Our Finest Hour

By Wilma Dean*

For the last 33 years, (with one exception, 2020) Reading’s African American community has met on the third Thursday evening in June for a banquet to honor local high school graduates. Our youths, our beacons for the future, are our most important resource. This event is our most important activity. It is indeed, OUR FINEST HOUR.

The Annual Scholarship Award Banquet was the “brain child” of Dr. Ronald Smith more than three decades ago. Dr. Smith, a former president of the Reading chapter of the NAACP, practiced medicine at Reading Hospital as an anesthesiologist for more than thirty years. He is now retired, and he currently lives in South Carolina. In 2013 the name of this activity was changed to the Dr. Ronald Smith Awards and Recognition Celebration. Because of the restrictions of the Corona Pandemic, this activity did not take place last year, and this year’s event took place virtually via Zoom (thanks to the skillful computer skills of Jennifer Hanf) on June 17, 2021. It was planned collaboratively by the Sisterhood and the Dr. Ron Smith Scholar Banquet Committee, which was headed by Dionne Stubbs.

The Sisterhood was founded 21 years ago for the purpose of encouraging women new to the community to get involved in community activities and to mentor young women. The Sisterhood has been a Godsend for our community. Ramona Turpin has been their president during all of their existence. Turpin was the superb Mistress of Ceremony for this event.

Rev. Jerry Jones, the Pastor of St. John Missionary Baptist Church, provided the invocation, and Rev. Alberta Jones, the Pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church of Reading, PA, provided the benediction for this program. Dr. Joseph Amprey provided a message of inspiration.

Another important part of the program was an announcement by Sharon Davis, the President of the Youth of Yesterday, of the availability of textbook funds provided by The Youth of Yesterday. This organization was founded in 1968 by the late Reba Templeton. The Youth of Yesterday have continued, since its founding, to assist Berks County college and university African American students with grants for textbooks.

Finally, Dr. Linda Matthews set forth powerful closing remarks in which she encouraged the students to define themselves before others attempted to define them.

The students were given scholarship awards by the St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church, the Reading chapter of the NAACP, and Bethel A.M.E. Church. These altruistic organizations were represented by Lisa Blount, Dionne Stubbs, and Mary Jo Smith respectively.

Listed below are the honorees and their future plans.

Dominic DuRant – Former Scholarship Recipient, and currently attending Millersville University - Computer Science

Malia R Ewen, BM – Student Speaker, Oakwood University Graduate, Vocal Performance and Music Pedagogy Degrees

Elijah Williams – will be attending Lincoln University and majoring in Major: Sports Medicine or Sports Management

Siyana Price-Lee – will be going into the US Navy.

Samire Price-Lee – will be attending Millersville University and majoring in Social Work

Fatama Jarieu Barrie – will be attending Reading Area Community College and majoring in Social Work or Music

Aracelis Aponte-Ruiz – will be attending Stephenson University and majoring in Zoology

A word from the Publisher,
Joseph Amprey

It is very important that we stay informed by making use of honest and dependable news sources. That why I am recommending that we use the Black News Channel (https://bnc.tv) The BNC is an independent network, minority-owned and operated. Its mission is to provide intelligent programming that is informative, educational, entertaining, inspiring, and empowering to its African American audience.

Juneteenth: Save the Date

Reading’s City Hall on Friday, June 18, 2021. Holding the flag is Lyra Talarico. To her right is Elder Lee Wilder who gave a powerful welcome to the attendees of that ceremony. Stacey Taylor, the President of the Reading Chapter of the NAACP served as the program’s Mistress of Ceremony. Other enthusiastic speakers included US Representative Chrissy Houlanhan, PA State Senator Judy Schwank, PA State Representative Manny Guzman, Reading City Councilwoman, Marcia Hinnershitz and the recently victorious Democratic primary City Council Candidate, Wesley Butler (pictured behind Talarico).

