



...PRESSING NEEDS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS...

"It is critical that we be more vocal, or at the very least, that we hold the individuals and organizations accountable in our community whom we have empowered to be our voice and allowed them to simply whisper on our behalf or, in most cases, remain silent on issues that have a direct impact on the minority community."

By Justin Hurst, Esq. – 14

...LETTER TO MAYOR SARNO

"Not "giving a d(a)mn" is precisely the problem. Our contention is not that the Mayor has made hiring choices in a discriminatory fashion, but rather that existing hiring practices have failed to create pathways for qualified people of color to be considered. We give a d(a)mn about this."

By Orlando Ramos and 7 other councilors – 14

IGNORING THE WARNING LIGHTS

"Leaders are faced with changes and new circumstances all the time. It is seemingly easy to ignore problems hoping that they will go away. I have never known that to work. Often the problem intensifies with inattention and goes from a small issue to a crisis."

By Lora Wondolowski – 16

DEAR PUBLISHER AND EDITOR ...

"First, I support the City Council Diversity Resolution that passed the Springfield City Council on February 5. I also support the Guest Opinion essay recommending the hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer for the City, signed by the council president and seven of the city council members (*Springfield Republican*, March 4). I also agree completely with the views expressed in your publisher's article "Let's Talk," regarding this same resolution and Mayor Sarno's response. You provided many good talking points for the mayor to work with the City Council and Springfield's Black and Brown communities."

By Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch – 25

WHOSE FOOL ARE YOU?

"The world is full of people who think themselves wise, powerful and knowledgeable."

By Rev. Dr. Barbara E. Headley – 26

WHAT IS APATHY?

"...apathy is the absence of caring. It is the lack of desire to engage in activities, make changes or desire anything positive. What makes the feeling of apathy unique is that it is essentially the feeling of not feeling."

By Sweets H. Wilson, PhD – 28

...THE LATE, GREAT HUGH MASEKELA

"He was a pioneer of vibrant, cultural music that began with the sounds and beats of South African coal miners in the Witbank township where he grew up. But as he embraced jazz music, and his reach grew worldwide, his music represented the plight of workers and injustice."

By Yvonne Mendez – 30

NABVETS CORNER

"This is the first of what we hope will be a series of articles written for the *Point of View* that will highlight the National Association for Black Veterans, Inc. and the work it does to assist veterans on a national and local level. I want to thank Rick and Marjorie Hurst for providing us with this opportunity."

By Milton Jones – 35

"BEST" OF POV 2017 OUR WRITERS' FAVORITES

The First 5 Years Of A Child's Life Is Critical

By Sally Fuller

Reprinted from August 1, 2016



Sydney Dodds reading to her dad, Keshawn Dodds, from one of his books (POV file photo)

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LET'S HOPE OUR WHITE FRIENDS REGAIN THEIR SENSES SOON

By Frederick A. Hurst

Reprinted from November 1, 2017



There was a time when we folks of color could rely on the predictability of White folks and be assured that, whether they were good or bad, we could predict their moves in any given situation. But nowadays, we don't know what to think about White folks and that has become a real functional problem.

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A History of Blind Industries and Services of Maryland 1908-2017

"Changing What It Means to be Blind"

By Frederick A. Hurst, Sr.

Reviewed by Catherine E. Phillips

Blindness is thought to be a disadvantage by most who are sighted. In his book, Frederick Hurst provocatively informs the reader of the history of the work process of the blind in Maryland and its expansion to North Carolina. He also takes the reader through the fluctuations of the industry that provides employment for the blind. As he delves into the differing philosophies of each governing body, the reader accompanies him on an enlightening, revealing, and inspiring journey to arrive at the modern day mission of the Blind Industries and Services of Maryland.

We see the industry from its inception of "the blind trades" – chair caning, basket weaving, broom and mop making and similar occupations – advance to modern operations of a conglomerate that is composed of several businesses in both public and private sectors, including an increase in profits and standardized production.

continues to page 5

A HISTORY OF BLIND INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES OF MARYLAND 1908 - 2017



"CHANGING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLIND"

FREDERICK A. HURST, SR.



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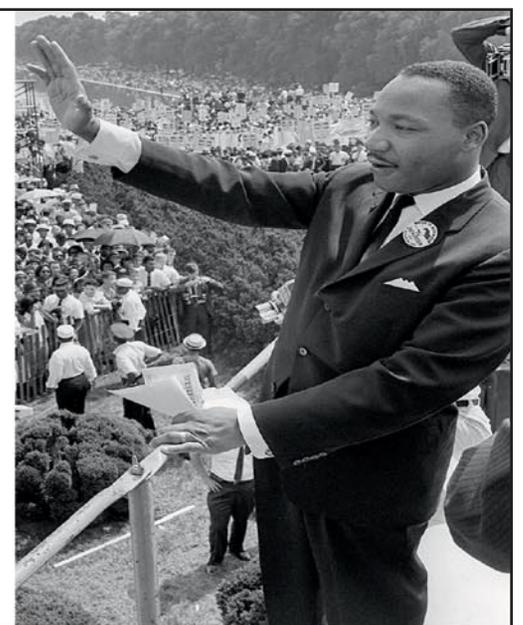

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RACE RELATIONS



**SPRINGFIELD CHAPTER
OF THE NAACP**

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 Community News Magazine
 Celebrating 15 years
 2003-2018

Your VOICE
Your COMMUNITY
Your POINT OF VIEW

AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

BLACK MALE TEACHERS SHOULD NOT CARRY GUNS IN SCHOOL

Whatever the merits of the debate over teachers carrying guns in school, one thing is perfectly clear. Black male teachers should not carry guns in school. Can you imagine a Black male teacher wielding a weapon in school against an attacker of any color as the SWAT team pours in? The poor Black teacher wouldn't have a chance. He would be dead from SWAT team bullets instantly before he had time to explain his role as a teacher in defense of his students. Let's face it, an unarmed Black male teacher would have a better chance of surviving while confronting a crazed armed intruder than an armed one would have of surviving the police.

IT IS SCARY

"Fifty-two percent of white women and 62% of white men voted for Donald Trump, compared with 43% and 31% for Mrs. Clinton respectively, according to exit polls." (*The Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2014) How all those White people could vote for such a despicable and dangerous man is beyond rational explanation and scary as hell.

IS THERE A REPUBLICAN PARTY?

In a *Boston Herald* opinion article (March 14, 2018), blogger Jennifer Rubin referred to retiring Senator Jeff Flake's response to the question of whether he felt Donald Trump needs a Republican challenger during his reelection campaign and Flake said, "Yes, I do. I do. I mean it would be a tough go in a Republican primary. The Republican Party is the Trump party right now." Rubin wrote of Flake's answer, "And he's right about it being Trump's party. Take a look at the polls showing 80 percent or more approval for Trump among Republicans..." She later wrote of the crowds at Trump rallies, "They've not just normalized what is abnormal, they are

wallowing in non-facts, incivility and unseriousness." **80 percent of Republicans support Trump?! Still! What does that say for the health of the Republican Party?** What it should say is that those lonely 20 percent of Republicans who still consider themselves rational beings should be heading for the exit and in search of a political party that matches their history and political sentiments. Of course, such a party no longer exists in our two party system. **So, what must the lonely 20 percent do? Third party?**

MYTHS DIE SLOWLY

"Workforce participation" refers to the number of Americans who are "actively working or looking for work." The unemployment rate is calculated only from those who are "actively working or looking for work." **The myth that is slow to die in White America is that Black folks are not participating in the workforce because they are not actively working or looking for work.** The statistics show otherwise. "The share of black Americans "actively working or looking for work" is 62.9% in February while the corresponding white rate sat at 63%....The gap (between Black and White Americans), which has all but closed, is the smallest gap in labor-force participation by race since 1972, when black participation was slightly ahead of white participation and the national average." (*The Wall Street Journal*, March 12, 2018) So the myth that so many White folks hold to so dearly that Black folks are lazy and unwilling to work is not supported by statistics and has never been supported by statistics. But there is a statistical gap elsewhere. "In February the jobless (unemployment) rate for blacks hit 6.9%, its second-lowest level on record, while the white rate ticked up to 3.7%." What the data makes clear is that Black unemployment is not a result of Black folks not "looking for work" but a result of them being – for a variety of reasons, including discrimination – unable to

find work. None of this should be rocket science to honest people.

WHITE POLITICIANS CAN DO MANY THINGS WITH IMPUNITY THAT BLACK POLITICIANS SIMPLY CANNOT DO

If you ever wanted a clear view of what White people in power can get away with, just continue following the Donald Trump saga. He is reigning over the most corrupt government in modern history while being protected by his morally bankrupt and ethically challenged Republican Congress and he is the most prominent among the many thieves. If Trump was Barack Obama, he would already be on his way to jail. This came to mind when I read a *Boston Globe* article (March 12, 2018) on Black Congressional candidate Ayanna Pressley who is running against an established White liberal incumbent, Michael Capuano. *The Globe* ran a long article on how Pressley spent funds from her City Council campaign account on advisors who were paid for work on Pressley's Congressional campaign. Under campaign finance laws such cross use of campaign money is improper but very commonly done, including by former Attorney General Martha Coakley who used \$25,000 from her state campaign to finance staff and consultants for her U.S. Senate campaign. In spite of the lengths to which the *Globe* went to bring attention to Pressley's use of funds (maybe in retaliation for her stepping "out of turn" and running against a fellow liberal who is also the incumbent), the article probably will not gain traction because it is such a common practice that Pressley would easily, by simply pointing them out, place too many White politicians in jeopardy for the same offense that has always been ignored by the state election commission. But my advice to Ayanna Pressley is the same warning I have offered to other Black elected officials. As Barack Obama understood so well, you will always be held to a much higher standard than your White colleagues so be as careful as he was.

"AYANNA PRESSLEY SHOULD'NT HAVE TO WAIT"

Like the way *The Boston Globe's* Yvonne Abraham defended Black Ayanna Pressley's right to run for Congress against an establishment White incumbent. She wrote: "I don't yet know whether Pressley would be a better rep than he (Michael Capuano) is. What I do know is that she's not some traitorous upstart with no right to challenge him....The Democratic establishment – including some who are quietly and not so quietly unhappy with her – have been trotting Pressley out for years to help win black votes. She has been a surrogate for Senator Elizabeth Warren (who is so far neutral in this primary), and President Barack Obama, and she worked her heart out last year for Hillary Clinton, appearing in Southern states, at black churches, and in the spin room after debates....Pressley has remarkable presence, has long been viewed as an up and comer nationally.... (Barney) Frank and others apparently believe that as long as good incumbents exist, hopefuls like Pressley should keep their feet firmly on the ground. And that maybe, if she's a polite patient wannabe, Capuano will deign to descend from his lofty post before she's six feet under....Can we be blunt? The argument that it's not yet time for this now majority-minority district to be represented by a woman of color is offensive. And an all-white delegation in a state as progressive as this is an embarrassment." (*The Boston Globe*, March 11, 2018) I can add a little bit more to this equation. **Ayanna Pressley is sending a powerful message by challenging the status quo and she serves as a powerful example to people of color in places like Springfield who have been covered into believing that their own should not challenge White incumbents like Mayor Domenic Sarno who seems to have problems directly addressing the needs of people of color. They should.**

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Social Justice Begins With Us

By Lucie K. Lewis, Ed.D

“Social justice provides the foundation for a healthy community. It grows out of our sense that each person—each created being—has value.”

<http://reachandteach.com/content/index.php?topic=socialjustice>

Springfield has been a city where the fight for social justice remains on the forefront of its leaders' consciousness. Activists have participated in the struggle for civil rights for many decades, including fighting to protect the right to fair housing, creating equal access to medical care, improving the quality of education for all students and building structures that support economic and political equity. The fight was in the streets, in the courts and in the offices of organizations central to the moral conscience of the community. The fight is not over. It continues in the spirit and values of Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services (“Agency”). In collaboration with organizations and people across the city, the Agency works to en-

2018 AWARDEES						
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DORA ROBINSON FORMER CEO MLKFS & UNITED WAY	JAFET ROBLES COMMUNITY ACTIVIST (DECEASED)	HERIBERTO FLORES PARTNERS FOR COMMUNITY	WILLETTE JOHNSON SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS (RETIRED)	LUCILLE KENNEDY SOLID GOLD BEAUTY PALACE	DR. SHIRLEY WHITAKER NORTHAMPTON VA MEDICAL CENTER	SPRINGFIELD CHAPTER OF THE NAACP

sure that this issue will continue to remain on the forefront, not just of social discourse but of social engagement as well.

The commitment to that fight is also evident in the work of many community residents, and on **April 14th**, Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services will celebrate five advocates who have stepped forward in action to bring about social justice in five essential areas at its **Second Annual Social Justice Awards Luncheon to be held at Chez Josef**.

On this 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services CEO & President Ronn Johnson took a reflective look at how much remains unchanged. He explained that “there is much work to do in the continued fight for social justice to address the health disparities, food insecurities,

under-education of our children and lack of economic opportunity for persons of color. The theme for the event, *In Times Like These*, is intended to underscore the need to continue to make every effort to fulfill the dream to create a more just society and city real.” While celebrating the resilience of the Social Justice Awards recipients, Ronn and the members of the Agency family seek to motivate us to press on in the fight for social justice.

Heriberto Flores of Partners for Community will receive the award in Economic Development. It is widely known that “*Mr. Flores brings not only his experience and education, but a strong personal commitment to meeting the needs of the populations served by the many organizations that he is associated with.*”

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“Changing What It Means to be Blind”

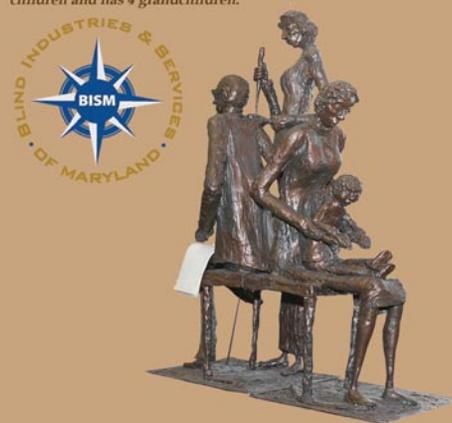
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You are introduced to a world heretofore mostly unknown or ignored by the sighted. Hurst recounts the innovative ways of debunking the myth that the blind would be eternally dependent on the sighted world for financial success and indeed for their very survival. With a scholar's impartial view, Hurst propels you into a world that is now inextricably embedded in shaping contributions for all.

The retrospective of the book leaves you grappling with a multitude of questions about blind independence and acceptance and the substantial investment made by the blind to the greater society. With Hurst's unique perspective, your introduction to the world of the sightless is a rewarding read for any with an inquisitive mind. ■



Frederick A. Hurst, Sr. is an attorney with Hurst and Hurst P.C. and owner and publisher of a Springfield, Massachusetts community newspaper, *An African American Point of View*. He earned his B.A. in Economics and Business at Howard University in Washington, D. C. and his Juris Doctorate at DePaul University in Chicago. He was active in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s and continues his activist role. He practiced criminal law in the early 1980s and served for nine years as an administrative law judge at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) where he gained national attention for authoring the “Hurst Report,” the outcome of his investigation of a riot between supporters of the Boston Red Sox and the New York Mets at the University of Massachusetts. Legal decisions he authored can be found in the *Massachusetts Discrimination Law Reporter (MDLR)*. During his long career, he was also a public school teacher, an adjunct college professor, a developer and a corporate materials manager. He remains active in local politics with his wife and law partner, Marjorie Hurst. He is the father of 3 adult children and has 4 grandchildren.



The sculpture depicted above and on the front cover was created in 2008 by internationally known artist Philip Ratner in honor of BISM's 100th anniversary and was placed prominently in the Baltimore front lobby and informally titled by BISM “100 Years of Changing What It Means To Be Blind.”

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EDUCATION

POSITIVELY LIFE CHANGING

On The Elation of Parents: Youth Achieve Great Things in Unexpected Places

By Kimberley A. Lee, Vice President of Development for CHD



Kim Lee

Having two teen-aged daughters in high school makes for exciting times in the Lee family. Classes, homework, projects, extracurriculars, time with friends...there's always something happening. For our older daughter, the past year has been dominated by her college search and it's finally "decision season." Each day she runs to the mailbox (if my husband hasn't already looked first!) excited for the responses from colleges she applied to—so far we are four for ten! Four admissions celebrated and now waiting to hear from six more. As our younger daughter said so matter-of-factly the other evening, "Well, at least we know she is going to college somewhere!" Right she is! And so we celebrate!

Whether a child's interest lies in academics, sports, music, the arts, leadership, community service, or a personal passion, parents celebrate whenever we see them shine. Recently, I was able to witness first-hand the elation of other parents and trusted adult caregivers celebrating the success of the young men in their lives, and in a place where you might not expect it.

CHD's Community Adolescent Treatment Program (CATP) plays a vital role in preparing youth in DYS (Department of Youth Services) custody for a successful transition back home. Youth typically enter the program facing issues such as aggression, substance use, gang involvement, poverty, low academic performance and lack of basic life skills. Staff provides intensive services including in-

dividual and family therapy, life skills development, anger management, substance use treatment, positive recreational activities, pre-vocational training—and a high school curriculum.

"The youth live here, get individual therapy here, and go to school here," said Clara Snowden, CATP Program Manager in Springfield. "This is secure residential treatment, so the environment is different than a regular high school, but courses are taught by certified teachers. The curriculum and the standards are the same. The youth have to approach their school work seriously."

Recently, CATP held its second Academic Excellence event with families in attendance to recognize five teenage boys who earned a spot on the Honor Roll this term. One youth, initials "E.S.," came to CATP with charges for distribution of a class-A substance. As a teen he was separated from his family and got in with the wrong crowd. He's been at CATP for several months and he'll be here several months more. While talking about the bad decision he made, he admitted the embarrassment he caused his family. He knows what he did was wrong and he's ready to start a new chapter in his young life.

"I'm a different person than I was," he said. "I am away from my family and it's hard, but now I do well in school and that makes me feel good. I'm trying to graduate and get my diploma. I know what I want to do and I have a family here at CHD and at home ready to support me."

This term, E.S. earned a 3.72 grade point average, the highest in the program. He is the first student in CATP to earn five A's in one semester!

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EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

Woman's Work

By Nicole Blais

Reprinted from March 1, 2017



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

in the field of early education. Some teachers are moving over to the public school and others are taking jobs with less responsibility in other industries that simply pay more money. This revolving door takes its toll on programs.

For the most part, the early education and care field here and across the country is comprised primarily of women. We can surmise the many complex reasons why. Ninety percent of the staff that work at HCS Head Start are women. Our Executive Director is a woman, our Chief Financial Officer is a woman, the Chairperson of our Board of Directors is a woman and the majority of our consumers are women.

The evolution of the early learning community has progressed from a childcare program to one that prepares children, cognitively and social emotionally, for kindergarten. The words we use to describe the field have changed from *daycare* to *childcare* to *preschool* or *pre-k* (pre-kindergarten) hence shifting attitudes towards the validity and the value of the work that is being done mostly by women.

