topped both the School Committee and the City Council elections, having received the highest number of votes. But more important than the number of votes I received or where I placed in the election, I want you to know that I am committed to the Springfield school system and to your children. Although progress is being made, I recognize there is still a tremendous amount of work to do.

I do not believe there is one solution to improving academic achievement, increasing the graduation rate and decreasing the drop-out rate. There are a variety of factors that need to be taken into account, such as access to quality, early childhood education, parental and community involvement, interventions to ensure children are in school on a daily basis

and receiving tiered instruction based on their learning needs. I also believe it is important to ensure that the adults in the city who have not received a high school diploma, be given an opportunity to obtain a GED, because when a parent understands the importance of an education they almost always impress that upon their own children.

I am excited to share with you that I have received the unanimous support of my colleagues, Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, Christopher Collins, Barbara Gresham, Peter Murphy and newly-elected members, Dr. Calvin McFadden and Rosa Perez, to serve as Vice Chair of the School Committee beginning in January 2014. I am looking forward to serving as Vice Chair because this will provide me with an opportunity to continue demonstrating leadership and to work collaboratively with my school committee colleagues and Superintendent Dan Warwick to move the school district forward.

One of my very first initiatives will be to increase the school committee presence within the community by holding "School Committee Meet & Greets" throughout the four school districts of the city. As I campaigned during the election, many people admitted to not knowing their school committee representatives or even understanding the role of the School Committee. I am committed to changing this. The School Committee is an important elected body and we play an imperative role in implementing effective policy for public education. With the help of the media, I intend to help our constituents learn who we are and what we do.

It is my honor to serve you for another four years and I promise to keep you informed and to do my very best to respond to your concerns. ■

BARBARA GRESHAM

**As Your School Committee Member,
I would like to express my gratitude
and appreciation to my community,
family, friends, and neighbors for
their support of me on Nov. 5th.**

**I will continue and look forward
to being your voice as a
School Committee Member for
the Springfield Public Schools.**

Stay in School

Show up. Every day. It matters.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION & HOPE

SPRING OF HOPE

By Gianna Allentuck



Gianna Allentuck is an Adjustment Counselor at Elias Brookings School, Volunteer, Wife and Mother. For questions or comments on uniting in hope, call (703) 930-0243

Recently during an interview with AmeriCorps members serving at Elias Brookings School, I was asked how do I leave the significant challenges of our population from work at work at the end of the day in order to balance professional, volunteer, and personal feelings and obligations. Though my daily actions to maintain this balance are numerous and part of a complicated, comprehensive professional and personal plan, my answer to this question is simple: faith and hope. Always hope.

My world is guided by positivity and problem solving; and I believe that with an emphasis on educating myself around available resources – human or otherwise – and connecting and collaborating with those resources that progress for and with our students, families, and community will be achieved. I have faith in my family, colleagues, friends, and partners that each genuinely has the best interest of our youth and community at heart and each is serving to the best of his or her ability to ensure successes – no matter how perceivably small or large.

For the past four years, with this faith as my guide, we have hosted *United in Hope: Celebrating Education* to highlight the inspirational and purpose-

ful efforts of Educators with students and families in putting forth Education as the foundation for life. This year, for assorted reasons, but most notably my father's passing in July, we are hosting *United in Hope* in March 2014. This will be our 5th annual celebration and will include Education and Community leaders such as Director of Parent and Community Engagement Patricia Spradley; youth voices and performances; and more than 30 resource partners from assorted fields including business, health and wellness, law enforcement, education, non-profit, etc.

Historically, we have been blessed by inspiring speakers and performances, but our attendance from a city of 150,000 and a school system of 4,000 Educators and 26,000 students and families is always low. I understand I need to be thankful for those who do participate in and attend *United in Hope*, but I also recognize the need to spark an interest – light a fire – under ourselves in order to further the mission of Education. We must connect in a personal and meaningful manner with this lifeblood of ourselves and our society.

To that end, please support the celebration of Education, our community, and most especially each other by promoting and attending *United in Hope* in March. Also, please call me at 703.930.0243 if you are interested in supporting planning for this event.

See you in March – when the spring of hope blossoms from your dedicated, collaborative, and supportive hearts by raising up Education at *United in Hope*. ■

PARENTS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IS IT TIME FOR A CHANGE?

By Patricia Spradley



Patricia Spradley is Chief Administrator for Parent and Community Engagement, Springfield Public Schools (413) 787-6597

Who determines if change is necessary? What actually prompts change? Where are the rules for change? When do we know it's time to change? How important is change? These are just some of the questions that come to mind when we are asked or required to change.

Change, unfortunately, is often perceived negatively. However, over the years, but most recently, I have come to understand the need to change is based on *who* is making the request. Not every suggestion or recommendation for change is warranted. Credibility, integrity and character of the individual should be factors. But when HE says "change," there is no doubt in my mind it's time to change, simply because HE said so! This was especially true when the consequences I experienced from my inability or unwillingness to change cost me dearly!

So then why are we so resistant to change? Are we really that comfortable with complacency? We act like prisoners to change. We have to stop being held hostage by our old habits! Far too often we're holding on to what we've always done or seen or heard. But sometimes HE is trying to grow us in order to change us and we refuse to see that we even need to change. We are asking HIM to change everyone around us in order for our lives to get on track, but HE is trying to change us in order that our lives might appropriately line up with HIS plan.

How is it that we can see the change needed in everyone else,

but we can never accept the change needed in us? What if that thing or person causing you so much frustration is the thing that HE is trying to use to change you! HE can't order our steps if we're not willing to consider changing our path! Or is the path you're on already taking you exactly where you want to be going? I don't know, but all I know is that HE will direct your path, if you listen for the directions!

Don't keep going back to old ways, old habits, or old comfort zones simply because you don't like change. HE is trying to pour something new and fresh into you! Even if it has always worked out in the past, if HE says change... then change what you are doing, change how you are doing it, change when you are doing it, change where you are doing it, or change who you are doing it with!

Be willing and minimally open-minded enough to consider the possibilities of doing things differently. *Don't wish for things to be easier; wish for you to be better!* Because for you to be better, YOU have to change! Life is a continuous improvement process, which makes change inevitable!

And remember, *"He will not waste His best work or His most innovative and creative ideas on a vessel that is unwilling to stretch enough to contain it!"*

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WE'RE STILL WAITING

By Sally Fuller



Sally Fuller heads the Reading Success by 4th Grade (RS4G) initiative for the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, to build community support and align efforts for all Springfield's children to read proficiently on the 3rd grade MCAS. www.readby4thgrade.com

The Davis Foundation's partner in early childhood education policy work is Strategies for Children, a Boston-based organization of child policy advocates. We began working with them more than a dozen years ago and they continue to be our thought partner.

There is now a great deal of momentum across the nation – beginning with President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan – and in Massachusetts with Governor Patrick – for expansion of high quality early childhood education. Nobel Laureate James Heckman continues to make the case for the economic return on investment in early childhood education as a proven way to develop human capital.

I want to encourage you to read a powerful article about Massachusetts' "reading problem" co-authored by the head of Strategies for Children and the former head of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. Here is an excerpt:

Over the past decade we have gotten very efficient at squeezing everything we can out of the K-12 system. But expecting schools to be able to solve this problem and catch these kids up on their own isn't realistic or cost effective. We need to start when children are younger, and ensure a consistent and intensive commitment to quality in all settings that children experience during their early years. Kindergarten teachers can tell as early as the first day of school which children have experienced a high-quality early education and which have not.

As outcomes in communities and states across the nation are proving, investing in early education helps close stubborn achievement gaps. New Jersey's high-quality Abbott Preschool program has shown significant effects on children's science and math outcomes through fourth grade and fifth grade, respectively. For children who experienced two years of preschool, 20-40 percent of the achievement gap was closed.

Please type this link into your browser to read the article in its entirety, I think it is well worth your time.

<http://www.commonwealth-magazine.org/Voices/Perspective/Online-Perspectives-2013/Fall/002-MCAS-scores-highlight-3d-grade-reading-problem.aspx>

When I sent this article to a local advocate for children, Jean Caldwell (before her retirement to become a full-time volunteer in our community, she was a reporter for the *Boston Globe*), I received a powerful response.

"Even the brief quote reminds me of a press conference I attended shortly before the election that made Ronald Reagan our president. The presidents of the Five Colleges – Amherst, Hampshire, Mt. Holyoke, Smith and UMass/Amherst – announced a press conference at which they would spell out what they thought the education plan should be for whichever candidate won.

I drove to Amherst wondering what they might say and decided they would ask for federally funded new science labs for all colleges because science was changing so much.

I was wrong.

They asked for one thing and only one thing: universal pre-school education.

It's – how many years later? – and we're still waiting." ■

Stay in School

Show up. Every day. It matters.

EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

"OH, THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL" . . .

By Nicole Blais



Nicole Blais is Director of Community Engagement HCS Head Start, Inc. blaisn@headstart.org

Oh, the weather outside is frightful and so is my to do list for the holiday season. I find myself writing about managing the stress and the worry this time of year brings with family commitments, work obligations, and, of course, the last minute shopping!

When I step back from all of that noise, I feel we owe it to ourselves to slow down and appreciate all of the good. After all, the goal is to enjoy this time of year with family and friends as we reflect on 2013 and anticipate what will come in 2014.

Young children also begin to understand what happens during the month of December. Although they may not fully comprehend the many traditions and customs celebrated

within their family, they are beginning to gain a sense of belonging. This is so important to their social and emotional health—beginning to figure out how and where they fit. For example, opportunities to develop relationships with extended family members, seeing themselves in the context of their family and force these critical concepts.

This, of course, happens through everyday routines but the holidays can serve as the perfect backdrop for children to connect to their family. As I look back on my childhood I don't remember the presents, I remember playing with my cousins, my grandmother cooking in the kitchen, and the grown-ups talking in the living room. That's the real beauty of the season.

So, try not to worry about the materialistic aspect the holidays can bring; focus on the good and remember that you're helping your young one develop her sense of belonging and that is a wonderful gift. From all of us here at HCS Head Start, have a safe and happy (stress-free) holiday season!

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School

is now accepting applications for the 2014 - 2015 school year. All interested students are welcome to apply. Information about PVPA and applications are available on our website. The deadline for receiving applications is Friday, January 3, 2014. Admission to the school is by lottery. The majority of slots available are for 7th graders. Applicants for grades 8 - 11 are also welcome to apply. Questions? amelemed@pvpa.org.

PVPA, 15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley, MA, 413-552-1580, www.pvpa.org

PVPA is open to all students on a space-available basis. Per MA General Laws, Chapter 76: Section 5, PVPA shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or academic achievement.

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Happy Holidays to you all!

BUSINESS & FINANCE

WHERE ARE THE BLACK BUSINESSES?



Zelmon Johnson,
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Books-N-Voices,
97 Hancock Street,
Springfield, MA
413-737-6400
olivetreebooks@msn.com

“There is a job that fits every person and a person that fits every job!”

This month, I am writing about a very new start-up business in the Springfield area, but the owners are not strangers to Springfield. Meet Griffin Staffing Network, an employment agency that trains and places permanent and temporary staff in the fields of Administrative, Medical, Financial, Professional Services, Hospitality, Insurance and Information Technology.

Griffin Staffing Network is owned by Nicole and Richard Griffin, who have been married for 10 years and are the parents of two lovely children and are active in the Springfield community. Although they have been marriage partners for many years, they recently became business partners in June 2013. It was very interesting to observe the complementary skills of these two professionals. Nicole is the

GRIFFIN STAFFING NETWORK

By Zelmon Johnson

CEO and handles day-to-day operations, while Richard handles the financial and internal consulting aspects of the business.

In interviewing Nicole and Richard, my first question was: “Why start an employment agency? Isn’t it difficult to make a quality living in this business?” Their answer was very simple — “We were born to do this! This is our passion. We want to leave a legacy to our family and community. There were others who provided us with guidance and opportunities, so now we would like to ‘lift as we climb.’”

Nicole and Richard were not always entrepreneurs. Nicole spent over 14 years in corporate settings in human resources, financial underwriting, sales and marketing. However, she developed a passion for helping others reach their career goals working as a mentor to high school students in Junior Achievement programs. This experience proved to be a turning point in her path to “giving and reaching back.” Richard also spent many years working in the insurance and financial industry, but currently works for the city of Springfield in the Office

of Planning & Economic Development. Richard says that his wife is very professional, loves excellence (which is why she married him), and enjoys assisting others reach their career goals. Nicole, on the other hand, says that Richard is the “numbers guy and is very strategic in business planning.” In addition to the skills of Nicole and Richard, Charles Griffin, the Information Technology Staffing Consultant for Griffin Staffing Network, brings a lot of critical expertise to the business as well.

Griffin Staffing Network works with employers (companies) and applicants in the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York areas, but their future plans are to expand nationally. They have three employees, but their future plans consist of increasing the staff to 10.

What makes Griffin Staffing Network unique from other staffing agencies? They do more than just place an applicant; they also provide workshops such as Interview Training, Resume Building and Dress for Success. But most importantly, they assess an applicant’s passion and skills,



Richard and Nicole Griffin

and then move them toward a career, rather than just a placement. Griffin Staffing Network remains supportive throughout the entire process, assuring that it is the best fit for both the applicant and client. Griffin Staffing Network works with entry level to senior management applicants.

Griffin Staffing Network believes in Springfield and is preparing today to make a difference in Springfield for tomorrow. They unite talent with opportunities and believe there is a job that fits every person and a person that fits every job.

If you are looking for a career vs. a placement or looking for qualified staff, visit Griffin Staffing Network at 1145 Main Street, Suite 414, Springfield, MA 01103 or call them at (413) 788-0751. ■

BUSINESS & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Larry Martin, Editor,
is Business Services
and Special Projects
Manager at Regional
Employment Board
of Hampden County
Inc. (“REB”)
lmartin@rebhc.org
www.rebhc.org

WHY ARE THERE ONLY LOW WAGE JOBS AVAILABLE? (PART I)

By Larry Martin

employee and they had a boundless pool of young applicants to fill open slots. There were always lower skilled workers or retirees who would also take these jobs, but the typical demographic was 16 to 22 years of age.

