

THE GIFT OF YOU...

"I'm not sure what the final turning point for me was, but since starting therapy I have been sharing my feelings more. Using my voice more. And advocating for myself more. All of this strengthens me to serve my family and my students better."

By Gianna Allentuck – 7

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

"In the 1970's James Baldwin said, 'To be black and conscious in America is to be in a constant state of rage.' Today this is true for people of color and even some white allies who feel this way."

By Zaida Govan – 14

...POISED TO LEAD THE CITY COUNCIL...

"City Council President Justin Hurst and Councilor Adam Gomez announce that they have secured enough votes from their colleagues on the 13-member council to serve as the next President and Vice President, respectively, of the Springfield City Council in 2020."

By Justin Hurst and Adam Gomez – 15

GRATITUDE OVERLOAD – 16

"Don't get me wrong, gratitude is a very important practice as leaders and humans. I just object to the cheapening of gratitude and Hallmarkification of its essence."

By Lora Wondolowski – 16

DON'T MISS A VISIT TO ABU DHABI AND DUBAI

"I was entertaining notions about the two that were so completely off base from reality that my wife, who finally convinced me to go with the Emurriel Holloway family and friends group, will never let me forget what I almost missed but for her."

By Frederick A. Hurst – 24

2019 HOLIDAY DO BETTER CHECK-LIST

"An anonymous person astutely stated, 'Excuses will always be there for you, opportunity won't.' Let us stop making excuses about our refusal to change and embrace this chance that we have been given to do and be better."

By Beverly Guerrero-Porter – 26

HER OWN TWO FEET...

"She remembered being left at the hospital, and how much it hurt. Still, as Papa said, 'Chance comes once' and so Rebekah went with a translator on her first airplane trip from one continent to another."

By Terri Schlichenmeyer – 29

A STRANGER

"Man tends to judge the outside of a person, as that is what they see. But God looks at what is on the inside of me."

By Berdia M. Brown – 31

Happy Holidays

THE ROAD TO WARD 6

By Koralise Williams

Victor Davila woke up at five o'clock in the morning, beginning his day by talking to God before heading out to make sure his team was in their rightful places for the day. The day he had worked so hard for was finally here, Election Day.

On November 5th, at Café Crystals surrounded by his wife Sonia Davila, along with family and friends, eyes glued to the TV, he waited anxiously for the results to see if his hard work and dedication had finally paid off.

This is not the first election that Davila had run in. He ran for the Springfield School Committee from 2003 to 2005.

"I didn't know what the heck I was doing. I had no clue. I had to ask where the election office was," Davila said of his first run. However, even though he was new to politics, Davila was able to garner 3,500 votes that first run.

Running again in 2009, this



Victor Davila, Ward 6 City Councilor-Elect

time for city council for Ward 6, he stated, "I got too confident." After losing that election he took some time off and then decided to run for city council at large in 2017 where he came in 8th out of the 13 people running.

Davila stated he took some time off and had to reassess his life. He asked himself where could he help the most? Where could he provide the most efficient help that would fit his lifestyle? All roads pointed him back to Ward 6.

This was to be no easy task as Davila was up against Kenneth Shea, a popular Ward 6 councilor who had held the position for four consecutive terms. Shockingly, Shea announced he was retiring from the council this term but Davila's new opponent, Timothy Ryan, was equally well known in the community and was currently serving as an at-large city councilor. When Ryan decided to run as a Ward 6 councilor, Davila knew he was going to be tough competition. However, Davila did not fear.

"God didn't make me a coward," he stated.

Very much a people person, and wanting to get to know the residents of his ward, Davila took to the age-

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IS MALO BROWN OUR FUTURE?

By Frederick A. Hurst

So Malo Brown won the final election in Ward 4 by a narrow margin. I call it the margin of his misbehavior because most of the cheating he did in the primary he chose to repeat in the final election. Malo's complete disregard for election laws and rules was stunning, just as stunning as the failure of city officials to stop him.

It would come as no surprise if his election victory was contested by either Jynai McDonald, who he robbed

of victory, or by Ward 4 voters, who otherwise will be forced to live with an illegitimate representative whose questionable character was on full display during two elections.

But to whom do they appeal? The Springfield Election Commission couldn't stop his misbehavior in spite of the efforts of the Election Commissioner.

When I went to visit the Rebecca Johnson polling

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COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

“Get On Board” Free Event

By Ellen Freyman, Esq.



“Get OnBoard!” event matches volunteers with non-profit boards

Are you looking to get involved with an area non-profit as a volunteer, committee member or board member? Are you a non-profit looking for new people passionate about your mission and ready to put their talents to work? **Then please join us at the Basketball Hall of Fame on Tuesday, December 3rd from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** where you both can meet each other. To date, more than 30 organizations, including Square One, STCC Foundation, Dakin Humane Society, Puerto Rican Parade Committee, Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School for Excellence and many others will be there seeking dynamic, community-based leadership utilizing a speed dating format. Over the years, On Board, Inc. and Leadership Pioneer Valley, which presents this biennial On Board event, has helped facilitate many matches.

Springfield City Councilor, Tracye Whitfield, who attended an On Board event stated, *“I graduated from Leadership Pioneer Valley in 2013 where we learned a lot about boards and networking. I knew I wanted to join boards but I had no idea which*

ones, and I didn’t know where to start. Fellow LPV alumna Lakisha Coppedge shared information with me about the OnBoard event. This was the perfect opportunity for me to interview boards and possibly join one or two. The event at the Basketball Hall of Fame was an amazing experience! I interviewed boards, got to meet amazing people, and I found the one board I really wanted to join. That was the SABIS board because my children attended. Little did I know the board was looking for trustees with my accounting and finance background. Through Leadership Pioneer Valley sparking my interest of board participation and OnBoard making the connection, I found the board that was a perfect fit for me and the school. The one thing I regret is attending alone. I wish I would have brought some people with me.”

Registration is free for individuals and \$100 for organizations. To participate in this year’s On Board event go to diversityonboard.net or visit us on Facebook. ■



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Happy Holidays

**POV thanks all of our readers,
advertisers and writers for a successful 2019 and
wishes all of you and your families a joyous
holiday season.**

AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

EDITORS

Editors are not perfect and, certainly, nor are the writers who require their editing. I, for one, depend upon our editor to catch my every mistake; often just so I will have someone to blame for any that get to press. To quote myself on page four of our November issue, I wrote: “I was awed by the contrast between the police officer assigned to the “Frederick Douglas School” (emphasis added) voting poll location in Ward 7 and the police officer assigned to Rebecca Johnson School in Ward 4 where, it is arguable, the most contentious election contest was taking place.” Some readers might have missed it, but others know that there is no school named “Frederick Douglas” in Ward 7 or in any ward in all of Springfield that I know of. Of course I meant to write “Frederick Harris School.” It will not be the first time that I have referred to it as “Frederick Douglas.” The frequency of it makes me think there is probably some subliminal compulsion buried deep within my consciousness that wants me to rename the school containing my formal first name after one of my favorite Black heroes just as I am compelled to want to blame my editor for an error of my own making.

CONGRATULATIONS JYNAI MCDONALD

The victory for Springfield’s Ward 4 City Council seat goes to Jynai McDonald who lost the numerical vote but won the moral vote. While running a fair campaign, she went from 265 votes in the primary to 711 votes in the final election while Malo Brown, who won the numerical vote, went from 509 votes in the primary to 842 votes in the final election after cheating and breaking the law before and throughout both elections, which is why he is now considered by many an illegitimate City Councilor-elect.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JUSTIN HURST

Justin Hurst topped the City Council ticket in both the primary and final elections. He and the City of Springfield deserve it.

SPECTACULAR MISCALCULATION

At-large City Councilor Timothy Ryan decided against running at-large in the recent Springfield elections in favor of running for the Ward 6 seat where he was born and raised. It must have seemed logical to him at the time but it turned out to be a spectacular miscalculation as he was defeated in the final Ward 6 election by Victor Davila who won by 39 votes.

MEDICARE FOR THOSE WHO WANT IT

I suppose if you need it, “Medicare for All,” as called for by Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders and other Democratic candidates, sounds good. But it’s a loser’s issue to people like me who happen to be satisfied with their current health care plans and will never vote for any candidate who promises to take it away, which means, of course, that Liz and Bernie will not get my vote and that of many others who feel as I do no matter how smoothly they propose to phase it in.

MAYOR PETE

Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s poor polling among Black voters (zero to one percent) has many causes beginning with his perceived treatment of the Black citizens of South Bend, Indiana followed by his low name recognition and perceived lack of experience and the popularity among Black folks of his competitors, especially Joe Biden. But what nobody wants to talk about in public is Black folks’ irrational concerns about the well-publicized fact that Mayor Pete is gay and married to a man. As Black United States Congressman Jim Clayburn said in a televised interview, older Black voters, especially, tend to be conservative and will probably not vote for an openly gay man although many of them have gay friends and family members who they embrace. It’s a strange part of Black culture that young Black folks have all but overcome. Mayor Pete’s task is similar to one Barack Obama had with his blackness. He must persuade people – especially Black people who make up the pivotal Democratic vote – to embrace sexual diversity without him making a big deal out of it. It will not be an easy task.

BUT MAYOR PETE EMBRACES THE TASK

“(Pete) Buttigieg...undertook a delicate task before the African Methodist Episcopal worshippers. As a gay, married man addressing a denomination that does not allow same-sex marriage rites, he tried to seek common ground over being members of minority groups whose civil rights have come under attack. It was a nod to his sexuality, following the disclosure last week that the Buttigieg campaign held focus groups that found some black voters in South Carolina (where he was attracting overwhelmingly White audiences) were uncomfortable with a gay man.” (*The Boston Globe*, October 28, 2019)

IMPEACH THE M.F.

I opposed impeachment of Donald Trump until I didn’t. He is probably the most despicable man

who has ever occupied the White House. And even worse, he is embraced by at least 50% of White America that supports him no matter how disgustingly he behaves. I opposed impeachment by the House because I believed Trump couldn’t be convicted by a Republican-dominated Senate and I feared that impeachment might encourage his solid White majority to somehow vote him back into office in spite of a majority of voters who will surely oppose him. As impeachment proceedings unwind, I have changed my mind because, without impeachment, the historical record would be distorted and the ugly truths that are being revealed about this awful man and his administration would be lost as would be the disgraceful implosion of the Republican Party, whose demise, these proceedings confirm, is no longer in question.

MY MALO BROWN MESSAGE

“There’s nothing weak about kindness and compassion. There’s nothing weak about looking out for others. There’s nothing weak about being honorable. You’re not a sucker to have integrity and to treat others with respect.” (President Barack Obama speaking at the funeral of United States Congressman Elijah Cummings.) My message is that Springfield City Councilman-elect, Malo Brown, has much to learn from the life of the late Elijah Cummings.

NUBIA

White people of European descent, especially those who migrated to the Americas, often try to justify or soften their role in slavery and the historical degradation of an entire people by spreading the false notion that they invented civilized society and the rest of the world followed. And they have always promoted the notion that Africa lagged behind the entire world with the exception of Egypt, which they “whitened” to make themselves feel more comfortable. But now, they have suddenly discovered Nubia, which is ancient Sudan and which matched Egypt and much of barbarian Europe in its grandeur and possessed a written language that Europeans still cannot decipher. The Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) recently issued an apology for its role in diminishing the accomplishments of East African Nubian civilization and buttressed it with a showing titled “Ancient Nubia Now.” I read about the much overdue revelations first in *The Boston Globe* (October 27, 2019) and later in *The Wall Street Journal* (November 20, 2019) and just got angry at the thought of the historical celebration of European explorers like Vasco De Gama, who sailed around the African Cape of Good Hope and opened up East Africa to the ravages of European greed and the “fake” European history that we have since lived with. *The Boston Globe*’s Murray White

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FEATURE ARTICLE

THE ROAD TO WARD 6

continued from page 1

old political tactic of door knocking. Inspired by his good friend, the late Dave Vigneault, who had a rich history in politics, Davila had learned that the old fashioned approach of going house-to-house, knocking on doors and getting to know the people is what wins elections.

So, that is what he did. He knocked on doors and personally found out what the community members thought were the issues in their ward. Working behind the scenes, not being boastful about his every move, Davila's reputation quietly spread throughout his community, making this underdog a winner in the 2019 election.

Davila's life wasn't always easy. Originally from Bayamon, Puerto Rico, Davila, his parents, and two siblings came to the United States to live when he was 15, leaving their home behind because of financial reasons. Not knowing the English language, Davila, with the help of many teachers, learned the language of his new country.

Humble man that he is, Davila does not like to speak about his past and the struggle that his family had to face when first coming to this country. "There is always somebody who has it worse." This is part of the reason Davila worked so hard to be able to be the voice for his community. He can understand the different economic statuses in his ward, having experienced them himself.

"I am the average person. I have been the person to have the electricity cut off, to have no food in the fridge. Society will judge but I put myself in other people's shoes," Davila stated.

He notices that there is a major disconnect between city hall and the average citizen and he wants to be the bridge to connect the two. This was one of his plans if he won the position of city councilor of Ward 6. He also plans to handle the litter problem in the Forest Park community and edu-



Ward 6 City Councilor-Elect Victor Davila celebrates his victory in Springfield's election with his campaign committee, family and friends at Café Christo



Bernard McClusky and supporter join Victor at his election celebration

cate the residents on how local government works. He would also like brighter lights in certain areas of Forest Park that are extremely dark. There are more problems that he will handle as they come up but those are just a few he knows he would like to begin with.

One thing for sure: Davila is willing to work for his ward to make



Victor is congratulated by Ward 5 City Councilor Marcus Williams who was also celebrating his re-election

sure that he is doing the job he was elected for.

Feeling like he was crawling out of his skin, Davila waited to hear the results of the final precinct. He patiently waited to see if his hard work and determination was going to pay off.

When the news of his victory flashed across the TV screen, while



Victor with writer, Koralise Williams, POV Intern and Westfield State University student

surrounded by family and friends at Café Crystal, Victor Davila turned to his father, gathering him in an embrace and began to cry. He then turned to his wife of 17 years, to whom he credits so much of his success, and hugged her long and hard.

He summed up his feelings: "This is a culmination of all the hard work we've done through the years. I am pleased of the opportunity that the Lord and the people gave me."

An ecstatic, humbled Victor Davila is still enjoying his victory and has the taste of honey on his lips. The emotional rollercoaster that he had been on has finally come to an end: Destination Victory.

"I am here for you. I will stay in touch. I am in your corner and will be accessible to you. I can make Forest Park a better place," Davila said speaking to the residents of Ward 6 on election night.