Although studies completed over the last few decades have illustrated the importance of brain building in the first few years of life and the connection between quality instruction and better outcomes for children, the annual salary for a preschool teacher continues to be low in comparison. According to the National Head Start Association, the average Head Start teacher with a Bachelor's Degree makes \$31,079 compared to the average \$68,270 that a kindergarten teacher with a Bachelor's degree makes in a public school setting. A February 2016 *Boston Globe* article, "State raises expectations, but not pay, for preschool teachers," stated that Massachusetts has a 29% turnover rate

Leaders at both the state and federal level are advocating to raise annual salaries to better position programs to recruit and retain quality preschool teachers. Casondra Powell, an Infant/Toddler teacher at HCS Head Start, chose to teach in the program because she says, "Head Start changed my life because it allowed me to pursue a fulfilling career working with children and their families. My experiences from Head Start are very unique, and I feel fortunate to be able to share daily interactions with a group of wonderful women and men. What puts a smile on my face was having my children enrolled in Head Start. Every time they would come home, they had a story about what they learned and how much they loved their teachers." Head Start teachers like Casondra enjoy what they do for a living but often find other sources of income by way of a part time job to support themselves or their families.

This work, which is predominately done by women, is incredibly critical to very fabric of every community here and across the nation. Parents have a safe place to bring their children while they go to work or school and to borrow a quote I recently heard at a conference, "children are given the academic confidence and the social emotional competence" to transition into kindergarten.

In honor of Women's History Month, all of us here at HCS Head Start want to thank all of our staff for the contributions they make to the program every day! ■

EDUCATION

EDUCATION & HOPE



Gianna Allentuck is a Mother, Educator, and Community Volunteer.

To connect with Gianna regarding Education and Hope topics discussed herein, please contact her at gallentuck@aol.com.

From Darkness There Is Light...

By Gianna Allentuck

Reprinted from September 1, 2017

to. Until now...

Though having endured cancer and the loss of dear loved ones, including my father – my hero – no sadness or despair has ever compared to that which I have been feeling from the recent loss of my older brother John.

The darkness has found me; and I am in a foreign land. Far from the light of home.

So many of those points of light with which my life has been blessed stem from my relationship with John. A protector, role model, friend. An inspiration. And as much as he was a light in my life, I know I was a light in his. But I was not the only one. As an Educator and a Coach, his students and his players were the lights of his life. His school family: deeply nestled embers in his glowing heart.

Because for some – Educators and students alike – school is the only light in one's life. The only safe space. The only beacon. The only source of comfort. Of love. John knew

that for some – unlike me – darkness is the norm. And that shelter in the embrace of light is necessary to not only survive. But escape. Succeed. Become one's own guiding light.

This, the essence of Educator. Of Education. Be a light that leads and guides a student to self-discovery. Self worth. Self esteem. Self value. Educators do this. Every day. Every. Day. Sometimes to the point where his or her own light starts to flicker and fade. Leaving him or her to fight off the darkness as though it were a predator looking to swallow up another bright light. Suffocate another moment of hope.

Educators endure this battle daily, but they show up and shine so that our students may see. See their

future. Reach their goal. Achieve their dream. Most especially, so that students may learn and understand that from darkness there is light...

Authors' note:

Since my brother's passing in June, I have spent each day searching for a moment of joy. Of light. A hug from my child. Pretty flowers left on my doorstep. A visit from an old friend. Touching video on Facebook. A chubby bunny on our lawn. Soft ice cream. Hard ice cream. Any ice cream. Smiling students back at school. These moments are fleeting, but they are there. And therein lies my hope... Please remember that educators and schools are the light of hope for so many; and please take a moment to stop in to your local school, meet the Principal or Counselor, and volunteer your time, so that you too can light the way.

All my life, I was raised in the light. In a home and world filled with love, laughter, and compassion. Seldom having experienced pain, trauma, fear, adversity, loneliness or the like associated with darkness. And for my forty-six years, I have been appreciative of and inspired by the light. Raised to consider the man with no feet when I questioned the strength of my shoes. To empathize with the man with no sight when I complained of weary eyes. To be inspired by the man with no voice when I claimed no one was listening to my own. I have written articles on the man with no feet. On faith, trust, belief, strength, education. And hope.

All points of light. Guiding my heart home if the waters did turn rough.

So immersed in light have I been that in reflecting I realize I have been only passively appreciating the light. Not actively seeking. I didn't have

POSITIVELY LIFE CHANGING

On The Elation of Parents

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His favorite subject is Social Studies. Back in February, he researched Olympian Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, and presented his research to the program. "Don't let your mistakes define who you are," E.S. said. "Learn to change your behavior and do good things. Learn to look ahead."

A year ago, E.S. was in a place where success in school wouldn't have crossed his mind. Now he's an honor roll student. Some youth in his program didn't achieve honor roll status, but still earned good grades, most for the first time in their lives. These

youth became peers at CATP because they all made bad choices, but now they are each earning their way back to the community, working cooperatively and preparing for the opportunities of a successful future.

For the families of these young men, it's an exciting time filled with promise, and with every envelope that arrives in the mail for my own daughter, I am reminded of the young men I met during that recent celebration at CHD's CATP program. As I think of them, I smile because I know, in the not-so-distant future, they, too will be making their own trips to a mailbox where good news from a college of their choice will be waiting inside. ■

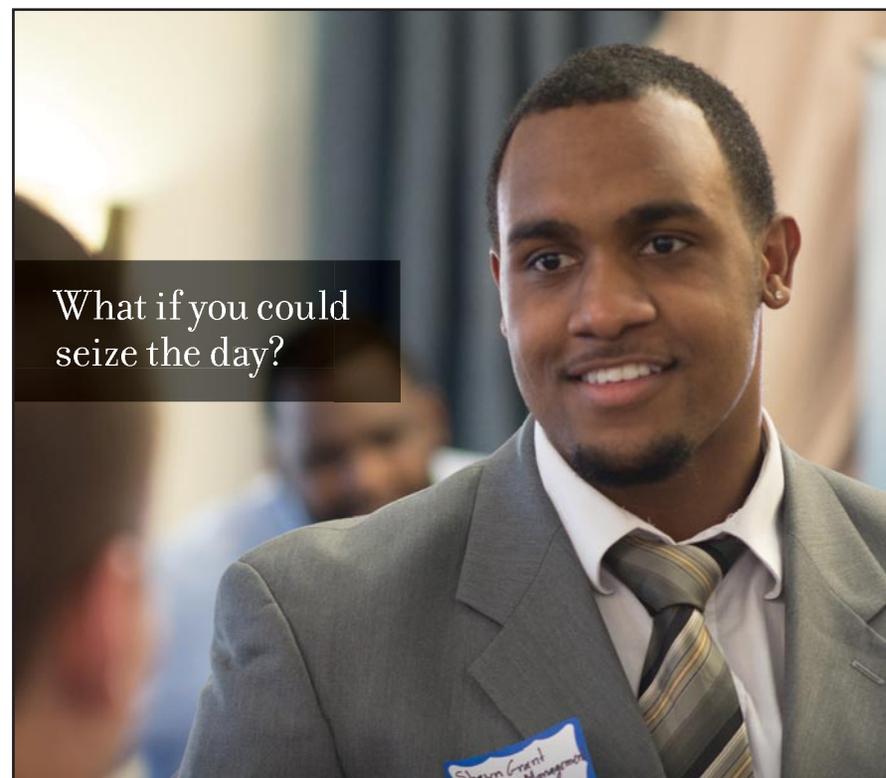
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EDUCATION

PARENTS & COMMUNITY

Complexity is Tied to Destiny

By Patricia Spradley

Reprinted from June 1, 2017



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

I heard a Pastor say “complexity is tied to the destiny within you.” In the context of his talk, it made complete sense. I also remembered how challenged the individual felt that he had such a limited time to make his point. And I, too, was left with wanting more.

I didn’t realize, however, when I looked at the sentence, all by itself, how much it would prompt me to reflect at a much deeper level. Personal reflection isn’t always easy, but necessary! As we travel through our journey, we are absolutely going to be faced with difficult times and complicated circumstances—complexities. It’s a required component of our journey.

Now I have certainly written before about purpose, but destiny made me look more closely within. And then it hit me. The greater your destiny, the greater the complexities! What a revelation that was for me. Even though I know that “to whom much is given, much is required,” I hadn’t made the connection to the increased challenges and obstacles that are inevitable, based on what He has purposed for your life.

That gave me a greater appreciation for my personal complexities. But the best part is the more internal reflection it is causing. Those occasions when I am totally frustrated with my seeming inability to change a behavior, now has me looking for better ways to silence myself, so that I can hear the only relevant voice—from the one who controls my destiny. I’ve been getting in His way. What nerve, thinking that I was in control!

I never thought about how much that slows down the process and con-

sequently increases the number of complexities that may actually be used as attention-getters. Instead, I was beating myself up. I better understand that this is not productive. I realize now that on the path to destiny, the complexities are necessary to strengthen us. This revelation reminded me, not only how much I am NOT in control, but most importantly, exactly WHO is.

Following His instructions on how to deal with the everyday difficulties is preparation for the complexities leading to my destiny. He needs us to, as quickly as possible, realize this so that He can use us to do the greater work that He has for us!

I have a new appreciation for complexities, large and small. In the past, I often viewed difficulties and challenges negatively. I rushed to respond with my own answers and solutions. I am now going to be listening intently for that guiding voice to direct me. I am looking forward to growing daily in my newfound perspective. Knowing that there is a direct correlation between complexities and destiny, gives me great cause to be peaceful and patient when complicated situations arise.

We’ll always have complexities in our lives. Understanding the connection that they have to our destiny should give us a reason for celebration. How will you handle inevitable complexities in your life? ■

READING TO SUCCEED

The First 5 Years Of A Child’s Life Is Critical



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

continued from page 1

Eighty-five percent of a child’s brain development takes place in the first 5 years of life. This means that the interactions of parents with their children in the first 5 years of life will determine the children’s pathway to success.

What does that mean?

Parents, you are your child’s first teacher, and every moment with you is a nurturing, loving, teachable moment.

So....if we were in charge of the world and all the parents in it, here’s what we would ask them to do:

- Talk/ read/ sing/ play/ write with your children, *beginning at birth*, in the language in which you are most comfortable.
- Read aloud with your child for 20 minutes every day. 5 minutes at a time is okay...it doesn’t have to be a 20-minute chunk of time. **(Did you know that for every year you read with your child, their average lifetime earnings increase by \$50,000?)**
- Have back and forth conversations with your child. Ask a question. Listen for the response. Respond to what they say.
- Let your child pick his/her own books. They will be more likely to read if the books interest them.
- Don’t always try to answer their questions. Children are natural explorers and scientists. Let them use their curiosity to figure things out.
- Let your child see you reading. You are their role model.
- Send your child to school every day—beginning in preschool. Every minute they spend in the classroom is a teachable moment. Good attendance habits begin early and carry through life.
- Set routines for your child. They thrive with established bedtime, reading-together time, family meal time, homework time.
- Take your child for walks in the park and talk about what you see. Talk about the importance of fitness and exercise.
- Take your child grocery shopping and talk about healthy eating. Talk about the foods that they see... what color are they? What letter do they begin with?
- Engage your children in enriching summer activities at home or in the community. There are lots of free summer activities, like the Springfield City Library Summer Reading Club.

Parents, you are your child’s first teacher, and every moment with you is a nurturing, loving, teachable moment. ■

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BUSINESS

PURSUING SUCCESS: CAREER ADVICE FROM A JOB COACH



*Wanda Smith-Gispert,
Vice President of Talent
and Workforce Develop-
ment for MGM Resorts
International*

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Many of our readers hope to take advantage of the exciting opportunities created by the expanding hospitality industry in Western Mass. AAPOV has invited Ms. Wanda Smith-Gispert, a senior Human Resources executive with MGM Resorts International, to share her thoughts and advice on how best to approach important career decisions that can last a lifetime. This is the first in her series of guest columns.

Pursuing Success: Career Advice from a Job Coach

By Wanda Smith-Gispert, Vice President of Talent and Workforce Development for MGM Resorts International

According to Wikipedia, “A job, or occupation, is a person’s role in society. More specifically, a job is an activity, performed in exchange for payment.”

As kids, many of us learned we would have to choose a profession one day. But I would suggest we should have been taught to decide **how** we want to work. A traditional job isn’t for everyone.

The first career choice one should make is whether you wish to be employed by a company and work for money, or whether to work for yourself and create your own source of income.

I grew up in a family business, so I understood from a young age that working for yourself means long hours, often 7 days a week. It also meant that you were responsible for generating the money to operate the business, pay employees and carry all the risk. I chose to become an employee rather than an employer.

There are pros and cons to both, and understanding the difference is important. Ask yourself – Do you enjoy being part of a team and helping a company execute its goals and vision? Do you mind following rules, dress codes and attendance standards? Do you want to compete

against others for promotions? If any of these things make you cringe, you may want to consider options other than being an employee.

On the other hand – Do you want complete freedom in making your own decisions? Are you comfortable working without pay while you build your business? If these concepts excite you, perhaps you would be happier as an employer.

This first decision is critical and can be at the root of why a person is unhappy no matter where they work. If you select a career path that doesn’t match your natural tendency, you may always struggle, change

companies, move to a new town, and still find yourself unfilled? Get to the heart of the matter and revisit to see if your first career choice was correct.

Your homework this month: Google this phrase – *How to be a better employee in 2018*. Reading these types of articles can give you a new perspective on your role as an employee. Your goal as an employee is to move up through an organization, to better positions, better pay and benefits. This goal never changes, whether you are an entry-level applicant or a seasoned professional.

So, let’s get started today! ■

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Vanessa L. Hall – CEO, Beauté Within Salon & Day Spa - A Team Salon

Approaching 25 years in business and finally completing the expansion to a full salon and day spa— her Dream, her Vision— Vanessa can now look back over the years and know why she continues this Journey, this Business, this Ministry.

It seems only natural that being one of seven sisters from a family of 13, Vanessa enjoyed braiding and styling hair during her growing years. Completing high school in Springfield, Vanessa entered STCC to study Business and Marketing. She was hired at Shearson Lehman Brothers Investment Company where she worked for five years. Vanessa then decided to go after her true passion and attended LaBaron’s Beauty School from which she graduated in 1990. She was immediately employed at Velmarie’s International Beauty Salon before starting her own business, Beauté Within Inc., in 1994. All the various jobs and training she had received made a difference in running her business.



Vanessa Hall, is recognized by the Forest Park Civic Association for her 25 year of providing quality services to the community. L to R: Association member Daniel Patrick Morrissey, Esq., Hall, and Laura Walsh, outgoing President.

As part of a large extended family, the Halls, Vanessa grew up being a part of the Springfield community. Her mother, Celestine Hall, was a very educated African American woman who worked for and managed many programs throughout the city, and spent her life uplifting others and teaching

continues to page 15



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HEALTH

HEALTH MATTERS



Doris Sexton-Harris, Health Consultant, Doris can be contacted at dorharris77@hotmail.com

The tobacco industry has targeted African American communities over the years, and, as a result, tobacco has taken a serious toll on the community.

Tobacco use is a major contributor to the three leading causes of death among African Americans—heart disease, cancer and stroke. And although African American adult smoking rates are nearly equivalent to that of whites (16.7% vs. 16.6%) and African Americans usually smoke fewer cigarettes and start smoking cigarettes at an older age compared to whites, they are more likely to die from smoking-related diseases than whites.

How did we get here?

Historically, the tobacco industry has targeted the African American community, placing larger amounts of advertising in African American publications and exposing African Americans to more cigarette ads than whites. Studies have shown that there

African Americans Targeted By Tobacco Industry

*By Sara B. Moriarty, Program Director,
Hampden County Tobacco Free Community Partnership/Gandara Center*



Sara Moriarty

are up to ten times more tobacco ads in neighborhoods with a high percentage of black households than in neighborhoods with a high percentage of white residents.

Furthermore, the industry deceptively built relationships with black communities by supporting cultural events and making contributions to historically black colleges, elected officials, civic and community organizations and scholarship programs that support the black community.

As an example, tobacco companies have spent decades marketing and promoting menthol cigarettes toward African Americans through tailored messaging and positive imagery. Sadly, the industry's tactics are working; nearly 9 of every 10 African American smokers prefer menthol cigarettes. According to many studies, menthol makes cigarettes easier to smoke and harder to quit; menthol has an anesthetic quality that numbs the smoker's throat while it suppresses the need to cough, making it easier to

inhale harsh tobacco smoke.

What can you do?

You can learn more about how the tobacco industry worked to hook the black community on their deadly products by watching the 15-minute short film [Black Lives Black Lungs](#) online.

Talk with your family, friends and co-workers about their experiences with tobacco and learn from the struggles of seven African Americans from around the country who quit tobacco and shared their stories through the CDC's [Tips from Former Smokers](#) campaign.

If you want to quit and tried in the past, don't give up. It often takes several tries before you can quit for good. However, with planning and support, you can become tobacco-free.

The Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline offers free coaching support 24 hours a day, seven days a week

(with some holiday exceptions) by calling 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or online through [KeepTryingMA.org](#). Free nicotine patches, gum and lozenges are available to eligible users. Online support also includes quit planning tools, chatting with others who are trying to quit, and motivational text messages, emails and instant messages. The combination of coaching and quit-smoking medication can make you nearly three times as likely to quit for good!

And, while you're visiting [KeepTryingMA.org](#), click on the My Community tab and learn more about how people in your region are working to counter tobacco industry tactics.

If you'd like to know more about how you can take action against the tobacco industry's influence in your community, contact Sara Moriarty at 413-733-1015 ext. 355 or smoriarty@gandaracenter.org and join the effort. ■



*Dr. Anika Thrower, MPH, CLC
WIC Program Manager at
Cornell Scott Hill Health
Center Adjunct Facility at
Springfield College*

*Admire the storms...prioritize
your health and enjoy your
wealth*

Cancer is a term used for diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control and invade healthy cells. Some people who have been diagnosed early have beaten the disease while others have not been as fortunate. Most people who have succumbed to the disease did so because of family history, poor lifestyle behaviors and/or late detection.

A report newly published by the Cancer Journal (and covered in the *New York Times*, 2017) asserted cervical cancer rates are higher than previously projected and disparities between Black and White women are *much greater*. In the new analysis, the mortality rate for Black women was 10.1 per 100,000 females. For White women, it was 4.7 per 100,000 females. Previous studies had put those figures at 5.7 (Black females) and 3.2 (White females).

In the *New York Times* article,

A Meeting in the Ladies Room

*By Anika C. Thrower, PhD,
Reprinted from March 1, 2017*

assertions made by doctors expressed "it [high rates in Blacks] could reflect unequal access to screening, ability to pursue early-warning test results and insurance coverage." A recent study in the journal of Gynecologic Oncology that looked at 15,194 patients with advanced cervical cancer found that more than half did not receive treatment considered to be standard of care, and that those patients were more likely to be black and poor (New York Times, 2017).