The key point here is that there were employment options that were available to all who wanted to work. If you were discontented with your job, you could shop your skills around or go for additional training. Most large employers, regardless of the industry, usually had some form of internal training program or apprenticeship.

And then the bottom began to fall out over time, slowly and progressively, beginning with the recession in the middle 80s, the dot.com bust; and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was the nail in

the coffin. Both of our political parties equally share the blame. President George Bush Sr. signed the Agreement in 1992; President Bill Clinton signed it into law in 1994. America lost 5.7 million, or 33%, of its manufacturing jobs in the 2000s. There were job losses in other industries, but they did not provide the upward mobility opportunities that manufacturing jobs provide to low skilled workers.

Whether it was the out sourcing of jobs to China or the evolution of manufacturing due to innovation and technology, there are far less opportunities for jobs that pay a living wage for low skilled workers or even high skilled workers whose job have been phased out. For every manufacturing job lost, three other secondary or service jobs are also lost. In addition, the educa-

tional requirements and training required for these positions are prohibitive. We are back to a subject I covered previously, *Supply and Demand*. When the number of unemployed is drastically higher than the amount of jobs available, wages typically will decline. Jobs that used to pay \$16.00 per hour now only pay \$12.00 per hour, sometimes requiring a college degree!

After the unemployment is gone, the savings have dwindled and you are still far too young to retire, the minimum wage job may be all that is left as an option. Many times, these are only part-time jobs so you have to patch together two or three to make ends meet — barely. Health insurance — you must be kidding! Supporting a family without government assistance, no way! Perpetuates a cycle of poverty, absolutely!

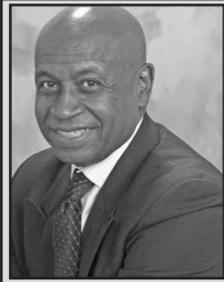
In my next article, I will delve further into the subject of the minimum wage. ■

I have struggled at times on this dynamic topic of the minimum wage. If I flashback to the era I grew up in, an entry level job was a starting point to gaining basic job experience and a few bucks in your pocket. Whether it was in a fast food restaurant, a local retailer, or stocking shelves and bagging groceries, you knew this was where you began a career in high school or college and you knew it was not permanent. Expectations of job seekers of making more than minimum wage in these jobs were unusual; employers rarely expected an employment length of stay of greater than a year from an

BUSINESS & FINANCE

FINANCIAL "CENTS"

WHAT DOES THE DEBT CEILING RESOLUTION MEAN TO INVESTORS?



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Gator Financial &
Insurance Planning
413-455-3765
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gatorfinancialins.com

After plenty of haggling, and a fair amount of political theater, Congress reached a last-minute agreement to raise the debt ceiling and end the partial government shutdown. Most people would agree that a fully functioning government that can pay its bills on time is a positive thing — and it's certainly good news for investors, because a default on the part of the U.S. government could have had serious repercussions in the financial markets. But what's next?

We may find out fairly soon, because the legislation that passed only funded the government through Jan. 15 and raised the debt limit through Feb. 7.

But as an investor, you don't have to wait until next year to respond to these ongoing political issues.

Consider taking the following steps:

- Look for opportunities. The stock market didn't overreact to the drama in Washington. Also, despite the likely short-term drag on the economy caused by the partial government shutdown, U.S. companies have shown that they are able to increase earnings, even with slow sales growth — and corporate earnings are a key driver of stock prices. These are all good signs for investors. And stock valuations (as measured by price-to-earnings ratios) are reasonably attractive. So, now may be a good time to pursue new investment opportunities, assuming they're appropriate for your individual needs, goals and risk tolerance.
- Be prepared for volatility. The financial markets have their "likes" and "dislikes" — and one thing they don't like is uncertainty. So, despite the fact that the markets stood up

Provided by Walter D. Woodgett

pretty well during the shutdown/debt ceiling episode, it's still quite possible that we'll see some volatility in the weeks ahead. To prepare yourself for these potential fluctuations, you'll want to own an appropriate mix of investments — which means you may need to rebalance your portfolio. A diversified portfolio can't guarantee profit or protect against loss, but it can reduce the impact of volatility — and it can help keep you calm, too.

- Be aware of interest rate movements. If the debt ceiling had not been raised, it's highly possible that we would have seen a spike in interest rates, which could have hurt the value of your bonds. (When interest rates rise, investors won't pay full price for existing bonds because they can get newly issued ones at the higher rates.) But even though we avoided this scenario, you'll still need to be

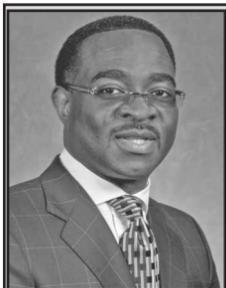
on the alert for interest-rate movements over the next several months — especially if the Federal Reserve discontinues its bond-buying program, which is designed to help keep long-term rates low. Still, it's probably not a good idea to totally avoid bonds in anticipation of rising rates, because bonds can help balance your portfolio if stocks were to decline. Nonetheless, keep a close eye on the Fed's actions, and be prepared to make changes if it appears that rates may indeed jump.

Apart from registering your opinion with your elected representatives, you can't control what happens in Washington. But, no matter what political conflicts are taking place, you can control your investment decisions — and you can continue with a strategy that can help you make progress toward your long-term financial goals.

FINANCIALLY YOURS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW HEALTH CARE LAW

By Samuel N. Wilson Jr.



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Certified Public
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203-368-6086.

FROM BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

Beginning in 2014, nearly everyone in America must either be covered by health insurance or pay a tax penalty. To facilitate this program, either your state or the federal government must provide a "Marketplace" (also known as the health insurance exchange) that enables you to compare and buy health policies from any of several different companies.

You can also use the program to find out if you qualify for a tax credit to help pay for the insurance or if you qualify for Medicaid assistance. You can reach the Marketplace through a website, through the mail, or by tele-

phone.

The plans in the Marketplace are offered by private insurance companies. All must provide a set of core benefits, and none may reject you because of an existing illness or other medical condition.

If you already have a health care policy, you needn't do anything at all. You may, however, use the Marketplace to seek out and purchase cheaper and/or better coverage if available, unless you're age 65 or older. In the latter case, you'll generally be covered by Medicare and will not be subject to the new law.

If you don't have health insurance, you can buy a policy directly from a provider, or you can use the Marketplace to find the coverage that suits you best. The cost will depend on the desired benefits, your income, and the size of your family. Marketplace

information about prices and benefits will be provided so that you will be able to compare policies before you enroll.

To access the program, compare options, and/or sign up, visit the feder-

al website at www.healthcare.gov. (If your state is running its own program, you'll be directed to the appropriate website.) You can also call 1-800-318-2596 for options, instructions, and answers to questions. ■

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HEALTH

HEALTH MATTERS



*Doris Harris,
Editor
Prevention Specialist
Caring Health
Center, Inc. Doris
can be contacted at
dorharris77@hot-
mail.com*

African-American girls (similar to African-American women) are at greater risk for developing obesity and type 2 diabetes. This increase in obesity and type 2 diabetes has been linked with a decrease in their physical activity levels. This is unfortunate, because physical activity has been shown to positively affect the lives of girls and women. Physical activity can improve children's academic performance, how they feel about themselves, their classroom behavior, while decreasing their risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Over the past few decades, physical activity levels in African-American girls and women have decreased. Because of this, it is critical that we find effective and creative ways to increase the physical activity levels in both African-American girls and women.

For a physical activity program to be effective among African-American girls, the program must be enjoyable and relevant to them. Dance has been shown to be an enjoyable form of physical activity. Therefore, it is possible that a dance program would be an effective way of increasing the physical

REACHING OUT TO MOMS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS: LET'S DANCE TOGETHER!

By Sofiya Albassan, Ph.D, Director, Pediatric Physical Activity Laboratory, UMass

activity levels of African-American girls. It has also been suggested that a way to increase children's physical activity level is to increase the physical activity level of their parent, especially their "mother" (primary female figure in the girl's life). A mother's health behavior has a strong influence on her child's health behavior. However, most current programs do not directly involve children and their mother figure.

What we are doing... We are offering a free 12-week afterschool dance program, which includes Hip-Hop, African, and Jazz dance. We are looking at the health impact of this program on African-American girls and their mothers. We are also trying to find out the impact that African-American "moms" have on their daughters' lives when they participate in a program together.

Who we are looking for... We are looking for African-American girls between the ages of 7-10 years and their "mother." In this program, we are defining "mother" as the

primary female figure that lives with the girl.

Where and When ... This program will take place at Rebecca M. Johnson Elementary School (55 Catherine Street, Springfield MA) in the heart of Mason Square. The program will be held 3 days per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday) for 12 weeks starting in January 2014. The program will start at 4:00 pm for the girls, but the "moms" do not have to be there until 5:30 pm.

What we are offering...

Each day of the program, all girls will be given free homework tutoring, mentoring, bonding time with both their mom and their peers, and healthy snacks. We will also provide day-care service for siblings while "mom" is dancing. Each mother-daughter pair who completes the program will also be com-



Sofiya Albassan

pensated up to \$140 for being part of the program.

When and how to sign up ... You can sign up for the program between now and December 14 by calling us at 413-545-6104, or emailing us at magnet.trial@gmail.com ■

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HEALTH

HEALTH MATTERS

PUTTING A CAP ON THE SPIRITS



*Dr. Anika Thrower,
MPH, CLC
WIC Program
Manager/Cornell Scott
Hill Health Center
New Haven Food
Policy Council*

*-Your Health
Is My Wealth-*

Usually the holiday season is the time of year when we participate in social events and reconnect with family. For some people, the holiday season is associated with a free pass to over consume beverages that contain alcohol. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ethyl alcohol, or ethanol, is an intoxicating ingredient found in beer, wine, and liquor. Additionally, alcohol affects every organ in the body (CDC 2013). The intensity of the effect of alcohol on the body is directly related to the amount consumed. Alcohol is produced by the fermentation of yeast, sugars, and starches.

The choice is yours.

Alcohol is an empty calorie beverage, which means there is no nutritional value. However, there are choices you can make to reduce the alcohol and sugar content of drinks. For individuals who prefer wine, try for a dry wine rather than a wet wine. Dry wines in many cases contain a lot less sugar. Do your homework before going to restaurants and check the Internet for your best options. Local stores that sell higher quality wines are usually happy to direct you to a beverage based on your preference and, in some cases, they may offer samples. Low calorie beers may be a viable option. Consider bringing your healthier option with you on your holiday outings.

What's a serving of alcohol?

According to the CDC, a standard drink is equal to 14.0 grams (0.6 ounces) of pure alcohol (CDC 2013). Generally, this amount of pure alcohol

is found in:

- 12-ounces of beer
- 8-ounces of malt liquor
- 5-ounces of wine
- 1.5-ounces or a "shot" of 80-proof distilled spirits or liquor (e.g., gin, rum, vodka, or whiskey)

Turnt up by turning down

Let's face it: the pressure to throw back a couple of beers with friends can be overwhelming. It can be unnerving to turn down alcoholic drinks when wanting to fit in and/or become a part of your group of friends. When dining out, set the tone by ordering your drink first. Consider ordering something festive with colorful sliced fruit pieces. Go back to basics and order water or soda water with lime slices. When asked if you are drinking alcohol, simply reply that you're saving your calories for your meal and then redirect the conversation. Who says alcohol makes the party?

Legally Speaking:

As you can imagine, the holiday season is the time of year when youth and teens find more chances to indulge in alcohol in poorly monitored situations. These opportunities set

adolescents up for failure, not to mention that underage drinking is illegal in all states.

Drinking and driving can have irreversible consequences. The CDC offers more information about alcohol usage and public health at: <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm#howAlcoholAffect>

Dear Robust Reader,

Did you know that this is the time of year that advertisers put millions of dollars into advertising alcoholic beverages? Take your stance with confidence and put a new spin on how you enjoy the holidays. Put a cap on it.

Next month we will be discussing another health-based topic. Please forward your thoughts, comments, and ideas, as they are important to me to: anika.thrower_phd@yahoo.com attention: *Anika*



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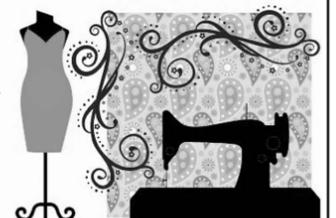
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HEALTH

MASON SQUARE HEALTH TASK FORCE

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Beatrice Dewberry

Tasha Moultrie-Phillips remembers back in 2006 when talk of building a full-line grocery store in Mason Square was just

one more item on residents' wish list.

"Mason Square had been identified as a food desert. Residents weren't able to get affordable, healthy, fresh foods in their own neighborhood. They were buying foods at convenience stores or travelling miles to get fresh foods. We had a lot of work ahead of us," said Moultrie-Phillips, a McKnight resident, who worked at the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts at the time.

As partnerships were established, food access work evolved into a collaborative team that became the Mason Square Food Justice Initiative (MSFJI), now a project under the Mason Square Health Task Force (MSHTF). Initiative members include MSHTF, Partners for a Healthier Community, Springfield Partners for Community Action, the Food Bank, Gardening the Community, Holy Trinity Church of God in Christ and Concerned Citizens for Mason Square.

"We saw that we could get more done by working together, rather than in silos," said Moultrie-Phillips, who now works with the Task Force.

By Beatrice Dewberry, Mason Square Health Task Force Communications Director

With state Department of Public Health CEED grant funds managed by Partners for a Healthier Community, food justice work here strengthened. The team forged ties with City officials, DevelopSpringfield, the State Street Corridor Alliance and MassMutual.