He is available and can be contacted by phone at 413-285-3007 or you can email him at springfield-vote4victor@gmail.com.

The swearing in will take place on January 6, 2020. At the time we went to press, there was no information on the time or location of the event. We were told you could contact the City Council Office at 413-787-6170 around mid-December for more information.

EDUCATION

EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

Holiday Hoopla

By Nicole Blais



Nicole Blais is Director of Community Engagement HCS Head Start, Inc.
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It's the most wonderful time of the year; but for many people it can be the most stressful time of year. Toddler tantrums, last minute shopping, and furiously cleaning the house for company can be hectic for adults and children. For a stress-less holiday, how can we help young children transition in and out of the holiday season?

Routines. It can be tempting to stray from routines like bedtime, naps, eating schedules but this can throw children for a loop. Schedules are important as they provide a sense of security and predictability and if a mealtime or naptime is missed, it could cause a meltdown at an inopportune time.

Communication. Talking with your child about what will happen throughout the day or weeks ahead will help set expectations. You may be going to a friend's for a holiday get together, or prepping food for a potluck. Tell your child what your plans are and pack a bag of books, a favorite toy and snacks you know your child likes to eat. Preplanning is a necessity during this time of year so we can enjoy the time we have with our friends and families and make lifelong memories for our children.

Self-Care. Taking care of yourself, physically and mentally, should probably be at the top of this list. If you are burning the candles at both ends, it will be difficult for you to take care of others. Plenty of rest and incorporating stress reduction strategies can be helpful when managing the demands



this time of year brings into our lives. For families here at Head Start we are constantly offering stress management workshops and distributing other resources, such as toy distribution centers, launching our All I Want for Christmas Campaign, lists of local food pantries, information about dealing with the holiday blues, and other related topics to support our parent community. For staff, wellness programs are developing here to help staff care for themselves in and out of the classroom, such as yoga offered during the workday.

And finally, **less is more**, especially when it comes to gifts and the number of commitments we make during the holidays. Like adults, children can get overstimulated by having too many choices and if there are too many toys or too many events to attend, it can turn a fun time into a tiresome one. My grandmother used to say, "Give children 4 presents: something they want, something they need, something to wear and something to read."

Each year we seem to make it through and gather up the energy to do it all over again. Remember, children do not need presents but they do need your presence to help guide them through this bumpy but festive ride called the holidays. From all of us at HCS Head Start, have a wonderful, happy and healthy holiday! ■



this time of year brings into our lives. For families here at Head Start we are constantly offering stress management

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

Painting the Picture of Our Future

By Daniel J. Warwick, Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools



Daniel J. Warwick, Superintendent at the Springfield Public Schools

As we usher in 2020, we will enter the last year of our 2017-2020 Springfield Public Schools Strategic Plan 2.0. I am proud of the progress we experienced using that strategic plan as our road map. I have referred to the plan as The Springfield Promise. And under that promise, we have worked tirelessly to:

- Develop global citizens that are productive 21st Century leaders;
- Graduate students ready for college and career, able to compete in today's changing world;
- Attract knowledgeable, highly effective, diverse educators and staff who want to work in a high performing district; and
- Engage parents and community members as essential partners in sustaining a Culture of Equity and Proficiency.

We have experienced many gains under The Springfield Promise. For example, we have narrowed achievement gaps between Spring-

field and the state for all of our students; our graduation rate has climbed from 55 percent to almost 78 percent and our dropout rate has been cut in half; we have successfully integrated a comprehensive 1:1 technology plan for our students; we have spent over \$600 million in building improvements and new buildings; we have created a Culinary and Nutrition Center, we have expanded free preschool availabilities and infused music and art into every school, and so much more. But there are gains that we continue to chase.

That is why I am so excited about formulating our next Strategic Plan, an initiative that we are calling "Portrait of a Graduate." Input from the community is a critical component as we ponder questions about the hopes and dreams that we have for our young people to achieve success during and after K-12.

This fall and winter, we are conducting dozens of community meetings seeking input from all who hold a stake in the future of Springfield's youth. Come springtime, we plan to host three more large community convenings. Please visit our online platforms on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter to stay informed of meeting dates and locations. Or call 413-787-7100 for more information. We want to hear from you.

The creation of a Strategic Plan is always exciting and promising work. The Portrait of a Graduate that we accept as our final document will serve as the guide for moving forward with our students, staff and community. It is important work that we should all have a say in. I look forward to working with the Springfield Community as we paint the picture of success for our precious youth.

("as appeared in The Springfield Educator Winter 2019 edition")

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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.

I don't have many vices, but I do love watching my favorite shows on Hulu. Especially law, police, fire, and medical dramas. I'm also hooked on *Say Yes to the Dress*: New York and Atlanta. Though I mostly play catch-up with recorded episodes, I do often view Hulu live. With live TV comes frequent advertisements. Normally I would be annoyed with the interruptions, but recently the majority of ads have been Olympic Swimming Superstar Michael Phelps sharing his thoughts on the power of therapy. On the power of communicating. On talking. Just talking.

In these ads, Michael is a literally larger-than-life, handsome presence stunning in his fitted suit accessorized by his Olympic medal confidence. He is charming. And real. So real.

And I am drawn in...

He is speaking to the world, but I feel like he is speaking directly to me. About therapy. About me. Of course he couldn't know this, but I finally started seeing a therapist two months ago. I write *finally* because for me therapy has been almost seven years in the making – since my father's passing in July 2013. The pain of which was profoundly compounded by my brother's and precious Patti's passing in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

Following these devastating losses, I stopped speaking to people. Stopped connecting. I talked to myself. If you know me personally, you know this sounds strange. But I am not talking about everyday conversations or listening to other's share her or his own thoughts and feelings. I am not talking about literally muting myself. But I am talking about not

talking. Not sharing my feelings. How I struggle with grief and sadness. With loneliness. Even though I am surrounded by loving compassionate engaging family and friends. I am beyond blessed by support. By people who will listen. But I didn't know how to open up. For others, my heart is warm and open. For myself, it is closed. Cold. Cut off.

I know now from therapy that this is my personal response to trauma. I also know that this is not healthy. At all. Truly living means connecting. And truly connecting means sharing. Both ways. So people know I am human.

And that's why Michael's ads speak to me – especially with his words *That's when I chose to become human and not just a machine*. I don't want to live life just to survive. Just to do everything I am supposed to do. I want to live life to live. To feel. To connect. For some, this way of living is natural. For others, it is developed. And for others – like me – it takes practice. Even though I am a Counselor who helps people use their voice, I need to remind myself of the value in my own voice. In sharing my own story in order to be the healthiest me.

Weirdly, as I was letting my eyes and brain rest from writing this piece, I was surfing Facebook and saw a post that read: *Our brains are wired for connection, but trauma rewires them for protection. That's why healthy relationships are difficult for wounded people*. This quote was attributed to a man named Ryan North. I have no idea who he is, but that doesn't matter. His sentiment makes total sense to me.

In enduring the trauma of significant losses, I shut down and couldn't imagine how talking to people or seeing a therapist might help. Again, I am a Counselor. So my reluctance to seek

help is even more troubling. I think I was also falling victim to the stigma of therapy. *Am I weak? Why can't I figure this out? Handle this on my own? What's wrong with me?* And so on...

I'm not sure what the final turning point for me was, but since starting therapy I have been sharing my feelings more. Being real more. Using my voice more. And advocating for myself more. All of this strengthens me to serve my family and my students better. My school. My colleagues and my community. Because of therapy, I am stronger. And I am able to offer value to others.

So in the spirit of giving, if you feel you need emotional support, please consider therapy. Open up yourself and open yourself up to one

of the greatest gifts of all – self-care. With this comes the blessings of peace in your head, heart, and soul... And to the rest of us – the gift of you...

Author's note: In March 2014, *POV* published my article titled *Swim or Sink* regarding my daughter Cecelia's emotional crises and my need to be educated and informed in order to best help her and in order for us to keep swimming toward health. For me to now be inspired and encouraged by the greatest swimmer of all time in my own therapeutic journey is an irony and a sign that sharing my story here might inspire someone else to seek help too...



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EDUCATION

LOCAL COLLEGES IN THE NEWS

Westfield State University and Springfield Technical Community College Announce Urban Studies 2+2+1 Partnership

Streamlined pathway to a master's program aims to meet workforce needs



(L-R) Westfield State University Interim Dean, College of Graduate and Continuing Education Stefanie Sanchez, Ph.D.; WSU Interim Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Emily Todd, Ph.D.; WSU President Ramon Torrecilha, Ph.D.; STCC President Dr. John B. Cook; STCC Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Geraldine de Berly and STCC Dean, School of Liberal and Professional Studies Richard Greco participated in the signing of 2+2+1 articulation agreement in urban studies between the two institutions on November 19 in a ceremony at Westfield State University

WESTFIELD, MA – A newly signed agreement creates an affordable pathway for students who earn an associate degree in urban studies from Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) to pursue both a bachelor's and a master's degree at Westfield State University.

In a ceremony on November 19, Westfield State President Ramon Torrecilha, Ph.D., and STCC President John B. Cook, Ph.D., signed an articulation agreement to formally connect the programs. Students will receive credit from Westfield State for program-related courses completed at STCC. They may apply those credits toward the requirements for a bachelor's degree in sociology and regional planning, followed by a master's degree in public administration.

"Westfield State's collaboration with STCC to develop this agreement underscores our commitment to our mission to provide accessible and affordable degree options, and will help to develop a strong workforce in Western Massachusetts," said Dr. Torrecilha, who explained that the new 2+2+1 will develop graduates equipped with the creative problem solving skills needed for the dynamic urban environments.

"With appreciation to our talented faculty, it is exciting to now have an urban studies pathway with Westfield State University, which has a well-established program," Dr. Cook said. "This collaboration will enable Western Massachusetts students to develop skills that will transform their communities."

As part of the agreement, stu-


dents who earn an associate degree in STCC's two-year urban studies program can transfer to Westfield State. There, they can pursue a bachelor of science degree in regional planning (with urban focus) with a double major in sociology, which typically takes two years. In their fifth year, graduates can earn a Master of Public Administration degree from Westfield State, for a 2+2+1 track.


Richard Greco, dean for the School of Liberal and Professional Studies at STCC, said the urban studies curriculum prepares students for careers in areas such as civic engagement, municipal planning, public policy, community organization and nonprofit management.

"The idea for urban studies grew out of the need to solve challenges within the city of Springfield such as socio-economic hardships and public health disparities," Greco said. "Most of our students come from Springfield and stay here after graduation. This is an opportunity for them to help create positive changes in their community."

Students will learn that the challenges facing urban cities like Springfield are not unique. "Cities like Springfield, Worcester and a number of other gateway cities that were once thriving hubs are starting to see a resurgence. This program has the ability to aid and help these cities

continues to page 19





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EDUCATION

LOCAL COLLEGES IN THE NEWS



Asphalt Academy at STCC Paves the Way to Construction Careers

SPRINGFIELD, MA – Springfield Technical Community College plans to open a mobile lab on campus to meet a demand in the construction industry for trained asphalt technicians and inspectors.

Students will train in the mobile lab as they pursue certification as hot mix asphalt plant technicians and hot mix asphalt paving inspectors. The jet-black lab, which resembles a box-car without wheels, is located next to a civil engineering technology classroom on the STCC campus.

The college plans to offer courses in 2020. The program is designed for students without prior asphalt training.

STCC will be the only community college in the state with asphalt certification training, said Jim Reger, executive director of Massachusetts Aggregate and Asphalt Paving Association (MAAPA), which provided funding for the mobile lab.

The training is made possible through collaborative efforts with Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), MAAPA and the NorthEast Transportation Technician Certification Program (NETTCP).

“There is a tremendous need for asphalt technicians,” Reger said. MAAPA represents owners and operators of hot mix batching plants and quarries in Massachusetts.

Reger explained that new specifications from MassDOT will require more licensed technicians and inspectors who will be in demand for jobs working in the field or at asphalt production facilities.

Janet Callahan, president of Palmer Paving Inc., initiated the idea of an Asphalt Academy while serving as Chairwoman of MAAPA. She echoes Reger’s sentiments that the in-



Asphalt lab group: From left, Gloryvee Diaz, internship coordinator at STCC, Elliot Levy, senior director of Workforce Development, and Barbara Washburn, interim dean of the School of STEM, stand in front of the asphalt lab with industry partners

dusty needs trained technicians and inspectors. Asphalt training only has been available in the eastern part of Massachusetts.

“We really wanted to establish something for people in the western or central part of the state,” she said. “This is critical for our industry.”

Callahan added, “There are not enough inspectors in the market right now. As a business owner, I know how difficult it is to fill these positions.”

Students who enroll in the program will be able to choose between two courses, which will be taught by NETTCP instructors:

- **Hot mix asphalt plant technician certification**, which is for individuals responsible for the sampling and testing of hot mix asphalt at a production facility.
- **Hot mix asphalt paving inspector**, which is for individuals responsible for inspecting, sampling and testing of hot mix in the field.

Also in development is a 420-hour asphalt pre-apprenticeship program designed to introduce people to the asphalt industry. The program would align with MAAPA’s 2000-hour asphalt apprenticeship program and would offer advanced certification.

For more information about the program, including prerequisites needed to enroll, visit <https://www.stcc.edu/wdc/asphalt-academy/> or contact the Workforce Development Center at (413) 755-4225 or wdc@stcc.edu. ■

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EDUCATION

LOCAL COLLEGES IN THE NEWS

HCC Welcomes Rachel Rubinstein as First VP of Academic and Student Affairs

HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Rachel Rubinstein

HOLYOKE, MA – Holyoke Community College is pleased to welcome Rachel Rubinstein of Florence as its first vice president of Academic and Student Affairs.

Prior to her arrival Oct. 1, Rubinstein spent 16 years at Hampshire College in Amherst, where she was a professor of American Literature and Jewish Studies and from 2010 to 2018 served as dean of Academic Support and Advising.

At HCC, Rubinstein will oversee the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in what is a newly unified role at the college.

“As dean of Academic Support and Advising at Hampshire, I was working with the entire school, across the curriculum, on student success and support,” said Rubinstein. “I worked with struggling students, and I worked with transfer students from community colleges, so the idea of a struggling student who is having ac-

ademic issues not necessarily because they are underprepared, but because of the challenges in their lives impinging on their ability to learn is familiar to me.”

The combined position is one of the features that attracted her to HCC.