Many times there are definitive

correlations between having an ailment (i.e. cancer, heart disease, diabetes, etc.) and an unhealthy weight status. For example, historically southern states, which include Arkansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Alabama and Mississippi, had higher rates of obesity. These same states had peak rates of cervical cancer. A coincidence? In a "not so southern state," West Virginia, there were high rates of obesity and very high rates of cervical cancer. What's a lady to do?

continues to page 11



Ernest Scruse, Jr. never had a heart attack or even experienced chest pains. But he was in heart failure.

TODAY ERNEST HAS A NEW OUTLOOK

He credits the award-winning heart and vascular team at Baystate Medical Center, and the cutting-edge procedure that saved his life.

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HEALTH MATTERS

A Meeting in the Ladies Room

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- **Know your family history.** Family history of diseases heightens future generations being vulnerable to similar diseases. Knowledge allows us to be proactive in protecting our health status.
- **Early detection is pivotal.** Build a relationship with a trusted health provider. Consider reaching out to public health departments and ask about free screening options. In Massachusetts residents can call (617) 624-5290 to get more information or check the link:
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/community-health/cancer-prevention-and-control/cancer-screenings.html>
- **Protect your children.** Have conversations with your child's pediatrician about the human

papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for females aged 9 to 26 and males aged 9 to 21. It protects against the HPV types that most often cause cervical, vaginal, vulvar and anal cancers (in both males and females).

- **Stop smoking TODAY.** Period. Limit direct exposure to smoking. Also be vigilant of indirect exposure to smoking which is called second and third hand smoke (toxic invisible residue is left on one's clothes and lingers on body parts after smoking).
- **Eat clean.** Limit processed meals and those foods loaded with saturated fats. Instead, add more fruits, raw vegetables, healthy protein and whole grains on your plates. When in doubt, simply limit portion sizes.

Dear Robust Reader,

The silver lining is Massachusetts is ranked lowest for cervical cancer in the Northeast (behind New Hampshire). Connecticut still has some work to do to lessen the frequencies of cancer. Ladies, no time to be coy; spread the knowledge at the next meeting.

Next month we will explore another 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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HEALTH

YOUR HEALTH

Baystate  Medical Center

A Simple Home Test Could Save Your Life

Elevated levels of radon in your home could cause lung cancer

SPRINGFIELD, MA – Usually when you hear someone asking, “Do you know your numbers?” they are talking about health indicators such as blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

But, there is another important number you should know to protect your health and it doesn’t involve any medical tests. It’s the radon levels in your home.

January (wa)s Radon Awareness Month – a time to raise awareness about the radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. The numbers tell the story. The **United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** estimates that more than 21,000 Americans die of radon-related lung cancer each year. Deaths attributed to radon far exceed annual deaths due to motor vehicle accidents, falls, drownings and fires.

“Radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. And just like breathing in the harmful chemicals in cigarettes, breathing in radon over long periods of time can present a dangerous health risk,” said **Dr. Rose Ganim**, a **thoracic surgeon** at **Baystate Medical Center**.

“And, if you smoke and have been exposed to high levels of radon, then your risk of lung cancer increases more than smoking or radon exposure alone,” she added.

Radon is an invisible, odorless and tasteless gas with no immediate health symptoms that comes from the breakdown of uranium inside the earth.

“Radon can enter your home in a number of ways, primarily by coming up from the ground and entering your home through floor-wall joints, cracks and crevices in floors and walls, crawl spaces, dirt floors and more,” said John Murray, CHMM, CSP, CIH, director, Safety & Environmental Affairs for Baystate Health.

While the majority of radon exposure in a home is from radon coming up from the ground, a

secondary pathway for the hazardous gas is through private well water. When well water is used in the home, radon in the water can become airborne, noted Murray.

In Massachusetts, the **Department of Public Health** estimates that 650,000 homes have radon that exceed the EPA action guideline of 4 pCi/L.

“You owe it to yourself and your family to test for radon,” said Murray.

Options include hiring a professional through online referral sites, by contacting the **American Industrial Hygiene Association** to locate a Certified Industrial Hygienist, or by purchasing a do-it-yourself kit from your local hardware store or even online.

Murray noted high levels of radon can be controlled by sealing cracks and openings between foundation walls and floors, and the dirt bottoms of sumps, or installing an engineered ventilation system to draw the gases out from under the foundation of your home. The engineered systems are usually the most effective, but also the most expensive. A radon professional can guide you to the best solution.

If you’ve been exposed to radon, especially levels exceeding the EPA action guideline, it’s a good idea to talk to your doctor about a plan of action that could involve regular health checkups and tests to look for possible signs of lung cancer.

Lung cancer patients have a 15 percent five-year survival rate and early detection is key to saving lives, note Dr. Ganim.

“As is true for many health issues, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in lung cancer. For most people, this means quitting smoking and testing for radon,” said the Baystate thoracic surgeon.

Until 2015, lung cancer screening was absent from a list of recommended preventive screenings that included breast, cervical, colon and prostate cancers. It was then that Medicare announced it would cover lung cancer screening for people at the highest risk – potentially saving tens of thousands of lives. Baystate Medical Center is the region’s only Lung Cancer Screening Center of Excellence offering low dose scans (LDCT). Low dose CT scans of the chest are better at identifying

abnormalities in the lungs and use lower amounts of radiation than a standard chest CD.

“Radon exposure alone doesn’t qualify a person for lung cancer screening, but people between the ages 55 and 77 who have smoked or do smoke a half to a full pack of cigarettes a day do qualify. You should discuss this with your doctor,” said Dr. Ganim.

Lung cancer treatment is determined by the stage, or how advanced the cancer is at the time it is detected. There are three main types of treatment used, often in combination. At an early stage, surgery is done to remove the tumor. If the cancer is more advanced, surgery may be combined with chemotherapy, radiation or both. Sometimes, chemotherapy and radiation are done before surgery to shrink the tumor. In the most advanced cases, chemotherapy and radiation or chemotherapy alone are used.

“As you can imagine, lung cancer is most curable when caught early. I cannot emphasize strongly enough that people should quit smoking and discuss screening with their doctor.

For more information about radon, go to the EPA’s website epa.gov/radon, call your state’s radon control program, or call a national toll-free hotline at 1-800-SOS-RADON (1-800-767-7236).

To make an appointment with a cancer specialist, or for general program information, call the Baystate Regional Cancer program at 413-794-9338 or visit baystatehealth.org/cancer.



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COMMUNITY

LATIN@ GROOVE



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



Brendan Upson/Photo courtesy of Magdalena Gómez

Written in memory of Brendan Upson, friend, choreographer, dancer, mathematician, chef, counselor, son, brother. Cornell University graduate with honors.

In recent years, several of my friends and mentors have died. All of them artists and activists who were taken too young. One of them, a gay man raised to be a “good Catholic boy” lived a secretive life of self-loathing and the fear of being hated and rejected by his family and the egregiously ignorant residents of his immediate world.

I will call him T, as he lived in the closet until the end. There is no other choice for me than to continue to protect his identity.

T and I were very close friends in our youth. He was one of the most alive, generous and kind people I have

ever known. He was a talented musician, a loyal friend and devoted to family members – the same people who would have turned on him if they knew he was homosexual. The mother, whom he helped to support and adoringly loved, would have spit him out of her life in the name of Jesus, with the same mouth with which she kissed his bowed forehead each day before he headed out to work.

The memory of T looms larger each day as I am reminded of such hatefulness passing for religious conviction by my own recent local experiences. Circuitous conversations, rescinded collaborations, nervous silences and deadpan expressions when I demonstrate my open support of the LGBTQA community, which I do not see as separate from myself or my community. Who are my community, my people? Those who stand for the civil and human rights of *all* people.

Fear drains light from the eyes of those who have been brainwashed by the insidious nature of a patriarchal, heteronormative white supremacy that hides inside of unquestioned rhetoric and generationally transmitted religious beliefs bereft of critical thought.

Those who proclaim to love God while shunning and hating, inevitably feel an inner conflict. This disquietude makes haters angry and ill at ease in their own bodies; trapped. They hate and shun as they pray and praise – how can such oppositional mental states possibly sustain the *peace that*

UNNATURAL OCCURRENCES: Unwrapping the Holy Days

By Magdalena Gómez

Reprinted from December 1, 2017

surpasses all understanding? If one's beliefs are firmly rooted in an empirical and sacred truth, then why speak in dissimulated language? Indirectness and passive aggression are the weapons of bullies, cowards and fools.

I have a heterosexual friend who was beaten into permanent brain injury and illness with a baseball bat while walking on a New England street with his arm around his brother. The attackers spewed homophobic hate language at both men with every merciless blow. It could happen to anyone.

It wasn't until 1973 that the American Psychiatric Association (APA) declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder. Prior to that declassification, I remember visiting the locked ward of Bellevue hospital in

New York City, where I went to perform and visit Vietnam veterans with severe trauma, one of them my first cousin. During one of my visits I met an African American man I will refer to as J who was locked up for being gay. The atrocity of his legalized victimization still haunts me; it was J's family that initiated his confinement. They wielded Bibles, not bats. “These people are terrified of my beautiful negro behind. Locked up for being Black and a faggot...” he touched his temple, then his heart “and I'm still free!” I could feel the truth of his words. J was healthy in every way; smart, vibrant, and humorous, despite the nightmare to which he'd been condemned. My solo show, *Cha-Cha in Love with Antonio Banderas*, was inspired by those locked ward visits

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COMMUNITY

POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Public Policy Priorities and Pressing Needs of African Americans in the City of Springfield

(Speech Delivered at Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Luncheon, March 10, 2018)

By City Councilor Justin Hurst, Esquire



Justin Hurst, Esquire
At-Large Springfield
City Councilor
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413-374-5844

It is imperative that we all follow in the footsteps of LeBron James and ‘Don’t just shut up and dribble.’ Some of you may recall a few weeks ago when Laura Ingram, a conservative host on Fox News told LeBron James, one of the greatest basketball players to ever play the game, to just “shut up and dribble,” when she became fed up with him using his stardom and platform to speak out regarding a variety of issues of social injustice occurring in our country.

Lebron James responded by saying, “I will definitely not shut up and dribble. I mean too much to society. I mean too much to the youth. I mean too much to so many kids that feel like they don’t have a way out, and they need someone to help lead them out of the situation they are in.”

I would like to submit to you today that the founders of The Divine Nine did not establish our fraternities and sororities for us to just ‘shut up and dribble.’ It is critical that we be more vocal, or at the very least, that we hold the individuals and organizations accountable in our community whom we have empowered to be our voice and allowed them to simply whisper on our behalf or, in most cases, remain silent on issues that have a direct impact on the minority community.

A CEO of a board that I am on

recently asked me to attend one of these high priced fundraisers for an organization that has been mute on just about every issue that I’ve brought to the forefront and for the first time, not only did I turn down the invitation, but I told him exactly why I refused to go.

I bluntly stated to him that this particular organization, (and it is not the only one in both the Black and Brown communities), has failed to fulfill their mission and I will no longer support them until they do.

Unlike the organization that I refer to above and the many others that have for so long embraced the ideology of “just shutting up and dribbling,” our fraternities and sororities, at least at the local level, don’t rely on city, state and federal funding, and very rarely take corporate monies to keep our organizations afloat, which means that we don’t have to kowtow to someone else’s agenda at the expense of fulfilling our mission. We just need to have the courage to not ‘just shut up and dribble’.

BUT we can’t speak out on the issues, if we don’t know the issues.

For the purpose of this luncheon, I’m going to presume that all of you here know the issues and I will just provide you with a few nuances as I see them that you can reflect on over the weekend.

Residency

On April 9th, it will be the 3rd time in roughly two years that the City Council will have an opportunity to vote down a contract from a Collective Bargaining Unit (District Fire Chiefs) because many of its members

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City Council Letter to Mayor Sarno

On December 8, 2017, the Springfield City Council sent a letter to Mayor Sarno pertaining to the lack of diversity among his department heads. According to records made available by the Mayor, five out of twenty-six department heads are persons of color. This statistic is concerning to us. In a follow-up letter sent on February 1st, we offered our assistance to the Mayor in increasing diversity efforts. In his response, the Mayor stated: “I don’t give a d*mn about anyone’s creed or skin color.”

Not “giving a d*mn” is precisely the problem. Our contention is not that the Mayor has made hiring choices in a discriminatory fashion, but rather that existing hiring practices have failed to create pathways for qualified people of color to be considered. We give a d*mn about this.

To make progress on diversity, we must first understand and appreciate the benefits of diversity. Diversity promotes varied talents, skills and experiences. Diversity creates innovation. Diversity grows the talent pool. Diversity improves employee performance. In the end, a government that is representative of its people, and which is comprised of varied world views, is a government that is most readily able to solve our society’s most significant problems. This is something we should strive for, not run away from.

Having diversity in any organization rarely happens organically and it certainly does not happen overnight—just ask those involved in the fight for women’s rights, civil rights, LGBT rights, and so on. Achieving diversity requires a commitment from leadership in order to make it happen. This does not mean hiring someone due to the color of their skin. Rather, it means explor-

ing recruitment, job postings, and the overall manner in which we seek prospective employees. We know that the City of Springfield needs to improve on our outreach to those in underrepresented communities in order to increase the extent to which these populations are represented at the highest levels of government. This is why we believe the Mayor should look hard at his record on hiring and acknowledge that there is room for substantial improvement.

Improving this record will require a new approach, which is why we are now proposing the creation of a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) to oversee certain municipal hiring practices in Springfield. The City of Springfield is one of the region’s largest employers and it should join other large local companies such as MassMutual, Baystate Medical Center, MGM Springfield, and Springfield College in hiring a CDO. In addition to these leading local companies, the cities of Worcester and Boston also have a CDO whose main role is to create, implement, and track a strategic plan on diverse hiring practices. The time has come for Springfield to join this effort. In fact, Springfield is already requiring diversity hiring practices from MGM Springfield through the hiring goals stated in our Host Community Agreement. MGM has surpassed those goals and is roaring towards completion. We feel that the City should, at the very least, endeavor to meet the same goals it has set for MGM.

Some will say that encouraging diversity means asking Mayor Sarno to hire unqualified candidates. This is false. The terms “minority” and “qualified” are not mutually exclu-

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Orlando Ramos,
President

Social Justice Begins with Us

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Willette Johnson, a retiree from the Springfield Public Schools, will receive the award in Education. Regardless of what Mrs. Johnson is involved in, *"She faithfully uses her voice and acquired skills to ensure that children are getting all that these schools can provide to help them learn, grow and get smart."*

Lucille Kennedy, owner of the Solid Gold Beauty Palace, will receive the award in Entrepreneurship. With the heart of a true entrepreneur, Miss Lucille, as she is affectionately called, knew her passion *"to bring the beauty out in women through HAIR"* and has been practicing her craft for 52 years.

Dr. Shirley Whitaker of the Northampton VA Medical Center will receive the award in Health Disparities. Her most recent project, *The Indomitable Spirit* (TIS) seeks to raise the discourse on domestic violence to a new level. *"She says making things better for people is what she was given life to do. She says, if you are not saying something to make it better you should not say anything at all."*

Springfield Chapter of NAACP is receiving a corporate award in Race Relations. In 1918, the Springfield branch was chartered to extend the fight for social justice into Western Mass. In the 100 years since, the Springfield NAACP has remained a courageous voice in the struggle for equality in the local community.

This year two additional awards will be given.

Dora Robinson, a respected and accomplished community leader, is being presented The Life Time Achievement award for her 35 years of work in the nonprofit arena and many contributions to the community. In her retirement, Mrs. Robinson is still giving back as she works to raise-up our future leaders through her work as an Adjunct Professor at Springfield College School for Social Work and the School for Professional Studies.

Jafet Robles, a community activist lost too soon, is being awarded a Legacy Award posthumously. The City mourned the loss of a man taken far too young who had marshaled the experiences of his life to become a vibrant, resonant voice for change and social justice before his death. He is dearly remembered as one who *"transformed into a powerful activist and passionate advocate. He was relentless, fierce, courageous and uncompromising in speaking truth to power."*

Proceeds from the event will be used to support Agency programs like the emergency food bank, after-school programs, college tours and so many more. For more information or to purchase tickets, email **Kumar Bilal at Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services at qbilal@mlkjrfamilyservices.org** or call (413) 746-3655, ext. 127.



BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Vanessa L. Hall

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them to win. Her father, Lawrence Hall, was a caterer and business owner his entire life. So, owning her own business and desiring to support her community came naturally to Vanessa. Both her parents showed by example and inspired her to work hard, do something she loved and to never give up on her dreams. She continues to be their living legacy.

Continuous education and training with master stylists from all over the world has kept her in the forefront of the beauty industry. She has always been known as the "Corporate Stylist" because of her level of advanced education, always being at the top of her class. She has received top awards and accolades from schools such as Dudley University and Pivot Point School as a precision haircutting expert. The timeless and personalized looks Vanessa creates are what continues to set her apart.

As a business woman, Vanessa has attended schools in the area of

Salon and Spa Management. She has employed and trained a substantial number of professionals through the years and continues to do so today. She also is skilled in corporate office training and has helped many young women move forward to outside office jobs after receiving office and front desk personnel training. Stylists getting their training right out of school from her salon have continued on and opened their own businesses as well as become teachers in cosmetology schools. Vanessa continues to be successful by evolving with the changing times and challenging herself in the beauty industry. As a member of Temple of Praise Ministries COGIC, she sees Beauté Within as her ministry.

Vanessa gives to many community charities and groups and hosts community events at her salon such as "Girls Night Out" and the "Annual Back to School Hairstyling Extravaganza." She truly believes and lives the philosophy that "It takes a village to raise our children and to support our African American Businesses." ■

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COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY

Ignoring the Warning Lights

By Lora Wondolowski

Reprinted from July 1, 2017



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

Last month I was driving my car, when the air bag light went off. I wondered what might be going wrong before ignoring the light in favor of not being late to my destination. The next time behind the wheel the light didn't go off, so I set aside my concerns, choosing to believe that it must have been nothing. A few days later my wife was driving the car when the light went off again. She immediately consulted the car manual which indicated that the warning light was serious and required immediate attention. The car dealer fixed the faulty air bag letting us know that the faulty bag was dangerous and it was good that she came in right away.

Leaders are faced with changes and new circumstances all the time. It is seemingly easy to ignore problems hoping that they will go away. I have never known that to work. Often the problem intensifies with inattention and goes from a small issue to a crisis. I have written before about reasonable leadership. Another hallmark of reason is not avoiding reality or new circumstances but adjusting despite the inconvenience.

Last month our country did just that by pulling out of the Paris Treaty on Climate Change. In one quick decision we went from world leaders to world laggards. Our warning lights have been going off for more than a decade now. It doesn't take a climate scientist to notice the changes all around us. More erratic weather, 90° days in April, flowers blooming earlier, more ticks, etc. My mom often comments on how weird the weather

is by her—this is becoming the new normal. After many failed national attempts to heed the warning lights, the Paris Treaty was a major step for a country that has been a leading carbon polluter.

When Congress and previous administrations failed to act, regions, states, cities, and towns stepped up. Massachusetts has been a leader in addressing climate change from reducing emissions and saving energy to encouraging investment in renewables. There are 185 green communities in the Commonwealth, including 2/3 of the towns in the Pioneer Valley including Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke. More than a dozen towns in the Valley, predominantly in Franklin County, have participated in Solarize Mass. This program provides incentives and rebates for installing solar. More than 20.6 megawatts of clean energy have been generated, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and people's energy bills.