Enthusiastically encouraged by the advocates and the Congressional Black Caucus, on June 15, 2021, the US Senate unanimously passed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, establishing Juneteenth as a federal holiday; it subsequently passed through the House of Representatives by a 415-14 vote on June 16. On June 17, 2021, President Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, which officially made Juneteenth a federal holiday.

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plus more!
Eric Turman Is The New Superintendent Of The Harrisburg School District

On June 16, 2021, the Harrisburg School District appointed Reading High Principal, Eric Turman, to be the district’s new superintendent. He started his new position on July 1, 2021.

Turman served brilliantly as the principal of Reading High School for ten years. With an enrollment of more than 5,300 students, the “Castle on the Hill” is one of the largest high schools in Pennsylvania. He has been credited with helping to improve graduation rates from 53% in 2011 to as high as 72% in 2019, with also a decrease in student dropout and suspension rates, and an increase in the high school’s school performance profile data. Turman gave much of the credit for his success to the talented administrators and teachers who were a part of his team of educators.

Prior to his appointment to Reading High School, Turman was the Director of Elementary and Secondary Education for the Reading School District.

Turman is a graduate of the former Holy Name High School (now Berks Catholic High School), and he earned his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from Alvernia University.

CONGRATULATIONS Eric Turman!

Save the Date

Other enthusiastic Juneteenth speakers included the following:

Juneteenth commemorates General Order No. 3 which was issued by Major General Gordon Granger, who arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865. The issuing of this order and the arrival of Federal troops in Galveston effectively ended the Civil War and emancipated those confined to a life of slavery. Specifically, Granger made the following declaration in General Order No. 3:

“On Monday, June 21, 2021, Abraham Amoros, the Managing Director of Reading, PA announced that Mayor Eddie Moran has issued an executive order to declare Juneteenth a holiday in the City of Reading, which will be observed on June 19.”

Save the date, June 19th, which started as a holiday previously for African Americans in numerous states in the US, South and in Nacimiento de los Negros in Coahuila, Mexico (since 1850 by escaped African American slaves), for JUNE NINETEEN is now a federal holiday!

You are growing into consciousness, and my wish for you is that you feel no need to constrict yourself to make other people comfortable.

~Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me

PLEASE SUPPORT THE ENTERPRISES THAT ADVERTISE IN THE DRUM AND ENCOURAGE THE ENTERPRISES YOU USE TO ADVERTISE IN THE DRUM.
Alex Haley (1931-1992)

Alex Haley was born August 11, 1931 in Ithaca, NY. He was the son of a college professor who taught agriculture at several colleges. Haley was not a very good student. He dropped out of college after two years of study and enlisted in the US Coast Guard where he served for twenty years. While in the Coast Guard, he developed into a skillful writer.

Haley was quite successful as a freelance writer. However, he is most famous for two of the most popular books during the latter half of the twentieth century, The Autobiography of Malcolm X (which he co-wrote with Malcolm X) and Roots, in which he traced his family heritage back to Gambia in West Africa. Both were best sellers. The Autobiography of Malcolm X was made into a movie by Spike Lee, (the award-winning film maker) and Roots was an award-winning television mini series. Also, Roots won a National Book Award and a special Pulitzer Prize in 1977.

Malcolm X, who was a drug addict and a convicted felon, who turned his life around after a conversion to the “Black Muslim” religion. He was perhaps the most popular American among youths in the ten years (1965-75) following his assassination and the publication of his autobiography.

Barack Hussein Obama (1961- )

Barack Hussein Obama II was born on August 4, 1961. He is a former community organizer, former law professor, and attorney, who served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017. As a member of the Democratic Party, Obama was the first African American President of the United States. Political scientists and historians have evaluated President Obama as being among the upper tier of American Presidents.

Prior to being elected as President of the USA, he served as a State Senator (1997-2004) and a United States Senator (2004-2008) for the state of Illinois.

Obama is a graduate of Columbia University (Bachelor’s Degree) and Harvard Law School. He is the author of four best selling books, Dreams of My Father, The Audacity of Hope, Change We Can Believe In, and A Promised Land.

In 2009, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Barack H. Obama “for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.”