“I think most of the community colleges in Massachusetts have this model, and I think the alignment is so necessary,” Rubinstein said. “What faculty are asked to do these days is very taxing because it’s not just about teaching anymore. It’s about advising. It’s about mentoring. It’s about student support. The issues that students are dealing with are tremendous and faculty need help. These issues can’t be solved by just Academic Affairs. They also can’t be solved by Student Affairs. It has to be a coordinated effort.”

Rubinstein holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Yale University and a Ph.D. from the Department of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University.

A child of Mexican-born, Jewish immigrants, Rubinstein grew up in a Spanish-speaking household and also studied Yiddish. Her academic studies, professional scholarship and teaching have largely focused on immigration, migration, and multilingualism.

“The other thing that attracted me to HCC was Holyoke,” she said. “The prospect of being at an HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) was really appealing to me. Holyoke has a really deep history as a city of immigrants, and literature of immigration is what I do.”

Rubinstein was the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship and a Whiting Foundation Travel Fellowship. She has taught at Smith College and Mount Holyoke College and also taught adult learners and high school

students through community organizations including the Jones Library and the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst.

Her scholarly work includes two co-edited volumes, *Arguing the Modern Jewish Canon: Essays on Literature and Culture in Honor of Ruth R. Wisse* (Harvard University Press, 2008), and the forthcoming *Teaching Jewish-American Literature* (MLA Publications Committee, 2019). She is the author of *Members of the Tribe: Native America in the Jewish Imagination* (Wayne State University Press, 2010), which earned a Jordan Schnitzer Book Award Honorable Mention.

She lives in Florence with her husband, Justin Cammy, an associate

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professor of Jewish Studies and World Literature at Smith College. They have three children: Aviya, Amitai and Shalev. ■

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HEALTH

HEALTH MATTERS

Epilepsy 101

By Wendy Geddis, Field Service Specialist,
Epilepsy Foundation New England



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

Epilepsy is a common medical condition which affects the brain and nervous system. It causes recurring seizures. A person gets diagnosed with Epilepsy after



Wendy with her two sons

two or more seizures that were not caused by another known medical condition. A seizure is caused by a disturbance in the electrical activity of the brain. Seizures are common. One person in 10 will experience a seizure in their lifetime and 1 in 26 people in the United States will develop Epilepsy in their lifetime. I am 1 in 26!

No one is exactly sure what causes Epilepsy. There are some seizures that are caused by tumors or head trauma. Those are known cases. A seizure happens when the electrical system of the brain just isn't working right and leads to way too much electrical activity. This can cause a person to have a change in their sensations, behavior or awareness. Triggers are

also another reason a seizure can occur, such as flashing lights, loud music, stress, fever, lack of sleep and hormones. Some people who have epilepsy don't have triggers

at all. My triggers are sickness, lack of sleep and stress—kind of hard to avoid that last one sometimes!

Once you have been diagnosed with Epilepsy, it is very important to keep all appointments with your neurologist (the doctor who specializes in seizures). They will be reviewing all of your medical history and preforming tests on your body and your brain. You might want to bring a trusted family member or friend with you to help you remember what was discussed during the visit and remind you of upcoming visits and tests. You will also want to inform your primary care doctor of your new diagnosis so they can also monitor you.

Once you have decided on a treatment plan with your doctors, you are able to lead a productive life. I will share my life story as an example. I am now three years seizure free. However, I went through a period of trying new medications in order to get to the levels and right combination to get there but I was always in constant contact with my doctors, letting them know how I was feeling and how I was doing. CONTACT is the key! And now I am working for the Epilepsy Foundation New England and I have two sons.

Epilepsy Foundation New England offers all kinds of support. I am available at wgeddis@epilepsynewengland.org and I am Springfield based. We have a website at www.epilepsynewengland.org. ■



Wendy Geddis

YOUR HEALTH

American Heart Association's Health For Good™ Movement Offers Simple Tips For Self-Care This Season



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November 8, 2019 – Nourishing yourself is smart for your heart and an effective way to take control of your health during the holidays. During Eat Smart Month this past November, the American Heart Association, the leading voluntary health organization devoted to a world of longer, healthier lives, offered its latest science-backed tips to help you be Healthy For Good.

"The holidays can present nutrition challenges and additional stressors, but simple changes and investments in your own health can make an impact on your well-being and help you enjoy the season even more," said Karen Mayo, American Heart Association volunteer expert and award selling best author and a board certified integrative nutrition health and lifestyle coach. "Start small by making one more healthy choice today and build on it tomorrow."

A recent survey conducted by Aramark and the American Heart Association showed more than three out of four employed U.S. adults say they're more likely to make healthier decisions at other times of the day if they eat healthy at lunch.

"One healthy decision, like choosing baked over fried food for lunch, may not seem like much on its own, but success leads to more success and over time those little things add up to more health," Ms. Mayo said. "Focus on small, consistent steps."

The American Heart Association's Healthy For Good Eat Smart Initiative offers five tips for nourishing yourself this holiday season:

- **Get creative with swaps:** cooking at home is a great way to take control of your diet and tweak favorite seasonal dishes. Reduce sodium by replacing salt with herbs and spices, adding more fruits and vegetables to dishes and using lower-sodium canned and frozen products. Combine lower-sodium foods with regular versions to help your taste adapt.
- **Snack smart:** we all snack, and snacking isn't bad for you if you do it in moderation and make healthy choices. Examples are apples, pears, carrots and celery sticks, broccoli and cauliflower florets, nuts and seeds. Check out the nutrition label and choose wisely when shopping.
- **Take your time:** don't rush through meals. Enjoy mealtime with family and friends by pausing between bites and savoring your food.
- **Use time-saving technology:** many grocers make it easy to shop deals and save time with online ordering and pick-up and delivery options. Plus, it's easier to resist that candy bar in the check-out line if you aren't in a staring contest with it.
- **Practice gratitude:** it can help lower blood pressure, improve your immune system and spur you to eat better and exercise more. Write down five things you're grateful for and share them with your family and friends. Gratitude is the gift that keeps on giving.

For more healthy tips and recipes visit www.heart.org/eat-smartmonth. ■

HEALTH

YOUR HEALTH

Baystate  Medical Center

Everything You Wanted to Know About Blood and Platelet Donations

Baystate Health has options that include its traveling bloodmobile and an in-house blood donor center

(With my recent need for several platelet transfusions uppermost in my mind, I am requesting that my family members become donors as their Christmas gift to me this year.
—The Editor)

SPRINGFIELD, MA – Community bloodmobile drives are alive and well at **Baystate Health**.

“By donating blood you will become a hero to someone by making sure there is blood on our shelves when a patient desperately needs it. With just one donation – and blood is something that most people can spare – you could help save more than one life,” said Amy Osgood, Baystate Health’s blood donor recruiter.

Blood donations can also be made at **Baystate’s Blood Donor Center** located on the first floor of the hospital’s Daly Building. Hours are Monday from 8 a.m. to noon; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from noon to 8 p.m.; Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sunday from 8 a.m. to noon.

Every two seconds, someone in this country needs blood. At least 44,000 blood donations are needed every day to help accident and burn victims, cancer patients, those having surgery, new mothers, premature babies and many others needing treatment in hospitals and emergency departments across the country. However, only three out of every 100 people in America actually donate blood each year.

At Baystate Health, 100 percent of all blood and platelet

donations made to its Blood Donor Program are used locally in western Massachusetts. Each year at Baystate Health, over 5,800 patients receive more than 23,000 transfusions of blood products.

An average blood donation takes less than 10-12 minutes. The entire process, from the time you arrive to the time you leave, takes less than an hour. Donors must be at least age 17, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in

good health. New donors will be asked to provide a photo ID. Whole blood donors are able to give blood every 8 weeks.

In addition to donating blood, there is always a need for new platelet donors.

Platelets are important in the control of bleeding and are generally used in patients with leukemia and other forms of cancer, open heart surgery patients, transplant patients, and some trauma patients. Since they must be used within five days, maintaining an adequate supply is always a challenge. Baystate’s Blood Donor Center has state-of-the-art plateletpheresis machines called Trimas that are faster, provide a better end product, and use only one needle.

Whole blood can be donated every 56 days and up to seven times each year. Platelet donors, who take part in apheresis, can donate as frequently as every two weeks, or 24 times per year.

Donors must complete a pre-donation questionnaire each time they donate blood. This is required by the FDA to help ensure that you are safe to donate. Donors may complete their questionnaire on their smart phone or computer prior to visiting the donor center or bloodmobile. The questionnaire, however, must be completed on the same day that the donor intends to donate. Access to the pre-donation questionnaire is available at <https://bmcdhq.bhs.org/DDAdv>.

Some additional facts about blood and blood donations include:


- Each year at Baystate Health, over 6,300 patients receive more than 19,000 transfusions of blood products.
- Approx. 36,000 units of red blood cells are needed every day in the U.S., and nearly 7,000 units of platelets and 10,000 unit of plasma are need daily.
- The blood type most often requested by hospitals is type O.
- As many as 100 pints of blood can be required for a single car accident victim.

To thank donors after giving blood or platelets, they can choose from a variety of gifts throughout the year, such as tickets to Six Flags New England, Dunkin’ gift cards, Big Y gift cards or tickets to The Big E.

Also, if you do not know your blood type, about four weeks after your first donation to Baystate Health your blood type will be recorded and shared with you in person during your next donation.

Any organization or business looking to host the **Baystate Health Blood Donor Mobile** can call Amy Osgood at 413-322-4125. To make an appointment at the **Blood Donor Center**, call 413-794-4600.

For more information, and to see where the bloodmobile will be throughout western Massachusetts, visit baystatehealth.org/blood-donor.





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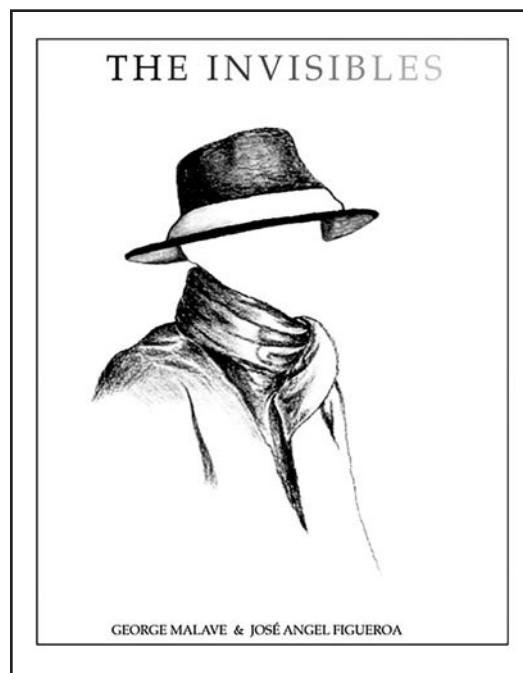


Magdalena Gómez is the Co-founder and Artistic Director of Springfield's first and only Latin@theater, Teatro V'la. Ms. Gómez has been a teaching artist for over 35 years.

We Don't Slam, We Jam: A Conversation with Two Living Legends

By Magdalena Gómez

When I was inducted as Springfield's Poet Laureate this past September, a



panorama of images flooded my being: the people and moments who have inspired my life and work. We are all a composite of our experiences and influences, and our life choices are informed by them, whether consciously or not.

As a member of the original Nuyorican Literary Movement, I had the very good fortune to meet some extraordinary artists who encouraged me to keep writing, both from inside and outside of the Movement. One of those artists was poet, educator, scholar, playwright, martial artist and activist, José Angel Figueroa, who in later years introduced me to photographer and visual artist, George Malave. Malave, who had created many inimitable photographic portraits of Boricua (Puerto Rican) writers, gifted me with a photo shoot which included an iconic portrait, by which many

have gotten to know me. Both Figueroa and Malave, have throughout their careers, consistently given of themselves passionately in support of other artists of all ages. These are two Boricua men who exemplify the intrinsic spirit of generosity of the Boricua soul. Generosity of all forms is a core value, and measure of good character when growing up Boricua, both on the island and across the Diaspora.

I recently had the good fortune to meet with Figueroa and Malave and get two copies of their recent collaboration, a limited edition, hardcover book of their poems and drawings, respectively, *The Invisibles*. This is one of many projects they have taken on that revel in and reveal the subconscious inspirations that fuel the soul of art.

MG: As two living legends in the arts, you have influenced many other artist. I am proudly among them. What do you consider to be your greatest achievements – those that cannot be measured by publications, productions or awards?

JAF: My greatest achievements come from collaborations with different artists in the schools, on stage, and in helping to enrich our communities-at-large in promoting our Latinx cultural legacy...especially with youth and adults whose cognitive and emotional barriers created diffi-

culties that lead them to prison; seeing them embrace poetry as a liberation of the human spirit. My second greatest achievement is perseverance.

GM: For me, it's the recording of our history for the benefit of present and future generations, passing knowledge through the power of the creative arts. And to give others pleasure in using the arts to examine personal and collective visual experiences.

MG: What fuels your passion to continue creating art, such as the collaboration on your most recent, highly collectible and inspiring book, *The Invisibles*?

JAF: What fuels my passion is the challenge and opportunity to educate the "eye's mind" – to quote Malave.

Malave's artistic integrity influenced my work. I love and admire this artist whose themes in his diverse art forms reflect a higher consciousness of the complex universe we live in. He has inspired me to get out of my comfort zone. He possesses a meticulous mind while I bump into things that don't exist.

GM: The creative process itself is a positive and nourishing self-renewing source. It helps us to see further and deeper, intensifying the experience of being alive while giving us the ability to share in our discoveries and to illuminate and inspire others on their own path of discovery.

MG: As a performance artist, I can see and feel the images and poems in

continues to page 16

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COMMUNITY

POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL



Orlando Ramos

last night's meeting.

Springfield City Council Gives Final Approval to Senior Tax Work-off Program

SPRINGFIELD, MA (Nov. 18, 2019) – Springfield City Councilor Orlando Ramos' proposal for a Senior Tax Work-Off program in the City of Springfield was unanimously given final approval by the City Council during

The Massachusetts tax work-off abatement law allows a city or town to establish a program giving property owners 60 or older the opportunity to volunteer services to the city or town in exchange for a reduction in property tax of up to \$1,000 (Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 59, §5K).

The city or town administers the program, keeping track of hours worked and crediting for each hour worked an amount not to exceed the minimum wage, currently \$12 per hour.

"With property values continuing to rise, many senior citizens are unable to keep up with their rising tax bill. This piece of legislation will give them an opportunity to reduce their taxes while also providing a valuable service to our city," Ramos said.