What does Paris have to do with Springfield? There is no doubt that Pioneer Valley towns and the Commonwealth will continue to lead in the fight to combat climate change. Our efforts are already saving money, creating jobs, and improving public health. The bigger concern is how this will affect investment in research and innovation. Green technology is a growing part of our economy locally and nationally. The signals from our national leaders could drive investment to Europe and China where climate leadership is already happening.

I was struck by the reposting of the photo of former Secretary of State Kerry signing the Paris Treaty with his granddaughter on his lap. By burying our heads in the sand and ignoring the warning lights, we are handing a climate crisis to our children and grandchildren. That is not leadership. ■

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How Our Garden Grows!

By Zaida Govan

Reprinted from May 1, 2017



Zaida Govan is a native of Springfield via Puerto Rico with a passion for improving the community she serves. She can be reached at 413.301.2533 or zaida.govan@yahoo.com

I am writing about gardening this month since we are finally able to start planning our outdoor planting here in New England. I wait until the end of May to put my plants outside because you never know. I am still talking about justice here, food justice. Because certain areas in Springfield are designated food deserts, it is imperative that we grow our own food wherever we can—on a stoop in a bucket, in a corner of a small plot or in a Community Garden.

I invite you to come by and visit our community garden at the Mason Square Library any time to see and possibly take part in it. On **May 12**, there will be Gardening the Community's annual plant sale on Hancock Street. I am going to buy a few watermelon plants, the small cute ones that are so sweet. I am also planning on buying strawberry plants in addition to my usual lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers. I like salads with only those ingredients in it. As a gardener I know it is strange to hear that I don't really like vegetables; I wish I did. But I love fruit. I wish we could grow our native mangos here but alas we can't.

May is a very busy month for gardeners. Planning to plant! This is a very exciting time in the city because there are many plant sales across the city. This year Wellspring Harvest is going to open a hydroponic greenhouse which means they

will be growing food in water. I am very excited about that and that they will have a community gardening lot near the green house for Indian Orchard residents to participate in. I didn't realize there is already a hydroponic greenhouse on Gasoline Alley.

The Springfield Food Policy Council is available to you if you are interested in starting a community garden in an empty lot near where you live. They have resources to help you find out who owns the lot and how you can get a community garden started. My dream is to see as many community gardens in our city as there are vacant lots. Then we can really show what our inner cities look like. Our inner cities are beautiful now and that is the reason I want to start to have everyone take a picture of where you live, work or play in the urban setting and send it to #innercityreality or to your social media page (Facebook, twitter, snapchat, instagram, etc).

I want to show the country and the world that we are not drug infested sites of carnage as "Agent Orange" said. We are a community and as I always like to say, "I love my community!" So if you live in an inner city, Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Westfield; yes, Westfield, even if you don't think so, where else? If you live in the inner city, let's show the world that we are beautiful, thriving communities filled with people and families who want justice for all. #innercityreality. Let's grow our gardens and keep them watered and filled with light. I am talking about both our literal gardens and our spiritual gardens that consist of our friends and families. ■



www.twitter.com/AfAmPointofView

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BEAT



Kenneth Harris is a passionate writer of children books and offers an educational newsletter about heroes from his website <http://kforpartnership.wixsite.com/educ>

Stand for Children

By Kenneth Harris

Reprinted from December 1, 2017

Massachusetts is one of 11 states where the Stand for Children (SFC) nonprofit education advocacy organization is working diligently with parents and teachers to improve early literacy skills for struggling children from economically disadvantaged communities.

Here in Springfield, the many SFC staff members and volunteers can be found at Springfield middle schools such as Duggan Academy and the Chestnut Middle School campus or at Springfield and Holyoke libraries.

Amneris Narvaez, the Springfield organizer for SFC, is part of this effort in mobilizing communities and encouraging participation for student success. Her personal journey has prepared her for this vital role in finding solutions to closing the achievement gap, where an estimated 43% of 3rd graders in low-income neighborhoods are not reading proficiently at their grade level.

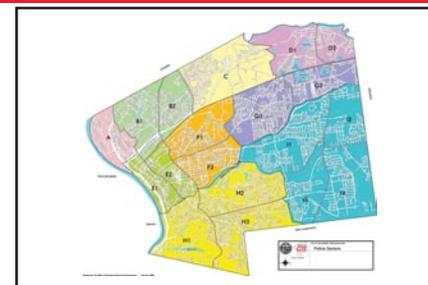
Following Narvaez's graduation from Westfield State University with a B.A. in Special Education, she became a teacher with the Springfield Public School system. During her eight-year tenure, it was her experience with the Home Visit Project that contributed to her understanding of how communication and transparency with families can be an ingredient for student success. Her active engagement in the Every Child Reads initiative exemplifies how empowering parents with the necessary tools and resources can make a difference in a child's life.

Parent engagement can be challenging, considering the work schedule of some parents or language barriers when English is not the first language in the household. But Narvaez goes the extra mile in trying to arrange transportation, child care, and she even distributes flyers in Spanish and English to help those with language difficulties. Stand for Children is devoted to helping parents foster a lively collaboration for the benefit of success.

When parents are involved with their children's education, the demonstrated leadership potential where growth and success denote a favorable outcome give Narvaez immense satisfaction at seeing mutual milestones achieved. The ripples of excitement within the Stand for Children organization can be felt when support from individuals in the community are united in confronting the issues in education and overcoming obstacles to see kids reach their highest potential.

In the years to come, Amneris Narvaez is committed to being a strong advocate for families and partnering with the Department of Education in joint initiatives in bettering education and learning for at-risk children. She welcomes anyone looking for information about Stand for Children to contact her at 617-320-1007 or send her an email at anarvaez@stand.org. <http://Stand.org/Massachusetts>. Their Facebook page also includes newsletters, events, blogs and other activities about the organization.

There is a need for more literacy



leaders in the greater Springfield area. Those in this role have the opportunity to participate in interviews for news media, be the subject of blogs, host house parties, share campaign updates with networks, and possibly represent the Every Child Reads campaign at the Massachusetts State House.

The next Every Child Reads Information Session will be held at the **Brightwood Branch Library, 359 Plainfield Street, Springfield on Tuesday, December 12th from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM**. Those interested are encouraged to attend.

The future for Stand for Children is just as bright as its initiative to improve literacy among children where growth and success soar in unison. It is symbolic of a community making a difference in the life of a child. ■

The American Red Cross Brings Free Smoke Alarms to Springfield to Sound the Alarm and Save Lives

SPRINGFIELD, MA – The American Red Cross announced today that their national Home Fire Campaign is partnering with the Springfield Fire Department to *Sound the Alarm* and install free smoke alarms in area residences on **May 3, 7, 8 & 9**. Teams consisting of a Red Cross Volunteer and Firefighter and will visit pre-registered Springfield homes to install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms as well as educate the homeowners on fire safety and personal preparedness.

Springfield residents wishing to participate should meet the following criteria:

- The home was built prior to 1975
- Current alarms are 10 years or older

To register, please contact the American Red Cross – 1-800-746-3511

Nationwide, the Red Cross will *Sound the Alarm* through a series of smoke alarm installation and fire safety events in more than 100 communities. From April 28 through May 13, Red Cross volunteers and partners will install over 100,000 free smoke alarms. These events are related to the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign, which since 2014 has helped save lives through smoke alarm installations and home fire safety education in thousands of communities.

The goal of this campaign in Springfield and across the country is to reduce deaths and injuries from home fires by as much as 25 percent over the next four years.

“Seven times a day someone in this country dies in a home fire and we have witnessed that tragedy right here in our community,” said [Mary Nathan, Disaster Program Manager for Western MA]. “Smoke alarms save lives.”

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COMMUNITY

POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Public Policy Priorities and Pressing Needs of African Americans in the City of Springfield

continued from page 14

refuse to comply with the residency law.

Pay close attention to the vote. It is inexcusable for any Councilor to vote in favor of this contract and provide as an explanation that they voted for it because they “didn’t want it to appear like the Council was voting along racial lines.” I have news for that Councilor... the City Council has been voting along racial lines to the detriment of our community for a long time and they never thought twice about how it appeared to their constituents.

That statement might have just cost me the Presidency next year on the City Council, but, again, as long as I am elected to serve this City, I will not just ‘shut up and dribble.’

Diversity

If you have not read the most recent article that the Publisher wrote in *An African-American Point of View*, then I encourage you to pick up a copy as soon as you leave here. The City Council, frustrated with the lack of diversity among the Mayor’s department heads, put forth a Diversity Resolution hoping to work with the Mayor to increase the racial makeup of his leadership in City Hall. The Mayor’s response was something akin to what our country’s current President would have said, not the leader of a City that is majority minority. The Publisher, my father, proceeds to surgically dissect and dismantle every careless word that came out of the Mayor’s mouth as he tried to justify why the number of minority department heads were so low and it could not have been said any better.

The only thing missing was the “radio silence” from every other organization of color that had a platform to speak up and have the City Coun-

cil’s “back” but failed to do so, which is probably why the Mayor felt so emboldened in making his reckless comments in the first place.

Police and Community Relations

As Chair of the Public Safety Committee and someone who believes that the vast majority of our police officers serve our community honorably, when I speak out on issues pertaining to the Police Department, it is after much thought and consideration of the potential impacts and the consequences that will result in saying nothing at all. If you see a press release from me regarding the Police Department, then that should be your cue that there is a glaring problem that cannot be ignored. Make a phone call to the Mayor’s Office and express your dissatisfaction, write a letter, or, even better, just show up at City Hall and demand an explanation. Trust me when I tell you the Police Commissioner does not make any meaningful decision around discipline, hiring, firing and promotions without running it by the Mayor first.

Voting

Both my wife and I are always being asked when will one of us run for Mayor. While I’m flattered that people would even consider either of us as capable of being the first African American Mayor of Springfield one day, we have to be honest with ourselves and dig into the numbers just a bit. We have roughly 150,000 people in Springfield. Out of those 150,000, roughly 120,000 are eligible to vote. Out of those 120,000 people eligible to vote, 108,000 of them are registered to vote, which means that only 12,000 are not registered.

The idea that we are still focused on getting people registered is a problem and not where our efforts should be concentrated. Out of those 108,000

City Council Letter to Mayor Sarno

continued from page 14

sive. Furthermore, the suggestion that we cannot find more qualified people of color to serve as department heads is offensive. There are many qualified candidates for leadership positions currently within our ranks and we, as leaders of this great city, have to find a way to prepare them for career advancement while also increasing our outreach efforts to focus more on diverse communities.

The purpose of our correspondence to the Mayor was not to disparage his hiring record, but to simply offer our support in helping take the necessary steps to increase diversity amongst city departments. To do this, we must first acknowledge that the statistics concerning the lack of diversity amongst department heads is a problem. This is not because our department heads are not the best people for the job, but because we have failed at outreach. Our proposed solution is the creation of a CDO who will be responsible for developing a recruitment plan, increasing professional development opportunities for existing employees, and examining the duties, responsibilities and goals of the current human resources staff.

people registered to vote, only a little over 10,000 actually voted in November, which is around 10%. And if you look at the numbers in the minority community, we are lucky if we get over 5% of the people out to vote. In order to see a Mayor of color elected in this city, those numbers have to increase dramatically, which means that our focus should be on getting people **out** to vote on Election Day as opposed to registering them.

While we are disappointed in the Mayor’s response to our request to work together, and do not appreciate the suggestion that our offer to help was politically motivated, our offer to assist still stands. Having a more diverse municipal workforce is something we all should give a d*mn about.

Sincerely,

City Council President

Orlando Ramos

At Large City Councilor

Justin Hurst

At Large City Councilor

Jesse Lederman

Ward 1 City Councilor

Adam Gomez

Ward 2 City Councilor

Michael Fenton

Ward 3 City Councilor

Melvin Edwards

Ward 5 City Councilor

Marcus Williams

Ward 7 City Councilor

Timothy Allen

Editor’s Note: City Councilors Not Signing Letter: At Large City Councilors **Thomas Ashe, Timothy Ryan and Kateri Walsh;** Ward 4 City Councilor **E. Henry Twiggs** and Ward 6 City Councilor **Kenneth Shea.** ■

Finally, the Deltas have a platform unlike any other Sorority or Fraternity in the city. You have direct access to the ear of the Mayor. The Mayor’s Chief of Staff, second in command in the entire city, just so happens to be one of your own. You just have to have the courage to speak truth to power and demand results. And if you don’t then the Deltas must consider themselves part of the problem. ■



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COMMUNITY

FROM THE STATE HOUSE

“Breakfast After the Bell” Makes Good Sense

By State Representative Bud L. Williams



Bud L. Williams

Many legislative Bills are filed at the State House of Representatives for consideration to become written as law. As a member of the education committee, I listen to public testimony regarding a myriad of issues relative to public education. One of the current issues before the committee is House Bill 327 and Senate Bill 242, presented as an Act known as “Breakfast in the Classroom” as well as “Breakfast After the Bell.”

If enacted and approved, this legislation would require all K-12 public schools in Massachusetts that have 60% or more students eligible to receive free and/or reduced-priced meals to offer breakfast after the start of the instructional school day.

According to information shared by the Rise and Shine advocacy coalition on childhood hunger, one in seven children in Massachusetts lives at risk of hunger due to impoverished circumstances. Many families are unable to afford the purchase of adequate amounts of food to sustain a healthful lifestyles. Studies have shown that children living in impoverished households oftentimes exhibit academic deficiencies, and/or various types of health concerns due to poor nutrition.

From my personal vantage point of having been raised in a household where food was often scarce and where my nine siblings and I lacked a variety of food choices, breakfast was non-existent. Most mornings, I arrived at the door of Hooker Street School in Springfield with an empty and ‘rumbling’ stomach. Although I consider myself to have been a ‘good student’, there were times when my hunger overtook my thoughts and I would find

myself dreaming about lunchtime and not focusing on the See Spot Run book that I was expected to read and comprehend or the math facts that I was to have memorized. As I remember it, my mind was on getting home for the sandwich (sometimes mayonnaise and bread) that I knew would help to quell the rumbling sounds emanating from my empty belly. After eating my lunch, I would return to school for the afternoon session with a smile on my face and a clear mind. I thank the Lord for giving my mother (the late Mozell Williams) the creativity to make a meal out of meager provisions.

Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting Rebecca M. Johnson Elementary School, located in Mason Square, the heart of one of the poorest neighborhoods in the 11th Hampden District, to tour and observe the “Breakfast After the Bell” initiative in practice and I was impressed with the fluidity with which the breakfast program was being implemented. According to Principal Darcia Milner and Vice Principal Keisa S. Williams, the students, teachers and parents wholeheartedly approve of the program. Both administrators agreed that since the implementation of the initiative, they’ve noticed an improvement in student achievement. In addition, there has been a decrease in student absences and tardiness, fewer visits to the nurse’s office, and a marked decrease in classroom misbehavior evidenced by far fewer office referrals.

After hearing testimony from the advocacy groups, educators, and my firsthand observation of the program in practice, I plan to put forth a tireless effort in support of passing this legislation to ensure that every eligible student will be provided a nutritious breakfast each school day.

*When you eat well,
you think well.*

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

STCC to Host Spring Career Awareness Fair on April 12

SPRINGFIELD, MA – Springfield Technical Community College will host a career awareness fair on **Thursday, April 12**, for STCC students, local high schools and community agencies that assist the public with workforce training.

The fair, to be held from **11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Scibelli Hall (Building 2) gymnasium at STCC**, will focus on opportunities in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Representatives from STCC STEM programs will be on hand as well as local employers. With a goal of raising awareness about STEM careers,

the fair will give attendees an opportunity to speak with employers about potential opportunities in their field.

The fair is a collaboration between the Career Development Center at STCC, the HSI-STEM Grant and the Perkins Grant.

For more information, please contact Activity Director for HSI-STEM Felicia D. Griffin-Fennell: fdgriffin-fennell@stcc.edu, (413) 755-4819, or STCC Career Technical Education specialist Peter Chirichiello: (413) 755-4382, pvchirichiello@stcc.edu.

Protecting Your Assets Part III

Springfield Partners for Community Action, Inc. (Springfield Partners) will host its third annual “Protecting Your Assets Part III” on **Wednesday, April 18th starting at 6 P.M. at the Springfield Central Library, 220 State Street**. The event is in recognition of National Financial Literacy Month celebrated every April and is free and open to the public. **Call 413-263-6500 to reserve your seat now!**

This year’s panelists include Julius D. Lewis of the Metrocom Group and the Lewis and Morrow Financial Hour which airs Wednesdays on STCC radio and Attorney Sara A. Miller, P.C. Attorney Miller is highly knowledgeable on elder law, estate planning, etc. New this year is Attorney Martin O’Connor, our resident authority on tax issues

and controversies affecting low-income, non-English speaking taxpayers and helping them understand their rights and responsibilities as taxpayers.

Paul F. Bailey, executive director at Springfield Partners, said, “We have another great panel this year with Julius returning for the third year along with Attorneys Miller and O’Connor. I am sure there will be something for everyone, along with great information sharing. I encourage the community to come out.” Synthia Scott-Mitchell, director of Community Services, added, “Those of us that are in the baby-boomer generation are looking toward retirement and if not already retired, this is for you. Also as many of us become caregivers for our parents, this is for you, too.”

It's time for #GreenNFit Springfield And We Need YOU!

Join us, **Saturday, April 28th**, as we perform critical repairs, modifications and curb appeal home improvements on Manhattan Street in the Old Hill Neighborhood of Springfield, Massachusetts.

We are looking for volunteers, sponsors and donors in order to make this event a true success for our community.

Register to volunteer today or contact us to sponsor at (413) 788-0014.

Around Town & In The Community



Western Massachusetts board member Doris Harris, president/chair Judi Fonsh and area director Julie Schwager attend the Department of Mental Health Legislative Breakfast on March 9th at STCC.



Springfield School Committee member LaTonia Monroe Naylor holds a Parents Village workshop at the Forest Park Library.



The Dunbar Divas and their instructor attended the STCC Jazz and Soul Food Luncheon. L to R: Ethel Richardson, Alma Kirby, Debbie Collins, Estelle Early, Francine Pina-Council and YMCA instructor Tracey Thomas.



Young men participating at the Constructing Kings Male Youth Summit.



An International Women's Day Celebration was presented by AFRI(K)QUE at Boland School. L to R: Board members Serge Koffi-Tessio, Sophie Koffi-Tessio, Faith Garcia, founder and executive director Karina Dise and board member Nanci Streit.



WTCC radio personality Lisa Ladas (front row 3rd from right) celebrated her birthday at the March community birthday celebration at the West Indian Social Club in Hartford.

Celebrating Women



Co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters/Springfield and the National Foundation for Women Legislators which dedicated March to honoring women in Public Service, Springfield Women's Commission honored School Committee Member and MA Commissioner for the Status of Women Denise M. Hurst, MA Lt. Gov. Karen Polito and City Council Vice President and Women's Commission Chairwoman Kateri Walsh.