Wanda Givens, director of the Task Force, said though players outside the community joined the table, the grocery store project evolved due to residents' input.

In 2010, the MSFJI team held a petition drive with more than 600 people asking Springfield leadership to prioritize bringing a full-line grocery store to Mason Square. In 2011, the JUST FOOD campaign was launched. A receipt collection drive collected more than \$50,000 in receipts to show potential operators the spending power of people who live, work, worship and play in Mason Square. In 2012, a postcard drive resulted in nearly 2,000 resident-signed cards being mailed to potential operators.

"It's been grassroots driven, and we intend to keep the community at the forefront of the effort," Givens said. The next leg of the JUST FOOD campaign is establishment of a resident-based Community Advisory Board which will work closely with an operator.

This month's Mason Square Health Task Force quarterly Community Check-Up will focus on the

grocery store project. **Held December 12, from 5:30 to 7 pm, at the Mason Square Branch Library, 765 State St., the meeting is open to the public. Food will be served.**

Residents can learn about serving on the Community Advisory Board, updates will be given on the project, and traffic questions will be addressed. Lucinda Hudson, president of a Shop Rite community advisory board in Philadelphia, is guest speaker.

"We are committed to equity, inclusion and collaboration," Jessica Collins, special projects director at Partners for a Healthier Community, said, noting that providing jobs to Mason Square residents is another MSFJI goal.

DevelopSpringfield CEO A. John "Jay" Minkarah said at least three of the four acres needed for the grocery store site has been secured in an old Springfield Technical Community College parking lot between Oak and Walnut Streets. Recently, DevelopSpringfield and partners in the project applied for a Working Cities Challenge Grant to help with funding.

For more information, contact Mason Square Health Task Force at 413-788-6143 or visit MasonSquareHealthTaskForce.org ■

COMMUNITY LATIN@ GROOVE DORCA IRIS DE GOMEZ

By Magdalena Gómez



Magdalena Gómez is the Co-founder and Artistic Director of Springfield's first and only Latin@theater, Teatro V'ida. Ms. Gómez has been a teaching artist for over 35 years.

Dorca Iris de Gomez was born in NYC's Lower East Side and came to live in Springfield's North End in 1976 for the next twenty-five years.

Gomez was appointed by Governor Weld as the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination for Western Massachusetts in 1994, and was subsequently appointed the first Puerto



Dorca Iris De Gomez

Rican woman Chairperson of the Commission in 2000.

A product of the 60s and 70s, inspired by resistance movements like The Young Lord's Party, Gomez has

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championed the human and civil rights of those who experienced oppression in many of the same ways she did, especially the victims of domestic violence. "Liberation movements like the Young Lord's Party, the Women's and LGBT movements helped me understand that a better life was possible."

Gomez is a survivor of domestic violence: "When I was eight years old,

I witnessed my father slash my mother's face. She was hospitalized for eight weeks and I thought she was dead—no one told me where she was. My father, a mobster, paid off the judge and got off without consequence. These types of experiences make us who we are. I have chosen to help other women not become victims."

continues to page 14

COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY

ACTS OF GRATITUDE AS LEADERS

By Lora Wondolowski



As Director of Leadership Pioneer Valley, Lora is passionate about strengthening the Pioneer Valley. Contact her at 413-737-3876 or www.leadershippv.org

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.”— Cicero

As we enter the holiday season, take stock of our blessings, and begin a time of thinking of others, I began reflecting on the leadership capacity of gratitude. Although I may be showing my gratitude for others in my personal life right now, am I doing it in my professional life as well?

In attempts to appear confident in our competence, it can be easy to not acknowledge the help and gifts we have received from others. We seek to maintain the façade of our awesomeness. But gratitude can be one of the most powerful behaviors that we express as leaders.

Gratitude is much more than just giving thanks. Gratitude is the capacity for appreciating the positive benefits we receive in life that result from the goodness of others. When we appreciate others, we acknowledge them and give them value. Conversely, when we fail to acknowledge others, we breed resentment and lack of effort. Why work hard when your contributions won't be acknowledged? Encouragement by leaders is so important to those they serve. As I've mentioned before, leadership is about relationships and gratitude helps enliven our relationships. When we express gratitude and the value of those around us, we increase our social capital and stature as leaders.

Can we take our gratitude one step further and reciprocate? This is the opportunity to go beyond words and demonstrate our thankfulness with reciprocal actions. There are so many opportunities to reciprocate in

small and large ways, but so often we are too busy or afraid of other's reactions to take the initiative. Yet in our culture, there are many negative connotations associated with not reciprocating, including terms like “ingrate.” By reciprocating or “paying it forward,” acts of kindness can be contagious and create a culture of gratitude in others.

Gratitude is a powerful tool for leaders to use. When we actively cultivate gratitude, we can have a strong positive effect on those around us and our communities. We not only evoke positive reactions but also increase the self-value of others and their assessment of us. Gratitude can have the effect of amplifying everything else.

I am grateful for the many people and opportunities afforded to me. I am grateful for the opportunity to work for Leadership Pioneer Valley, which has given me the opportunity to work and connect with so many amazing people from throughout the region, many of whom I would never have met otherwise. I am lucky to do work that fulfills me, draws on my strengths, and allows me to make a difference. Many people have mentored me, encouraged me, criticized me, and helped me along the way and every day. I am grateful for all of them. My successes are not mine alone or the sole result of my efforts. To increase my capacity to express gratitude, I plan to take stock weekly of the things I have received, what I have given, and the troubles and difficulties I have caused. I will cultivate gratitude and act on it. Imagine how our communities might be transformed if we more regularly practiced gratitude. Let's act on our gratitude year-round and not just during the winter holiday season. ■

CALL TO THE CAUSE

BULLIES ARE DELUSIONAL

By Kirk Smith



Kirk Smith is President & CEO, YMCA of Greater Springfield 413-739-6951 www.springfieldy.org

Fear is the intellectual and emotional anticipation of harm. Courage isn't the absence of fear; courage helps us take control over our fears. Bullies feed on the fear of their victims. Bullies are delusional, as they believe they have control over the weak and disadvantaged. They think that somehow they're better than others and can determine their fate, futures and peace of mind. They think they're invincible and above correction and reproach. They think this ‘bullying stuff’ will go on forever, and will ultimately make them more powerful.

Bullies are usually some of the saddest, most insecure people among us, as they are in need of the sadness, fear and failure of others to validate themselves.

I can remember being chased home from elementary school at least three days out of the week and beat up and threatened by the school bullies. I was born two-months premature and, as a result, my physical development was slow. My teeth were brown and my gums were weak. My skin was extremely sensitive, and bruised easily. My mouth would bleed with the lightest tap and I could easily grow welts with the slightest push. I had no father to speak of and my mom worked two jobs so she was rarely home during after-school hours. The teachers really didn't care; they were fearful themselves and just wanted the school day to end. My third grade teacher actually struck me in the mouth with my own hand in front of the entire class to prove a point. As my mouth bled, I jumped up and ran out of the classroom in tears; no one followed to check on me. After

school, I would cry and scream as loud as I could while running through the streets and wooded areas trying to make it home. I was terrified that these kids would kill me and no one would know or even care. By the time I was eight or nine years old, I hated myself, my life and even my own reflection.

After a few years, by the grace of God, I gained enough courage to stop running. I braced myself intellectually and emotionally for harm, because at that point I felt that those bullies could do no more harm. Gradually the bullying stopped, and I began to realize that I had value; that I meant something to the world. God cared about me: this poor, sensitive, rotten tooth, fatherless kid who repeated the third grade, really? As the years passed I discovered that I was more powerful than any bully. Most of those bullies ended up dropping out of school and going to prison. Some are now living in poverty with no education or marketable skills. Because they were delusional, they didn't realize that they were chasing me from their failure to my success. I guess they recognized that I wasn't ‘cool enough’ to drop out of school and become a criminal and dependent on a Judge to determine my future or the Government to determine my assistance.

There are bullies in the workplace, at home, at school, and even on the road, but we don't have to allow them to control us. If you are being bullied or know of someone who is being victimized, be courageous enough to sound the alarm by letting somebody know, no matter the fear or threat level. If you're a bully, stop now and seek help, because you're headed down a path to a place you don't want to be. Please join me and millions of others and answer the call by intellectually and emotionally anticipating safety, equality, peace and hope for all.

To view this editorial and Smith's past articles, visit www.springfieldy.org/category/news/president-ceo-editorials. ■

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

THE RESULTS OF WARD REPRESENTATION

By Rev. Talbert W. Swan II



Rev. Talbert W. Swan, II is Pastor of The Spring Of Hope Church Of God In Christ

For far too long, the at-large electoral system, which was protected at all costs in Springfield, guaranteed that there would neither be proportional representation nor even some minimal percentage of seats for communities of color on either the school committee or the city council.

For a dozen years, social activists and community groups like Arise for Social Justice, the Spanish American Union, the Million Man March Committee and the NAACP fought a concerted effort, which included two lawsuits, a citizens initiative petition and other advocacy efforts, to bring about a mixed electoral system, which combined ward and at-large seats to ensure fair representation.

Advocating for a system that would achieve proportional representation for communities of color was met with much criticism and opposition from within and without our community. Those concerned with protecting the status quo threw out buzz phrases like the need to “work hard” in their narrow minded analysis of why African Americans and Latinos met limited success while seeking elected office.

They ignored the compelling evidence that minority voters were yet optimally concentrated geographically and that voter dilution ensured their defeat at the ballot box. Furthermore, they were well aware that a switch to ward-based voting would create voting districts where persons of color were of sufficient size to control the majority of votes and, thus, achieve representation.

Four years after its implementation, ward representation has proven what many thought impossible:

blacks and Latinos could become the majority in elected boards in our city. The significance of the historic November election of four African Americans and three Latinos to the City Council and three African Americans and one Latino to the School Committee cannot be underestimated.

The city of Springfield, because of its sizeable racial and ethnic minority population and its history of discrimination against communities of color, was forced to address the issue of fairness. Today, communities of color are better represented in city government because of ward representation, a more effective provision.

For many years blacks were denied voting rights in this country. Once blacks finally gained the right to vote in 1870, whites, especially in the south, created new barriers to ensure that blacks could not exercise their right to vote. Many blacks at that time could not read or write and literacy tests were implemented. Property requirements were put in place to keep poor blacks from voting. Even districting, which is now used to enfranchise black voters, was once used to dilute the black vote.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the subsequent amendments of 1970, 1975, and 1982 were passed to help enfranchise minorities into the electoral process. Fair representation entails empowering the voter and giving them control of the government. Ward representation has brought about a fundamental fairness in our representative democracy.

Congratulations to: Justin Hurst, Bud Williams, Clodo Concepcion, E. Henry Twiggs, Zaida Luna, Orlando Ramos, Denise Hurst, Dr. Calvin McFadden, Barbara Gresham, and Rosa Perez on your election. We pray for your success. We will be watching and holding you accountable. ■

COMMUNITY FOCUS

VALLEY GIVES DAY: 12.12.13

By Freda Malone

The Community Foundation and the leading funding organizations in Western Massachusetts will recognize Valley Gives Day on Dec. 12 to promote philanthropy and increase support for the important work the non-profits of the region do each day.

By participating in Valley Gives, donors can help their favorite charities become eligible for special prizes of up to \$200,000.

Many of these agencies are vital to communities of color. **Please visit Valleygivesday.org on Dec. 12 to support one or more non-profits.**

The Boys and Girls Club Family Center, more affectionately known as the “Girls Club,” “Family Center,” or just “the club,” is one of the organizations that deserve your support. The Club has deep roots in the city of Springfield. For more than 100 years, the Club has offered a safe haven and support for families and children. It

provides our youth with an environment that fosters academic success and nurtures leaders who are engaged citizens that live healthy lives. The Boys and Girls Club Family Center believes that Great Futures Start at the club. Our goal is to put our members on track to graduate high school with a plan for the future, demonstrating good character, citizenship and healthy choices.

“I had mentors when I was a member of the club when I was a young man,” said Tony Hudson, a club alum and volunteer mentor, “and it’s only right to give back to my community and be a mentor as well.”

Robert “Cee” Jackson has purchased memberships for more than 15 teenagers and recently purchased dance attire for young girls. “Giving back to the community is important and children are the lifeline,” Jackson said. “When you are blessed, you should bless others.”

continues to page 32

LATIN@ GROOVE

DORCA IRIS DE GOMEZ

continued from page 12

Like many other women without access, money, or privilege, Gomez’s mother went back to her husband. “As teens, my sisters and I left home with our shopping bags and went underground. Not wanting to lose her children, my mother found the courage to leave also. I didn’t choose to grow up like this but it has formed my consciousness and fueled my life-long passion for justice.”

When asked what kept her strong, Gomez responded without hesitation: “Music. There was nothing in our school books that reflected us, no visible role models. When we moved into communities, residents fled; everywhere you looked our images were negative; it was as if we had contributed nothing to society. We worked multiple jobs to support our families and were still considered synonymous with welfare. Although our music was sexist, it also included our oral history and our sorrows. It kept us inspired and was the only

thing we had to preserve our cultural and historical identities and context.” Gomez’s family shared a common emigration story: “My grandfather was forced to come to the United States to escape the abject poverty caused by American industrial exploitation on Puerto Rican soil.”