ABOUT US

THE DRUM is published 6 times annually. Hereafter, we will publish in February, April, June, August, October, & December.

OUR MISSION IS TO CELEBRATE BLACK ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS.

Please call us at 610.372.5049 or email us at readingdrumnewspaper@gmail.com or write to us at THE DRUM, P.O. Box 12711, Reading PA, 19612 with topic suggestions.

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THE READING NAACP HONORS FIVE LOCAL UNSUNG HEROES
By Wilma Dean

On June 18, 2021, the Reading chapter of the NAACP paid a most impressive virtual tribute (via Zoom) to five local unsung heroes: Dr. Joseph Amprey, Jr., the late Danny Gilmore, Patsy Jefferson, Reverend Frank D. McCracken, and the late Kermit Stern. Listed below are the biographies of the honorees.

JOSEPH AMPREY, Ph.D.
A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Dr. Joseph L. Amprey, Jr., is a retired professor from the Department of Student Support Services, the International Students’ Advisor, and the Director of the Multicultural Studies Program at Kutztown University. He was employed at Kutztown University for 21 years. His fields of specialization are human diversity, race relations, psychology, and international studies. He earned a B. A. at Morgan State University in Baltimore, an M.Ed. at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, an M.S. at the University of Baltimore, and a Ph.D. at The American University in Washington, D.C. For three years, he was the editor of the Journal of the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals; and for 11 years, he wrote a column on race relations for the Reading Eagle in Reading, Pennsylvania. He is also the editor of the book, Student Development on the Small Campus, and the author of many papers for professional journals and other scholarly publications. Presently, he is publisher and editor of The Drum, a bimonthly newspaper which focuses on news and views affecting people of color in Berks County, PA.

DANNY GILMORE
He was a graduate of Reading High School in 1965 where he was an outstanding athlete, playing multiple sports.

He was one of the original members of the Iron Men Athletic Association. Danny coached basketball at Cabrini Academy with Robert Flowers, where they coached for several years. Danny also coached football for the Northwest Athletic Association. He served as a mentor to many throughout his life, especially through coaching youth.

PATSY JEFFERSON
Patsy Jefferson was employed by CNA Insurance Company for a total of 36 years. Her initial position was Clerk Typist. However, she used her many talents to progress upward rapidly taking positions in Maryland and Illinois in underwriting, sales and finally upper management.

After retiring from CNA, she returned to Reading and was employed by 2 banks, then ILEAD Charter School, and finally Family First Resource Center. She accepted the position of NAACP Treasurer in 1998. She also served her local community as the Executive Director the 55+ Senior Center, a co-author of the “History of Washington Presbyterian Church,” and as a treasurer at Zion Baptist Church.

REV. FRANK D. MCCRACKEN
Reverend Frank D. McCracken, the first elected Black City Councilman in the history of Reading, Pennsylvania, has been a dedicated leader within the City of Reading and the surrounding area for over 50 years by influencing more than twenty-three community oriented organizations.

Reverend McCracken has generously contributed his time and energies with numerous organizations, including Berks Children and Youth Services, Berks County American Lung Association, Berks County Pro-Kids, and is the co-founder of the Progressive Organization of Afro-Americans. He served as Vice President and Treasurer of “One Church One Child” of Pennsylvania, Executive Board Member of the NAACP, Reading Chapter. He served as Vice Chairman of SAIDAC, South African Industrial Development & Agriculture Corporation, a vocational training school in Sierra Leone, West Africa (over 400 students). He was appointed by Governor Richard Thornburg to the Council of Trustees for the University and was elected Chairman of the Council. He served in that capacity for nearly 10 years.

Reverend Frank D. McCracken founded the St. James Christian Academy, Reading, PA. He attended and graduated from Kutztown University, with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration and a minor in Political Science.

Reverend McCracken formerly held the position of President and General Manager of Reading Broadcasting Inc. WTVE TV51 [a regional broadcasting station serving nearly 2 million households in the PA, NJ, NY, and DE Region]. Reverend McCracken was also Pastor and President of the St. James Chapel Church of God In Christ for more than 25 years. He is currently President of Berks County Resource Consortium.