As part of Women's History Month, poets Tracey "Mind Evolution" Caldwell, Brenda's Child, Crystal Senter-Brown and Lynnette Johnson read their poetry and signed books at Art for the Soul Gallery presented by Gallery Director Rosemary Tracy Woods (right).



100 Women of Color Springfield area honorees: Dr. Janine Spinola Taylor, Talia K. Gee, Kimberly Robinson Williams, Terry Powe, Myra Marcellin, Waleska Lugo-DeJesus and Lidya Rivera-Early with Eleven28Entertainment CEO June Archer.



St. John's Congregation Church held its annual First Lady's Luncheon with featured guest speaker Sheryl Lee Ralph (center). Pictured are First Lady Jamina Scippio McFadden (3rd from left) and table hostesses.

Urban League of Springfield's Distinguished "Black Women of Excellence" Awardees

Ruth E. Carter, BA, — Keynote Speaker

Ruth E. Carter Costume Design

Tania Barber, MBA

President/CEO, Caring Health Center

Helen Caulton-Harris, RN

Commissioner, Health And Human Services, City of Springfield

Pia Flanagan, JD

Chief of Staff to President and Corporate Secretary, MassMutual

Yvette Frisby, MA

Senior Vice President, Urban League of Springfield, Inc.

Anika Gaskins

Vice President of Regional and National Marketing, MGM Springfield

Enku Gelaye, JD

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, UMASS Amherst

Sheila Goodwin, MBA

Senior Vice President, PeoplesBank

Jessica Henderson

Lieutenant, Springfield Police Department

Paulette Henderson, BA

Director/Owner, Henderson Funeral Home

Denise Jordan, MA

Mayoral Chief of Staff, City of Springfield

Tashanna Myers M.D.

Gynecological Oncologist, BaystateHealth

Adrienne Smith, MS, EdD

Dean, Engineering Technologies and Mathematics, STCC

Dr. Cheryl Stanley, EdD

Dean of Education, Westfield State University

Shadae Thomas-Harris, ED LD

(May 2018) SPS Principal, Harvard Teaching Fellow

Shirley J. Whitaker, MD

BaystateHealth

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

STCC Accepting Applications for STEM Week

SPRINGFIELD, MA – Middle school and high school students in Springfield can register for the second annual STEM Week at Springfield Technical Community College, a free camp during spring break, **April 17-20**.

Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis beginning in March. To apply, please contact Marta Burgos at (413) 755-5424.

The camp, which started last year, provides an opportunity for Springfield public school students in sixth through 11th grade to spend their spring break participating in fun and

educational activities including field trips to museums. Participants will work on building projects and team challenges that expose them to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). STCC faculty will help with hands-on activities.

The camp will run 9 a.m.-3 p.m. from Tuesday, April 17 through Friday, April 20. Students will receive lunch each day. Transportation is available upon request.

Organized by HSI-STEM and the Latino Education Institute, STEM Week is supported by a federal grant awarded to STCC to support Hispanic and low-income students and a Title

III grant, which is used to help ensure that English learners attain English language proficiency and meet state academic standards.

The Latino Education Institute works to improve academic outcomes for Latino students in Springfield by strengthening the connection among families, schools and higher-education, and providing after-school, vacation-time programming and parent academies throughout the year.

“For local youth, STEM Week at STCC is a chance to have fun while expanding their understanding of STEM,” said Dr. Felicia Griffin-Fennell, activity director of the Hispanic Serving Institution-STEM (HSI-STEM) grant, funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

“The camp increases awareness

about STEM and what it means for their lives,” Griffin-Fennell said.

“Children last year had a wonderful time participating in activities here at STCC and learning about technology and different STEM careers.”

Dr. Milagros Martinez-Schettini, program liaison of the Latino Education Institute for Springfield, said, “STEM Camp at STCC is a great opportunity for middle school and high school students. It will provide experiences that will help students to work in emerging STEM-related fields, in growing industries that include technology and math as well as in fields that include science, communication, and environment.”

For more information about STCC, visit www.stcc.edu. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@S_T_C_C).

CONGRATULATIONS CORNER



Denise R. Jordan

Congratulations to **Denise R. Jordan**, chief of staff to Mayor Domenic Sarno, who has been named chair of Baystate Health's Rays of Hope. The appointment is for two years and Denise will oversee the 25th anniversary Rays of Hope Walk in October. A breast cancer survivor herself, Denise is personally committed to the work of raising awareness and supporting the fight against breast cancer. Stated Denise, “I truly believe in the mission of Rays of Hope and have accepted the role of chair in honor of my good friend, Tracy B. Whitley, a former Baystate Health employee, who passed away last year after a long battle with breast cancer.”



as a 5-day boarding student for the 2018-2019 aca-

Congratulations to 11-year-old **Davian (“Davi”) McDonald**, son of Kevin McDonald, grandson of Carolyn McDonald and grandnephew of *POV* publisher Frederick A. Hurst, who was accepted into the 7th grade class



Tracy B. Whitley
(*POV* file photos)

demical year at the elite Fay School in Southborough, Massachusetts. According to his acceptance letter, “Davi has demonstrated the qualities that we seek in our admissions process and that are consistent with the five core values of Fay School: Academic Excellence, Honorable Conduct, Dedicated Service, Earnest Effort, and Wellness of Mind, Body, and Spirit. The decision to offer Davi a spot in our 7th grade class reflects both our confidence that Davi will thrive at Fay and our enthusiasm for the many wonderful qualities that he will bring to the School.”



Congratulations to **Jason Rucker**, a 14-year MGM Resorts security veteran, who was named by MGM Springfield to lead the safety and security program at the company's new entertainment resort set to open in Western Massachusetts later this year. In his new role, Rucker assumes the leadership of all security departments at MGM Springfield, including investigations, surveillance, special event staffing and safety. Additionally, Rucker will serve as security liaison with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. Rucker is a true MGM Resorts career success story. He was most recently Director of Security at MGM National Harbor in Maryland, where he oversaw the security team and focused on training and mentoring programs. Rucker was originally

hired by MGM Resorts in 2004 as a security lost and found clerk at Bellagio Resort in Las Vegas. He has served in multiple positions within the Security division, holding the title of Director of Security at both Bellagio and Signature at MGM Grand. He also assisted in the development of the company's K-9 Security Unit.



Congratulations to **Cheryl Stanley, Ed.D.**, dean of Education at Westfield State University, who was among 15 Black Women of Excellence honored by the Urban League of Springfield during National Women's History Month. Dr. Stanley has served Westfield State University since 1993, when she joined the education faculty. She became the dean of Education in 2011 and has been instrumental in the University's Reach to Teach initiative with Springfield Public Schools, developed to help fill educator staffing needs in critical shortage areas and hard-to-staff schools. In support of this initiative, Westfield State University is one of four institutions in the state to receive a two-year grant award from the state Department of Higher Education to further best practices in increasing the diversity of P-12 educators. Dr. Stanley holds a B.A. from Spelman College, a M.A. from George Washington University and an Ed.D. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. ■

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

LAW NOTES



Dr. Bridgette Baldwin is a Professor of Law at Western New England University School of Law with areas of interest in criminal law and procedure, international criminal law, evidence, critical race theory, cybercrime and welfare law.

Be Honest or Be Silent: The Dangers of Lying under Oath

By Anne B. Goldstein, Professor of Law

Recent investigations into the last presidential election and possible Russian interference have brought to the surface the dangers of “perjury” or “lying to investigators.” You may be wondering exactly what these terms really mean and how they become a crime.

Quite simply, “perjury” is the act of lying under oath. The oath may be taken in court, in a hearing, or a deposition in a lawyer’s office. The oath may also come in the form of written words like “sworn (or affirmed) under the pains and penalties of perjury” seen above the signature line on some official document. Under federal statutes, the penalty for perjury is up to five years imprisonment. Massachusetts law makes the penalty up to twenty years in state prison.

Perjury does not simply concern statements made by one witness that contradicts the testimony of someone else. It requires that at least two witnesses contradict the defendant’s version, or it requires the proof of evidence that supports a single wit-

ness’s version. Additionally, perjury can occur when the defendant swears under oath to stories that are so contradictory that both cannot be true. By example, in 2015, Nathan Perez pled guilty to perjury because he had incriminated (lay blame on) Charles Wilhite in his first murder trial. But then in his second trial, Perez denied what he had previously said. (Mr. Wilhite’s conviction was overturned. He was then acquitted. Springfield settled Mr. Wilhite’s wrongful imprisonment case for \$1.4 million.)

However, not every lie under oath is perjury. The lie must be “material” to the case—that is, important. Courts say the lie must have “a natural tendency to influence, or be capable of influencing, the decision.” It must “tend to affect some aspect or result of the inquiry.” A lie can be “material” even if nobody believes the statement, as long as the court determines that *someone could* believe it.

In the federal system, a “material” lie to a federal investigator is the

crime of “false statement.” In the highly controversial events surrounding the last U.S. Presidential election and the Russian probe, Attorney Alex van der Zwaan pled guilty to making a false statement for claiming that he last spoke to former Trump campaign aide, Rick Gates, in August 2016 instead of a month later. Like perjury, making a false statement can also be in writing.

It is never safe to lie under oath or to make a “false statement.” We can’t know, when we testify, sign something under oath, or fill out a form, whether what we are saying will turn out to be “material.”

What if the truth would hurt? The Fifth Amendment allows us to refuse to incriminate ourselves. The only way to protect that right is to “plead the fifth” and not answer. We may not lie. Lying under oath, even to protect oneself, is perjury. Lying to government agents, on government forms, or on public documents—even to protect oneself—violates federal and state law. Therefore, if the truth

could hurt, the only safe recourse is to refuse to answer or plead the fifth.

We all know the saying, “honesty is the best policy.” Most of us try to be honest, but an occasional white lie doesn’t hurt (always for a good reason, right?). When testifying in court, filling out any form that may end up in government files (even indirectly), or talking with a federal agent, we must either be honest or be silent. It really is the best policy. ■



Anne B. Goldstein is Professor of Law at Western New England University School of Law, teaching criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence, and police misconduct courses.

Trump Alerts!

By Marjorie J. Hurst



WASHINGTON, DC – March 12, 2018 – Statement of AFT President Randi Weingarten responding to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ “60 Minutes” interview and President Trump’s school safety proposals:

“The White House proposal to harden schools and to arm teachers is straight out of the NRA playbook. It is antithetical to the needs of children and ignores the purposes of public education. The administration made a choice to listen to the NRA and gun manufacturers, rather than parents, students, teachers, law enforcement and communities. And while the plan takes baby steps to strengthen the background check system, it will mean more guns in schools and, as a result, more potential for violence and tragedy. What a missed opportunity.

AFT’s Weingarten on DeVos’ 60 Minutes Interview, Trump’s School Safety Proposals

“Based on Betsy DeVos’ performance on ‘60 Minutes’ last night, and at Stoneman Douglas High School last week, it’s clear the secretary of education knows little if anything about how to ensure safe and welcoming schools, much less an appropriate environment for teaching and learning. How is she possibly equipped to lead a commission on school safety?

“We gave President Trump the benefit of the doubt—just like we did on the Dreamers—sending him a letter asking to let us share what we know, as educators. But he’d rather listen to the NRA, and do its bidding, than be a champion of children.”

EDITORIAL

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

MY POINT
OF VIEW

Frederick A. Hurst



OUR 15th ANNIVERSARY

By Frederick A. Hurst

Thank you all who recognized the 15th anniversary of *Point of View*, a/k/a *An African-American Point of View*, a/k/a *Af-Am Point of View*. We are not choosy about whatever name you choose to call us by as long as you also recognize us as “durable” which is what we believe our 15 years strongly suggests.

Point of View has survived the most severe economic downturn since the great depression, the increase in the competitive influence of the internet as a news source, the loss of key business advertisers through buyouts

from out-of-town entities, the refocusing of several larger advertisers away from Springfield, ad agency bias and the generally strange reluctance of so many local businesses to actively pursue the African American market through *Point of View*.

Point of View has also withstood political headwinds stirred up by those who would prefer that we be passive which we will never be. We will continue to write the truth as we understand it and let the chips fall where they may whatever the revenue consequences because the truth, however controversial, is an integral part of our broader mission to be the “voice of the community.”

Toward that end we have com-

plied a diverse team of excellent writers who cover a diversity of informative topics with dedication that inspires us. And we continue to add writers, most recently Milton Jones from the National Association for Black Veterans and Wanda Smith-Gispert from MGM Resorts International. Moyah Smith and Yvonne Mendez have added to the enrichment of our arts section as have Berdia Brown and my 11-year-old grandson, Tristin Hurst. And Jynai McDonald has given our Community Calendar new life. Others have also joined the team of dedicated regulars who have been with us for years...many for the entire 15.

We have frequent guest writers

and several are in the current issue including Catherine Phillips who has written a review of my book, “A History of Blind Industries and Services of Maryland.” I worked on the book for more than a year and am proud to say that it is finished and I am satisfied that it constitutes a job well done but, nonetheless, it represents just another day in the diverse work that all of us at *Point of View* hope to continue.

Point of View has survived with its core staff through some very good years and some very tough years and it feels good to report that conditions are favorable and we expect to be around for at least another 15 years, long enough, I might add, to continue to please some, to displease others and to pass the business along to the younger Hursts. ■

Af-Am

POINT OF VIEW

Community News Magazine

2003-2018

Celebrating

15 years

Your VOICE

Your COMMUNITY

Your POINT OF VIEW

AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

continued from page 4

OF COURSE TRUMP IS A RACIST

Of course Donald Trump is a racist. “According to a new poll by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, 57 percent of Americans think Trump’s policies have been bad for Muslims, and 56 percent think they have been bad for Hispanics....Forty-seven percent of all adults, including more than 8 in 10 blacks, three-quarters of Hispanics, and nearly half of whites, said they think Trump is a racist....Eighty-five percent of Democrats consider Trump racist, **but just 21 percent of**

Republicans agree (emphasis added).” (*The Boston Globe*, March 1, 2018) **More evidence that the Republican Party has lost its moral compass and, for all intents and purposes, become the Party of Trump, which raises the question of where the few remaining real Republicans go from here.**

AND HE IS NUTTY ENOUGH TO WANT TO POST SECRET SERVICE AGENTS AT THE NATIONS POLLS

Can you imagine! If Donald Trump has his way, a provision

in the Homeland Security reauthorization bill will give him the authority to post Secret Service agents at federal election polls. Who does he think he is, Vladimir Putin?

WHITE PEOPLE ARE NOT THE ONLY SUPER HEROES

The movie *Black Panther* has passed the one billion dollar mark at the global box office. It has made more than 521 million domestically and has become the No. 2 superhero release of all time surpassing *Dark Knight*. (*Boston Herald*, March 11, 2018)

THE TIGER RETURNS

Can it be that Tiger Woods’ golf game is back to normal? Some

think so after his second place finish in the Valspar Championship. The odds makers are placing their bets on Woods to win his next PGA outing at the Arnold Palmer Open. (He didn’t win the match but watch the Masters!) Why not? His top club head speed of 129 was not only the highest in the tournament but the highest by any player on the PGA Tour this season. His average is 122 which is higher than it was in 2013, when he won five tournaments. And his average drive distance is above 300. And the crowds were huge as were the television ratings, which drew more viewers than any regular PGA tournament in 2017 except the Masters. And nothing motivates Woods like a fawning big crowd. ■

LETTERS TO THE PUBLISHER

*Dear Publisher and Editor of An African American Point of View
Frederick A. Hurst and Marjorie J. Hurst*

First, congratulations on the fifteen years of your excellent community news magazine! I was living and working in Springfield when you began your publication. From the beginning, I was appreciative of all that you were writing and publishing. In June 2006, I moved away to serve as pastor of a United Church of Christ congregation outside of Albany, New York. When I moved back to live in Springfield in July 2016, I was pleased to see that your news magazine continues to flourish and serve the community.

I write to comment about several of the articles in the March issue.

First, I support the City Council Diversity Resolution that passed the Springfield City Council on February 5. I also support the Guest Opinion essay recommending the hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer for the City, signed by the council president and seven of the city council members (*Springfield Republican*, March 4). I also agree completely with the views expressed in your publisher's article "Let's Talk," regarding this same resolution and Mayor Sarno's response. You provided many good talking points for the mayor to work with the City Council and Springfield's Black and Brown communities.

Next, I was saddened to learn (in AF-AM Newsbits) of the death of Lerone Bennett, Jr., former editor of *Ebony* magazine. In 1965, I read and first used his book of African American history, *Before the Mayflower*, as one of my major resources in leading a six week course for several churches in West Haven, Connecticut. This book, plus Alex Haley's *Roots* and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and several other works by historical and contemporary African Americans were seminal in my personal learning in the 60s and in the Civil Rights movement.

Having voted last November for all of the School Committee and City Council candidates who won, I was pleased to read Denise M. Hurst's column about School Committee Happenings. I share the joy that "for the first time that can be recalled, the Springfield School Committee elected its first female majority school committee, and first majority women of color school committee." I appreciated Justin Hurst's article about issues before the Springfield City Council.

As a graduate school student, I supported the principles and practices of the Black Panther Party. Thus, I was pleased to join the thousands of people around the world who have been viewing the amazing Marvel action film *Black Panther*. Looking at another generation of your outstanding family of community leaders, I was inspired by the articulate movie review by Tristin Hurst, "Why 'Black Panther' is the Best Superhero Movie of All Time."

Beyond these comments, I also value and learn from all of the writers and columnists featured in *Af-Am Point of View*. I look forward to all of the future years of *An African American Point of View*. Keep up the great work!

Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch (3/7/18)



From Alan T. Popp

Dear Marjorie & Rick,

Thank you for your paper as it is a gift to all of us who read it. You involve the community so nicely, address truth to power, and support the community in so many ways.

I'm delighted I subscribed and connect on a monthly basis.

Warm regards,
Carol Kinsley (3/12/18)

Dr. Mr. Hurst,

In the old days I may have sounded like the mayor, but the richness of my experience in and service . . . to the Community the last 25+ years has taught me much. I concur with your analysis of the text of Mayor Sarno's response to the City Councilors' letter. We believe in our hearts that treating everyone "the same" as individuals is right and sufficient. Well and good on the surface, but insufficient for many reasons as delineated in your column. Keep telling the truth and educating us.

(3/3/18)

Congratulations to Springfield Central High School Girls and Boys Basketball Team as the Western Mass Division One Champions



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. Atu White, Editor, serves as Pastor of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 368 Bay Street, Springfield, MA and as Second Vice President of the United Baptist Convention of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. atuwhite@gmail.com

People are often confused about why the date of Easter changes from year to year. In 325 CE, the Council of Nicaea, a governing body of the early church, established that Easter would be observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon occurring on or after the spring vernal equinox. This was to align it with the observance of Passover, which was celebrated by Christ and His disciples at the last supper. Thus, the date of the celebration of the Resurrection changes from year to year. This year, Easter/Resurrection Sunday falls on April 1st. Here lies our modern-day dilemma – in this post-modern, post-Christian world, celebrating the belief of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead will be for many

an April fool's joke. Some hold that only fools can believe that a man brutally beaten and then executed by crucifixion, put in a tomb with a boulder rolled in front to seal it, could then rise from the dead three days later.