Gomez advises women of any age: “Learn on your own, find our own voice. It’s always there—don’t avoid it. Don’t move too fast; listen to the parts of yourself that you are ready to hear and listen well. Read, study, learn your history. People often ask how I have become so strong. I tell them that I need to be strong for myself first and then for my children, or they will not survive. Those children include men. Many men think the world is about them, but without women they wouldn’t be here.” With an impish grin and her indefatigable sense of humor, Gomez asks: “Oh, I’m sorry. Was that supposed to be a secret?” ■

Happy Holidays

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From Point of View



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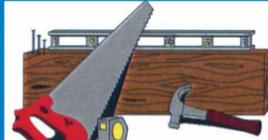


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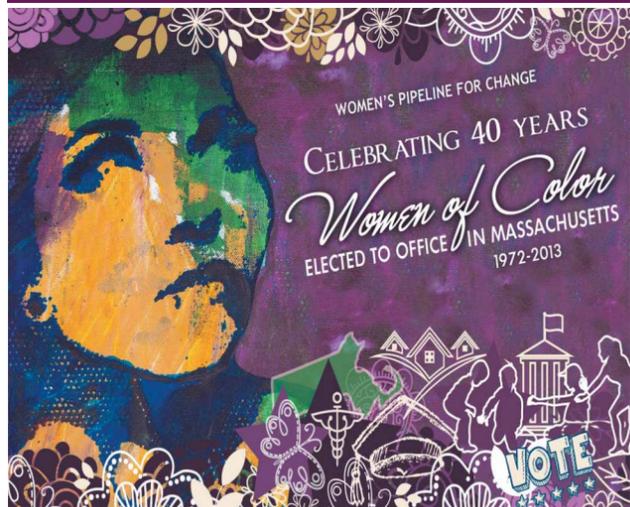


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WOMEN'S PIPELINE FOR CHANGE

WOMEN'S PIPELINE FOR CHANGE: 40 YEARS OF WOMEN OF COLOR ELECTED TO OFFICE IN MASSACHUSETTS



The Women's Pipeline for Change is a coalition of innovative leaders that facilitate support, resources and education to women of color who aspire – or who should aspire – to serve in positions of public leadership across our Commonwealth. On Wednesday November 13, 2013, The Women's

Pipeline for Change honored women of color who have been elected to office in Massachusetts in the last 40 years. It was an inspirational evening with current and former Women of Color Elected to Office sharing their stories of running for office and becoming elected officials.

2013 has been a remarkable year for women of color in public leadership. There were a record number of 45 women of color running for office across the Commonwealth this year. State Representative Linda Dorcena Forry moved up the pipeline from the

House of Representatives to the State Senate, the first Haitian American to do so. In Boston, the only woman in the Mayoral race was a woman of color, Charlotte Golar Richie, who came within 4,000 votes of the final. From this year's elections, there are six women of color newly elected to municipal office and 17 others who were re-elected. Next January, the only two women in



Jean McGuire (former Boston School Committee member), Dianne Wilkerson (former State Representative), Shirley Shillingford, JacQuie Cairo-Williams and Cheryl Clyburn Crawford (Pipeline Board member and Executive Director of MassVOTE)



Marjorie Hurst (former Springfield School Committee), Elizabeth Cardona (Pipeline Research Fellow and Director of the Office of the Governor Western Massachusetts Region), Charlotte Golar Richie (former State Representative and Boston Mayoral candidate) and Denise M. Hurst (current Springfield School Committee member)



From left to right, in front: Barbara Gresham (Springfield School Committee), Rosa Perez (Springfield School Committee Elect), Gladys Lebron-Martinez (Holyoke City Council), Zaida Luna (Springfield City Council), Jossie Valentin (Holyoke City Council Elect), Marjorie Hurst (former Springfield School Committee) and Elizabeth Cardona (Director of the Governor's Office Western Massachusetts Region). Back row: Myriam Quinones, Zaida Govan (former candidate for Springfield School Committee), Denise Hurst (Springfield School Committee) and Lizzy Ortiz

the Boston City Council will be women of color, Ayanna Pressley and Michelle Wu, who topped the ticket in the At-Large race.

Research lead by Ileana Cintron, the Pipeline's Program Manager, confirmed that over 80 women of color have been elected to office in the last 40-41 years. The most common office has been school committees, and city councils or board of aldermen. There has only been one Woman of Color Mayor, Lisa Wong, who just won re-election to a fourth term. There have been 13 women of color elected to the

State Legislature since 1972, and currently there are 4. There have only been 3 women of color elected to the Senate (2 were in attendance at the event).

The Women's Pipeline for Change was incubated by the Partnership for Democracy and Education in its early stages, and later supported by Access Strategies Fund. Now the organization is flying off the nest and will be operating under the fiscal sponsorship of Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts. Delia Rodriguez-Masjoan was introduced as the New Director for Women's Pipeline for Change, spearheading the growth and expansion of the Pipeline network to support women of color in public leadership. Most of Delia's career, including running for office herself, and helping other women of color run for office, has been spent in Providence, Rhode Island, where she is a community organizer, a radio personality, and an immigration specialist.

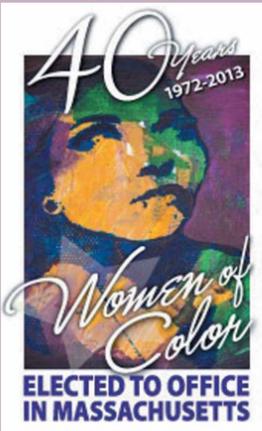
Sponsors of this event included: Access Strategies Fund; The Jobin-Leeds Partnership for Democracy and Education; Eastern Bank; The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at UMass Boston.

The Pipeline encouraged everyone to check out and tweet the website at <http://www.umb.edu/cwpppp/pipeline>.



Marjorie Hurst (former Springfield School Committee member), Dianne Wilkerson (former State Senator) and Elizabeth Cardona (Director of the Office of the Governor Western Mass Region and Pipeline Research Fellow).

WOMEN'S PIPELINE FOR CHANGE



Women of Color



State Senator Linda Dorcea-Forry, the first Haitian-American to serve in the Massachusetts Legislature. Previously, she also served as State Representative for the 12th Suffolk District.



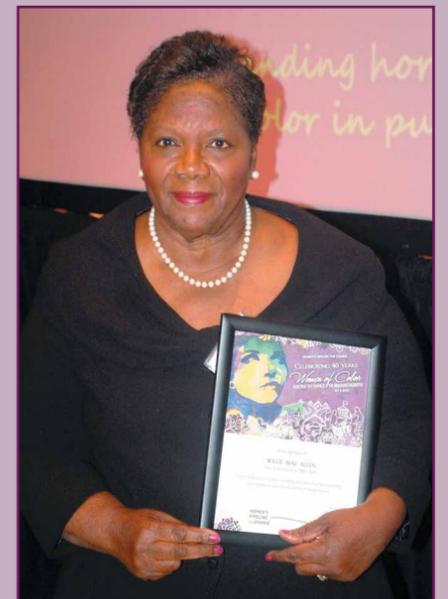
Jamie R. Williamson, former Pittsfield City Councilor and current Commissioner at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.



Martina Cruz (former Lawrence School Committee member and Pipeline Research Fellow), Maria De la Cruz (former candidate for Lawrence City Council) and Marta Rentas (former candidate for Lawrence City Council)



Natalie Carithers (Pipeline Board member and member of the Boston Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta), Jane C. Edmonds (former Sharon School Committee member, Commissioner of the MA Commission Against Discrimination and Cabinet Secretary), Jean McGuire (former Boston School Committee member), Shayna Barnes (newly elected Brockton City Councilor), Mary Tuitt (former candidate for Boston City Council and the House of Representatives) and Suzanne Lee (Pipeline Board member and former Boston City Council candidate)



Age couldn't stop Willie Mae Allen! She was 69 years old when she won a seat in the House of Representatives.



Dr. Debra Dagwan, President of the Barnstable Town Council, with Delia Rodriguez-Masjoan, Director of Women's Pipeline for Change.



A trio of Latina elected officials from Chelsea: Marilyn Vega Torres (former City Councilor), Lucia Colon (current School Committee member) and Melinda Vega (former School Committee member).



Lawrence City Councilor Sandy Almonte shares her experience as a woman of color elected to office.



Dana Rebeiro, newly elected to the New Bedford City Council

Photos by LUZPORTFOLIO BOSTON

Around Town & . . .



A phenomenal group of young people participated in Canaan Baptist Church of Christ's "An Elegant Youth Affair," which honored the passage into adulthood of Christian youth and celebrated the memory of Trayvon Martin.



Isabel Wilkerson, Pulitzer Prize winning author of the national bestseller, "The Warmth of Other Suns — The Epic Story of America's Great Migration," gave a captivating and enlightening talk at STCC's Diversity Council series.



Baystate Mason Square Neighborhood Health Center team at the Rays of Hope 20th Anniversary Breast Cancer Walk.



Members of Richard Allen Lodge #30 came out to support the Rays of Hope Breast Cancer Walk's 20th Anniversary.



The Western Mass Black Nurses held a conference at St. John's Congregational Church entitled "Diabetes in the 21st Century."



Cindy Clemons, Executive Director of Village Keepers Adult Day Health Services held the first annual award ceremony entitled "Faces of Alzheimer's." From left: Cindy Clemons, award recipients Carolyn Brennan, Andrew Cade, Bettye Anderson Frederic, and Mistress of Ceremonies Springfield Health and Human Services Commissioner Helen Caulton-Harris.

. . . In The Community



Founders of AWAKE, Chelan and DeJuan Brown (right), with keynote speaker Gail Devers (fifth from left), award recipients and supporters at AWAKE's 10th Anniversary, "Community Heroes" Awards Gala and Fundraiser.



Representative Benjamin Swan (4th from right) was feted by his family (pictured), and a multitude of friends and supporters at the Springfield Sheraton in celebration his 80th birthday.



Youth Fitness and Dance Challenge—Let's Dance for a Cure—directed by Renee Mari Stewart, now in its 3rd year, held a dance competition which encouraged movement, healthy lifestyles and fitness. Special guest Emcee was "eKnock" from America's Best Dance Crew and the Amazing Race T.V. program.



Springfield Parent Academy held its Fall Parent Academy, "Building Parent Leaders for Student Success," at Western New England University to empower parents and other adults in support of student achievement.

The United Church Ushers of Western Mass held their 11th annual scholarship banquet recently. Pictured are the Senior and Junior Ushers representing 12 Springfield churches.



COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FOCUS

SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES CELEBRATES 35 YEARS



Executive Director Charles H. Rucks, Esq., Deputy Director RuthAnn Hamilton-Stutts and Mayor Domenic J. Sarno.

Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services (SNHS), a treasure to the community, recently celebrated 35 years of "tending to our roots and branching out." They provide a full array of mortgage products to potential homebuyers located anywhere within the Commonwealth. Established in 1978, SNHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation

that transforms families and revitalizes communities through homeownership development, recycling of blighted properties and resident empowerment. This is done successfully through the following Full-Cycle Lending services provided to families in the city and region: Credit counseling and home ownership education for potential buyers; Technical assistance to borrowers from loan intake to closing; Flexible financing products that include property rehabilitation; Technical assistance with property inspections and rehabilitation services; and post-purchase services that include foreclosure intervention which provide critical guidance and relief to struggling homeowners facing loss of their home. Loan products include those for purchase, refinance and/or rehabilitation.

SNHS has stabilized and stimulated development within Springfield through homeownership

development, recycling of properties, and resident empowerment. As part of its strategy, Springfield SNHS acquires blighted and abandoned properties, renovates existing houses or builds new houses on vacant lots. SNHS has helped hundreds of families achieve their dreams of sustainable homeownership. Wherever a family may be along the continuum of homeownership, Springfield NHS has products and services that add value.

Celebratory activities began with a flag-raising on the steps of City Hall on November 4th followed by a reception and concluded with the 35th Anniversary Invitation Gala on November 14. At the Gala, Executive Director Charles Rucks presented the Corporate Leadership Award to MassMutual, and the Sophia Jeffery Community Partner Award to Springfield College's former president, Dr. Richard Flynn. ■



MassMutual Vice President Nicholas Fyntrilakis with Rucks.



Springfield College President MaryBeth A. Cooper and Rucks.



City Councilor-Elect Justin Hurst with Gabrielle, Dominique and Brandin.



Sophia Jeffery, Damon Slocumb, Arnell Jeffery, L'Tanya Pitt and Ida Flynn.



Zachary DePace, Joan Gearing, Brandi Gamble-Lucas and Rucks.



Pre-Purchase Housing Counselor Sterling Hall and Board President Lisa Harrison.



Baystate Health Vice President Steven Bradley with Rucks.

SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES

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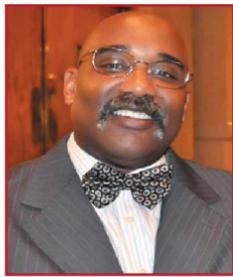
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CONGRATULATIONS CORNER



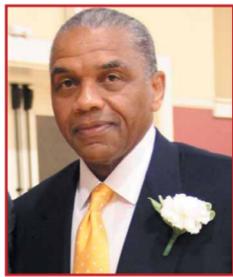
Congratulations to **Minister Lee "Sonny" Brown** of Springfield on the celebration of his 70th birthday.



Congratulations to **Rev. Dr. Mark E. Flowers** on the recent celebration of his 5th Pastoral Anniversary at Springfield's Mount Calvary Baptist Church.

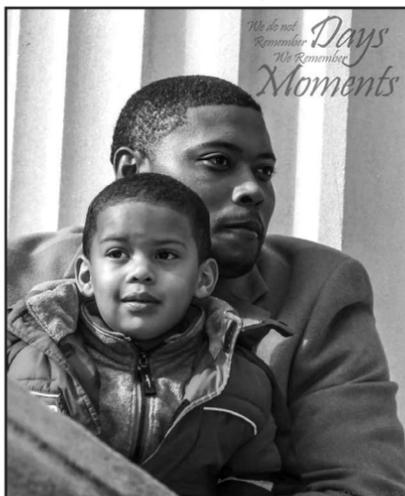


Congratulation to **Roberto Nieves** of Ludlow who was recently hired as Business Development Director at Common Capital Inc., the non-profit business organization that provides financing, strategic business development training and assistance to small- and mid-size businesses in western Massachusetts.