KERMIT STERN
Kermit Stern, the late director of Mulberry Street Olivet’s Boys & Girls club for 20 years, was an extremely active and passionate leader for Reading’s youth.

Kermit’s innovative and transformational leadership has impacted many lives. His impactful work in the community exemplified his dedication, passion, and commitment for upholding the Olivet’s mission for all young people to reach their fullest potential as healthy, productive, and caring responsible citizens.

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Strut Your Stuff Mighty Mike!

Because he is so talented and so industrious, Michael Reese has been featured often in the DRUM, as a Certified Recovery Specialist at Tower Health, as a Retired Public Servant for the City of Reading, as President of the Million Youth Chess Club, as a Board Member of the Community Action Program, as a Board Member of the Caron Foundation, as a Long Distance/Marathon Runner, and as a Retired Board Member of the United Way of Berks County.

However, for the first time, we are proud to feature him in his role (as a member of the Board of Trustees of Albright College) at his first Albright College Graduation on May 30, 2021. Strut your stuff Mighty Mike because you look great in a Cap and Gown!

Going Back to School
By Carmen Booker

Reading has a lot of young talent! We have great hoodies designed by local Reading youth, Cameron Brown, for The House of Portalatin.

We are donating free book bags to anyone who purchases a Back to School youth hoody.

The hoodies are made of a cotton and polyester blend and the cost is $40. They are of good quality and are great for Fall 2021. Limited edition, so contact Carmen at 484.797.1434 to get yours today!

**Designer:** young Cameron Brown

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- Senior Community Centers
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- Ombudsman
- Protective Services
- Senior Living Options
- Health Education Programs
- Resources on Aging & Disability Programs
- Information & Community Resources

For information, call 610-478-6500 or visit www.BerksAging.org.
Our Finest Hour

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Luis Emilio Jimenez Reyes – will be attending Reading Area Community College and majoring in nutritionist.

Laura Michelle Mosqueda Sime – Goal: Anesthesiologist
Cassandrine Sarah Normil – Goal: Finance Major/Financial Advisor or Manager

Manuel Malik Navedo – will be attending Reading Area Community College and majoring in Computer Science, Software Developer

Isabel Marie Peralta Disla – Goal: Political Science career & Human Rights Lawyer

Alivia Margaret Walters – will be attending Alvernia University, Major: Criminal Justice/Psychology

Avarie Young – will be attending Lincoln University and majoring in Psychology

Kobe Michael Raifsnider – Goal: Nursing

Jada Lynn Williams – Goal: Nursing

Michael Asante – will be attending the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia and majoring in Pharmacy.

Kobe Michael Raifsnider – Goal: Nursing

Sincere Booth – will be attending Community College of Philadelphia and majoring in American Sign Language.

Congratulations to each and every member of our village who made possible OUR FINEST HOUR!

*Wilma Dean is the business manager of The DRUM.

Visit our website at www.bcapberks.org!!
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

Berks Community Action Program
645 Penn Street, 3rd Floor
Reading, PA 19601 610-376-6571
Monday – Friday
8:00am to 4:30pm
(Closed 12:30pm to 1:30pm for lunch)

“A neighbor in need is a call to action.”

Pictured below are Elijah Williams, Malia Ewen, Samire Price-Lee, Alivia Margaret Walters, Michael Asante, and Avarie Young.
**Déjà Vu**

Deja Harris is still another brilliant and well educated native of Reading who has stayed here and play a monumental role in the quality of life for our community. Currently, she is a Vice President at Olivet Boys and Girls Club where she has been employed for eighteen years. Harris is a graduate of Reading High School, and has done additional studies at the former Pace Institute and Reading Area Community College. Her academic training is important in her profession, but even more important, is the invaluable intellect she uses in her powerful inspiration for the youths she counsels at BCAP in her personal triumphs over some of life's most difficult challenges. When her clients and mentees complain about being overwhelmed by the violent deaths, drug addiction, and teenage parentage of friends and relatives, she can honestly say “Been there, done that” or in French, “Déjà vu.” They admire and respect her understanding of their challenges, and they follow her advice relative to not allowing themselves to be overwhelmed by seeing themselves as victims.