Christians down through the centuries have faithfully defended the historic account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But no doubt this year, there will be added opportunity for ridicule as we celebrate that miraculous event on April Fools' Day. I've heard some equate the Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus as "zombie" worship or honoring the "undead." While these references have made me cringe, I know to the unconverted it does sound like foolishness. Who but a fool would believe such a thing? But even the Apostle Paul had to deal with ridicule

for the faith he had in the living Christ. In I Corinthians 1:18-20 Paul writes:

"¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: *"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."* ²⁰ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

Yes, the story of the resurrection of Jesus defies logic and common sense. It doesn't hold up to modern day science or medical knowledge. And, yes, it seems that only the simple minded would believe such a story, but God is not bound by human logic, wisdom or knowledge. In fact,

God intentionally turned human knowledge and wisdom on its head, and made available to whoever would have faith, to not only believe in the resurrection story, but experience its power in their own lives.

The world is full of people who think themselves wise, powerful and knowledgeable. They would claim to be nobody's fool. But Paul when confronted with the spiritual arrogance of members of the Corinthian church wrote, *"We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong!"* This April Fools' Day, Resurrection Sunday, I will again proclaim my belief and gratitude for the power of the empty tomb and be a "fool" for Christ. Whose fool will you be? ■



Rev. Dr. Barbara E. Headley

Whose Fool Are You?

By Rev. Dr. Barbara E. Headley, Zion Community Baptist Church

Global Ministry Conference for Women

By Jynai McDonald



Progressive Community Baptist Church brings global ministry conference for women with Christian Evangelist Priscilla Shirer's message of "The Power of a Praying Woman" to the Springfield faith community.

Priscilla Shirer, also known for her leading role as the wife in *WAR ROOM*, has a Master's Degree in Biblical Studies and is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. Priscilla's evangelism encompasses being an author, actress, and motivational speaker to spread the power of the Holy Spirit. Women from around the world will be gathering via simulcast streaming to enhance their learning of God's word,

worship, and be inspired by Priscilla's cross denominational message of truths of scripture.

Progressive Community Baptist Church is encouraging the Greater Springfield Faith Community to participate in an exciting and powerful full-day experience in the presence of God and other women who seek to dig deeper into their relationship with Him. The full day conference includes lunch and will take place on **Saturday, April 28, 2018 from 9:00AM to 4:30PM (doors open at 7:30AM) at Progressive Community Baptist Church, 599 State St., Springfield, MA. For ticket purchases please call (413) 886-2325/ (413) 736-8844 or email swanmeetings@gmail.com.**

RELIGIOUS DIRECTORY



Rev. Dr. Atu White

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Pastors, Ministers, Professors and Theologians, please submit your articles for the "Religious Point of View" to Rev. Dr. Atu White at: atuwhite@gmail.com

RELIGION

RELIGIOUS DIRECTORY

New Life Calvary Baptist Church



Rev. Jesse E. Williams Sr.,
Pastor/Teacher

A NEW BEGINNING

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9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service
10:00 AM
Prayer/Bible Study
Wednesday
6:00 & 7:00 PM

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(413) 796-1600

*"A Diverse People who are
One on Solomon's Porch"*
Acts 5:12b



Sunday Worship— 10:45 AM
Sunday School— 9:00 AM
Wednesday—"Noonday Hour of
Power" With Lunch
Wednesday— Prayer Meeting
— Bible Study — 6:30PM

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Springfield, MA 01104
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Dr. Mark E. Flowers, Senior Pastor
Mountcalvarybaptistchurchspringfield.org

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Rev. Marcus T.
McCullough

Church School
Saturday
11:00am

Sunday Morning
Divine Worship
10:00am

Bible Study/Prayer
& Class Meeting
Wednesday - 6:00pm

Church email address:
bethelmaespringfield@comcast.net



Reverend Nathaniel
Smith, Sr., Pastor

Third Baptist Church
149 Walnut Street
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Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Prayer Meeting & Bible Study
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Rev. Dr. W. C.
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Canaan Baptist Church of Christ

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413-739-5053

Sundays

Sunday School (all ages) -----9:15a.m.
Morning Worship Service ----10:45a.m.

Church Life

Worship, Prayer, Praise & Study
Mid-day Prayer & Praise--12:00-1:00p.m.
Bible Study -----7:00 p.m.

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Rev. Joe C.
Long Jr.,
Pastor

Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m.
Sunday Bible School - 9:00 a.m.
Bible Study - Wednesday - 6:30 p.m.

FAMILY CHURCH

Pastor Gail L. Hill, Senior Pastor



Sundays
Christian Education 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Tuesdays
Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

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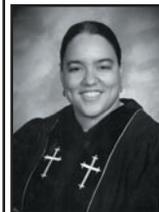
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Sundays

Sunday School (all ages) 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

Solid Rock Community Baptist Church

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Telephone (413) 734-5441
Fax (413) 734-5438

Transportation (413) 575-4035

Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 am
Weekly Bible Study/Prayer Service Tuesday 7:00 pm

Bishop Curtis L. Shaird, Pastor
Reverend Harold P. Dixon, Assistant Pastor



Alden Baptist Church

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413-736-5997

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of faith at work in the community. This vision is
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Dr. L.A. Love

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9:00 a.m.

Sunday Prayer &
Meditation Service
10:15 - 10:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning
Worship Service
10:30 a.m.

Bible Study
Tuesdays
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Youth Ministry
Fridays
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Shiloh Seventh-Day Adventist Church

797 State St., Springfield, MA
413-734-0103

clerk@shiloh1.comcastbiz.net



Dr. Walton H.
Rose, Pastor

The Church
In The Heart
of The City

Sabbath School 9:00a.m.

Sabbath Services:
(Saturdays)
Divine Worship
11:00a.m.

Adventist Youth Services
6:00pm
Adventist
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LIVING

LIFE'S CHALLENGES

What is Apathy?

By Sweets H. Wilson, PhD

Reprinted from February 1, 2017



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

According to Mr. Radwan, in "What Causes Apathy and How to Deal With It," apathy is the absence of caring. It is the lack of desire to engage in activities, make changes or desire anything positive. What makes the feeling of apathy unique is that it is essentially the feeling of not feeling. Many of us at one point in our existence have encountered the absence of not caring. Whenever we feel that something vital is missing from our life, yet lack the motivation or drive to pursue it, we are afflicted with this emotionless emotion.

Anxiety is a powerful emotion. It can sap away happiness, causing negative thinking, negative emotions, fear, irritability and more. Anxiety is the type of condition that can make you cry for no reason and it is the type of emotion that makes you feel completely on edge and desperate for relief. Apathy seems like an emotion that does not fit with what anxiety causes.

Although there are many practical things you can do about your apathy, you will not be able to do any of them unless you manage to change your mindset. Regardless of what initially caused you to feel so unmotivated, it is your present day outlook on it that now keeps you stuck. Ask yourself, "Am I willing to make a commitment to myself to give apathy the fight of its life, even though doing so feels like it will take a lot more energy and effort than I am now capable of?" If your sluggishness continues indefinitely, its repercussions can be enormous. You cannot possibly live life to the fullest, be happy, fulfilled or content if you do not actively pursue your

goals and desires. Besides, failing to act can lower your self-esteem, and eventually create distressing feelings such as worthlessness, guilt or shame.

Apathy is not something that someone can really prevent when they have anxiety, since the experience of severe anxiety is what creates the apathy. To remove it, you have to reduce your anxiety significantly.

Here are some solutions to consider:

- Determine where your apathy is coming from and contest its underlying assumptions
- Transition from passivity to problem solving
- Inject some novelty into your routine
- Challenge your apathy in every way you can
- Recall and reawaken happier times when you felt more enthusiastic and alive
- Direct your attention to a goal you might pursue right now
- See a professional therapist

After trying these suggestions, if you still are unable to escape from your apathy, chances are you can be suffering from a deeper, underlying depression. It is suggested that you cannot do this on your own but may need professional help by enlisting the assistance of someone who can understand the dynamics of your dilemma and who can offer viable ways for you to overcome the apathy. Many individuals develop a behavioral apathy about dealing with their anxiety. The term behavioral is used because the individual may still wish they were anxiety free and may try to wish their anxiety away daily, but they do not actually take the time to find a treatment that works, or commit to those treatments in full.

Reference: Radwan, F., M. "What Causes Apathy and How to Deal With It." http://www.2knowmyself.com/what_causes_apathy

THANK YOU

SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING

March 6, 2018

Greetings All,

We are settling in and it's GREAT! We took a Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services seminar facilitated by Sterling (Hall) where we met Robbin (Jones) and Atty. (Marjorie) Hurst.

Then we took those Home Ownership classes that were invaluable and had a couple of sessions with Jackie (Nogueras) that helped us clean-up our credit.

By happenstance we met Laura (Slotnick-Krouch).

Then we spoke to Ms. Cecilia (Carelock), whom we've never met and she was our blessing that connected us to Moyah (Smith) at United Bank.

And now...

We wouldn't be here if all of you weren't there, especially the Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services and words of encouragement from Mr. (Leo) Williams and everyone else. We are ready to speak with SNHS anytime.

Thank you too much,
Ferris & Wunmi Shelton



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ENTERTAINMENT



Moyah Smith is the Community Outreach Officer and Mortgage Loan Officer for United Bank. Also a radio personality for WTCC, her show, Whispers After Dark, is every Wednesday evening from 8-10pm on 90.7fm or www.wtccfm.org.

Lakisha Jones: To Whitney, With Love

By Moyah Smith



Lakisha Jones

I had the pleasure of speaking with Ms. Lakisha Jones, one of the top 4 finalists of American Idol (season 6), who will be performing at Springfield CityStage on April 6th, *Lakisha Jones: To Whitney, With Love*.

Moyah Smith: So I am sure you have come a long way from first setting foot on that American Idol stage. How long has it been since that experience?

Lakisha Jones: I can't believe it, but it has been ten whole years. My daughter was 4 years old. She is in the 9th grade now!

MS: Wow! I watched that season. She was so little then. Does it feel like yesterday or does it feel like eons ago?

LJ: It actually only feels like a couple of years ago, until I look at my daughter. Then reality hits.

MS: How has your life changed since American Idol ("AI")?

LJ: AI completely changed my life. I am able to reach people through my music and that would have never happened otherwise. AI allowed many firsts for me. My first time in California. My first time on Hollywood Boulevard. It was an amazing journey.

MS: And what has Ms. Lakisha Jones been up to in the last 10 years?

LJ: After Idol, I immediately went on the 3-month tour with *American Idol Live*. Then I auditioned with

Oprah for Broadway's *The Color Purple*. From 2007-2008, playing the characters of Sophia and the Church Singer, I shared the stage with Chaka Khan and BeBe Winans. I've recorded my album, *So Glad I'm Me*. Traveled with symphonies throughout the world to places like Russia, Prague and Germany, working with 60-70 piece orchestras. While touring, I came up with this brainchild of the Whitney performance. I've always admired and looked up to her.

MS: So this show, *To Whitney, With Love*, this was actually your own vision?

LJ: Yes! But it was just in my head. I would talk about it all the time. I knew how I wanted to open the show, what songs I wanted to sing, and even when I wanted to make wardrobe changes. But it was just in my head. My friend encouraged me to at least write the ideas down.

MS: So how did you take this idea from your head, to paper, to actual production?

LJ: I mentioned it to my friend while I was in Russia. She said, "You have to do it!" The next thing I knew, she came back to me and said, "We have a booking. Your vision has come to life." It felt like it happened overnight. Springfield is actually our first stop. We will be in

Ridgefield, CT next along with other bookings coming up. So it's very exciting.

MS: When did you first realize you had a gift?

LJ: My grandmother used to make me sing in church and everywhere since I was about 5 years old. She would just say "Lakisha will sing." And I would get up and sing. Wouldn't look at anyone. Kept my head down. I would sing and just sit down. No confidence. I began getting compliments everywhere I went. When I got to high school, my teacher put me in an a cappella choir.

MS: When did the love and passion kick in?

LJ: Sometime around middle school is when I realized I could actually do this thing. I never believed or even

continues to page 30

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



Renée Flowers is Point of View's Artist in Residence. You can contact her directly at (413) 209-9882 to arrange a private viewing of her work.

Every month
different paintings
created by
Renée Flowers are
displayed at
Point of View



THE ARTS

ENTERTAINMENT



Yvonne Mendez is the Director of Education & Engagement at the UMass Fine Arts Center. She produces events for the Valley Jazz Network, and also works with the Springfield Jazz and Roots Festival.

Afro-jazz, Apartheid and the Late, Great HUGH MASEKELA

By Yvonne Mendez

Sadness once again hit the world with the death of musician and activist Hugh Masekela (April 4, 1939-January 23, 2018). He was a pioneer of vibrant, cultural music that began with the sounds and beats of South African coal miners in the Witbank township where he grew up. But as he embraced jazz music, and his reach grew worldwide, his music represented the plight of workers and injustice. His music was based in African culture, but the heart of the music and the beat were close enough for my parents, both immigrants here and the children of canal workers in Panama, to claim it as their own. Masekela forged a pan-African unity in music, integrating jazz music with African beats.

This was the universality of Hugh Masekela. He started his music career in his twenties, playing with the Jazz Epistles, the first all-black band to record in South Africa. The Epistles included musicians Kippie Moeketsi, Jonas Gwangwa and Abdullah Ibrahim, then known as Dollar Brand. At the time, apartheid was just being introduced and jazz music was banned. To the government, this music encouraged race mixing and threatened white superiority. So the Jazz Epistles performed in secret,



Hugh Masekela

April 4, 1939 - January 23, 2018

Photo: By Tom Beetz [CC BY 2.0

*(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)],
via Wikimedia Commons.*

attracting diverse crowds who often sat on the floor of packed clubs to listen. Eventually, apartheid forced the exile of Masekela and the other Jazz Epistles to places like Europe and New York City. In New York, he attended the Manhattan School of Music. He performed with musicians like Miles Davis, Harry Belafonte, Herb Alpert, Bob Marley, Fela Kuti and reunited professionally with his ex-

wife Miriam Makeba. He and Makeba would go on to perform and produce musical expressions of society and freedom, including the song *Soweto Blues*, commemorating the violent massacre of school children during the Soweto Uprising. They also toured with Paul Simon's Graceland Tour that promoted worldwide divestment from South Africa and the eradication of apartheid.

Through his music Masekela helped restore artistic expression and creativity in South Africa, singing in the resistance language *Zulu*, and un-making the restraints of apartheid for his people and the arts. His songs often showed sadness, but also happiness with life, rhythms, singing and song, which has been part of the African Diaspora and black music in America since slavery times. In this way, we have more in common than we have differences. His songs *Stimela (Coal Train)* and the anthem *Mandela (Bring Him Home)*, as well as his popular jazz song *Grazin In The Grass*, show the spirit of our people, the broad range of emotions and experiences —happiness, sadness, injustice, poverty, and love. Rest in peace Hugh Masekela. ■

Lakisha Jones: To Whitney, With Love

continued from page 29

thought about it before then. I actually thought I was going to be a teacher.

MS: Are you still nervous when you perform?

LJ: Oh my goodness, yes! I am nervous *every time!* Always thinking....What if my voice cracks? What if I forget the words? But once the music starts, you just have to walk it out and light it up.

MS: Do you have any particular rituals prior to performing?

LJ: Just drinking tea, take in some steam and prayer.

MS: With your daughter, how do you balance family and career with all the traveling?

LJ: Girl, it takes a village. I actually have two daughters now, an 8-year-old and my oldest. We have a strong village supporting us.

MS: Well, I can't wait to meet you and see your performance. What can we expect?

LJ: You can expect to be touched and inspired. I want everyone to remember Whitney's voice.....I am not trying to be Whitney. I just want people to remember how she touched everyone with her voice. Forget all the negative things. Just remember how she touched them. Stand up and clap, dance and feel the music. We will also feature tributes to Aretha, Diana Ross and Donna Summer in the show.

Tickets to the show are available at the CityStage & Symphony Hall Box Office located at One Columbus Center in downtown Springfield, via telephone at 413.788.7033 or online at www.citystage.symphonymall.com. Group discounts available. Call for more information. ■

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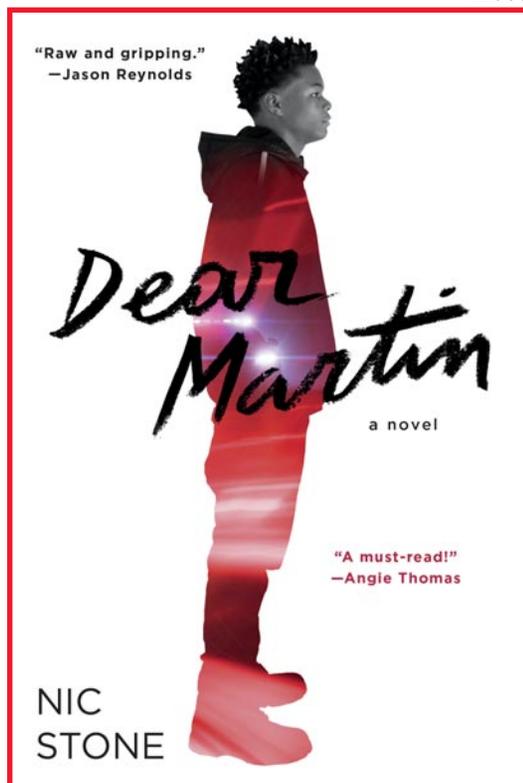
THE ARTS

CHILDREN'S BOOK CORNER



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.

What if your entire future was mapped out for you?



All you'd have to do is show up, keep your nose clean and your mouth shut. But what if you couldn't? What if the color of your skin had some bearing on it, and your outrage and need for understanding made you speak up? As in the new novel, "Dear Martin" by Nic Stone, WWMLKD?

It was supposed to have been a nice thing.

When Justyce McAllister saw his ex-girlfriend, Melo, next to her car, drunk and half-dressed, he knew there was no way she could drive herself home and he wasn't about to leave her in that neighborhood. She hollered when he took her keys. She smacked him as he poured her into the passenger's seat, which was nothing compared to what happened when the

cops stopped and cuffed him, thinking that he was hurting Mel, whose skin was more light than Black.

He'd never forget the feel of those cuffs, which led him to a search for understanding through the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. Justyce felt that if he could live like Martin, he might be able to tolerate things like being guilty until proven innocent because of his race.

He might also be able to withstand guys like Jared, who was in Justyce's debate class. From his head to his toes, Jared was racist, hiding behind fake equality in his pathetic arguments and complaints about reverse discrimination.

Couldn't everybody see through people like that?

No, Manny couldn't. Manny was Justyce's best friend but he was Jared's friend, too, which was something Justyce couldn't understand. He didn't get why Manny agreed with

Jared's comments or why he hung out with Jared's crowd. Manny was Black. He had a cousin who was gang-banging but he stayed friends

with a fool.

No matter. Justyce had his own issues and he wondered what Martin would do. Surely, Dr. King wouldn't stay quiet about racial profiling. Would Martin fall for a white girl? And this: *Martin* chose to be nonviolent, but what about everybody else?