Participants in the program may volunteer by doing anything from painting fire hydrants to answering phones to stacking books in the local library. In return for their services, they receive a record of their work which is also sent to the local assessor in order to reduce the volunteer's property tax bill. The value of the work is not considered to be wages and therefore is not taxable. Under Councilor Ramos' proposal, participants/applicants will be chosen by lottery.

Surrounding communities with similar programs include Holyoke, Wilbraham and Northampton.

The City will begin accepting applications in the spring and volunteers can begin working in July of 2020. ■

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All I Want for Christmas

By Zaida Govan



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

It has been a crazy year for me. I'm glad 2019 is almost over. The stress of being woke in this country can be overwhelming at times. In the 1970s James Baldwin said, "To be black and conscious in America is to be in a constant state of rage." Today this is true for people of color and even some white allies who feel this way.

People will accuse you of being a conspiracy theorist when you point out the blatant discrepancies between the haves and the have nots. I listen in on conversations when I'm walking by people and almost always I hear people talking about money. How they don't have enough to do this, or they need more to do that. It saddens me because I think of people (the 1%) who don't have to have con-

versations like that. They don't have to worry about how much a gallon of milk costs or how they will pay for their kids' school pictures. It has been determined that for a family of four in this country to thrive, that means survive and maybe enjoy life a little, they will need two incomes coming into the household, sometimes three.

The design developed in the trickle-down economics era is continuing to make parents unavailable for their children's school activities. Parents are worried about keeping a roof over their heads and food on the table while the underfunded and overcrowded school-to prison-pipeline system wants them to be fully involved in their activities. This is difficult when you are poor and have to work two or three jobs just to make ends meet. I grew up in a time where my father worked while my mother stayed home with us kids. The way things are set up now, that is almost impossible in every situation. I always say, it's expensive to be poor. A rich person can get a parking ticket

continues to page 15



Happy Holidays

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COMMUNITY

POLITICAL HAPPENINGS - SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL

City Council President Justin Hurst and Councilor Adam Gomez are poised to lead the City Council in 2020

SPRINGFIELD, MA (November 20, 2019) – In a joint statement, City Council President Justin Hurst and Councilor Adam Gomez announce that they have secured enough votes from their colleagues on the 13-member council to serve as the next President and Vice President, respectively, of the Springfield City Council in 2020.

This is the second consecutive year that City Councilor Justin Hurst will be leading the City Council as its President as he enters his 4th term on this legislative body. He has the unanimous support of his colleagues although a formal vote will occur at the first meeting of the new year, which will take place on January, 6, 2020.

“I am appreciative to my colleagues for continuing to believe in my leadership. Over the past year, this Council has passed some of the most comprehensive legislation in the history of Springfield and at the same time they have never been afraid to



*City Council President
Justin Hurst, Esquire*

address difficult issues that matter most to the quality of life of our residents. I look forward to leading such a talented group of individuals who truly care about the citizens of Springfield.” - **Council President Justin Hurst**

Similarly, City Councilor Adam Gomez also announces that he has secured commitments from enough colleagues on the 13-member council to be voted in as the City Council Vice President next year. Councilor



*City Council Vice President
Adam Gomez*

(Photo courtesy of Ray Rafaelle Photography)

Gomez was recently elected to his 3rd term on the City Council and for the past three years has served as the Chair of the Economic Development Sub-Committee. He has received a

commitment from the following Councilors: Michael A. Fenton, Melvin Edwards, Marcus J. Williams, Orlando Ramos, Tracye Whitfield, Kateri B. Walsh, Jesse Lederman, Justin Hurst and Councilor-Elect Victor Davila.

“I am humbled and honored to have been selected by my colleagues to serve as the next Vice President of the City Council and I look forward to continuing to spearhead initiatives that spur neighborhood level economic development and small business innovation to benefit all residents.” - **Councilor Adam Gomez** ■

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All I Want for Christmas

continued from page 14

and pay it off right away. A poor person will have to wait until they get the money to pay it and by then there may be a late fee and ultimately a person can lose their license, which may be their livelihood, because they couldn't afford to pay a ticket.

We can march, stand out and sign petitions all we want, but until we get congress and the senate to disallow corporations to avoid paying taxes and raise the minimum wage, nothing will change. Things will actually get worse. We need to vote locally and nationally for people who believe that everyone should pay

their fair share of taxes, that insurance companies should not be charging an exorbitant amount for premiums and co-pays and still have the option to deny treatment.

People say their vote doesn't count and if you don't cast it, you are absolutely right. Keep living paycheck to paycheck and stay too busy to vote. That is what the 1% want. Heck, that's what the system wants. This Christmas the only gift I want is for Springfield and the country to increase its voter turnout rate in 2020. Let's vote our family values so families can go back to being families. ■

HUMAN INTEREST HUMAN SERVICES

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COMMUNITY

LEADERSHIP PIONEER VALLEY

Gratitude Overload

By Lora Wondolowski



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

It seems like everywhere I turn this month and last, there are references to gratitude. That's not a bad thing, but I feel a little bludgeoned by gratitude. Marketing companies want me to buy cute mugs and plastic plaques that show our gratitude for our workers. Amazon is promoting "thank you" gift cards for your valued employees. Don't get me started on the quote posters with their inspirational sayings and lovely backdrops. All of this makes me feel like the Grinch this holiday season.

Don't get me wrong, gratitude is a very important practice as leaders and humans. I just object to the cheapening of gratitude and Hallmarkification of its essence. Gratitude is a vital practice that many take for granted in our busy lives. It can reduce stress, build relationships, and lead to joy. A hastily purchased, generic mug may not generate the true gratitude that I am talking about for the giver or receiver. By taking time to recognize someone and picking a recognition that fits the person, you are practicing deeper gratitude. You benefit from slowing down and really noticing that person and they benefit from being noticed and appreciated.

Recently I was at a lunch with several participants in our LEAP program and an alumna. I overheard the alumna telling one of the participants about how the program had impacted her. She went on at length about how she continues to use the lessons and networks some five years later. Hearing that, I felt so much pride in the

work we do. I was grateful to know that what we do matters so deeply and that we had contributed to her success. As we were walking out, the alumna ended our conversation by telling me how impactful our program was and is on her life and genuinely thanked me. I was humbled by her gratitude and received it as the gift it was intended. That interaction elevated my mood for the rest of the day.

Gratitude is one of the leadership capacities we discuss through our Positive Leadership curriculum. The author Adam Seaman asserts that our senses are the gateways for gratitude. By noticing things around us, we can become more appreciative. This can be a lovely sunset, the efforts of a coworker, or a fantastic lunch. Noticing forces us to slow down and not take things for granted. The gratitude poster that I pass every day doesn't have that kind of power, but real gratitude does. The other power of gratitude is to show us that we are enough. When I was thanked by my alumna, it stopped me from obsessing over the things I hadn't finished that day or the negative comment. I was able to be in the moment.

So this holiday season, don't let yourself be beat-up by ubiquitous calls for gratitude—feeling like you aren't grateful enough or need to buy another gift or appreciation. The commodification of gratitude can take away its essence and have the opposite effect. Give yourself time to engage your senses, notice those around you, and see what you discover. You'll be grateful that you did and may just feel like you are enough and make someone else feel truly noticed. ■

LATIN@ GROOVE

We Don't Slam, We Jam

continued from page 13

the book as easily transferable to live performance, spoken aloud, set to music, danced, or sung. Is taking this work to the stage something you might consider?

GM: Yes, I would. The characters could have conversations with one another or the audience...a migrant with a president, death could speak with life, new characters could be created, room sizes and lighting could add to the story telling. I'm open to experimentation and collaboration.

JAF: George and I have collaborated on several visual and literary



José Angel Figueroa
Photo by George Malave

works for decades. We're a perfect team, like a rice & beans sandwich. Malave asked if I would be interested in writing poetry and prose off his illustrations and I took the challenge. His impulse is to continue experimenting with new art forms. I hung these caricatures on the wall like unusual suspects, and like a poet-detective, saw "things" (gestures, eyes, thoughts, et al) that crept inside me and *The Invisibles* was born. This visualization process became a tool in my play with words and metaphors. I've been highly influenced by avant-garde visual artists, beginning with childhood comic books, graphic illus-

trators, and especially by cultural sages like Walter Vélaz, Phil Dante, George Malave, and Juan Sanchez, who have been my lifelong best friends and mentors.

MG: What are the most significant changes you have seen in the arts, particularly in arts generated by Boricua artists? What are the most significant changes you have seen in the diasporic literary movements the last twenty years?

JAF: It is the collective will power of the Puerto Rican spirit to fight against cultural amnesia and be forward-thinking. Cultural visionaries like Eugenio María de Hostos, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, Julia de Burgos, Lolita Lebrón, and Jesus Colon changed the political mindset of rebel freedom-fighters. It inspired today's rebel poets and patriots to use their art forms as a weapon of defiance. These artists suffered in more brutal ways than ever written during their lifetimes. Many were put into prison and tortured, if not excommunicated. Even their families and hometowns were bombed, terrorized, and burnt until those who survived had to become self-exiles in the U.S., Cuba, Europe, and in Latin America. This is how the Puerto Rican Diaspora was born. We had to adapt to new environments and cultural influences when we were forced to migrate to the inner cities of the U.S., including the impact of transformational issues and themes of immigration, assimilation, acculturation; and how these divergent lifestyles changed the Puerto Rican artist's social, economic, and political consciousness. One of these significant changes came in the birth of Neo-Rican literature. Poet, artist, novelist, and playwright Jaime Carrero was first to coin the term "Neo-Rican" in 1958, with his classic poem, *Neo-Rican Jetliner* (published in Puerto Rico in 1964). This was the genesis of

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COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY BEAT



Ken Harris is a former Special Police Officer and Corrections Officer. He is a graduate of STCC. Follow him at shadowedu.blogspot.com pvpeduc.wixsite.com/arts

Recently, I was fortunate to attend the “Write-Up Springfield Reads!” final public reading for the year at the Central Library. As expected it was an enormously fun-filled event and I had a marvelous time sharing an excerpt from my latest Amazon novelette, “Night Terror,” during open mic with a group of other outstanding writers who have a passion for spreading creativity.

Among the scheduled readers in the community room were Robin Coolbeth, Tara Dasso, Donald Fisher, Tamara Fricke, Renay Jihad, Shane Robitaille, Kateri M. Walsh, and



Tara Bronner, Mathew Jaquith, and Kateri M. Walsh

many others who enlightened an enthusiastic audience with readings from poems and works of creative fiction.

Standing and speaking before spectators is easier said than done. Do you have any idea of the challenges involved in creating a piece and conveying it openly to a lively crowd? For me personally, striving to overcome such hurdles provides a sense of accomplishment.

I am thrilled with event founders Tara Bronner and Kateri Walsh, along



A reading by Author Shane Robitaille

with organizer Mathew Jaquith, who worked compassionately and diligently throughout 2019 to make this “Write-Up Springfield” a platform for writers to share their ideas and exchange informative feedback.

This event kicked off with Mathew’s signature warm welcome while some key participants and members of the audience helped themselves to refreshments. All in attendance also had the chance to enter their names for a free raffle prize compliment of the Friends of the Library.

Following the introduction, several featured writers took to the podium, one by one, and each one garnered a positive reception from the audience. Preceding the intermission, a lucky winner walked off as the random winner of a prize as is the custom with library events like this one. (I encourage you to come to one of these events in 2020 to see what it consist of!)

With that said, I also encourage all residents to support our local library and to regularly visit springfieldlibrary.org to get the latest news and events.

Write-Up Springfield Reads!

By Ken Harris



Write-Up Springfield members

My website at <https://pvpeduc.wixsite.com/arts> is all about sharing news regarding **FREE** books from all over the country. Subscribe to my website and get access to **FREE** books from great writers! ■



SPRINGFIELD SENIORS, DO YOU NEED A RIDE TO RAYMOND JORDAN SENIOR CENTER?

The City of Springfield and Springfield Partners are initiating a pilot program offering **FREE** door-to-door transportation service to go to the Raymond A. Jordan Senior Center on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, starting on December 2, 2019.

Springfield seniors can now be picked up at their homes to attend the Raymond A. Jordan Senior Center!

Call reservation line at: 413-575-0443

Seating is limited and will be available on a first come, first serve basis. Please schedule your ride two to three day in advance.

Massachusetts Senior Action Council (MSAC) is a grassroots senior-led membership organization committed to empowering seniors and others to act collectively to promote the rights and well-being of all people. For more information or to get involved contact Tracey at 413-328-4659 or email TCarpenter@MassSeniorAction.org

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FOCUS

First Annual Election Day Celebration of Sojourner Truth: Champion of Women's Suffrage

By Denise Brown, M.S.

In 1826, Sojourner Truth left her life as an enslaved person, not running but walking, with her infant in her arms. She fought for her son who had been sold down south and won the court case to have him returned to New York State where it



*Sojourner Truth
"Abolitionist and
Civil Rights
Activist"*

was not legal to sell slaves out of state. She became the first black woman to ever successfully fight this type of case in the courts against a white man. She embraced her new life, shedding the name given to her when she was enslaved and claiming the name she chose for herself – Sojourner Truth. She felt compelled to go forth and spread the truth that she knew in her heart and share the hope that was burning in her for her people. She spoke of emancipation, sharing stories of the hardship of slavery, and advocated for women's right to vote, becoming one of the most outspoken voices of her day to champion the call for women's suffrage.

And, yet, her story has often been overlooked by the history books, which have instead highlighted white suffragettes such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Not only is this an inaccurate telling of history, it is a history that has been white-washed, ignoring much of the implicit racism that was part of the strategy to move the right to vote for women forward. Every election day people travel to Rochester,

NY where Anthony is buried to place an "I Voted" sticker on her tombstone. Recently, there has been a similar tradition in the Bronx where Stanton is buried.

This year marks the first time that there has been a celebration marking Truth's contribution at the Sojourner Truth Statue in Florence, MA where community members were invited to place their "I Voted" stickers on a sash draped across her body. Truth lived in Northampton, MA during the mid-1800s, which she used as her home base when not out traveling the country speaking to and inspiring people, and a statue was erected to honor her in 2002.

"Truth was a strong link in the chain of freedom," Loretta Ross, activist, feminist and visiting



Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter High School students "Libby and Joseph" danced embracing the message of Truth in their dance choreographed to "Glory" from the film Selma

Photo taken by C. Lollis, Daily Hampshire Gazette



L to R: Joseph and Libby, PFSCJCS Dancers, VoteTruth Committee: Wendy Sinton, Denise Brown, Liz Friedman, CMTE Chair Andrea Ayvazian, Carol Rinehart, Rhonda Soto, (kneeling) and Rose Sackey-Milligan

professor at Smith College, told the crowd of over 100, instructing us to "bring what you need from the past to the present so you can build a better future." She added, "... this (is) what black women have done all along."