Deja Harris and her colleagues at BCAP are a very important asset for Berks County.

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**Stephan Fains Epitomizes BCAP**

The Berks Community Action Program (BCAP) plays a major role in improving the quality of life in Berks County, and Stephan Fains is a key person in BCAP’s success. BCAP is a non-profit organization serving over 2,500 individuals and families each year. This organization provides services to low-income families and individuals, including financial assistance, workforce development, family education, mentoring services, mortgage assistance, and other services for those who are financially eligible.

Fains is BCAP’s Program Coordinator. He is responsible for Community Outreach, Promoting Responsible Fatherhood, and their “Yes” Mentor Program. Fains started his employment at BCAP seven years ago. Prior to working at BCAP, he was a very successful salesman at Sneaker Villa. However, he believes that he has more opportunities to help people in his role at BCAP. Fains epitomizes the successful altruism of BCAP.

Stephan Fains is also happily married (to Stephanie Fains), and the father of five children. He also has one grandchild. Berks County indeed is blessed to have Stephen Fains and BCAP.

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**Fishers of Men**

By Carmen Booker

Michael (a native of Harrisburg) and Tara (a native of Reading) East are successful Outreach Pastors now living in Harrisburg, PA. Their success as pastors is a result of their turning a devastating tragedy into a monumental success.

Five years ago, their son Andre Parker, who was born in Reading, PA fell victim to street violence in Harrisburg. This was very hard on the East family, as a loss of a child is always a painful experience and a hard thing to deal with. As a result, the East family set out to bring awareness and to stomp out the violence. They did this by becoming fishers of men and of aquatic fish, noting that fishing is not just a recreational sport for them. Fishing for men and aquatic fish require a similar skillset and technique to be successful. According to Mark 1:17, this verse states “Come follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” This translates into enlarging the kingdom of God, an honorable assignment.

Recently, the Easts went to the state of Massachusetts and caught several Porgies and Sea Bass. It was a wonderful time being out on the waters. Further, the Easts oversee an outreach ministry of love, forgiveness and healing. The purpose of their outreach ministry is to provide resources to the community and an opportunity to heal, to educate, and to spread the gospel locally, nationally, and globally. Their outreach ministry is called, STOMP THE VIOLENCE and is in Harrisburg, PA. It was birthed from the painful loss in the East family back in 2016. This outreach is successful and is a yearly event. The STOMP THE VIOLENCE event was held this year on July 17, 2021 in Harrisburg, PA. There was prayer, various artists, food, street ministry, song, dance, and much more.

As the opportunity to fish brings people together, the donations from their fishing trip sales ties into making the kingdom work complete. Pastors Michael and Tara East benevolently addressed the crowd on some of the causes of street violence and the impact that mental health has in the community. It was a beautiful event and we look forward to the extension of STOMP THE VIOLENCE being set-up in the city of Reading, PA. Please stay tuned!

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**Pastors Michael and Tara East fish men in Massachusetts.**
**A Man of Many Great Hats**

By Carmen Booker

Mr. Demerious Smith is a local creative originally from the city of Philadelphia. He is a busy man that wears many great hats, fulfills interesting tasks and has several roles to perform. To name a few, he is a Real Estate agent, a poet, a writer, a music producer, a video director, a rapper, a counselor and a philanthropist.

A common thread through most of what he does is love. Smith says that love is the foundation of his belief and everything that he does. Smith enjoys reading and learning new concepts that help to shape his perspective, and that inspires him to newness in his life. Smith is also inspired by being around the youth that he works with and their energy. As a musician, he enjoys being in the process of creating music, i.e., birthing something new. However, within the real estate field, Smith offers up advice. He says that “You must look at real estate, the same way that you look at Wall Street. There are many variables in the field of real estate. Things fluctuate constantly. Also, pay attention to the market, i.e., the buyer’s market versus the seller’s market. That enables one to know how to gauge the market. In doing so, you will always work better in your given time frame suited to your needs.”