Congratulations to Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services' Executive Director **Charles H. Rucks** who is the recipient of the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network's annual Lifetime Achievement Award for decades of nonprofit innovation and spirit. Mr. Rucks has helped to lift up families and revitalize communities for close to 15 years.

Congratulations to **Thomas M. Belton, Sr.** who served as Springfield's Veteran's Day Parade Marshall. Mr. Belton is the Veteran's Affairs Director for the city of Springfield and a Vietnam War Veteran. His moving words at church prompted City Councilor-Elect Justin Hurst to take his son, Justin, Jr. to the Veteran's Day parade.



Photograph taken by DonDee Photography November 11, 2013



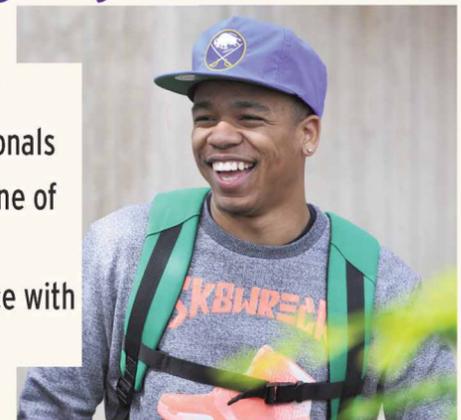
Supporters of Rev. Dr. Calvin McFadden celebrate his victory in being elected to an At-Large seat on the Springfield School Committee. He won a second place victory unseating incumbent Antonette Pepe.

From left: Denise Jordan, Jamina McFadden, School Committee-Elect Dr. Calvin McFadden, Sharie Adams and Candace Jones.

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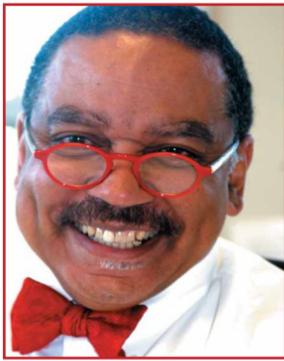
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JUSTICE LUBBIE HARPER JR. WORKS TO IMPROVE CAPE VERDE ISLAND'S JUSTICE SYSTEM: HOSTS HISTORIC VISIT BY CAPE VERDE JUDGES AND ATTORNEYS

By Dwight Bachman, Public Relations Officer, Eastern Connecticut State University



Dwight Bachman

There are many reasons to visit the African Republic of the Cape Verde Island, located in the Atlantic Ocean, west of the coast of Senegal. Once a strategic stop in the horrific European Atlantic Slave Trade, today, the U.S. Bureau of African Affairs calls it "one of Africa's success stories," a "model of democratic governance," and the "Island Paradise of Africa, a place of incredible beauty, unspoiled by mass tourism." People go there to relax year round on peaceful, beautiful, white sand beaches, and experience the warmth and friendliness of the people.

Former Connecticut Supreme Court Justice Lubbie Harper Jr., who currently sits on the state's Appellate Court, had another mission on his visit to the island country. His goal is to help improve the island's criminal justice system. Having gained its independence from Portugal through an armed revolution led by Amilcar Cabral, this African Republic



The Honorable Chase Rogers, Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, with former Supreme Court Justice Lubbie Harper Jr.



Cape Verde delegation from left: Judge Bernardino Degado, Defense Attorney Keita Correia Silva Monteiro, and Prosecutor Patrick Monteiro Varela with Litigation Management Specialist Joseph Moniz, former Supreme Court and current Appellate Court Justice Lubbie Harper Jr., Connecticut Supreme Court Justice Chase Rogers; Judge Manuel do Rosario; Defense Attorney Manuel Barros. Not pictured is Prosecutor Vital Santos da Moeda Filho.



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of 500,000 people, only 39 years old, has approximately 90,000 legal cases pending. Obviously, its system of justice needs help.

In January of this year, Harper, along with Joseph Muniz, Hartford-based specialist in trial and litigation strategy and complex litigation management and a native Cape Verdean, along with David Soares, District Attorney for

Albany County, NY and also a native Cape Verdean, were invited by the Minister of Justice of Cape Verde to participate in a criminal justice seminar in Praia, the capital and largest city of Cape Verde. They learned much about Cape Verde's justice system, and, in turn, shared information about Connecticut's criminal justice system, particularly about the concept of plea bargaining, a procedure that is foreign to Cape Verde's system of justice.

The trip to Praia sowed the seeds for Justice Harper to bring a distinguished Cape Verdean delegation group of six judges and lawyers to Connecticut for a week to observe, first hand, how the criminal justice system operates in Connecticut and New York. The United Nations Office of Drug

continues to page 34



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*Joe Young, writer and producer of the movie **Diamond Ruff**, poses with actors, sponsors, crew, and supporters at the reception after the movie premier which took place at the Bushnell Theater in Hartford, CT.*



NEW HAVEN MAYOR-ELECT TONI HARPER: SHE MADE HISTORY!!!



POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - NEW HAVEN

REMEMBERING A DEAR FRIEND, MAE OLA RIDDICK: ACTIVIST, ALDERWOMAN, CAREGIVER, AND TENANT ORGANIZER

By Arlene Davis-Rudd



Arlene Davis-Rudd

Our dear friend, Mae Ola Riddick, recently passed away at the age of 71, leaving a rich legacy of unselfish giving and community service that few of us would be able to honestly brag about.

Mae Ola, who never took 'no' for an answer, was a true champion of the neighborhood residents and an outspoken advocate for those who were not always able to speak up for themselves.

The *New Haven Independent*, a local on-line newspaper, published an article immediately following Mae Ola's death. It read, "She went by many names: Ms. Mae Ola, Alderwoman, Tenant Organizer, The Chairlady, and Mom, even though she had no biological children of her own."

"Whatever people called her, anyone who wanted to make a difference in the Dixwell neighborhood, or did political or police business with Dixwell, knew Mae Ola Riddick. And she made sure they knew what the neighborhood needed."

Each year, just before the holidays for the past two decades, you would always find Mae Ola moving around our city, 'with a quickness.' She would be visiting several of our local grocery stores, toy stores, and area churches. Mae Ola was seeking the necessary donations she counted on each year for her organized gift-giving—holiday food baskets for our senior citizens and lots of toys for tots throughout her neighborhood. Elm Haven residents looked forward to Mae Ola dropping by before Thanksgiving and Christmas to give them their gifts. It was known throughout the community that many seniors and youngsters would have gone without food and toys at these times.

Ms. Mae Ola, a well trained organizer, had an agreement with area stores to pick out and pick up a number of selected 'big' toys. Needless to say, the kids always looked forward to 'Ms Mae Ola' showing up like Santa Claus, carrying loads of toys.

Mae, as this writer always referred to her, was a compassionate and generous human being. She loved people and they loved her back. Mae possessed a unique spirit that allowed her to 'keep on keeping on,' no matter what.

This year's season will bring tears to many of our eyes. It will also bring to mind the many great and unselfish deeds that Mae was known for. Mae would sponsor free turkey dinners for the community at New Haven's Elk's Club on Webster Street. The dinners were scrumptious.

Because our entire 'village' knew Mae and cared so much about her, she had no problem getting around the town, greeting and meeting local political officials, and community leaders. She immediately expressed interest in their work and their aspirations. It wouldn't be peculiar or out of character for Mae to question them about their motives or reasons for being involved in our community.

This writer grew up in and lived for 25 years in the Elm Haven projects where Mae served as president of their tenants' council. Around the corner and down the street, my dad, a graduate of Shaw University in the 1930s, owned and operated 'The Harlem Barber Shop' for over 35 years. His loyal customers, mostly African American males, came from all over Connecticut and New York City to receive a 'special kind' of hair-cut from Johnny Davis, a very successful entrepreneur trailblazer. It was after a 25-year absence that I returned to New Haven, stayed for a short time with my mom, in the

Elm Haven projects and began volunteering for different activities. It was during that period that I met Mae. My mom, a domestic worker and active member of the tenants' council, had remained a resident of Elm Haven following my dad's untimely death. A friend of Mae's and proud

of her daughter, my mom was always eager to give my name to people as a possible volunteer or worker. Mae asked my mom if I would be interested in serving on the Board of Director's of Dixwell Opposes Alcoholism (DOA), an organization located in Elm Haven and designed to assist those who are fighting the battle of alcohol addiction. At my first DOA meeting, I met the remarkable Mae Ola, community activist and humble neighborhood leader. We became immediate friends. I learned from Mae, all about the tenants' council. It had been organized to assist residents with any issues that they might have. One day Mae insisted that I travel around the 'Projects' with her, meeting and greeting many of her friends and neighbors. All of this activity led to Mae hiring me as Editor-In-Chief of the tenants' council's monthly newsletter.

Time passed. Mae, after meeting several times with neighbors and friends, decided to run for the Board of Aldermen. Mae appointed this writer as her campaign manager. She won the tough election and served two terms as a member. She was respected by all.

Our many weekly conversations were most interesting and stimulating. I will sadly miss Mae, my dear friend and mentor. ■



Mae Ola Riddick

EDITORIAL**FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK****SPRINGFIELD,
BE PROUD!****MY POINT
OF VIEW***Frederick A. Hurst**continued from page 1*

Suffice it to say that the seemingly out of proportion political intrigue, which probably heightened the interest in the at-large School Committee and City Council seats and inflated a badly deflated voter turnout, had much to do with the desire of the old political guard to retain power for now and well into the future. But their ill-conceived plots failed and the people of Springfield prevailed which is why I will reserve the story-behind-the-story for a future date. The winners deserve as much.

It is important that we not take our eyes off what actually happened in this election. My son, Justin Hurst, and my daughter-in-law, Denise Hurst, topped the tickets in the race for at-large City Council and School Committee, respectively, in a city that is still majority White. Justin Hurst, a non-incumbent, beat five incumbent, at-large City Councilors and, in doing so, defied all odds and put to rest the political conventional wisdom that incumbents can't be beaten by non-incumbents, which, as an ancillary accomplishment, probably guaranteed that Springfield's City Council incumbents will never again sit back on their assets on the assumption that they need not work to be re-elected.

Among those Justin Hurst prevailed over was City Council President James Ferrera, whose sixth place finish lost him the election. The fifth and last place at-large winner was Tim Rooke, whose ethical missteps apparently did not go unnoticed by voters. (Ironically, many have said Justin Hurst beat Ferrera, while the accurate truth is Justin Hurst beat everybody. Tim Rooke beat Ferrera!) Remarkably, Black incumbent at-large City Councilor Bud Williams came in third making him the second African American to be elected to the five at-large

Council seats.

And incumbent School Committeewoman Denise Hurst got more votes than anybody on the School Committee and more votes than anybody on the City Council. She was the top vote-getter in the entire election in spite of the fact that she faced a threat from an unexpected source, who came into the race with more than \$20,000 that was raised by people who wanted to defeat her or her fellow School Committeewoman Antoinette Pepe, who ended up losing to Calvin McFadden, the pastor of St. John's Congregational Church. His second place win meant that both at-large School Committee winners were Black. And it is notable that in January Denise Hurst will become the Vice Chair of the School Committee by the unanimous vote of her colleagues.

Combined, Justin and Denise Hurst did something that conventional wisdom said they should never have tried to do, which is run as a husband and wife team. And the credit for their resounding victory goes to the voters of Springfield who knew that these two, individually and together, had done their homework. They did more door-to-door campaigning than I've ever seen in the history of politics in Springfield while the incumbents sat on their laurels (or should I say "assets"), which is typical of elections in Springfield where the mainstream media historically promotes the incumbents and all but ignores challengers whether they are good for Springfield or not. The two prevailed because their message got out to people all over the city in many different ways. And people of all persuasions all over the city voted for them.

Some incumbent cynics made the misguided calculation that the election was going to be about race and focused their efforts in the predominantly White wards in the belief that White folks would

not vote for Black candidates. And they calculated that Black folks would not come out to vote. It pleased me to tell my lunchtime friend that the elections were not about race at all but about politics. And that the Black candidates running for at-large offices were running to decide who would represent the city of Springfield on the School Committee and City Council just like the White candidates. And that the proportionate Black and White voter turnout was just about the same.

And all that was a good thing! The people spoke. Not the Black people or the Brown people or the White people or any other select group but all of the people of Springfield who voted spoke. And when they finished speaking, the most qualified candidates were elected. And, when winners of the ward seats were added in, the makeup of the City Council and School Committee became a true reflection of the demographics of the city of Springfield and the powerful message was sent by voters all over the city that the past is past and the future is now.

Yes! There is a back story to the elections that is not so positive that I think people should know. And I told it all to my friend at lunch, maybe because I felt a need to tell it to somebody just to get it off my chest. You can count on the fact that all of it will be the subject of a future article that will be written when I feel the details will not detract from the glory of a victory that is all of ours.

The most important story is that the voters of Springfield changed the electoral calculus, defied conventional wisdom, ignored racial barriers and moved Springfield closer to a bright future.

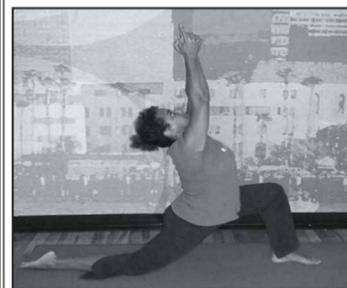
Springfield, be proud!**LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER**

Fred,

Saw the article ("Bridgeport Has Come Alive!" POV, November 1, 2013). Great job highlighting our activities! Really love the publication and look forward to being in touch again soon as projects move along.

*Thanks,
David*

(David Kooris, Director of Planning and Economic Development, City of Bridgeport)

CORRECTION

Point of View extends its sincere apologies to Monifé Marshall and her family for the incorrect caption that ran in our November 1st Health Matters article, "Yoga by Monifé." The error was mine.

Marjorie Hurst, Editor

Monifé is the daughter of George Marshall, the late Elaine Marshall, and the stepdaughter of Sheila (Grandison) Marshall.