Rose Sackey-Milligan, also a founding member of the Vote Truth Committee, invoked Sojourner by reading her words to the assembled crowd. "Sojourner was a prayerful woman and we are living in her answered prayers in this moment. She prayed for all women to find their power."

The crowning moment of the celebration came from the students of Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter High School when the choir sang Andra Day's "Rise Up" whose words spoke to the legacy of Sojourner Truth and her legacy to each of us:

*"And I'll rise up
I'll rise like the day
I'll rise up"*

ENTERTAINMENT - CITY STAGE



Jo Sallins and Alex Bugnon recently performed at a Gator Jazz Production at City Stage in Springfield.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

IS MALO BROWN OUR FUTURE?

continued from page 1

precincts 4A and 4B, I watched Malo stroll into the voting area. He walked right through the door in front of the cop who was assigned to prevent it while representatives of Jynai McDonald observed the rules and stayed the proper distance away from the door. When I asked the police officer why he allowed it, he didn't say much of anything to me but, in exasperation, he later told one of my relatives that he had never done polling duty before and was disturbed that I called him out.

What the officer couldn't have known is that my frustration wasn't with him but with the Springfield Police Commissioner who was responsible for assigning him there and her boss, the Mayor of Springfield, who, they tell me, made a cameo showing after I left. They had received enough complaints about Malo Brown's behavior during and after the primary election to be on alert. Their solution seemed to have been to simply replace a White cop, who didn't know what he was doing, with a Black cop, who did-

n't know what he was doing, and the result was that nothing changed.

Elections are sacred. They deserve to be protected by those who are responsible for protecting the people in a community – voters and nonvoters alike – from predators like Malo Brown, who may be the Ward 4 City Councilor for the long haul if Ward 4 residents fail to act ... now or in the next election when, just maybe, city officials will do their jobs.

Rumor has it that Malo Brown is already preparing to be the replacement for State Representative Bud Williams when he retires after several more terms. The question that folks in Ward 4 and the entire Black community (and, for that matter, all of Springfield) should face right now is who will represent their future. (Maybe Jynai McDonald will preempt Malo and run for state representative. Certainly she should run for city council again next term.)

If Malo Brown represents the future of Springfield then the future is certain to be bleak. ■

LOCAL COLLEGES IN THE NEWS

Urban Studies 2+2+1 Partnership

continued from page 8

bounce back,” Greco said.

The urban studies program at STCC exposes students to courses offered in different academic disciplines throughout the college, including architecture and building technology, public health, sociology, history, economics and literature. Students need to earn 62 credits to graduate from the program, which includes some online studies.

As part of the final project, students develop a proposed solution to a challenge facing the city of Springfield and present it to the community. “They will get a deep appreciation for what it's like to get immersed in an urban revitalization project,” Greco said.

Emily Todd, Ph.D., interim dean

of the Westfield State University College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, said “We aim to provide a close mentorship throughout each student's education and experience at both institutions. Our collaborative team will provide support, guidance, and careful advising from the beginning of the student's work through completion of the degree. Their experience will be enhanced by research and internship opportunities, with an emphasis on community-based initiatives.” ■

Westfield
STATE UNIVERSITY

New Funds Are Available to Pay Gas Bills

SPRINGFIELD, MA (November 20, 2018) – Springfield Partners for Community Action has funds available to assist Hampden County residents with paying their natural gas bills. Residents could get up to \$500.00 per household. Those interested in applying for the program should call Springfield Partners for Community Action at **413-263-6500** or email augustuse@springfieldpartnersinc.com to schedule an appointment. Paul Bailey, Executive Director for Springfield Partners for Community Action, said, “We are pleased to have received a second round of funds from the Attorney General's office to assist Hampden County residents.” Funds are time sensitive, limited to Hampden County residents and are for natural gas only. Once you qualify, payments will be made directly to your natural gas provider.

About Springfield Partners for Community Action

Since 1964, Springfield Partners has been the designated community action agency serving Greater Springfield and Hampden County. For 55 years, Springfield Partners for Community Action's mission has been to successfully guide residents of Springfield and Hampden County towards self-sufficiency, economic stability, and a better quality of life. The agency has various programs and services that support and advance the mission including Financial Literacy, Credit Counseling, Weatherization Assistance, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (state and federal), Homebuyer education, New Beginnings Early Education and Care Center, Veterans Serviced and many more. For more information on our programs, services and how you can get involved can be found at www.springfieldpartnersinc.com

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Around Town & . . .



The New England Minority Nurses Leadership Conference took place in Springfield recently



Congratulations to Team Hurst on Justin Hurst’s first place win in the Springfield at-large City Council election



Members of the Springfield Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. pose for a group photo at their recent Red Velvet Soiree held at La Quinta Hotel



The Greater Springfield Mass. chapter of The Links Inc. pose for a photo with the Links Inc. Eastern Area Director, Dr. Shauna Tucker-Sims, at the Freedom Trail Cluster Luncheon

. . . In The Community



Members of the Winchester Square Vietnam Era Veterans Ltd of Greater Springfield, MA participated in the Springfield Veterans Parade. Included in the photo are family members and 2007 Parade Marshal, Springfield Health and Human Services Commissioner Helen Caulton Harris (far right)



Springfield City Council President Justin Hurst, sons Justin Jr. and Jackson, and School Committee Member Denise Hurst participated in the parade in memory of James Roscoe Hurst, Ronald Charles Hurst and all veterans



Bumpy's Natural and Organic Foods recently celebrated a grand opening of their store on Allen Street in Springfield



The Buckingham reunion recently took place at the Cedars Banquet Hall. David Montgomery (top), Carol Murchison and Elaine Scott (2nd row), Lavonne Johnson, Ruth Malone, and Pat Woods (seated)



Recent mayoral candidate Yolanda Cancel (right) spoke on the National Day of Outrage, October 28th, at Court Square at the monument entitled "In Memory of Our Slain Sisters of the Community"



A reception for the Democrats of Distinction was held recently at the Elks Lodge in Springfield

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY FOCUS - CONNECTICUT

Stamford NAACP Honors Eastern Social Work Professor Eunice Matthews

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

On Sept. 27, 2019, at the Stamford NAACP's Annual Freedom Fund Dinner, Eunice Matthews, professor of social work and coordinator of the Social Work Program at Eastern Connecticut State University, was presented its prestigious Dr. Joyce Yearwood Humanitarian Award.



Keynote Speaker Dana Lewis

The award is given to an individual who is a premier advocate for fairness, justice and equality in the community in health care, employment, housing, education or voting rights. The award recognized Matthews for her work as a clinician providing mental health services for two decades to the adults and adoles-



L to R: Stacey Close, Eastern's associate provost and vice president for equity and diversity; Sen. Richard Blumenthal; Eunice Matthews, Denise Rodriguez, lecturer in the Department of Social Work; Shirley Matthews, sister of Eunice Matthews and professor of clinical psychology at Columbia University; and Isabel Logan, assistant professor of social work, congratulate Matthews



Annie Summerville McAllister (center) with Naomi Chapman Taylor and Guy Fortt, Executive Board Members

cents in the Southern Connecticut area.

The theme for the evening was "Mental Health in the African American Community." Dana Lewis, special assistant for former President

Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama and well known for her speeches on mental health at national organization meetings across the nation, delivered the keynote address.



Dwight Bachman

Several other dignitaries were on hand, including Robert Perry, senior pastor at the Union Baptist Church in Stamford, Stamford Mayor David Martin, and Sen. Richard Blumenthal, who praised Matthews, saying, "Dr. Yearwood was a personal friend who I loved and greatly respected for her diligence in enhancing the lives of others. I thank you, Dr. Matthews, for the wonderful work you have done so effortlessly and continue to do in transforming the lives of so many people in Stamford and beyond."

Sen. Christopher Murphy wrote, "Dr. Eunice Matthews' commitment to social work and clinical social services demonstrates her tireless efforts to advocate for the people in her community through her medical practice in Stamford. It is my privilege to recognize her exceptional achievements... and the work...she has done to benefit our state."

Matthews, affectionately known as "Penny," secured her first faculty appointment at Fordham University's School of Social Services. She joined Eastern in 2000, and along with her colleagues, developed a nationally recognized Social Work program. In 2001, she also began serving as a clinician at the Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut, and as a consultant for the Healthy Families New York in South Bronx, NY, where she served for 15 years.

Matthews continues to contribute to the intellectual discourse in her field, serving on the board of directors of the Southern Conference of African American Studies and the Council of Social Work Education. Matthews earned her bachelor's de-

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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.

Did you know that the insurance policy on your life is an asset that you might be able to sell? Oftentimes, we purchase life insurance to provide financial protection for our spouse or children in case we die at a young age when the children are still dependents. Some people may have maintained the insurance policy in place throughout their lives. Older people may end up owning quite large life insurance policies.

Depending on a person's age, health status, the type of the policy, and the amount of life insurance, they might be able to sell the policy for cash. However, even if you can sell the policy, should you?

Circumstances may arise where

Your Life Insurance Policy, Keep It...or Sell It?

By Frederick Royal, Professor of Law

the cash received for the policy can be used to pay for treatments not covered by medical insurance or to provide for long-term care services for an elderly person. One special type of sale of a life insurance policy is called a viatical settlement. Such a settlement is given special treatment under the Internal Revenue Code. If specific rules are met, the amount received by the person who sells the life insurance is not taxable as income. If a doctor certifies that a person has an illness or physical condition which can reasonably be expected to result in death in 24 months or less, and if that person sells the life insurance policy to a company qualified to purchase the insurance, then the money received will not be taxable as income. In another situation, if a person is certified by a licensed health care practitioner as not capable of caring

for themselves, either due to physical or mental illness as determined by certain criteria, and if the funds received for the life insurance are used to pay for qualified long-term care services for the selling policyholder, then the money received will not be taxed as income. In this second situation, an individual who holds a durable power of attorney for an elderly person might sell a life insurance policy on the life of the elderly person and use the proceeds from the sale to provide for that person's care.

Another type of sale of a life insurance contract is simply known as a life settlement. Basically, a life settlement is the sale of a life insurance policy to a third party for an amount greater than any cash surrender value, but less than the death benefit which is the face amount of the policy. This type of sale does not receive any spe-

cial treatment under the Internal Revenue Code. Consequently, a portion of the sale proceeds received may be taxable as income.

Ms. Elderly is age 68 and still has a life insurance policy on her life that will pay a death benefit of \$200,000. Ms. Elderly wants to sell her policy for cash. Before she sells the policy, she should consult with a certified financial planner, a certified public accountant, or an attorney who specializes in Elder Law. A number of questions must be explored before she sells. Why does she want to sell? What will the sale proceeds be used for? How do you find a reputable company to buy the life insurance policy? How much will she receive for the policy? Ms. Elderly's life insurance policy is a valuable asset. Any sale should be approached very thoughtfully. ■

COMMUNITY FOCUS - CONNECTICUT

Professor Eunice Matthews

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gree in Social Work at Morgan State University, her Master's degree in Social Work at Columbia University, and her Ph.D. in Sociology at the City University of New York.

Lewis, of Weston, CT, president and CEO of In Other Words and a 20-year federal public civil servant and a Hampton University alumna, is working to set up mental health chapters on every (HBCU) Historically Black College and University in the nation. Lewis has been published in People and Fresh Lifestyle Magazines and in Accenture's Global Network of Health Experts. She is writing her first novel, "Five Days in Room 11," scheduled for publication next year.

The Stamford NAACP also presented Mrs. Annie Summerville

McAllister its Nathan Wilder Political Award. Since she arrived in Stamford from Alabama in 1964, Summerville McAllister has worked to improve the lives of Stamford and Connecticut citizens. She has served on Stamford's Town Committee, its Board of Representatives and was elected to the clerk of the board where she served for 39 years. She has also served on Stamford's Union Baptist Church Board of Trustees, Stamford's Center for the Arts, and served as Stamford's chair for Denise Napier's and Frank Borges' election campaigns for State Treasurer. She has been named recipient of numerous awards, including the W.E.B. Dubois Lifetime Achievement Award for her energy, support and leadership in making life better for hundreds of residents. ■

Trump Alerts!

By Marjorie J. Hurst



"You can't promote principled anti-corruption action without pissing off corrupt people."

George Kent, State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasia, testifying before the House Intelligence Committee Impeachment Inquiry on Wednesday, November 13, 2019, referring to Marie Yovanovitch, the former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine.

EDITORIAL

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

MY POINT
OF VIEW

Frederick A. Hurst



DON'T MISS A VISIT TO ABU DHABI AND DUBAI

By Frederick A. Hurst

I'm beginning to question my own travel judgment. I recall my reluctance to join a trip to England, Scotland and Ireland because I didn't see a reason to spend my valuable travel time visiting places where "folks don't like me." I couldn't have been more off base. I had a great time, especially in Ireland where the folks who I expected to be the most unfriendly turned out to be the friendliest.

Similarly, I was reluctant to join a trip to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the two biggest emirates in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). I was entertaining notions about the two that were so completely off base from reality that my wife, who finally convinced me to go with the Emurriel

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Emurriel Holloway Family and Friends Group

AF-AM NEWS bits

By Frederick A. Hurst

continued from page 4

wrote of MFA's complicity in the cover-up: "It admits it hasn't given its Nubian collection much notice in years, but its sudden rediscovery is surely in step with the moment. Undoing a generational myth of Nubian insignificance – a myth the museum was very much a part of – fits right in with the MFA's burgeoning apology tour, right in time for its sesquicentennial next year... Like many of his contemporaries, Reisner (MFA's early African expert) was guided by the belief that dark-skinned Africans could never have built a sophisticated civilization on their own. His conclusions informed the easy race-based consensus of the day: that Ancient Nubia was mired in what they judged to be barbarism of Africa and beholden to Egypt for any and all of its worthwhile advances in art, architecture, and technology, and that Egypt was allied with the blossoming sophistication of Mediterranean cultures... By now, we know not an iota of any of this is true: Nubia was a full-blown civilization, replete with advanced art, craft, science, and governance. Nubia, in fact, ruled Ancient Egypt for a century, infusing it with its own culture and art, and inevitably borrowing some of it back." Nubia was not alone. Englishman Basil Davidson wrote about East African civilization so thoroughly that it is unlikely that African History was unknown to those modern Europeans who controlled the historical records that didn't even include Timbuktu of West Africa. And now we have many more Africa experts who have devoted their entire intellectual

lives to documenting the truth.