What can you say about a book that surprises, gives you goosebumps, makes you happy, and then makes you sad? If it's "Dear Martin," you say, "Yes, please."

Through an observant narrator and the spot-on voice of a teenage boy, author Nic Stone takes national news and gently twists it into a believable tale that's smooth and somewhat unruffled until – *bam!* – Stone drops a gigantic stone into the story. If you

haven't fallen for her perfectly-created characters by that point, she'll have your complete attention there. What happens next, and next after that, is unexpected – don't even *try* to guess – and it'll have you turning pages. Indeed, you'll absolutely need to know how this tale ends and

"Dear Martin: A Novel"

By Nic Stone

c.2017, Crown \$17.99 / \$23.99 Canada 211 pages

Reviewed by Terri Schlichenmeyer



Nic Stone, author
Photo by Nigel Livingstone

how a man who's been dead nearly five decades impacted it.

This may be one of the most truthful, chilling novels your teenager may read this spring, but you need to find it anyway. "Dear Martin" is a winner, and what if you miss it...? ■

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JUANITA TORRENCE-THOMPSON: Pushcart nominee. Playwright. Published fiction, children's stories, feature articles, hundreds of her award-winning poems in dozens of U.S. and international journals, nearly 30 anthologies, 9 books including "When Morning Comes" (2016). Writes print & online newspaper poetry columns; produces poetry salons and reads internationally. Former Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of award winning 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

When Morning Comes

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson

When morning comes
Will you be there
Like lakes kissing mountains
Violet moon
Caressing emerald hills

Will you waltz with pizzazz
Dream with angels
Sing with velvet birds
Wear speckled diamond robes

When morning arrives
Will you appear on the terrace
Like Sousa leading the band
Like honeybees at the hive
Or will you be the empty pillow on my bed

Copyright 2016 by Juanita Torrence-Thompson

Driftwood in the Sand

By Berdia M. Brown

There was seaweed in a pile.

I'm sure it had drifted for many, many miles.
Through the rough ocean, rocks, and sand, it also drifted
on dry land.

I continued to stroll along the sandy beach, with high
waves dashing in and out, revealing many beautiful sea
shells and hermit crabs which were tossed about.

The beautiful blue ocean seemed to connect with the clear sky, as many sea
gulls glided by.

My eyes wandered onto a piece of wood buried in the white sand.
I brushed it off gently with my hand, the driftwood in the sand.

I noticed right away the designs, so perfectly etched. Only God could create
such a beautiful sketch.

Perhaps this piece of driftwood, too, had traveled for many, many miles and
rested so peacefully in the sand, which gave me a sense of peace of God's
guiding hands.

All rights Reserved



Berdia M. Brown

Guns, Race, and Labels: Love, Simon

By Tristin Hurst

I may live all comfy and content
But millions of others don't
I have the chance to get an education well spent
And so many others won't

I finally had a wakeup call
I've finally learned the truth
So I'm going to write this sad poem so all
Will protect our endangered youth

America is a messed up place
I don't know why we are all still here
I wish you could see my ridiculed face
Filled with anger and fear

Though you might think racism is gone
I am here am here to inform
It's not over, we never moved on
It's just taken new forms

On the streets and in the jail
Is where slaves work all day
Behind the gates are so many black males
Who did nothing of dismay

Why do we need a word for gay
A word for things we can't accept
I don't know if we'll ever see the day
Where we take that giant step

For why is it straight for a girl to love a guy
Why is it so limited to that
Can't Simon love both girls and or guys
Or I guess that's considered bad

We can't even control our guns
Or keep our children safe
I hope those kids had nice days in the sun
In my heart they have a place

It would be safer if guns were illegal
But it's all about the money
Crazies pray like a bald eagle
But the rich must think it's funny

And why not give the teachers guns?
For kids to steal and misuse
Boy that sounds like lots of fun
That will definitely solve the issue

We only descend further down
Into a chaotic world
Maybe one day we'll go north not south
But now we remain swirled

America is a messed up place
And I hope we take that giant step
Into a better future



Tristin Hurst

THE ARTS

ART FOR THE SOUL



Rosemary Tracy Woods.
Executive Director, Art for the Soul Gallery, Tower Square & 235 State St., Springfield. Showcasing the talent of diverse artists.
Gallery hours:
Tues.-Fri 11am-5pm,
Sat. 11am-3pm.
413-301-6314.

The Happenings at Art for the Soul Gallery

By Rosemary Tracy Woods



With spring finally here, Art for the Soul Gallery is blooming with new ventures and exciting times. Due to popular demand, the **7th Generation: Contemporary Native American Artists of the 21st Century exhibition was extended until March 24, 2018.** The Gallery hosted Springfield students from the UMASS College Matters Program, and boy are they observant! The students were able to find the Star Wars figures in David Fadden's artworks at the wink of an eye, while the adults over the age of 30 appeared to take a little longer.



Children on Art Scavenger Hunt find the Star Wars figures in David Fadden's work

artist Larry "Poncho" Brown. After an amazing visit, the group continued on what turned into an 8-hour tour of the Museum. A poignant moment shared by all, as tears poured down the eyes of many, occurred at the Emmett Till exhibit. Another favorite was the Chuck Berry exhibit, just to name a few. The Museum is an institution that every African American and every individual should visit.



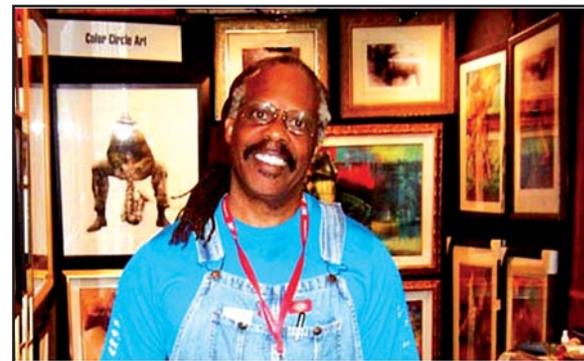
Art for the Soul Cultural Tour participants in front of the National Museum of African American History and Culture

"The Art and History of Quilting, accompanied with a Pop Up Exhibition of her works. We rounded out the month with "Queenin," a series of 4 authors: Brenda's Child, Crystal Senter Brown, Lynnette Johnson and Mind Evolution. What a tremendous success. A portion of the proceeds from all of our Women's History events were donated to "Walking with Our Sisters," a national organization which brings awareness and conversation to the plight of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls of Canada and the United States.

In February, Art for the Soul Gallery went on its own hunt for culture and traveled to Washington, DC. Our first Cultural Tour had 41 participants accompany us to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. First stop on the tour was to the studio of renowned

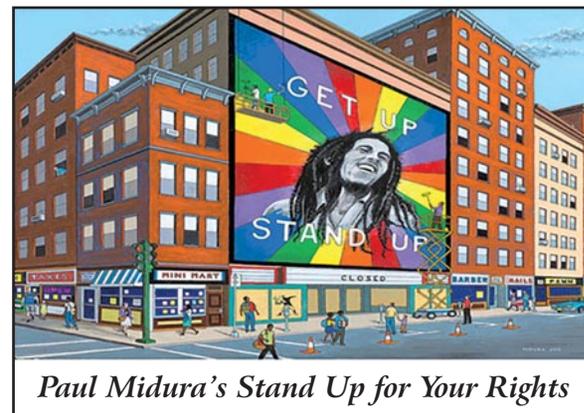
artist Larry "Poncho" Brown. After an amazing visit, the group continued on what turned into an 8-hour tour of the Museum. A poignant moment shared by all, as tears poured down the eyes of many, occurred at the Emmett Till exhibit. Another favorite was the Chuck Berry exhibit, just to name a few. The Museum is an institution that every African American and every individual should visit.

We marched into March on March 19th **Celebrating Women** with Lisa Brooks, author of *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Phillip's War*. Brooks led us to a new understanding of the history of colonial New England and of America's origins. This event was followed by Susan Duncan's discussion of



Paul Goodnight, "Imagination to Application" Artist Reception, Saturday April 21, 2018, 4-6pm, Art for the Soul Gallery

just like you and me. Mr. Goodnight has created his own unique aesthetic philosophy to document the history and humanity of people from the African Diaspora. He will also host a Master Class while the exhibit runs at the Gallery. If life is the practical application of what we know to be true, then "Imagination to Application" will certainly highlight the truth of esteemed Master Artist Paul Goodnight.



Paul Midura's Stand Up for Your Rights

Rather than April showers, April brings a national treasure to Art for the Soul Gallery. Artist Paul Goodnight will be featured in an exhibition entitled: "Imagination to Application." Mr. Goodnight's cultural contributions to a global community have enriched and embodies the lives of plain old ordinary folks,

A classic comes to Classical with artist Paul Midura's exhibition, "Pulitics," which opens on **March 30, 2018 at Art for the Soul, Classical location, 235 State Street, Suite 10, Springfield, with an Artist Reception scheduled for April 14th from 3 to 6 p.m.**

Even though much of Paul Midura's artwork involves beauty for its own sake, a large portion of his work also covers social and political issues. His politically and socially oriented art spans the entire spectrum from the humorous to the tragic. The messages are varied, including not only depictions of the human condition and observations about threats to democracy, but also real-life solutions such as organizing, dissenting, protesting, actively resisting injustice, and so on.

Although most of his work consists of vivid paintings, the artist has also done in-person pencil portraits of political and social figures such as Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Daniel Ellsberg, Angela Davis, Adrienne Rich and more, all of whom autographed and inscribed their portraits. Three of these are included in the show.

Check the art4thesoul.org website for additional and updated information. Contact the gallery at 413.301.6314 or visit Tuesday - Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m at the Tower Square location. Call 413.788-3903 for the Classical location. ■

UNNATURAL OCCURRENCES: Unwrapping the Holy Days

continued from page 13

with those incarcerated by the unnatural occurrences of hate, betrayal, bigotry and war.

While living on Christopher Street in New York City in the mid-1970s, many dear friends, supporters and neighbors were brutally attacked for being homosexual. Baseball bats were a weapon of choice then too. Lesbians were the constant target of ridicule, abuse and shaming; treated as subhuman. Today, countless LGBTQA adults and youth remain under threat of aversion/conversion therapies that are still practiced, usually religiously motivated and unauthorized by any legitimate psychiatric association. Much of the information is anecdotal, as these practices are mostly hidden from the general public. Homelessness, depression, suicide and isolation of those, whose identity and orientation are at odds with the “normalcy” myth, suffer in our own neighborhoods, where I continue to insist that we have too many churches and not enough God.

In Springfield, I have met a loving and accepting mother who fears for her child’s life and well-being having publicly disclosed their non-binary identity. I have met a father who told me he doesn’t understand his child’s sexual orientation, and admits he has learned to believe that anything outside of being heterosexual is a “sin.” Despite the pressure to reject his son and to look upon him as “an abomination,” exacerbated by the fear of being shunned by his religious community, he chooses to stand in the light of love for his child. I have known too many clinically depressed youth who struggle each day to believe they are worthy of being loved; that they are not “deviants” or inferior.

On occasion, I am also heartened by people who are stepping up and speaking out against this reprehensible injustice. Those who understand that human and civil rights are not just an issue of race. I never dreamed that in the 21st century we would still need to use words beyond our names to define, identify or explain ourselves. To those small minded who think that our sexual being is bound to our genital behaviors alone, I have to say, you must be the most miserable and boring of lovers.

Let’s not forget the death of Carl Joseph Walker Hoover, the twelve-year-old Springfield resident who was brought to desperation by bullying and homophobic epithets and committed suicide by hanging himself with an electrical cord. His devastated mother who found him, the late Sirdeaner Walker, courageously brought national attention to the issues that create bullying and championed the rights of *all* children, honoring the memory and life of her son. We as a city still owe a debt to Sirdeaner

and Carl Joseph that no amount of scholarships can erase. The silences, the mistakes, the religiosity, the modeling of homophobia by adults to children, by intention, action, or inference, all converge into that “perfect storm” that will inevitably lead to continued tragedy.

Here we are in this season of Holy Days, mostly ignoring their origins prior to bureaucratic and economically motivated interventions centuries after the political execution at Golgotha. We forget that the one Christians call Jesus was a precocious Jewish boy who studied the ancient liturgical texts with rabbis, presumably in Hebrew and ancient Greek, which he then translated and transmitted orally to Aramaic for the average person of his place and time. It was from rabbis where he learned that the fundamental principle of Jewish moral law is loving kindness to friend and stranger alike. This principle is at the core of many religions and cultures:

“The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I the L-RD am your God.”

Leviticus 19:34 (from the Pentateuch)

Jesus challenged classist authorities and hypocrisy at an early age, used the Natural world in his teachings, broke rules that did not serve love, and died brutally at the hands of the Roman State who feared the influence of his forward-thinking on the masses. He was a threat to the political establishment and status quo despite having no political aspirations. We accept original sin and reject original innocence. We use Satan as the scapegoat for our own evil and God as its panacea. These are the true blasphemies; all deadly backroom abortions of truth.

As a society, I witness prayer used as an excuse to ask God to do for others what we can do for them ourselves. I often cringe when people say, “I’ll pray for...” such and such and so and so, because I know that most of them won’t actually do it. Words become a self-assuagement of guilt that provide a way out of taking helpful action. “You’re being evicted? I’ll pray for you.” Spiritually and biologically, prayer is a powerful tool that should not be mocked by wrongful use. I have never rejected the idea of a Supreme Being; I reject the idea that a loving God would segregate and isolate us from each other.

We are now raising generations of children who measure their worth by the number of hits and likes on their social media accounts. We have adults

obsessively seeking affirmation, reassurance and compliments by posting selfies. Love and affirmation, tears and laughter, have been reduced to emoji’s in the shorthand of technologically mediated human interactions. We are missing too much time from the life-giving acts of discussing ideas, not other people or material things, and building empathy, connection, healing.

My holiday wish: To experience all of Springfield’s religious leaders coming together and creating a public forum in collaboration with the LGBTQA community where people can lovingly and safely speak and be heard. Where division and misunderstanding can be usurped by unconditional love and acceptance. Where our young people can come together and unite to dismantle the unspoken consent to the kind of violence that led to the death of Carl Joseph and the subsequent aberrant silences that were interrupted by only a few. The hidden, the invisible and unspoken, revealed and shared in a forum of intentional, thoughtfully moderated dialogue. Can you imagine the power, the beauty and Godliness that such an event could bring into our lives?

Let’s be truthful, we have been a City of Silos for too long. There are some changes at hand, and they are for the most part benefitting the privileged. Let’s widen the circle and redefine the term “stakeholder.” In fact, why don’t we do away with that implicitly exclusionary and obnoxiously cliquish term altogether? We need to hold each other more than we need to hold stakes.

Let’s make our city a true model of inclusion. It is within each other’s eyes that we can begin to access our mystical longing for unity with the Divine. One does not need to believe in God to champion Love – that intrinsic gift that can lead us to redemptive living, where all the elements of our suffering can become tools to benefit humanity. We just need to be willing to quiet the ego, seek out the lesson, and find the gift deep inside the worst of our days.

What parts of our lives, our being, our beliefs, will we unwrap during these holy days?

What can we choose to give that will endure? At the very least, let us offer someone a reason to live, a place to rest and fully be themselves. Let us see ourselves as a part of the stranger, not apart from the stranger.

I will do my best to go and show love and mercy to a bigot.

We cannot simply pray, we must become the prayer.

Take back the Holiness of Holidays. ■

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FOCUS

NABVETS Corner

By Milton Jones, Member & Past President

This is the first of what we hope will be a series of articles written for the *Point of View* that will highlight the National Association for Black Veterans, Inc. and the work it does to assist veterans on a national and local level. I want to thank Rick and Marjorie Hurst for providing us with this opportunity.

The reason we believe this opportunity is important is because even though we are located in the middle of Mason/Winchester Square we are constantly hearing from people that we don't know where you are located, or we don't know what you do and how your organization helps Veterans. This first article is intended to begin answering those questions.

The National Association for Black Veterans (NABVETS) was formed in the early 1970s by two black officers who, upon being discharged from the armed forces, encountered many barriers to getting the benefits they had earned after years of serving our country. They posed the question: If we, as high-ranking officers, are running into barriers securing our benefits, imagine what enlisted men and women are going through? Their response to this question was the formation of NABVETS.

On a national level NABVETS is:

- A nationally certified Veteran Service Organization and a United States Department of Veterans Affairs claims representative for the purpose of benefits and discharge upgrade services;
- Working in unity with the community to end homelessness, empower low income and minority veterans and working with disadvantaged youth;
- Preserving the historical contributions of minority veterans, such as the Congressionally approved National Day of Honor (May 25th);
- Advocating for the needs of home-

less and economically disadvantaged veterans;

- Rising to the challenge of addressing amnesty for Vietnam veterans as well as youth development in the community;
- Providing incarcerated veteran services;
- Providing peer support counseling for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and Agent Orange as well as access to Clinical counseling.

NABVETS is a membership organization with membership and chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The organizational structure looks something like this:

- National Command – Located in Fayetteville, N.C.
- Regional Command – Currently there are nine (IX) Regional Commands spread across the United States.
- State Commands – Vary in size based on the size of the State and the number of Chapters.
- Chapter Command – Each Chapter is made up of members who are responsible for carrying out the Mission of NABVETS through Chapter activities. Each Chapter must be approved by the National & Regional Command and must meet membership requirements. ALL VETERANS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP AND NON-VETERANS MAY JOIN AS AUXILLARY MEMBERS (more about this later). Each Chapter Command consists of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Sergeant at Arms. Each office has particular responsibilities outlined in our Charter, which is available at our



Milton Jones

GOOD NEWS

April 2018



Jay Griffin,
Stone Soul Festival
Program Chairman
hayjay252@msn.com
Tel: 413-636-3881
or
413-739-2947

Collaborations

- We are all excited about the opening of the MGM Springfield casino coinciding with the 30th anniversary of Stone Soul Festival. We are hoping to work some collaborative magic for our 30th anniversary.
- Stone Soul attended the Bright Nights Community Breakfast at the Sheraton Hotel where all of the guests received wrist watches and a fine breakfast. Judy Matt has done an outstanding job. Stone Soul has collaborated with the Spirit of Springfield Bright Nights and Parade of the Big Balloons. We have been supportive for 25 years since the beginning of Bright Nights.

Food as Medicine

We want to thank Ron Brace, Jr. for his series on Whole Food Plant Medicine for the body. Ron has remade his body to the point where he no longer takes medication for diabetes and high blood pressure. He is a model for us all. Ron provides television presentations by doctors who prescribe food as medicine each Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., 41 Colton St., Springfield. Ron has a group of 20 to

30 people for whom he provides samples from whole food plant foods that he blends together. Come out and learn how to eat the medicine for your body. Ron may be contacted at 413-309-3621 for additional information.

Spiritual Guidance

For your spiritual guidance, you are invited to attend Faith Christian Center at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays, 41 Colton St., Springfield, MA, Bishop Harold L. Moore, Senior Bishop – (413) 782-7247.

Old Times

I enjoyed my visit with Freddie Guess and Carl (Dubby) Williams reliving old times. Get ready to hear about their new singing group, "Back In Time".