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who emailed us congratulations, as well as to those of you who called us, stopped us on the street, or congratulated us in person at various venues since the election. We are sincerely grateful to all of you!

Rick and Marjorie Hurst

Marge/Rick,

Congratulations to you both and to your children upon winning their respective elections. I was glad to see you promote your son and daughter-in-law in the Nov. issue of POV and for helping to develop our next generation of leaders in the political arena. We need our young people to want to be engaged in the betterment of our community. KUDOS!

My-Ron Hatchett A.I.A.

Marjorie & Rick:

Although I am not a resident of Springfield, I personally congratulate you and your family in surrounding and guiding Justin and Denise. Too often there is public letdown with candidates who become public servants, but I am certain that Denise and Justin are an exception to the rule.

*Best wishes,
Mary Shurn*

From our family to yours, congratulations to the entire Hurst family for a TOTAL victory. The joint effort was evident. We now know the City of Springfield will move forward in a more inclusive fashion!

Dr. Anika Thrower and Mr. Chester Thrower

Hi Marjorie:

I can only imagine how good this day feels. I am very happy and excited for the City and the Hurst Family of servants and pray God give them ruling grace and wisdom. I am happy to say my Granddaughter, Gabrielle (11), filled in the ballot arrow for the victors and we will share that memory for our lifetime. It was truly a teachable moment about faith and determination.

Denise Mari Stewart

Marge,

Congratulations to the Hurst family. You all prevailed in the highest manner, which goes to show the coming of a paradigm shift in the city. Justin should be looking at the mayor's office next—SOON. CONGRATULATIONS TO YOUR FAMILY!!!!!!

Walter D. Woodgett

Today is one of the happiest days of my life. Congratulations to all. Our family is truly blessed.

Love, Dad

I . . . am thrilled that your son and daughter-in-law won their races and were at the top of the ticket. Congrats to you and yours.

Arlene Davis-Rudd

Recent election was a plus!

Att. Justin Hurst won for several reasons. His father's, publisher of *Point of View*, coverage was wonderful and emotional to me. Also coverage of Atty. Justin Hurst's views in *The Republican* (16 October 2013, Springfield Neighborhoods Plus, "Residency plan problems").

Many of us WW-2 veterans are angry about those dictating where we Americans will live if employed by the city. I asked this question in a Letter to the Publisher in *Point of View's* January 1, 2012 issue.

Also, many voters want educated leaders.

We now have Atty. Justin Hurst and my attorney, Ken Shea. Let us be ready for the next election. Let us keep up our prudent voting!

I loved the words in *The Republican* (6 November 2013 title of article by Peter Goonan), ". . . OUSTED FROM . . ." Also Ken Dolder's Letter to the Editor of 7 November 2013, "City Council lax on pawn-shop rules." Many of their remarks and opinions have been nonstop!

Millie Dunbar (November 8, 2013)

Congratulations to you and your family on the successful races in both the school committee and city council. Both are very deserving of the opportunities.

Zee Johnson

Congrats on the victories of both Justin and Denise.

Freda Malone

Congratulations on the double victory!

Anne A. Dixson

Nice message! Love you.

Carolyn McDonald

Rick & Marjorie,

Congratulations! Hard work, job well done — hard work pays off.

Jay Griffin

Rick and Marge:

We are excited about the election results. An outstanding accomplishment.

The Holyoke Spradleys

I know you must be very proud of Justin and Denise accomplishments. Job well done!

*All the best,
Doris Harris*

Let's Celebrate The Hurst Victories!!

Emurriel Holloway

You guys really did it! Congratulations!!

Juanita O'Neal

The recent elections in Springfield were like music to us "sideline cheerleaders" when the election reports indicated victories for Team Hurst. Congratulations to my Delta Soror Denise and my Omega Brother Justin in the continuing in and the beginning of historical legacies that will impact the community for years to come. We stand behind them with abundant pride.

Willette Johnson

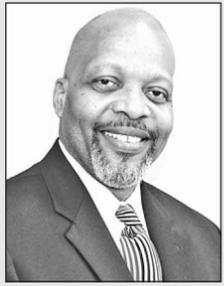
Letters to the Publisher and other content MUST be sent electronically to: mjhurst@afampov.com

(Please reference a subject matter or e-mail is automatically deleted.)

RELIGION

RELIGIOUS POINT OF VIEW

Dr. Brett Snowden,
Editor
Pastor, True Faith
Inspirational Baptist
Church
Tampa, FL



Pastors, Ministers, Professors and Theologians, please submit your articles for this page to Dr. Brett Snowden at progressivecbc@comcast.net

GOD HAS A WORD FOR EVERY CHALLENGE — COMPREHEND AND MASTER THIS MOMENT!

By Rev. Dr. W.C. Watson, Jr.

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (Eccles. 3:11, NIV).

Ecclesiastes 3:11 may be one of the most important verses of scripture and uplifting words of inspiration you will ever read in the Bible. When you come to understand it, it will elevate you to a new level of awareness about yourself and your place in the grand scheme of God’s masterwork. The verse imparts a profound and empowering revelation. Once fully understood, you will never again be permitted to see yourself as an anonymous victim or casualty of circumstances. On the other hand, you will always be encouraged to make sense of your life within the greater purposes of God.

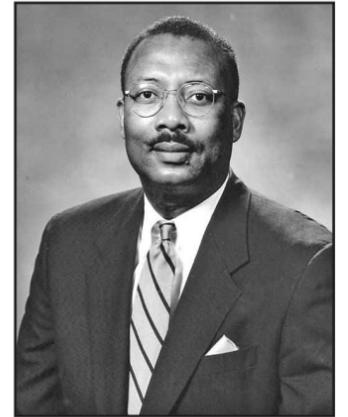
This verse is special, potent, and power-packed. It says to us that within this very moment of time, in the midst of any issue, crisis, or challenge, every situation fits within the grand and ele-

gant design of God’s will. Not only that, but God has granted you the capacity to understand the meaning of it all (in some useful manner). It’s another way of saying “it’s all good” when you realize how God is marvelously working all things together. But it’s essential that you connect the dots. You must come to understand how the bigger picture fits together in order to better comprehend your individual circumstances.

In essence, what you are witnessing right now — no matter what it is — ultimately fits into the beautiful mosaic of a divine and eternal plan. This should bring a new perspective to a lot of the things that so often leave us complaining. Think about it: you may be facing some daunting problem that saddles you with dread and loathing; you may be experiencing anxiety about mounting bills, medical concerns, job woes, or worrisome family dynamics; you may even find yourself preoccupied with hating the success of others. Added together, these issues will sap your vitality and your sense of

wellbeing. In the midst of your daily drama, however, this word of knowledge says three things: step back to see the big picture, look at things from a Godly (divine) perspective, then take responsibility for mastering and maximizing this moment for your benefit.

There is, however, a cautionary word to the wise. As you come into this new awareness, be mindful of the second part of the verse. In its conclusion the verse says to the reader “no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” In other words, you may be ready to embrace the big picture in life, but don’t get it twisted — you will never fully understand it all! But this simply allows us to keep things in perspective. Let us be content to manage us, while we let God manage the rest of the universe. ■



Rev. Dr. W. C.
Watson, Jr.

“LOOKING BACK . . . REACHING FORWARD”

By Marjorie J. Hurst



Rev. Joe C. Long, Jr. and
First Lady Yvette D. Long

Love dominated the installation and celebration of Reverend Joe C. Long, Jr. as the second pastor of Progressive Community Baptist Church in Springfield, Massachusetts on Sunday, November 17th. The love of a congregation for their pastor. The love of a pastor for his congregation.

The spirit-filled service looked

back on the church’s beginnings under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Brett Snowden in 1994 and reached forward, having selected one of their own to continue that leadership in the person of Reverend Joe C. Long, Jr.

“Pastor Long was born in Athens, GA on December 15, 1971, and is a product of a God-fearing family. He moved to Springfield in his early twenties and was baptized as an adult on October 4, 1992 at Canaan Baptist Church. He received his call to ministry in 2005, but after struggling with the seriousness of this calling, he surrendered to God’s calling in 2008, and preached his first sermon in September 2008.

Pastor Long attended the Boston Christian Academy in Boston, MA and is currently enrolled in Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, MA,

where he is pursuing a Master’s Degree in Pastoral and Urban Ministry. He is a Master Barber and the owner of the Fabulous Cuts Barbershop in Springfield.

Pastor Long served for the last three years as an Associate Minister under the leadership of Dr. Brett Snowden. In this position, he was a faithful instructor in both the Adult and Young Adult Sunday Bible School classes, led the Men of Iron Bible Study at the church and at his barbershop, taught Wednesday night Bible Study, as well as assisted the Pastor in various ministerial functions and special services.

Pastor Long serves the community in many ways, including being the organizer of a Men’s Street Ministry that provides spiritual and financial assistance for all who are in need. He has a special place in his heart for youth and is the head coach of the CYO Pee Wee Team, serves on the board of AAU Youth Basketball League and is an advisory board member of the YMCA of Greater Springfield.

As a gifted and anointed preacher and teacher, Pastor Long’s mission is to stand firm on the Word of God as the foundation and purpose of the church. He strongly believes that when the Gospel is preached in its fullness, it will lead to deliverance and the transformation of lives. His vision is to see the lives of the members, friends and guests of Progressive transformed under the unction of the Holy Spirit which enables us to evangelize, teach and make disciples, as we are commanded by Christ in the Great Commission.

Pastor Long is married to Yvette D. Long and they are the proud parents of three sons, Marquis, Jordan and Jaylen.”

Although the above bio provides background information on Pastor Long, it does not do justice to who he is. Pastor Long is a humble servant. He is loving, patient and kind. He is not arrogant. He is not self-absorbed. He is a believer of the Holy Spirit of God and walks his talk. He and his congregation are truly “reaching forward!” ■

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Tuesday	Prayer	6:30 pm
	Bible Study	7:00 pm



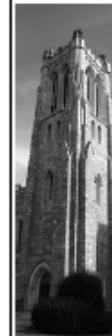
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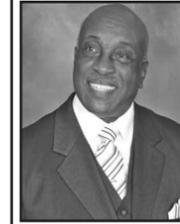
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THE ARTS

PEN & INK



BRENDA'S CHILD has made it her life's mission to inspire people through poetry and stories and through leading by example with courage, confidence, and integrity. In April 2007, she self-published her first book of poetry, "A Piece of My Mind...Poetic Confessions of a Self-Proclaimed Diva." Since then she has published four more titles. For more information, email: brendaschild@brendaschild.com

MOTHER TO SON... THE NEW GENERATION

By Brenda's Child

It has to happen... that dreaded conversation
Set aside feelings of hysteria and trepidation
Bring the knowledge, history and logic,
Similar to the message, "life ain't been no crystal stair"
A black mother has to forewarn her son
That he is among the hunted and feared.
That while you adore him, America abhors him.
The details have changed but the danger he faces hasn't.

In the past it was

*That's master's woman even if that's your wife,
If he comes for her, look away.*

*Stay away... from white women,
Remember what happened to Emmet Till?*

Don't look a white man in the eye and remember to say sir!

Now we have to be explicit when teaching
What to do when stopped by an officer.
Any swift movements could end in a stream of bullets
*Why do you have to wear that hoodie?
Don't you know that puts you at risk?*

We have to teach them their amendments and Miranda rights,
Making it clear that they may be violated anyway,
*You can't walk down that block, even if family lives there.
You may be mistaken, handcuffed and taken,
I love the color red too, but you don't want to be gang affiliated*

This conversation is a warning,
This must be articulated delicately,
Otherwise it becomes discouraging
And he feels defeated before the fight bell rings,
We have to be more than mommy; we have to be referees,
Careful not to make a bad call,
Appear optimistic and strong
All the while hoping we never get that call
That he is behind bars, or on the ground
Surrounded by evidence markers and yellow tape.

It's equally painful and infuriating...humiliating
For Black fathers to have this talk too,
But I'm speaking from a single mother's point of view,
Burdened with this particular duty as I look into his brown eyes,
He towers over me, but this teenager is my baby,
From my womb, and one day soon
He will be a man, so I'll be damned
If I don't do all I can to save his life,
And that means...
Swallowing the lumps in my throat
Setting aside the inner hysteria and trepidation,
And having this life changing
But absolutely necessary, dreaded conversation.

©2013 Brenda's Child for Two Two INK



JUANITA TORRENCE-THOMPSON: Pushcart nominee. Published fiction, children's stories, feature articles, hundreds of her award-winning poems in dozens of U.S. and international journals, 12 anthologies, 7 books including her *Talking With Stanley Kunitz* (2012). Writes print & online newspaper poetry columns; produces poetry salons and reads internationally. Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of acclaimed 30-year-old *Mobius, The Poetry Magazine*. Her poetry is translated into 15 foreign languages. *Talking With Stanley Kunitz* and *New York and African Tapestries* were best pick by *Small Press Review*. *Mobius, The Poetry Magazine*, best pick 2007 thru 2012 www.poetrytown.com

HOLIDAY FRAGMENTS OF YESTERDAY

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson

Imagine icicles dangling from gray eaves
A whisper away from tastefully lit
blue spruce in front of the house, just
inches away from the gazebo
a block from the old stone church.

Imagine "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"
Cascading through your Cape Cod
The children running pell mell in their p.j.'s,
Casting sidelong glances at brightly wrapped
Gifts from mom, dad and Santa. Mom and dad's
Eyes sparkling as they secretly hide bicycles
In the hallway.

Imagine grandma and grandpa, arriving with
More gifts. Little Lauren sitting on grandpa's
Knee; grandma praising Robbie for his missing
Front tooth. Robbie sports \$5 from the Tooth Fairy.

Imagine the children tearing into their gifts, eyes
Aglow. Mom, dad, grandparents thanking Lauren and
Robbie for a painted giraffe, clay zebra made at summer
Camp, lace handkerchief for grandma.