BOSTON MARIJUANA LAWS AND SPRINGFIELD

If Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno embraced the same spirit of cooperation with Springfield's City Council regarding the marijuana laws as Boston Mayor Marty Walsh is doing with Boston's City Council, he would be far more successful in convincing minorities and women that they will be getting a fair shake. Under the leadership of Black Boston City Councilor Kim Janey, the Council has rewritten the procedures for awarding Marijuana licenses to assure equitable minority participation. Among other things, "Janey's proposal would give priority to applicants when more than half of the ownership meets various criteria including being black, Latino, having a prior conviction for selling pot and being a Boston resident for at least seven years. It would also require more transparency about where applicants are in the process and how they're being judged, and would create a fund to help minority pot business hopefuls get started." (*The Wall Street Journal*, November 19, 2019) Mayor Walsh, rather than hog all of the power, has fully embraced the City Council's work.

NOT IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA!

Yes. On November 12, 2019, Steven L. Reed was sworn in as the first Black mayor of Montgomery, Alabama, the same Montgomery where Rosa Parks made her famous refusal to move to the back of the bus which led to a Black boycott that became so costly to the White power structure that they changed the law to allow Black riders to sit anywhere on the bus. ■

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK



RELIGION

RELIGIOUS POINT OF VIEW



Dr. Atu White, Editor, serves as Pastor of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 33 Oak Street, Springfield, MA and as First Vice President of the United Baptist Convention of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. atuwhite@gmail.com

Love Fusion is a biennial singles and couples conference sponsored by Bishop Andrew and Rev. Michaelia Daubon of Daubon & Daubon and Pastors of Celestial Praise Church of God, Springfield, MA. This year, the conference was held at the Tower Square Hotel Springfield on October 18th & 19th. Our first conference was held at the Sheraton Hotel, Bradley Airport (Hartford) in 2017 and was billed as a one-day couples only conference. Based on feedback from that conference, we decided to add a second day and to expand it to cater to singles as well.

Our Friday evening session featured refreshments, games, massages, and a breakout instructional session for singles and couples. Then we

Love Fusion 2019

By Bishop Andrew Daubon

transformed the evening into a date night, networking, games, prize giveaways and dancing, which ended at midnight. Among the attendees were eight (8) senior pastors, some attending with their spouses. We all took the opportunity during the afterglow just to briefly fellowship together. Friday night turned out to be a time of relaxation, fun and laughter. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Saturday was a full day of breakout sessions. We had a combined money matters session and wrapped up the day with a panel discussion where questions that did not get answered during the other sessions were taken by a panel comprised of all the speakers. Our speakers were Bishop & Rev. Daubon, Dr. Faith Wokoma from Cary, North Carolina, Rev. Dean Brown from Bronx, New York, and Drew Townsend, a mortgage broker serving the Springfield area. Our attendees came from as far away as

Wisconsin, North Carolina, New York, Boston, Stratford, CT, and a contingent from Nantucket, MA. Our topics included Identity & Self-Love, Dating, Money Matters, Love after Loss, Dreaming Together and Intimacy.

This year our conference saw significant growth in attendance over the previous one.

We had 115 fully registered for Friday and 100 for Saturday. Attendees were pleased with the direct and practical approach taken by all the speakers, and their ability to humanize topics that are sometimes tabooed and/or ultra-sensitive. The speakers' willingness to speak about their own lives established credibility with their audience.

What's next for Love Fusion?



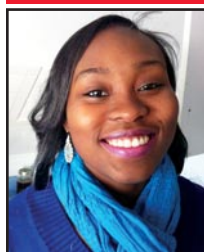
Bishop Andrew and Rev. Michaelia Daubon

Some attendees are hoping that we make the conference an annual event. Daubon & Daubon, along with their planning committee, will get together to see whether this is feasible due to the cost involved to keep this conference affordable. It is our hope, however, to continue growing this conference into one that serves the entire southern New England region and beyond. ■

LET'S CONNECT

"2019 Holiday Do Better Checklist"

By Beverly Guerrero-Porter



Beverly Guerrero-Porter

In just a few short weeks, we'll be getting ready to celebrate the holidays with friends and family, eat festive meals, exchange gifts, sing some carols and light a Kinara.

Keeping in step with my childhood family tradition, it is also time to deep clean the whole house, give away excess or unused items, and make preparations to welcome the New Year. It is believed that how you end the year is indicative of how the new one will be. Whether the cleanliness of a home really has an impact on the outcome of the New Year is up for debate; but it never hurts to have a tidy place, so we adhere to it!

Similarly, it is important for us to assess the

orderliness of our *personal* house: spiritually, physically, relationally and financially.

Spiritually: Have we grown in maturity in our faith or have we scaled back on keeping in step with practicing what we preach?

Physically: Have we been taking good care of our bodies by eating well, exercising and reducing stress? Are we at a healthy weight? For those of us battling with hypertension or diabetes, we certainly don't need an extra helping of anything on our plates.

Relationally: How about our relationships with ourselves, our significant others, children, friends, coworkers, neighbors? Are we being intentional


with loving and being attentive toward them or are we glued to screens, growing distant and taking them for granted as if they will always be here?

Financially: Is the desire to impress leading us to overextend ourselves financially, barely being able to pay the bills? Are we building our savings and investing properly so that we actually have wealth to enjoy in retirement and have something to pass on to our children?


An anonymous person astutely stated, "Excuses will always be there for you, opportunity won't." Let us stop making excuses about our refusal to change and embrace this chance that we have been given to do and be better. ■

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

RELIGIOUS DIRECTORY



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Acts 5:12b



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AROUND TOWN & IN THE COMMUNITY



Beta Sigma Boulé recently helped sponsor the trip to the New York HBCU College Fair which departed from the MLK Jr. Community Center



Bethel AME Church recently celebrated their 170th Anniversary. L to R: Reverend Donald C. Luster, Anniversary Preacher Reverend Dr. Donald L. Tucker, Reverend Amelia A. Eddy, Retired Presiding Elder Herbert Eddy, and Senior Pastor Reverend Marcus McCullough



Reverend Dr. Donald Tucker poses for a photo with past Acolytes and Church Family Members



The Canaan Baptist Church of Christ Men's Choir sang at the church's recent Men's Conference



MLK Jr. Family Services recently recognized the contributions of volunteers and staff at an event at the MLK Jr. Community Center

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.

“Her Own Two Feet: A Rwandan Girl’s Brave Fight to Walk”

By Meredith Davis and Rebekah Uwitonze
c.2019, Scholastic \$17.99 / \$23.99 Canada 208 pages
Reviewed by Terri Schlichenmeyer

On the day you took your first steps, your parents were very proud.

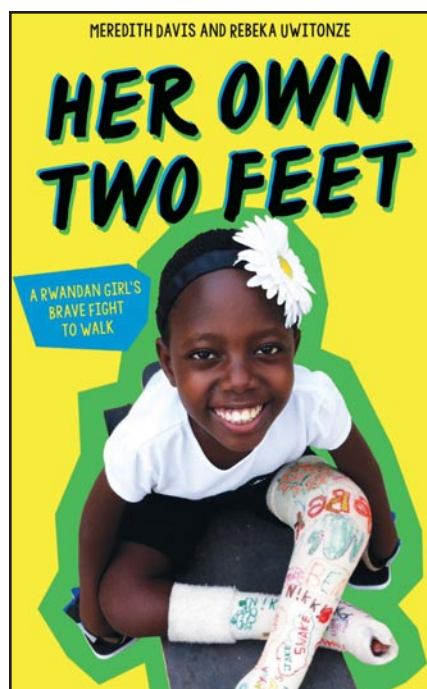
They took pictures of you standing by yourself with a one-tooth smile on your face, and then they called Grandma and Grandpa to tell them you were walking! It was reason to celebrate and you walk now without thinking about it, but in the new book, “**Her Own Two Feet**” by **Meredith Davis and Rebekah Uwitonze**, first steps aren’t always second nature.

One thing was for sure: Rebekah Uwitonze was independent.

Born with her feet twisted sideways and backward, her shoulders stiff, and her middle fingers bent to her palms, Rebekah never let her problems stop her from anything. She could feed herself – she wasn’t a baby! – and though it took awhile to figure out how to quickly reach the bathroom a few feet from her back door, she otherwise got around just fine.

So what if she crawled, or lurched about on the tops of her feet? So what if folks in her Rwandan village told her parents to let her die when she was born? So what if some people said she was “cursed”? As long as Rebekah stayed strong and smart and loved, her feet and her hands weren’t important.

Yes, she’d seen doctors: when she was small, they tried to turn her feet but it hurt a lot. It didn’t work, either, nor did a second attempt, so when a white stranger came to her parents’ home and offered to take Rebekah to America to fix her feet, she was



afraid. She remembered being left at the hospital, and how much it hurt. Still, as Papa said, “Chance comes once” and so Rebekah went with a translator on her first airplane trip from one continent to another.

But Bugesara, Rwanda was *nothing* like Austin, Texas! In Texas, dogs are allowed in the house and on the bed. There were new foods to try, a trampoline to play on, and new holidays to experience. Rebekah learned English, made new friends, and ate French fries while her surgeries healed and she learned to walk again.

But then it was time to leave Texas and go home. Was she ready for it?

Some days, nothing goes your child’s way. From the moment she wakes up until the second she shuts her eyes, it’s one thing after another but this is for sure: have “Her Own Two Feet,” and things will fall into perspective.

Beaming strength from every page, authors Meredith Davis (the matriarch of the Texas host family) and Rebekah Uwitonze tell the latter’s story in a matter-of-fact way that elicits compassion without begging for it. That gives readers a chance to quietly observe Uwitonze’s determi-



Her Own Two Feet authors, Rebekah Uwitonze and Meredith Davis

Photo by Meredith Davis

nation, practicality, and her sheer bravery in a quest to overcome a disability. Without being a spoiler, this will leave your child cheering.

“Chance comes once,” as Uwitonze’s Papa said, so seize it and find “Her Own Two Feet.” If your 8-to-12-year-old wants a good biography or a tale of gratefulness, having it is the first step. ■

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.

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paintings
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THE ARTS

PEN & INK



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, 10 books including "Centos of Life". 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

One Moonlit Night

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson

I walked, one moonlit night,
Down the garden path and sighed
When I saw the roses; then the stars
Twinkling like neon lights.

The moon framed the violet sky,
While roses shimmered in the breeze.
The stars tangoed with the moon
And lit up the eggshell white gazebo.

The roses, the stars, the gazebo
Rocked fervently while the whistling wind
Captured the mood.

The roses, the stars, the gazebo, the wind
Tapdanced a tuneful air, while the scottie
Pranced along the perfumed garden path.

The roses, the stars, the gazebo, the scottie,
Serenaded the violet moon. The moon, was so
Delighted that the man in the moon
Winked over and over again.

Polar Bears Treading Water

(inspired by Carolyn Wells)

By Juanita Torrence-Thompson

Since polar bears are treading water and icebergs are melting like ice cubes, I might as well study taxidermy or finish my memoir next week. Or I could try out for the next Olympics as an ice skater if the ice stays frozen.



A Seasonal Gift

By Renay Intisar Jihad

Snow crystals adorn
each window's view.
Brown thorny branches brush
against the winter sky
and garnish the gauzy blue.

The sun's rays sneak feebly through
clouds of chilling, hazy air.
We admire the display,
but stray not too far from
home's calm, balmy care.

As the afternoon reveals
a melting maze – like streams
of glassy tears,
folks measure the moments
with every laugh and word;
recounting joyous memories
from past days, weeks,
months, and years.

The love shared
with family and friends
is a truly priceless gift.
Even when ice rains down,
our spirit welcomes
this special season's lift.
A storm of holiday cheer
calls forth unity, giving, and warmth.
So many reasons to
appreciate these frosty icy forms.

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Reprinted from Angels In the Forest

Visit Medium.com for other poems by this author



Renay Intisar
Jihad

Lest We Forget – December

First Women Billionaire Madame C.J. Walker

Born: December 23, 1867

Died: May 25, 1919

**First Black American governor of an American state, Louisiana
Pinckney Benton Stewart Pinchback**

Born: May 10, 1837

Died: December 21, 1921

Participated: American Civil War

**Historian and Founder of the Association for the Study of African
American Life and History**

Carter G. Woodson

Born: December 19, 1875

Died: April 3, 1950

THE ARTS

PEN & INK

A Stranger

(Mrs. Bennette)

By Berdia M. Brown



Berdia M. Brown

Well, Lord, a stranger came knocking at my door a few weeks ago.

I fed him, and I haven't seen him anymore. He was raggedy and dirty, but I didn't turn him away. I let him in and fed him that day.

One of his eyes was shut tight. I suppose he'd lost his sight. His mouth was slightly twisted; perhaps he'd had a stroke. The poor stranger was so hungry; he ate so fast, I thought he was going to choke.

I kept placing food on the table for him to eat. The shoes he had on, the soles were worn down to the soles of his feet. I knew I was letting my light shine. I thought of Jesus and what he has done for me in my life. I couldn't help but be kind.

Before he left that day, he had a few words to say. He said, "Ma'am, I sure thank you for feeding me today. God does answer when we pray. I hadn't eaten for nearly two days, maybe more. I'll take my hat, and go. You didn't look at me and turn me away. Ma'am you took me in, and fed me, that's the godly way.

"There have been many doors I've knocked on, and they were quickly slammed in my face. Many sat at their tables with folded hands and bowed heads as they said grace. They shouldn't fear me, or be alarmed. I'm a stranger, who has never done anyone any harm.

"Day by day as I trod, I prayed for those people because their ignorance separated them from God. Man tends to judge the outside of a person, as that is what they see. But God looks at what is on the inside of me. I often wonder, as I journey on my way, if Jesus came to visit some of those people, would they let him in, or turn him away."

I looked at the stranger, and said, "It's a shame; I didn't ask your name." He looked at me, and said, "A stranger, that's all, just a stranger." I watched as he walked down that old twisted dirt road with everything he had. I gave him food; he took in a brown burlap bag.

I think of the stranger who came to call that day. I'm thankful I could give, in a kind and godly way.

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ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW

Passion and Impact – Danilo Perez and the Panama Jazz Festival

By Yvonne Mendez



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.

club, and started playing music. Everyone was scared, but despite their political affiliation, anti-USA or not, everyone was united in the music. This was the start of his idea to use music to unify communities.