Events

Friday – May 4, 2018 - Women of Destiny Outreach Ministry, hosted at Canaan Baptist Church of Christ, 1430 Carew St., Springfield, MA. Guest speakers will be Chief Program Officer of the YWCA, Mrs. Teresa Sanders of Cleveland, Ohio, along with inspirational speakers: Pastor Maria Aponte of the House of Peace and Restoration Church, "Casa De Pazy Restauracion." The Heart and Purpose of Women. **A Banquet will be held on Sunday, May 6, 2018,** Castle of Knights, 1599 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA. For tickets, contact Elegant Hair Design at (413) 523-3308, Lisa Goodman at Surdoue Boutique, (413) 726-7301 or Rhonda Owens Gilbert at Sweet Idea's, (413) 205-2828.

office for review. Current officers are as follows:

PRESIDENT Tony Bass
VICE PRESIDENT VACANT
TREASURER VACANT
SECRETARY Bernard McClusky
SERGEANT AT ARMS Eugene Brice

Our office is located at 878 State Street, across the street from the Indian Motorcycle Building and next door to the Blue Lagoon Jamaican Restaurant. Office hours are M, T, TH & F 11AM – 5PM and W 11AM – 1PM. We can be reached via PHONE at 413-209-9000, FAX at 413-273-1711, EMAIL at nabvetschapter102@comcast.net or WEBSITE at <https://nabvetsspringfieldmchapter.org> ■

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - APRIL 2018



Jynai McDonald,
Community Calendar
Editor of 2018
Please submit your events
with attn: Jynai in the
subject line to
info@afampov.com

April 4 (Wednesday)

Job Seekers Workshop w/ Youth Works

For ages 16-26

Where: Springfield Library
220 State St., Springfield, MA

When: 5PM-7PM

For registration info: 413-263-6828 x425

Portfolio Day:

An opportunity for area school students to show their art work.

Where: Scibelli Hall (Building 2), 7th fl
1 Armory St., Springfield, MA

When: 3PM-5PM

For more info: 413-755-5288 or
fmriddle@stcc.edu

April 5 (Thursday)

Festival of Flowers

Where: Museums a la Carte
21 Edwards St., Springfield, MA

When: 12:15PM

\$2/members, \$4/non

For more info: 413-263-6800 ext. 459 or
www.springfieldmuseums.org/flowers

Culture & Cocktails: Festival of Flowers

Where: Springfield Museums
21 Edwards St., Springfield, MA

When: 5PM-8PM

\$10/members, \$20/non

reservations are suggested

For more info: 413-314-6479 or
www.springfieldmuseums.org/flowers

April 7 (Saturday)

Women's Power Breakfast

Where: Wesley United Methodist
Church
741 State St., Springfield, MA

When: 9AM - FREE

For more info: wesleyumc741@gmail.com

Afternoon Tea

Where: Blake Court of Springfield
Museums
21 Edwards St., Springfield, MA

When: 2PM-3:30PM

\$23/members, \$36/non

For more info: 413-314-6479 or
www.springfieldmuseums.org/flowers

Family Day

Children will explore the world of flowers through hands-on activities

Where: Springfield Museums
21 Edwards St., Springfield, MA

When: 10AM-4PM - FREE with

museums admission

For more info: 413-314-6479 or
www.springfieldmuseums.org/flowers

First Time Homebuyers Workshop

Where: Springfield Neighborhood
Housing
111 Wilbraham Rd., Spfld., MA

When: 9AM-5:30PM

\$50/in-person workshop,
\$100/online class

Registration is required: 413-739-4737
ext. 100 - www.springfieldnhs.org

April 8 (Sunday)

Film Screening

Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to
Matisse

Where: Springfield Museums
21 Edwards St., Springfield, MA

When: 1PM

FREE with museum admission

For more info: 413-314-6479 or
www.springfieldmuseums.org/flowers

April 12 (Thursday)

Suit Up Springfield Suit Drive

Collecting new or gently used business at-
tire

Where: Thomas J. Sullivan Banquet Hall
112 Island Pond Rd., Spfld., MA

When: 4PM-6PM

For more info: 413-367-8487

Tech Foundry Open House

14-week technology training program

Where: Tech Foundry
1391 Main St., 9th fl, Spfld., MA

When: 2PM-4PM - FREE

For more info: 413-331-9355 or
lopezconsultingteam@gmail.com

April 12-15

1st Pastoral Anniversary of Pastor Jesse

Burgess & First Lady Stephanie Burgess

For more info: 413-221-3608; or go to
afampov.com

April 20 (Friday)

A Journey In Jazz Presents An Evening

With The Ladies: All Female Perform-
ance

Where: Elks Lodge #61
440 Tiffany Street, Spfld., MA

When: 7PM-11PM - \$25/ticket

For more info: 413-883-9631 or
tgaynor@springfieldcollege.edu

April 21 (Saturday)

Junior League of Greater Springfield: 4th

Annual Beer & Wine Tasting

Where: The Wherehouse
109 Lyman St., Holyoke, MA

When: 4PM-7PM - \$30/ticket

For more info: www.jlgs.org

April 22 (Sunday)

Earth Day Holistic Expo

Presented by CT Holistic Chamber of

Commerce



Where: Double Tree Hotel by Hilton
42 Century Blvd, Bristol, CT

When: 10AM - 4PM

For more info: 860-830-1180 or
yourholisticvents@gmail.com

Climate Day of Action

Where: Springfield Museums
21 Edwards St., Springfield, MA

When: 11AM-4PM

For more info: 413-314-6479

April 24 (Tuesday)

Women's Fund of Western MA Open House

Where: 1350 Main St., Suite 1006,
Springfield, MA

When: 4PM-6PM

Register by April 23rd

For more info: jholt@mywomensfund.org

April 25 (Wednesday)

Health & Wealth Seminar Series for Springfield residents

Hosted by Way Finders

Where: DeBerry Elementary School
670 Union St., Springfield, MA

When: 6:30PM-8:30PM

FREE, RSVP in advance

For more info: 413-222-9985

April 26 (Thursday)

2018 New England Knowledge Corridor Mayor's Economic Forum

Where: Goodwin College
211 Riverside Dr.,
East Hartford, CT

When: 7:30AM - 11AM

FREE, Registration ends April 21

For more info: 860-659-3587 or

www.crvchamber.org

April 27 (Friday)

Community Music School of Springfield Spring Gala 2018

Celebrating Motown: The sound that
shaped America

Where: Community Music School of
Springfield
127 State St, Springfield, MA

When: 6:30PM-9:30PM - \$75/person

For more info: www.communitymusic-school.com

"Sewa" Wofa African Dance and Drum

Company - Annual Show

Where: P.V.P.A Theatre

15 Mulligan Dr., South Hadley
When: 7PM-9:30PM - \$10, \$7, \$5

For more info: 413-530-4061 or
gwo413@aol.com

April 28 (Saturday)

Progressive Community Baptist Church Women's Conference: Power of a Praying Woman

Featuring Priscilla Shirer via Simulcast

Where: P.V.P.A Theatre

15 Mulligan Dr., South Hadley

When: 9:30AM-4:30PM

\$30/ person (includes lunch),

\$75/vendor tables

For more info: 413-886-2325 or

swanmeetings@gmail.com

"Sewa" Wofa African Dance and Drum Company - Annual Show

Where: P.V.P.A Theatre

15 Mulligan Dr., South Hadley

When: 7PM-9:30PM - \$10, \$7, \$5

For more info: 413-530-4061 or

gwo413@aol.com

April 28 (Saturday)

Keep Springfield Beautiful

Great American Clean Up

Where: 2705 Main St., Springfield, MA

When: 8AM-12PM

City-wide clean-ups taking place through-
out the city

For more info: 413-238-4141

Revitalize CDC: GreenNFit Neighborhood Rebuild

Where: 54 Manhattan St., Spfld., MA

When: 8AM-2PM

Register to volunteer or sponsor at:

www.revitalizecdc.org

Wednesdays

New England Fit & MMA Self-Defense Class

Where: 321 Albany St. (Gasoline Alley),
Springfield, MA

When: 6PM - \$80/8 weeks

For more info: 413-736-0038

Saturdays

Young Scholars Reading Program

Where: Boys & Girls Club Family Center
100 Acorn St., Springfield, MA

When: 9AM - FREE

Open to elementary & middle school

youth

LET'S HOPE OUR WHITE FRIENDS REGAIN THEIR SENSES SOON

continued from page 1

I mean, if White folks legally lynch us, co-opt us, cheat us or deny us economic and health security and justice under the law, we are not caught by surprise, just as we are not caught by surprise when White folks join us in genuine opposition to such behavior and honestly contribute to reversing the effects of it as do many White folks. However, Black folks are finding it more and more difficult to distinguish White friends from White foes.

These are such confusing times that I am even unsure how to write about what seems to be happening. Black folks generally want to be one with White folks when they deserve it. But how can we be one with White folks while watching the many ways they rationalize acquitting cops who we watch murdering our Black men on national television? How can we be one with them when they elect a Donald Trump as president and let him twist their minds over the difference between using the flag and national anthem as touchstones of legitimate protest and using them to divide our country and to so easily make White folks believe that our Black athletes, who kneel during the national anthem, are unpatriotic?

My brother was killed in Vietnam while White folks were burning the American flag at the Pentagon and all over the streets of America in protest of the war (I was at the Pentagon during the protests observing White violence). Our Black athletes are kneeling to the flag in deference to all it stands for and as a reminder to White folks of what it has always stood for and should still stand for – most of all, justice. They are not desecrating the flag in protest. They are honoring it and all that it stands for. And my family story is not unique among Black folks. So, it is disconcerting to hear White folks, who are supposed to be our friends, succumbing to Trump-like attacks on our patriotism even as many of them and/or their parents were among the ones who burned the flag and ran President Lyndon Johnson out of politics and laid the foundation for the election of Richard Nixon as his successor.

I don't mean to belabor the point but my youngest brother served and died in Vietnam shortly after my oldest brother returned from his Vietnam service and my second youngest brother served on the DMZ in Korea shortly after that. My namesake, Uncle Frederick, served in the Pacific campaign in WWII and my Uncle Alton served in North Africa in the same war. And like so many other Black folks who served the American country and flag, both uncles returned to a society that rejected them and often lynched their Black counter-



parts for “stepping out of line” in the name of the “confederacy” and the flag that they tried to use to replace our own American flag.

Our White “friends” seem to have forgotten that Jackie Robinson, while serving in the United States Army in honor of the same American flag, was court marshaled for refusing to move to the back of a Southern bus years before Rosa Parks was arrested and later commemorated for the same behavior. So it is very disconcerting to listen to White “friends” suggest that their “love” of the flag is somehow greater than our love simply because we honor it in a different way.

Many Black folks feel that we are being victimized by something else that is going on in White America. White folks are fighting for power among themselves. And they are trying to use folks of color as pawns in their battle, which they can succeed at only if we folks of color allow them to do so. But stopping it is not easy because all sides in this White struggle – liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican, alt right and far left – are fighting for their base and a shifting White middle and, unfortunately, a good portion of that White middle is bigoted as are most of those who identify with the alt right. White emotions are running high – which often times means running amok – making it easier for the Trump-like demagogues on all sides to influence White opinion through faux patriotic, racist catcalls, which is why patriotism and the flag and racial appeals are proving to be easy tools for the Trump-like to divert even good people's attention away from the real White battle for raw power.

Even the mayor of Springfield has jumped on the demagogic wagon and dragged a few well-meaning but misguided rich White folks with him. He's a good mayor but a confused one during a time when so many White folks need clarity from leaders. Everyone in the world who knows anything about Dr. Seuss knows that he had a racist period in his life that affected his writings and art. A strate-

gic decision was made by museum officials to ignore the racial element in the Seuss history and it turned out to be a bad decision that has worldwide ramifications. Scholars and average folks alike will always question the decision. The best thing for everyone would be for those who made the decision to rethink it and to preserve Geisel's more racially controversial works in an open section of the museum with words that reveal his racist period rather than trying to deny and hide them. To be imperfect is human.

The mayor's immature and Trump-like response to critics of the museum display may have appealed to a certain part of his base but it didn't serve Dr. Seuss or Springfield well nor did it serve a mayor, who strives to be the “people's mayor,” well. Likewise, the mayor's attack on Colin Kaepernick and the other Black athletes who kneel during the national anthem is equally as immature. Both carry a tint of racism but the fact is that our mayor is merely a product of confusing times for White folks in America who are suffering an identity crisis that politicians who want to stir the pot are capitalizing on.

By any stretch of the imagination, the “old days” were slow going for African Americans but we always knew where we stood and what the fight was about and prepared for it. There was no confusion. We had good White folks and bad White folks and we always had to be prepared to fight even the good ones, who felt compelled to compromise with the bad at our expense. But we could reason with the good ones and even some of the bad ones. We understood this and had the all important benefit of no confusion. President John Kennedy's equivocation during the Civil Rights Movement is a good example. He was not a great civil rights president but we were able to keep our concerns on his mind until he was tragically assassinated and Lyndon B. Johnson stepped in and chose to be a historical leader on the issue of civil rights.

But the situation today with Trump and the hard right, the radical left and the confused middle is out of control. We Black folks no longer have clarity. We don't know who White folks are anymore. Too many seem to have completely lost their identity which is why watching them united around patriotism and the flag is so scary and reminiscent of past historical trends that didn't bode well for Black folks and certainly didn't bode well for the European Jewish community during the Nazi era. When the good White folks and the bad White folks united around such amorphous concepts as patriot-

continues to page 39

LET'S HOPE OUR WHITE FRIENDS REGAIN THEIR SENSES SOON

continued from page 38

ism and the flag and claimed them as their own while ignoring the real issues of their times, we got lynched, literally and figuratively, and White folks justified it among themselves until the amorphous trends played themselves out.

One thing I know. Black folks shouldn't be the first ones to tell Springfield's mayor to not play into the racist tone of the times. White folks should be. Black folks should not be the first ones to speak out against the unfair characterization of Colin Kaepernick and other Black athletes and their supporters as unpatriotic for kneeling in protest of injustice. White folks should be, just as they should be unequivocal in speaking out against Trump-related bigotry. And as history has made clear, when White folks fail to act, Black folks must not fail to act. And we should not be the ones to have to remind White folks, friend and foe alike, of the same moral obligation that Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded his fellow White ministers of in his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail." He wrote:

"I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection." (emphasis added) (available in full at www.afampov.com)

In this day and age, the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. written as he sat in isolation in the Birmingham jail during one of his many battles against injustice, should not be necessary. Unfortunately, they seem to be more necessary now than ever before. It is not a racist president or that substantial part of his White base that is racist who are most confounding. It is our confused White "friends" who are most worrisome because confusion is so



easily misdirected by tyrants like Trump who understand that, in the midst of confusion, logic fails and appeals to emotions dominate and symbols like the flag can be useful in manipulating the behavior of confused White people, especially when they consider themselves to be righteous as so many White folks do, and who also consider themselves to be the arbiters of what is righteous.

So we Black folks and our many allies of color, and more enlightened White folks, are going through perilous times waiting for our confused White allies to recover from their confusion. And we know that during their recovery period, which we know can last for days or decades, we will bear the brunt of the consequences unless we prepare to defend ourselves, which we will do because historical circumstances have given us a new level of sophistication. You can't hang us all!

Watching White folks unite around their own misappropriation of flag and country is disconcerting but historically familiar. We know where it could carry them and we know we are in for a tough fight. But we also know it's a winnable fight and a mere continuation of the long fight from slavery to freedom that has been unabated since the first African slave was forced to build

America without pay. Yet, from the very beginning, we have served our country and honored our flag with our blood. So, to see White folks willingly misappropriate the American flag as their own in this day and age, when we are presumed to be an enlightened people, is disheartening.

I don't mind speaking up about it even though I understand there will be consequences. But my courage pales in comparison to that of Colin Kaepernick and those other Black athletes who continue to kneel in the view of huge crowds of mostly White folks who don't want to hear the message these brave Black athletes are kneeling for and who conveniently convert the message into an anti-flag and country scam that in their confused minds justifies their tolerance of injustice in total contradiction to what our flag stands for.

I have no words that can heal White confusion. History says it will eventually work itself out but not without some cajoling and substantial discomfort for all of us. But history also tells us that the period from the onset of the confusion to the working out can be catastrophic, which is why I hope our White "friends" regain their senses soon. ■



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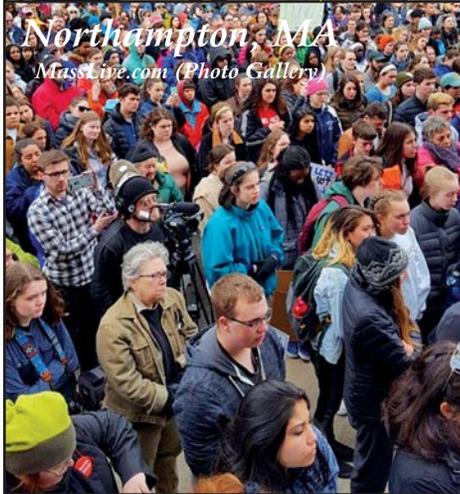
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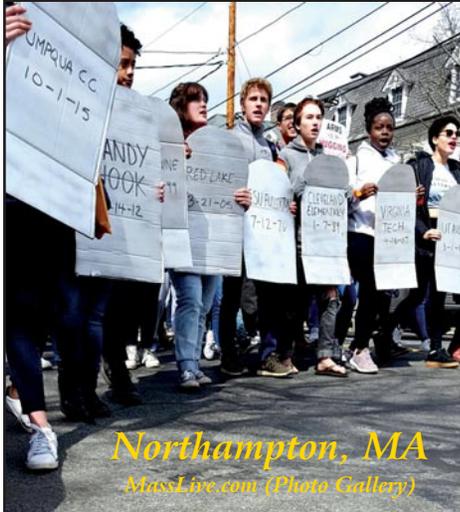
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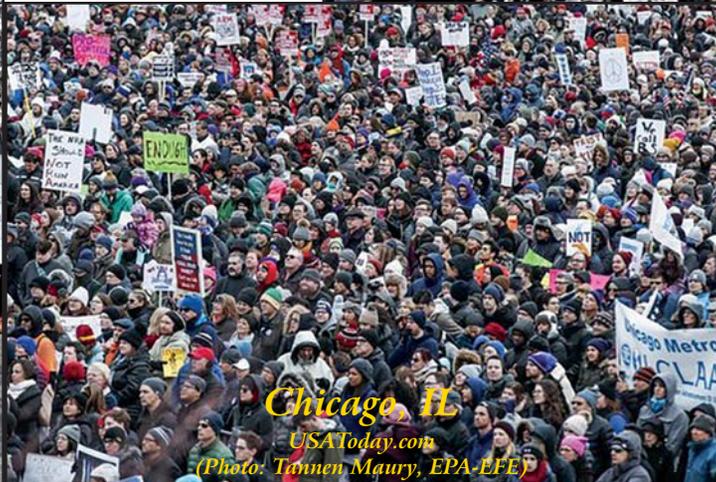
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