Imagine after Christmas dinner of Cornish hens,
Glazed yams, broccoli au gratin, cranberry sauce
And blueberry pie ala mode, dishes are stacked in
The dishwasher. Mom plays "Silent Night" and other
Christmas carols on the maple spinet piano.

Imagine, just imagine a fragment of home.

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THE ARTS

CHILDREN'S BOOK CORNER

"BORIS AND STELLA AND THE PERFECT GIFT"

By Dara Goldman

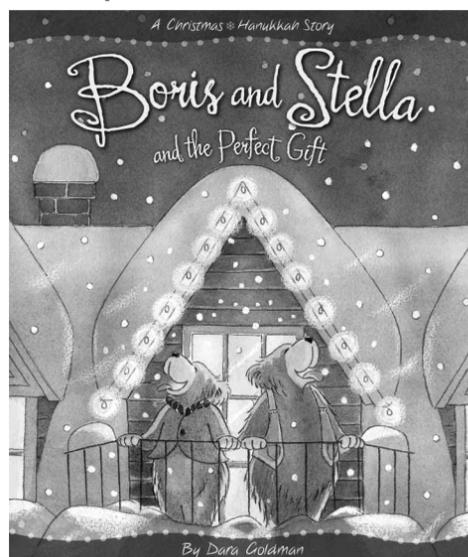
c.2013, Sleeping Bear Press \$15.99/\$16.99 Canada 32 pages

Reviewed by Terri Schlichenmeyer



The Bookworm is Terri Schlichenmeyer. Terri has been reading since she was 3 years old and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.

Nobody likes getting presents more than you do.



You love the sound of the paper as it rrrrrrips off. You like the shiny bows – for at least a minute before they hit the ground. The reason for the gift doesn't matter because you know there's going to be something good inside the package, and you're always careful to say "thank you" because it's the nice thing to do.

You love getting presents – but do you know how much fun it is to give them? In the new book **"Boris and Stella and the Perfect Gift"** by Dara Goldman, you'll see that giving is sometimes better than getting.

For Boris and Stella, the city was a perfect place to live. Their work was close; every day, Stella baked desserts at the bakery next door, and every night, Boris went downstairs and played the piano, filling the air with the songs he learned growing up in Russia.

Stella and Boris were very happy. They didn't have a lot of money, but they had each other and that was enough.

But one winter, Stella realized that it was almost time for Hanukkah. She

shook her savings jar – there wasn't much in there – then she figured out where to get more money. She took her little pine tree, the one that came from her family's farm in Italy, and she sold it to the owner of a local flower shop. That would give her enough coins to buy a dreidel for Boris, for his collection.

Back home, Boris was thinking. Christmas was coming, and he wanted to give Stella something beautiful. But there wasn't much in his savings jar, so he got an idea. He would sell his dreidel collection, the one that his parents gave him for Hanukkah when he was little. That would give him just enough to buy something "dazzling" for Stella's little pine tree.

On the last night of Hanukkah, after lighting the candles of the menorah, Stella had a wonderful gift to give Boris. But before she could hand him the box – *"Bozhe Moi!"* – Boris noticed something missing. And just after he opened her gift – *"Mamma Mia!"* – Stella noticed something missing, too...

So your Christmas tree is decorated with dreidels and gelt. Or your Hanukkah celebration includes candy canes and wreaths. Whatever holiday your family holds dear, "Boris and Stella and the Perfect Gift" lives up to its perfect title.

Savvy adults may quickly notice something here, though: author-illustrator Dara Goldman drew from classic literature to convert this "Gift of the Magi"-like tale of love and sacrifice into something easier for smaller children to understand. Indeed, the adorable illustrations here are very kid-friendly, so if your child is too young to know the O. Henry story (or if you're unfamiliar), that's perfectly okay.

If the "tis better to give than receive" message is something your 4-to-8-year-old needs this holiday season, here's a good start for teaching that lesson. For them, "Boris and Stella and the Perfect Gift" is a book they'll rrrrrrip into. ■

LIVING

INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS . . .

THE SIDELINE CHEERLEADER... AN UNSUNG HERO

By Willette H. Johnson



Willette H. Johnson is a Retired Springfield Public Schools Educator

Raising daughters afforded me the opportunity to re-experience one of the activities that was pleasurable for me in my youth—cheerleading. Both of my girls, at some point in their growing up days, involved themselves in this sport. I attended countless games and cheerleader events in support of their participation. My older daughter changed her focus to dance and other artistic expressions after satisfying her desire to be a sideline inspiration. My younger daughter continued her love for and skills in cheerleading into her

college experience, eventually earning the title of Cheerleader of the Year at Morgan State University. I'm sure they could speak of happy memories about this part of their school experiences.

Oddly enough, I'm not sure if I ever realized the genuine service they performed as sideline cheerleaders. So often the role is either ignored or plays second fiddle to the "real athletes," those on the field chasing a ball of some kind. In hindsight, I have developed a greater respect for the sideline cheerleader who, although taken for granted more often than not, actually serves as an integral part of the tenor of the field performance. Imagine having someone continuously cheering you on to victory—declaring to all who will listen that you are a winner.

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LIFE'S CHALLENGES

PARASOMNIA OR NIGHTMARES: PART I

By Dr. Sweets H. Wilson



Dr. Sweets S. Wilson is a Christian life purpose coach, motivational speaker and CEO of Inspire ME, LLC. wilson.sweets@gmail.com or 860-869-8067

FROM HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Parasomnias are disruptive sleep disorders that can occur during arousals from REM sleep or partial arousals from non-REM sleep. Nightmares that occur frequently are parasomnia dream state events, in which visual sequences unfold that often depict imagery or situations that are particularly disturbing or frightening to the individual experiencing them, and may often come from fears in their own subconscious. Nightmares are disturbing dreams associated with negative feelings, such as anxiety or fear. Nightmares are common. According to

The National Sleep Foundation, nightmares begin in childhood and tend to decrease after about age 10. However, some people have them as teens or adults or throughout their lives. Nightmares seem real, often becoming more disturbing as the dream unfolds. But nightmares usually are nothing to worry about. They become a problem if you have them frequently and they cause you to fear going to sleep or keep you from sleeping well.

Parasomnias include nightmares, night terrors, sleepwalking, and many others. Nightmares are considered a sleep disorder when they occur frequently enough that they disrupt sleep on a regular basis and cause further fear of sleeping. This can lead to sleep deprivation and the formation of other sleep disorders or medical or psychological conditions. Nightmares are similar to a regular dream involving images and sound, but the images often invoke fear or anxiety in the individuals experi-

continues to page 30

FOOD AND FASHION

THE URBAN COOK



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a Personal
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Food Consultant
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MY FAVORITE THINGS

By Rhonda Jones

It's been a year since I did my family in for Christmas. I don't think they'll ever forget how I let Christmas fall by the wayside last year. Yes, I clearly remember that I put up a small artificial tree with a fake pine tree smell. My kids were not happy with me. I also remember not decorating the house and that I didn't even wrap one gift! Now I'm looking back at last year and realizing how selfish I was not to recognize how blessed I am to have such a great family and wonderful friends. I'm happy that I can say it's a new year, a new day, and it's all forgotten that I was a Grinch last year.

The excitement that I'm experiencing is scary because I have so many ideas for Christmas this year — obviously as a result of missing last Christmas. My house will be decorated and lights turned on the day after Thanksgiving with the warm smell of cinnamon flowing through the house. I might get my tree that same weekend except that I don't want to have a dried out tree before Christmas day.

Now turning to my meal planning. Do I want to cook a baked turkey or a fried one? Will I cook a glazed ham

with brown sugar, honey and pineapple and cloves? And I can't forget about cooking a Prime Rib seasoned just right with herbs and spices and few pieces of bacon placed on top.

Next I have to figure out what side dishes to cook. The basics: macaroni and cheese, candied yams, dressing and collard greens. As for the deserts, there'll be pound cake, cheese cake with strawberry or cherry topping, my red velvet cake with cream cheese frosting and my son's favorite, sweet potato pie.

All that sounds like a lot of food for a family of four but I'm trying to catch up; so, since I'm having all this delicious food, you are all invited! One more thing — I almost forgot the cornbread and the cranberry sauce. If I've forgotten anything else, when you come visit, you're welcome to bring whatever your favorite dish is. Since I'm so excited about Christmas this year, I'm going to share two great recipes with you that, hopefully, brings joy and goodness to your hearts and stomachs.

*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year.*

CORNBREAD

1 pkg Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix
1 pkg Jiffy Golden Yellow Cake Mix
2 eggs
½ cup cold water
1/3 cup evaporated can milk

Blend all ingredients. Bake on 375 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Brush with butter when still warm

OOEY GOOEY BUTTER CAKE

1 box yellow cake mix
8 oz cream cheese, softened
4 eggs
1 stick butter, softened
2 tsp of vanilla extract
1 16 oz box powdered sugar

Mix cake mix, 2 eggs, 4 tablespoons butter and extract together. Pour into ungreased pan. Mix cream cheese, 2 eggs and 4 tablespoons butter and powdered sugar. Pour this mixture over the batter. Bake for 40 minutes at 350 degrees.

INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS . . . THE SIDELINE CHEERLEADER... AN UNSUNG HERO

continued from page 29

Fast forward to present day and the existence of a different kind of sideline cheerleader. How about those people in our lives who have served as loving parents, caring adults, teachers, coaches, good friends, and Christian role models? Without any fanfare or high regard, these individuals have engaged in sideline cheerleading throughout our lives. Recall for a moment how you felt when someone validated your work or final product with words like “great job,” “outstanding,” “you did it,” or “that was incredible.” Maybe it created a boost in your ego, or maybe it brought tears to your eyes knowing you did something that impacted others in a positive way and they appreciated it. If we could bottle the feeling and save it for a rainy day, we'd all probably do it. A little encouragement, sincerely expressed, is worth its weight in gold. No matter what age or position in life, we all enjoy the accolades and inspiring words. More often than not, it's the stuff that keeps

us going, especially when we're uncertain of our own abilities. But how do we say thanks to these unsung heroes?

For my daughters and other pom pom toters, I believe the best thank you for their dutiful sideline cheering was a team win. That always made the bus ride back home more enjoyable. I'm sure it was also satisfying when someone complimented them on their commitment to serve.

So, as we approach the Christmas season, let us utilize this time for meaningful gratitude. Join me in thanking the **sideline cheerleaders** in our lives. From my parents and family to my teachers and other caring adults in my youth, and to my present day family, friends and people I respect and admire, I say thank you for your love and support. To my role models and encouragers (Deaconess Laura Burt, Deaconess Luzetta Terry, Ma Ethel Hudson, Sister Catherine Shider, Soror Barbara Lanier, Junebug Spradley—to name a few), I pray God's blessings upon you always. ■

LIFE'S CHALLENGES PARASOMNIA OR NIGHTMARES: PART I

continued from page 29

encoring them. Dreams are considered nightmares when they cause an immediate awakening from sleep, which usually occurs at the climax or extreme point of terror. Nightmares are often vividly recalled, and the sense of fear felt during them may continue for some time even after waking.

Nightmares occur largely in the REM, or deep stage of sleep, but may occur in earlier stages in some cases—often when a particularly stressful or traumatic event is on an individual's mind when they lay down. This can lead to entering the dream state directly from sleep. Nightmares are rarely lucid dreams, meaning they are not recognized as dreams by the person experiencing them, which, of course, leads to the increased level of terror felt by them.

Nightmares are referred to by doctors as parasomnia with symptoms such as:

- Your dream occurs near the end of your sleep time
- You feel scared, anxious, angry, sad,

or disgusted as a result of your dream

- Your dream keeps you from falling back to sleep easily
- You cannot think clearly upon awakening, and can recall details of your dream

Children's nightmare content varies with age, typically becoming more complex as they get older. While a young child might dream of monsters, and older child might have nightmares about school or difficulties at home.

Nightmares may be viewed differently in different cultures. For example, in some cultures nightmares are thought to mean that the dreamer is open to physical or spiritual harm. In other cultures, it is believed that the dreams may contain messages from spirits or may forecast the future. These beliefs may lead those with nightmares to use certain practices in an effort to protect themselves. In Part II, we will explore what you eat that can affect your sleeping. ■

BLACK SPORTS

BLACK SPORTS INTERNATIONAL

13TH ANNUAL HBCU NATIONAL TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS



MEN CHAMPIONS: XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

Xavier University (XU) of Louisiana sophomore Kyle Montrel defeated North Carolina Central University's Daniil Gerasimov 6-2, 6-4 to win the men's singles A flight at the HBCU National Tennis Championships and lead the Gold Rush to its first-ever team title in this event.

Montrel became the second Gold Rush player in three years to win the singles championship in the A flight. His final three victories came against NCAA Division I opponents. Xavier is an NAIA member.

The XU men earned the team championship on a combination of matches won and bracket byes. The three-day tournament ended after rain cancelled a few of the matches. Neither of the men's doubles flights were completed, and none of the three Gold Rush teams had been eliminated.

"The guys had an awesome weekend. With so many new guys, I'm happy about the way they are blending together and forming a bond," XU coach Alan Green said. "The Nuggets played well, too, and I'm excited about how well our freshmen played. This has the makings of a special year for us, if we can keep this up."

XU freshman Tushar Mandlekar lost 7-6 (7-5), 6-3 to Florida A&M University's Zack Evenden in the men's B flight singles final.

Nikita Soifer and Jordan Harrell, seeded first in men's B doubles, defeated Bluefield State University's fourth-seeded Vlad Catlan and Connor Pickering 8-2 in the semi-finals. Montrel and Mandlekar led Bluefield State's Vishwesh Sinha and Aziz Yuldashev 4-3 in their A doubles semi-final when rain stopped it.

Green's teams won a combined 31-of-45 matches in three days. The Gold Rush and Gold Nuggets were a combined 21-14 in matches against NCAA Division I opponents.