After the invasion, gangs and violence ruled the poorest parts of Panama. Perez realized he could make an impact on youth and poverty, through his talent and musi-

Grammy nominated pianist Danilo Perez is a world-renown pianist, composer,



Danilo Perez

producer, educator and activist. He serves as a UNESCO Artist for Peace, and also served as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. He is the founder of the Global Jazz Institute at Berklee, offering musical study as a tool for social change. Perez has leveraged his talent and resources to make an impact in his native country of Panama. He is the founder and artistic director of the Panama Jazz Festival.

In 1989, Perez was in Panama during the U.S. invasion. As he recounts the tale, he says there were explosions going off everywhere. He figured if he was going to die, it might as well be playing music. So he got some folks together at a local

cal connections. He mobilized the people and community leaders, and together they created a plan to reclaim the city. In a successful grassroots campaign, they connected with gang members on the street, training them in various skills including tourism, food and dance. Perez's expertise was music, so he began working directly with the youth. In 2003, he founded the Panama Jazz Festival. He brought together an international lineup of jazz musicians, who taught workshops and master classes, as well as performing on stage. The 2003 lineup included Regina Carter, Steve Turre, Kenny Barron, and more.

continues to page 35

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:
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REFLECTIONS OF 2019

Rosemary Tracy Woods, Executive Director
William "Billy" Myers, Artistic Director/Gallery Design

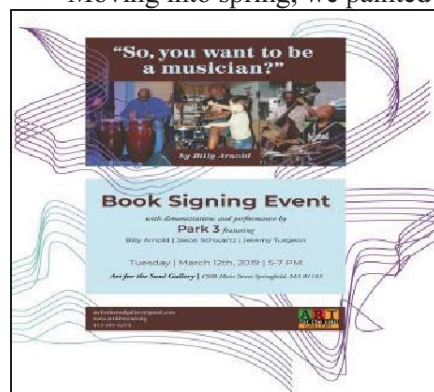


Art for the Soul has had a very exciting 2019 and we are looking forward to an even more exciting 2020. Starting off in January 2019, with a sponsorship from the Springfield Cultural Council, the gallery was able to host another great African American Artist – Dane Tilghman.



March roared in like a lion and so did Springfield's William "Billy" Arnold, with a book signing of his recently published book "So you want to be a musician." Billy Arnold, professional drummer and recording artist, has been a drum instructor for Springfield College, Holyoke Community College, Suffield Academy, Amherst College and the Community Music School of Springfield to name a few. He has traveled all over the world making music.

Moving into spring, we painted the town with



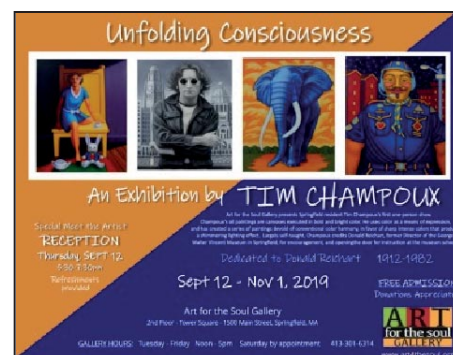
laborative. The Mural Project ran from June 2 to June 8th, a week of community paint parties and gatherings and ending in a wonderful community artists' reception. Fresh Paint will certainly be around for 2020 and we promise to have just as much fun!

Several local artists were selected for the mu-



ral, including Emerging Artist, Ryan Murray, who is pictured above with his mural, Springfield Sanctuary. You can find this mural in Union Station. Murray explained what this mural means to him: "...the mural was not only a tribute to LaJuana Hood, former Executive Director of PAHMUSA, whose passing has left a void in the community, but it was also the largest project I have ever done." He continues by describing the message he wanted to convey with this mural. "This was a great opportunity to educate the public about a topic with which they might not be familiar—the relationship of the underground railroad and its connection to the City of Springfield." Ryan's works can be seen at ryana-murray.com.

The beautiful fall leaves bring such wonderful colors and Springfield resident Tim Champoux's "Unfolding Consciousness" is just as colorful. Champoux's first one-person show featured his bold, bright oil paintings on canvases. Champoux states, "I use color as a means of expression and have created a series of paintings devoid of conventional color harmony, in favor of sharp intense colors that produce a shimmering light effect."

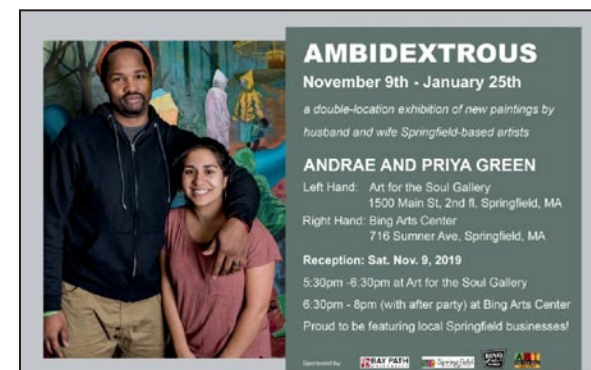


See art4thesoul.org. Our final

exhibition of 2019, "Am-bidextrous," featured husband and wife team, Andrae and Priya Green.

Priya Green states, "It is a progression from our last major artistic collaboration in June 2019," a large-scale mural entitled "Victory" on Taylor St., Springfield, part of the Fresh Paint mural festival." The couple has

shown their paintings both internationally and nationally. However, this exhibition will be the first time they will show their work together. This is a double location exhibition of new paintings by the Springfield-based artists. They plan to lead gallery talks and private showings. Please contact 413-687 8707 for additional information.



As we bid 2019 farewell, here is a sneak peek at a few of the many exciting events we have planned for 2020!

- February – Don Blanton
- March – Save Women Artist Now (SWAN) featuring an all-female exhibition
- April-May – Creative Quarantine featuring Larry Poncho Brown and guests
- June – Fresh Paint Springfield 2020

The gallery is available to rent for special occasions, poetry slams and book signings. We will continue to do our Cultural Trips to the Museum, Broadway and other cultural events.

Happy Holidays and Thank you for your continued support. See you in 2020! ■

We Don't Slam, We Jam

continued from page 16

migratory memories of artists whose frequent trips from the homeland to stateside America changed the literary landscapes of how we used Spanish and English (Spanglish) to reflect a sympathetic and empathetic overture of our literary gifts.

GM: The awareness and use of the power of the arts for social and political change. And its ability to help and promote the culture, while connecting and clarifying our struggles over numerous injustices that we collectively face. The power of the Internet is a noteworthy change in our ability to reach the masses like never before.

MG: Over the years I've noted how many people confuse the Nuyorican Café, which is a venue, with the Nuyorican Literary Movement. How would you describe the rise of the Nuyorican Literary Movement?

JAF: The rise of a new literary movement described as Nuyorican literature grew from dual-language artists who paved the way for the new writers of the mid-1960s to the early 1980s while the artists of the 1940s to the 1960s used short stories, novels, and drama. Those writers include René Marqués (The Oxcart), Jesus Colón, Nicholasa Mohr, and Piri Thomas, who introduced the migrant and transformational experience into a major Puerto Rican art form. These significant changes came from avant-garde street theater like Miriam Colón's Puerto Rican Traveling Theater, lyrical songs by the troubadours like Ramito, and Afro-Cuban and the salsa music explosion during the mid-1970s which included Machito, La Lupe, Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, and Ray Barretto. These artists influenced the voices and poetic wisdom of Neorriqueño and Nuyorican artists whose themes were based on racism, sexism, capitalist exploitation, segregation, and eco-political struggles that these artists put on paper. The novice voices born or raised in the inner cities of New York were also inspired by the pioneers of the Harlem Renaissance including Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. Other influences... Civil Rights and Black Arts Movements of the 1960s (Motown, Amiri Baraka, Ella Fitzgerald, Malcolm X, Satchmo, rhythm & blues, and the birth of cool spearheaded by Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis et al). This was the decades of Black Fire and the rise of a new Latinx literary movement. One of the distinct differences in the Neorican versus Nuyorican literary movements is the powerful voices of women as poets and writers, most of whom were ignored or side swept by chauvinist writers and editors who were too in love with their crap to witness the birth of great literature that

helped to liberate our souls. Writers like Julia de Burgos and Clara Nair paved the road for women who struggled for recognition, respect, and an opportunity to shine on stage. However, the literary your highnesses, who thought their genitalia was so big they had to wrap it around their shoulders, kept their beautiful minds out of sight and out of hearing.

MG: I can attest to that, as I was, as you know, one the excluded. Our late brother, may he forever be present, Louis Reyes Rivera, told me the reason I was not welcome: "You were a woman who could not be had." Hah! I lived on the block across the street from the original Nuyorican Café on East 6th Street. Many of those men hit on me (to no avail) but did nothing to encourage me. You, José Angel, were among the few who mentored and/or encouraged me in my youth, along with Louis Reyes Rivera, Pedro Pietri, Crispin Larangeira, and, of course, Sandra María Esteves, who made sure I was published in the first multicultural women's poetry anthology: *Ordinary Women/Mujeres Comunes*. I had other mentors who were nearly erased, outside of the Movement, like poets Emilie Glen and Barbara A. Holland, who provided my first performance venues, along with Richard Spiegel, founder of Ten Penny Players who, like yourself, brought poetry into the lives of adjudicated youth.

JAF: It was writers like Myrna Nieves, Sandra María Esteves, Luz María Umpierre-Herrera, Etanairis Ribera, Marithelma Acosta, Aurora L. Morales, yourself, Judith Ortiz Cofer and others, who strove not to be erased while breaking new ground in contemporary feminist studies.

MG: Decades later, and you still encourage me. Thank you! George, this question is for you specifically. What inspired you to become a photographer? What is the primary intention of your photography work? Why did you choose drawings over photographs for *The Invisibles*?

GM: I did not decide art was my path, it chose me, I never questioned it, it just felt right. Since the age of seven I have been creating, first in drawing and painting, then photography, graphic design, digital images and recently book and printmaking. The camera has been my diary, a time-machine that has allowed me to record with light, my/our journey through time and space. It turns out that a collective portrait has emerged from the body of work, 50+ years in the making, that reflects our particular cultural existence.

MG: What do each of you hope to accomplish



L to R José Angel Figueroa, Magdalena Gómez, George Malave at Fordham University

Photo by James Lescault

through your art? Has that intention evolved through the years?

GM: I started out using the arts to discover the unknown, learning through the arts and others' experiences, our history and possibilities. Each work created is a life lesson, a way of evolving into something new. Of gaining a better understanding of who we are and might become. My early work was about exploring the outer world in which we collectively live, gradually it evolved into examining the things we too often take for granted: light, colors, place, the senses, family and strangers. My hope is that my work inspires others to appreciate and express gratitude for what is.

JAF: Pablo Picasso said, "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." Got poetry? It is more effective and cheaper than therapy. I'm proud to say that I've helped children and learners of all ages use poetry to tap into their inner wisdom. Some have used it as an anti-suicide mission. A few have become professional artists, respected cultural workers, and greater human beings. One of my greatest achievements via poetics: To encourage free thinkers never to let hope get stuck in their ribs and refuse to become an endangered species. I guess I've evolved because it's been ages since I was asked, "Are you still writing poetry?"

As we enter 2020, I encourage all of us to take a moment to reflect and express gratitude to those on whose shoulders we stand. Remember and celebrate the living and the dead. The veil is thin, and the influences endure. May the memories and gratitude continue to fuel our passions, actions, and inner worlds. ■

COMMUNITY

GOOD NEWS - DECEMBER 2019



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

This month's Good News column is for those of us who have been facing difficulties in life (which is most of us). We want to share with you some uplifting information—you are not alone! If you feel you are carrying a heavy burden, you are not alone! God has given you something special – LIFE. We, the community, need to share our energy and resources with those who are less fortunate. Whatever you have in abundance, you should share with

the less fortunate. If you are free and mobile, you should visit the restricted and shut-in. We are talking about those in jail who need a visit to know they are not forgotten. We should visit the hospitals and rehab centers to encourage those who are in need of rehabilitation. We should share our energy and spirit. You will be surprised at the surprise and delight you bring about with just a short visit to those who are immobile.

I came from a large family and trying to keep up with my sisters, brothers, cousins, grandchildren, and the whole family is very difficult. My cousin, Marita Bledsoe, has started a telephone tree to connect our family each month. I

am delighted to receive and send a phone call to them—to allow them to share their love and spirits. We may be bored at times, which means you can do other things to fill that void. You can write, you can phone, you can visit those who are less fortunate. I have not mentioned money. It's up to you to determine whether or not you are able to share financial resources. I am speaking about whatever you have in abundance – mobility, energy and spirit. Find time to share, let others know you are thinking of them.

As I remember the various books and poems I have read, the one that stands out most to me is the "IF" poem by Rudyard Kipling. ■

26th Annual RAYS OF HOPE



Walk & Run Toward the Cure of Breast Cancer

If
By Rudyard Kipling - 1865-1936

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!";
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!*

(written in 1895)

(Top Photo) Prince Hall Masons from Richard Allen Lodge #30 with the Rays of Hope 2019 Chair Denise Jordan, Executive Director of the Springfield Housing Authority.

(L to R) Alex Cotton, Richard Griffin Jr., Jordan, Darrin Hayes and Everett Handford

(Bottom Photo)

It's a Family Affair: Willie, Pat and Dwight Spradley

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Volunteers Needed For Income Tax Program

SPRINGFIELD, MA – Springfield Partners for Community Action is currently seeking volunteers to help prepare taxes during the upcoming income tax season in its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. No previous experience is necessary; free IRS-certified training will be provided. **Trainings will be offered in late December and January**; tax preparation will be conducted from late January to mid-April 2020. Hours are flexible. Volunteers may be eligible for college credit.

VITA helps low-moderate income taxpayers identify, file and

claim available tax credits that are rightfully theirs. The agency has been the lead organization for VITA in the local area since 2002, during which time 42,911 taxes have been prepared and submitted on behalf of low-income, working taxpayers. Closing the 2018 tax season, volunteers prepared tax returns for 1,550 customers, saved them \$465,000 in filing fees and helped them claim 4.5 million in tax credits.

Springfield Partners is the designated community action agency for income-eligible residents of Greater Springfield. In addition to VITA, we offer Credit Counseling, Financial Lit-

eracy, Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics, Emergency Fuel Fund, Eviction Clinic, Weatherization, HUD-Certified Housing Counseling, First Time Homebuyer Education, Veterans Services, New Beginnings Early Education and Care, and Community Scholarships. The mission of Spring-

field Partners is to utilize and provide resources that assist people in need to obtain economic stability, ultimately creating a better way of life.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Laura Manship at 413-263-6500 ext. 6001 or email lauram@springfieldpartnersinc.com.

ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW

Passion and Impact – Danilo Perez and the Panama Jazz Festival

continued from page 31

In 2005, Perez started La Fundacion Danilo Perez, a school and a community institution in Panama. Perez is clear that La Fundacion works with youth on more than just music. “They need more than just music lessons... they need real care, real love...,” he says in the video, *Danilo Perez: A Man, A Plan and A Canal*, [<https://youtu.be/p69AU4Ot0LE>]. La Fundacion started with six students and now more than 20,000 have studied there. The foundation has excelled with the help of musicians like Chucho Valdez, Herbie Hancock, Jack DeJohnette, Wayne Shorter and more.

Now in its 17th year, the Panama Jazz Festival is a part of the world stage of music festivals making change. **The next festival is January 13-18, 2020.** The festival site is an old American military base, a space that has retained the stigma of U.S. occupation. But in another revo-

lutionary move, the Festival has reclaimed that ground as a vibrant cultural space at the forefront of community and cultural strength in Panama. The Festival stands strong as a desired jazz destination, and a leader of economic and cultural growth in Panama. Perez’s efforts are a great case study and inspiration for others using music as a means for social change.

Learn more:

Global Jazz Institute, Danilo Perez, <https://www.berklee.edu/focused/global-jazz>

YouTube: Danilo Perez:

A Man, A Plan and A canal,

<https://youtu.be/p69AU4Ot0LE>

Panama Jazz Festival: <https://panamajazzfestival.com/en/inicio-2020/>

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MISCELLANEOUS

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR — DECEMBER 2019



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

**November 27, 2019 – January 5, 2020
BRIGHT NIGHTS**

Closed December 2 - 3, 2019

**Sunday through Thursday
5PM to 9PM**

**Friday, Saturday and Holidays*
5PM to 11PM**

New Year's Day - 5PM to 9PM

**Buses with Reservations Priority
5PM to 6PM**

Rates: Mon. — Thurs — \$20 per car
Fri — Sun and Holidays*
\$25 per car

December 3 (Tuesday)

OnBoard

FREE Board of Directors Matching Event

Where: Naismith Memorial Basketball
Hall of Fame
1000 Hall of Fame Ave.,
Spfld., MA

When: 5PM–8PM

Register: www.diversityonboard.net

December 4 (Wednesday)

After American Son

Netflix Movie review panel around
racism and criminal justice system in this
country

Where: 675 Main St., Middletown, CT

When: 6PM–7:30PM — **FREE**

Info: 860-527-738

December 5 (Thursday)

**Downtown Springfield YMCA Grand
Opening**

Where: Tower Square
1500 Main St., Spfld., MA

When: 3PM — **Parking on Level A*

Info: 413-739-6951

December 6 and December 22

Black Nativity, Langston Hughes' joyful
gospel song-play retelling the Nativity
story, returns for its 49th year to Boston.
Its 12 performances are presented at
Emerson College's Paramount Center in
the Theatre District.

Where: Paramount Center
559 Washington Street
Boston, MA

Shows: Friday, 12/6/2019 - 8:00pm
Saturday, 12/7/2019 - 3:30pm
& 8:00pm

Sunday, 12/8/2019 - 3:30pm
Friday, 12/13/2019 - 8:00pm
Saturday, 12/14/2019 - 3:30pm
& 8:00pm

Sunday, 12/15/2019 - 3:30pm
Friday, 12/20/2019 - 8:00pm
Saturday, 12/21/2019 - 3:30pm
& 8:00pm

Sunday, 12/22/2019 - 3:30pm
Tickets: \$65.00, \$47.50 and \$35.00
Info: (617) 824-8000 or
www.blacknativity.org

December 7 (Saturday)

**El Parrandon/Ugly Sweater Christmas
Party**

Where: J's Crab Shack
2074 Park St., Hartford, CT

When: 6PM–11PM

Info: www.hartfordprparade.com



December 7 and December 14

Get ready for the big day with holiday-
themed family activities. **Free** with mu-
seum admission!

Where: The Springfield Museums
21 Edwards Street
Springfield, MA 01103

When: 10AM–5PM

- **Meet Santa, 11 am-2 pm**
- **Santa's Workshop, 11 am-3 pm**
- **Mount Crumpit Derby, 11 am-3 pm**
- **Meet the Grinch, 12-3 pm**
- **Art Discovery Center, 12-4 pm**

December 8 (Sunday)

**Meet Santa, Princesses, Buzz Lightyear,
& Baby Shark for Breakfast**

Where: Center Square Grill
84 Center St.,
East Longmeadow, MA

When: 9:30AM–11AM

Tickets: \$30.13

Info: 413-525-0055 or
www.eventbrite.com

December 11 (Wednesday)

Zoo Night at Bright Nights

Where: Zoo in Forest Park &
Education Center, Spfld., MA

When: 5PM–8PM

Tickets: \$5/adult — **FREE**/12 & under
FREE/military families with
active ID

**Bright Nights park entry fee required*

December 14 (Saturday)

**Co-op Power Sustainability Summit and
Annual Meeting**

Where: TechSpring - The Baystate
Health Technology
Innovation Center
1350 Main St., Spfld., MA

When: 10AM–5PM

Info: 413-772-8898 or
ernesto@cooppower.coop

December 14 (Saturday)

Breakfast with Santa

Where: Mass Mutual Center
1277 Main St., Spfld., MA

When: 8:30AM–10AM

Tickets: ev2.eventbrite.com

Info: www.sbgc.org/festival-of-trees-about-us

December 14 (Saturday)

Sharon Katz & The Peace Train

Where: Mount Toby Friends Meeting
194 Long Plain Rd. (Rt 63),
Leverett, MA

When: 7:30PM

Info: Suggested donation: \$15-\$30
<https://mttobyconcerts.wordpress.com>

December 19 (Thursday)

**Ward 4 Democratic Committee Egg-nog
Party**

Food, Prizes, Fun!

Where: Fraternal Order of the Eagles
530 St. James Ave., Spfld., MA

When: 6PM–9PM

Tickets: \$20

December 27 (Friday)

2019 Citywide Kwanzaa Celebration

Where: UMASS Center Springfield
1500 Main St. (2nd fl),
Spfld., MA

When: 12PM–2PM — **FREE**

December 29 (Sunday)

Afrobeats & Mimosas

Where: Soul Baila
735 Wethersfield Ave.,
Hartford, CT

When: 1PM–5PM

Info: www.eventbrite.com

December 6-22

**Langston Hughes' Holiday Classic Black
Nativity**

Where: Paramount Center
559 Washington St.,
Boston, MA

When: various times

Tickets: \$35, \$47.50, \$65

Info: 617-824-8000 or
www.blacknativity.org

Mondays

Women & Girls Open Gym

Where: South End Community Center
99 Marble St., Spfld., MA

When: 6:30PM–8:30PM — \$1 fee

Info: 413-788-6173

Tuesdays

**Adult Basic Education (GED/HiSET
Classes)**

Where: Training Resources of America
32-34 Hampden St.,
Ground level Spfld., MA

When: 11AM — **FREE**

Info: 413-732-2223 or
jmcdonald@tra-inc.org

Mondays

Forest Park C3

Community Engagement Initiative Work-
ing Together for a Safer Community

Where: Calvarys Love Church
17 Oakland St., Spfld., MA

When: 10AM

Tuesdays

Mason Square C3

Community Engagement Initiative Work-
ing Together for a Safer Community

Where: Mason Square Branch Library
765 State St., Spfld., MA

When: 11AM

Wednesday

Metro/South C3

Community Engagement Initiative Work-
ing Together for a Safer Community

Where: South End Citizens Council
510 Main St., Spfld., MA

When: 11AM

Tuesdays & Thursdays

Co-Ed Adult Kickball League

Where: South End Community Center
99 Marble St., Spfld., MA
\$100/team, \$15/individual

Info: 413-788-6173 ask for Dion

*For more events
happening in the
community,
please visit our website
at www.afampov.com*

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

DON'T MISS A VISIT TO ABU DHABI AND DUBAI

continued from page 24

Holloway family and friends group, will never let me forget what I almost missed but for her.

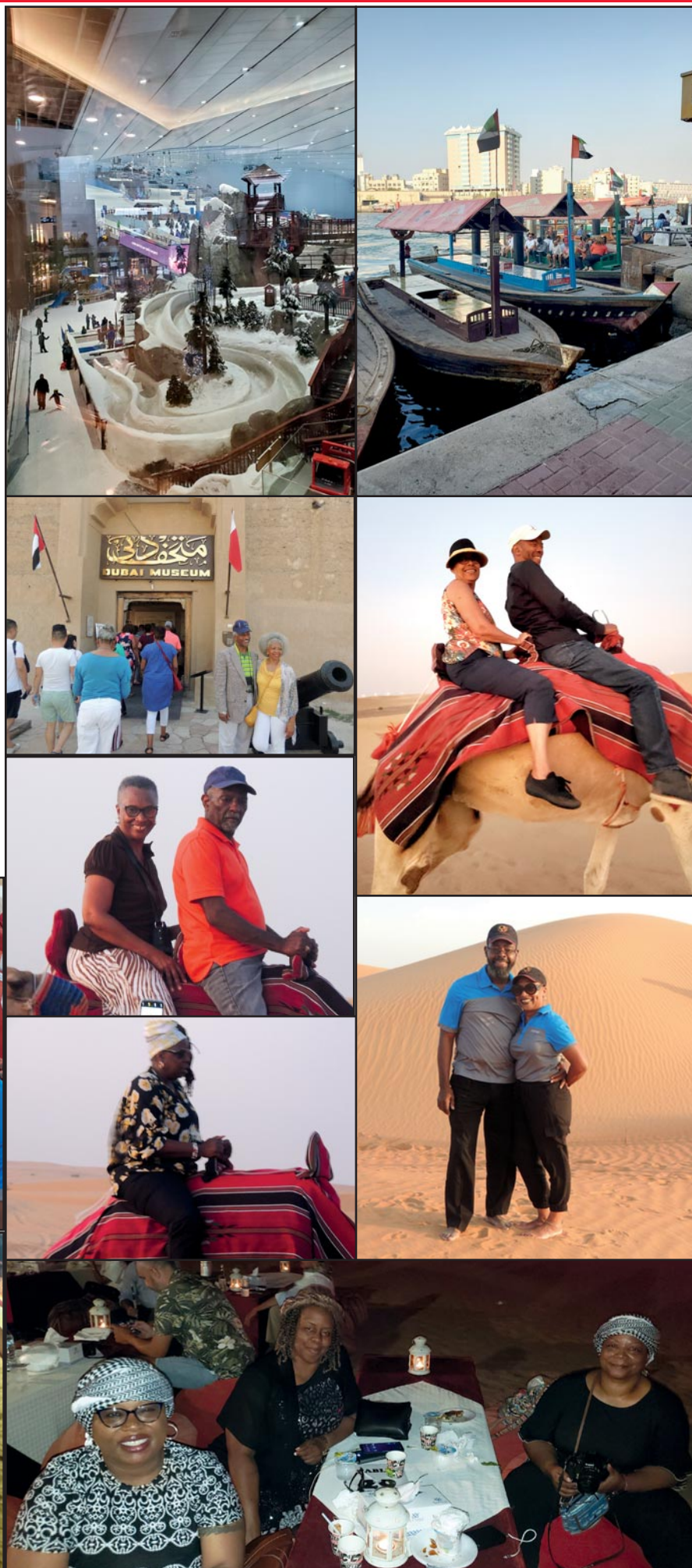
My image of both was of an airport and desert with a few tourist hotels manned by folks who spoke Arabic, dressed strangely and hated Americans and, worst of all, prohibited alcoholic beverages. My big concern, however, was the instability in the region.

The UAE is a Persian Gulf nation right in the geographical mix with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Turkey! You get what I mean. Most of them shoot at each other! And it's some serious shooting. They can hit airplanes! And ISIS is still around. They kidnap people! And cut off heads! It's not that I expected we would encounter any of this stuff on the trip. But I like to err on the better side of caution and was having a hard time overcoming the cautious

man's main question: Why take the chance?"

First of all, the official language of the UAE is English. It was much easier to communicate with folks than in most European and Asian countries we've visited. I don't recall hearing any Arabic during the entire nine days. And if you like to share your vacations with cocktails—though somewhat restricted—they were readily available. But most important, Abu Dhabi and Dubai are thoroughly modern, safe locations that have invested their oil money wisely in ways that will make them competitive destination points long after their oil is depleted. And you can complete the nonstop trip out of New York on Emirates Airlines in 12 hours.

We didn't get to visit the other five emirates in the UAE but they are all a part of an extremely progressive area of the Middle East that you must visit to fully appreciate. ■



Caring Health Center's 25th Anniversary Gala-A Night in Oz



President & CEO Tania M. Barber with Honoree Eileen McCaffery



Honoree Ibrahim Ali



Honoree Anne Richmond



Honoree Wesley Jackson



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25TH PASTORAL

Anniversary

AND

15TH WEDDING

Anniversary

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SATURDAY-SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7-8, 2019

THEME: "GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS: GOD'S GRACE FOR 25 YEARS IN MINISTRY"

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8TH
MORNING WORSHIP CELEBRATION SERVICE
10:30 A.M.**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP INSPIRATION:
"LET THE WHOLE CHURCH PRAISE HIS FAITHFULNESS!"**

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TRIBUTES: MINISTERS, LEADERS & COMMUNITY VOICES

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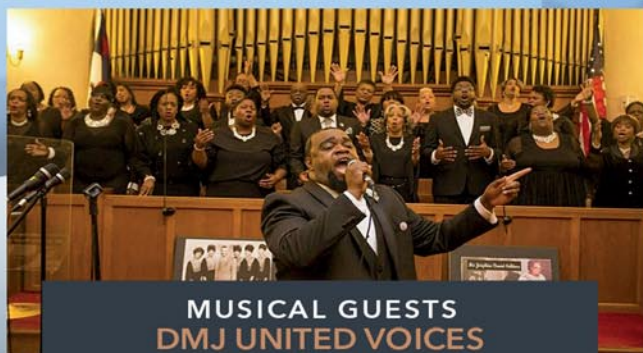
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**TICKET DONATION:
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\$30.00 FOR YOUTH 13-18
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(CHILDREN 12 AND UNDER)**



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER (12/7):
BISHOP ROBERT G. BROWN**

PRESIDING PRELATE OF COVENANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH ALLIANCE
AND SENIOR PASTOR OF ZION CHURCH MINISTRIES, EVERETT, MA



**MUSICAL GUESTS
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