Florida A&M finished second in the men's team standings, and North Carolina Central was third.

Men's Division Final Ranking

1. Xavier University	28
2. Florida A&M University	22.5
3. North Carolina Central University	17
4. Bethune-Cookman University	14
5. Prairie View A&M University	12
6. Bluefield State University	10
7. Tennessee State University	5
8. Stillman College	4.5
9. Benedict College	3
10. Howard University	2
11. Tuskegee University	1
12. University of Arkansas Pine Bluff	1



WOMEN CHAMPIONS: BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY

Bethune-Cookman University's (B-CU) goal of defending its HBCU National Championship Women's Title was to prove the 2012 win was not a fluke. Two of the singles flight championships were all B-CU participants, with one Lady Wildcat winning her straight title. Three doubles teams made the semi-finals. Convinced?

With the championship well in hand Friday evening, B-CU was able to default its remaining Saturday matches so both men and women teams could attend a private memorial for their fallen colleague Juan Varon Munoz, who tragically lost his life in a traffic accident.

"Our girls played with Juan in their hearts and on their rackets," said B-CU Head Coach Tim Pleasant. "It was an outstanding effort on our part." Chinatsu Kajiwara downed teammate Gaby Chinchilla to win the "B" flight. Both needed three sets to win their semi-final matches, with Chinchilla recovering from dropping her opening set 6-0.

The "A" flight featured freshmen Mina Matsuba and Maria Sablina, with Matsuba continuing an impressive fall start with her second tournament title in as many weeks. Matsuba faced off top-seeded Katelyn Stokes from Howard University, who has been ranked in the East Region of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association rankings, and has been ranked twice in the National Rankings the last two years. She has also not lost in Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference play the last two years. Matsuba rallied for a 2-6, 6-2, 6-2 victory that set the tone for the Lady Wildcats' weekend.

"She not only challenged the big shots from Stokes, but she eventually overpowered her," Pleasant said. "Mina did not play any competitions for two years. If she can play at this level now with only six matches in two weeks and none over the past two years, all I can say is "this is going to be a fun season."

Pleasant praised the doubles combo of Maria Dimitrova and Laura Rodriguez, whose second round match clinched the team title. "Maria showed me she can be a top player for this team when she has her confidence going," Pleasant said. "As for Laura, it was the best match and the best tennis I have seen her play in 3.5 years. She would get the 'Game Ball' if I was to award that to someone for the weekend."

Women's Division Final Ranking

1. Bethune-Cookman University	26
2. Howard University	20
3. Florida A&M University	18
4. Xavier University	17
5. Delaware State University	13
5. Prairie View A&M University	13
5. Southern University	13
6. Benedict College	5
7. Savannah State University	3
7. Stillman College	3
8. Bluefield State University	2
8. Tuskegee University	2
9. University of Arkansas Pine Bluff	1

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Portuguese, Latino, Polish, Greek, and Italian programming -
plus talk shows with local hosts discussing local issues.

Check out our updated website at wtccfm.org

COMMUNITY FOCUS

VALLEY GIVES DAY

continued from page 14

The club offers several programs, including preschool, afterschool, teen drop in, mentoring, girl scouts, dance, swimming, and yoga. For more specific programming information visit us on the web at bgcafamilycenter.org or call us at 413-739-4743.

From Square One

At Square One, we understand that moving a child forward means moving the whole family forward. It's a concept we put into practice every day. So Share The Square and help us spread the news of the good work we do every day. **Don't forget to mark your calendars for 12/12/13 Valley Gives Day** and support Square

One because every penny matters and makes a difference in the lives of the children and families who every day are welcomed at Square One.

From the YWCA of Western Mass

On 12/12/13, join Valley Gives in an annual 24-hour celebration of generosity. Every year on December 12, community members from across all of Western Massachusetts come together to support nonprofit organizations from across the region. Donors will be able to learn more about the causes they care about and the nonprofits serving our community by visiting www.valleygivesday.org. ■

SAVE THE DATE!

12.12.13

The clock has started counting down to **Valley Gives!** Save the date and join Springfield for the Pioneer Valley's biggest day in philanthropy! www.valleygivesday.org

DECEMBER 2013 EVENTS

Send your events by the 15th of the month to: info@afampov.com

For updated events, go to: www.afampointofview.com/events.htm

SEE PAGE 2 FOR ADDITIONAL DECEMBER EVENTS

Ongoing thru January 5

Bright Nights at Forest Park

When: Sun.-Thurs. 5—9pm
Fri., Sat., Holidays 5—11pm

Where: Forest Park, 302 Sumner Avenue,
Springfield, MA

Info: \$18 per vehicle Mon.-Thurs;
\$21 per vehicle Fri.-Sun. & Holidays;
www.brightnights.org

The Urban Nutcracker

When: Opening Night:
Fri., Dec. 6th at 7:30pm
Fri. Evenings:
Dec. 13 & 20 at 7:30pm
Sat. Evenings:
Dec. 7, 14, 21 at 7:30pm
Sat. Matinees:
Dec. 15 & 21 at 1:30 pm
Sun. Matinees:
Dec. 8, 15 & 22 at 3pm

Where: The John Hancock Hall,
180 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA

Info: \$25, \$35, \$45, \$65;
www.backbayeventscenter.com or
888.596.1027

MONDAY—2

Wine & Wings Event for ALL Boys & Girls Club Family Center Alumni

When: 6pm
Where: 100 Acorn Street, Springfield, MA
Info: FREE and Open to All Alumni;
RSVP at 413.739.4743

TUESDAY—3 THRU SATURDAY—14

Annual STCC Student Artwork Showcase

When: Tues. thru Fri. 12:30—4:30pm;
Sat. 10am—2pm
Wed. 12:15—1:20pm Reception

Where: Amy H. Carberry Fine Arts Gallery,
STCC, Springfield, MA

Info: FREE and Open to the Public

FRIDAY—6

Reading and Booksigning by Shyy, Author of "Stiletto Nights — Don't Be Shy"

When: 6—8pm
Where: Renaissance Art Space
143 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Springfield, MA

Info: Mature Audience Only

SATURDAY—7

Stephanie Capparell, Author of "The Real Pepsi Challenge: The Inspirational Story of Breaking the Color Barrier in American Business," will Discuss her Book

When: 2pm
Where: New Haven Free Public Library
133 Elm St., New Haven, CT

Info: 203.946.8835

SUNDAY—8

Art Show/Collectibles by Camryn Little (Age 11)

When: 2—4pm
Where: Olive Tree Books-n-Voices,
97 Hancock Street, Springfield, MA

Info: FREE and Open to the Public;
413.736-6400

3rd Annual "I Am Me Kids' Fashion Show" Hosted by Gary Bass ("G Money the Prince" from WZMX Hot 93.7)

When: 5—7pm
Where: Springfield Sheraton,
1 Monarch Place, Springfield, MA
Info: Teka Jones at 413.330.0458 or
tekajones15@gmail.com

THURSDAY—12

Springfield Public Schools Teachers and Educators of Color Employment Opportunities Information Session

When: 4pm
Where: Springfield Public Schools,
Human Resources Department,
1550 Main Street, 2nd Floor,
Springfield, MA
Info: 413.787.7180; 413.537.9437;
www.sps.springfield.ma.us

SATURDAY—14

Booksigning by Eric Durham, Author of "Transformed"

When: 1—3pm
Where: Olive Tree Books-n-Voices,
97 Hancock Street, Springfield, MA
Info: FREE and Open to the Public;
413.736-6400

Christmas at the Armory in WWII: Invitation to Commanding Officer's House

When: 1:30pm
Where: Springfield Armory National Historic
Site, STCC grounds, Springfield, MA
Info: FREE and Open to the Public;
413.734.8551 or www.nps.gov/spar

SUNDAY—15

Booksigning by Minister Melvin Wilson, Author of "The Good Book"

When: 3—5pm
Where: Olive Tree Books-n-Voices,
97 Hancock Street, Springfield, MA
Info: FREE and Open to the Public;
413.736-6400

SATURDAY—21

St. Peter's Episcopal Church's Annual Dinner Dance

When: 6pm—12am
Where: Chez Josef, Agawam, MA
Info: Public is Invited;
For tickets call 413.736-8567;
413.246.6980; 413.841.0343 or
SaintPeters45@gmail.com



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JUSTICE LUBBIE HARPER JR. WORKS TO IMPROVE CAPE VERDE ISLAND'S JUSTICE SYSTEM: HOSTS HISTORIC VISIT BY CAPE VERDE JUDGES AND ATTORNEYS

continued from page 22

and Enforcement Control sponsored the delegation's trip to the United States.

State and Hartford officials and dignitaries, members of the Judiciary, including Chase Rogers, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, members of the bar and the general consul from Cape Verde, welcomed the delegation at a reception on Oct. 5, at the Hartford Club. Rogers, who has worked with Harper for many years on the Appellate and Supreme Court, happily embraced the delegates, saying she believed the interaction with the Cape Verdean delegation would be a learning opportunity in jurisprudence for the Connecticut criminal justice system as well.

"Justice Harper has hand-picked and lined up a full and comprehensive range of individuals for professional briefings, workshops and court sessions for you. I know he and his team are working hard to make it happen for you. When we serve you, we all win. Trust me when I tell you that you can turn to Justice Harper with confidence. He will be there for you when, where, and for as long as you need him. That is the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!"

Harper thanked Francisco Borges, president of Simsbury-based Landmark Partners, Inc., Attorney Dori Hightower, Marylyn Ford, professor of law at Quinnipiac University, Attorney Catherine LaMarr, general counsel to State Treasurer Denise Nappier, Manuel Fontes, a physician in North Carolina, Melissa Farley, executive director of external affairs for the Judicial Branch of the Connecticut Supreme Court, Lennox Bailey, banquet captain of the Hartford Club, and Chrissy Carpenter, the Hartford Club's manager of catering and membership sales, for their financial support, time and effort to make the visit by the Cape Verdean judges and attorneys a huge success.

Special thanks went out to Moniz, who Harper called "a tireless warrior," who devoted an inordinate amount of time working with Harper to assure the delegates engaged in an intense successful program.

The program included the delegates interacting with members of Connecticut's legal community to discuss a variety of legal issues and various court proceedings in New York, New Haven and in Hartford.

On Oct. 6, the delegation traveled to Albany, NY, where Attorney Soares greeted them. While in Albany, the group attended criminal pretrial hearings, plea bargains, sentencings and alternatives to incarceration and community service.



Bridgeport Superior Court Judge Melanie Cradle talks with Defense Attorney Keita Correia Silva Monteiro, Prosecutor Patrick Monteiro Varela and Judge Bernardino Delgado.

On Oct. 8, the delegation visited New Haven to observe Superior Court Judge Raheem Mullins in action, as well as witness other court proceedings. Mullins introduced the group to the criminal court system; provided an overview of the Constitution and how it relates to plea bargaining; explained the difference in Part A and G.A. criminal courts; and gave an overview of the motor vehicle docket and the differences between infractions and criminal offenses.

Harper and Mullins then escorted the delegation to Superior Court Judge Patrick Clifford's chambers, where they observed pretrial negotiations and more plea bargains on serious offenses such as murder, sexual assaults, violent robberies, burglaries and/or home invasions.

Next, the delegation observed Superior Court Judge Maureen Keegan conduct plea negotiations involving violations of protective orders and less violent robberies and physical and sexual assaults. Judge Keegan also provided an overview of arraignments, as well as bail hearings and decisions. At lunch, the delegation discussed issues of mutual concern with several Connecticut judges.

Later, New Haven Mayor John DeStefano welcomed the delegation. Rosalyn Hamilton, vice president of the Amistad Committee, fittingly provided the delegation with a brief history of the famous Amistad case, which originated in New Haven courts in 1839. Fifty-three Africans, who took over the Amistad ship fighting for their freedom after being enslaved, were arrested and jailed and charged with murder. The New Haven court ruled in favor of the Africans, as did the Supreme Court in 1841, finally granting them their freedom.

Dinah Milton Kinney, chief deputy of the United States District Court, and court clerk Robin Tabora, provided the Cape Verdean delegation a tour of the federal court, where it met with Federal Chief Judge Janet Hall, who discussed federal procedures with the delegation.



Joseph Moniz, a native Cape Verdean, welcomes delegation from his homeland.

On Oct. 9, the delegation was back in Hartford, where Harper introduced the delegation to Superior Court Judge Joan Alexander. The group observed pre-trial hearings and decisions, arraignments and bail hearings, and were able to ask the judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys about the proceedings.

On Oct. 10 in Hartford, the delegation was moved when Harper, Moniz, Superior Court Judge Maria Kahn and Rep. Rosa Rebimdas (R-70th District) spoke during a flag raising ceremony at the State Capitol in honor of their visit to the United States, and out of respect and honor for their country. They also visited the Community Court session on Washington Street, the Legislative Office Building, and met with Supreme Court Justice Dennis Eveleigh. That evening, Justice Harper and Moniz hosted a farewell reception for the delegation at the Office of the Consul General of Cape Verde in Quincy, MA.

On Oct. 11, the delegation spent its first free time sightseeing historic sights in Boston and visiting family and friends before heading home the next day.

"We provided a thorough and extensive examination of our criminal justice system," said Harper. "We left no stone unturned for this group of young, accomplished gentlemen who are among the Republic of the Cape Verde Island's best and brightest legal minds, and certainly, among the island's most respected new leaders. We gave the delegation the complete package. We made great strides. We believe Cape Verde legal system will get better as a result of the delegation's visit, and that this visit is a continuation of a long and rewarding partnership."

Harper said he is hopeful that by working together with the Cape Verde Island judges and attorneys, that "we can incorporate plea bargaining into their system of justice, and establish a community court where low level offenses can be disposed of expeditiously. Those would be major initiatives in helping them to alleviate their incredible backlog of cases." ■



HISTORY IS MADE!!!





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