Next on his agenda, he will be expanding all aspects of his business and will create a central hub within to operate. In addition, on July 12, 2021, Mr. Smith performed hip hop live on BCTV. Please check out BCTV’s archives to view this energetic performance. Also, please feel free to reach out to Mr. Smith for any of your creative endeavors and/or for any real estate needs.

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**Do you know?**

1. Who was the first African American teacher, and was the first African American guidance counselor, and who was the first African American principal in the Reading School District?
2. Who was the first African American women to be elected to the US Senate?
3. Who is the black man who founded Chicago, Illinois?
4. Who was the oboist and composer of more than 150 classic works who is referred to as the dean of black composers?
5. Who was the former Boyertown history teacher and accomplished musician who wrote They All Stand Fair: A History of Bethel AME Church in Reading, PA?
6. Who did Time Magazine name “Man of the Year” in 1964, and what other award did this person earn in 1964?
7. What is the title and who is the author of the first play by a black woman to be produced on Broadway, and what honor was attributed to that play?
8. Who was the first African American to graduate from Kutztown University, and in what year did that person graduate?
9. Who is the most successful African American hip hop artist?
10. Who is the most successful African American lawyer?

The answers can be found on page 9.

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_“It was the awakening summer of 1960 and the entire country was in labor. Something wonderful was about to be born, and we were all going to be good parents to the welcome child. Its name was Freedom.”_ —Maya Angelou, *The Heart of a Woman*
The Late Reverend Geneva Carter-Burns Was A Superstar!

August 27th will be the eighty-eight birthday of the late Rev. Geneva Carter-Burns. She was the first African American woman pastor in Berks County. Rev. Carter-Burns served as the Pastor of the Church of Deliverance at 1327 N. 10th St. in Reading for 60 years.

This dynamic preacher, who was born in 1933, went home to her Lord and Savior on Saturday, April 17, 2021 in her residence in Wilmington, DE. She was predeceased by her first husband, Deacon Joseph N. Carter, Sr. and her 2nd husband, Dr. Roosevelt Burns. She was born in Wilmington, N.C., a daughter of the late Rev. and Mrs. Moses Thomas.

Rev. Carter-Burns was the first woman to preach for the Reading and Vicinity Ministerial Association, the first female member of the Reading Council of Churches, and the United Missionaries of Reading and Vicinity. She also had a ministry in the Berks County Nursing Home Association for 15 years.

In addition to her professional accomplishments Rev. Cater-Burns was the mother of six children, five grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

The late Rev. Geneva Carter-Burns is a very important part of the history of Berks County.

Art Exhibit: Miss Naomi Varmah

By Carmen Booker

Art Exhibit: Miss Naomi Varmah, a Liberian American artist, will grace us with an exhibit that opened on July 2, 2021 and ends on August 30, 2021.

You still have time to see her artwork and the revealing of two of her latest pieces. The exhibit will be on display in the 3rd Floor Gallery, next to the Wilson History Project, at the Goggleworks.

Take a glimpse into the beauty of her most popular African American themed master pieces. Leave with the reflections of the country’s power dynamics, the current social movements, and the vigor of its people.

“ But when we have vaguely said that Education will set this tangle straight, what have we uttered but a truism? Training for life teaches living; but what training for the profitable living together of black men and white?”

~W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk

Busy Beau

By Wilma Dean

It has been a busy late Spring and Summer for Beaumanoir Amprey, the DRUM’s cartoonist, who is the youngest of the publisher’s (Joseph Amprey) five grandchildren.

On May 30, 2021, he finished first in the 2021 Diving, Region 1 Championships at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY.

On June 26, 2021, Amprey finished third in both the 1 meter and 3 meter competitions (There were 13 divers competing) in Greensboro, NC.

Congratulations Beau!
In his role as Program Director he was most passionate about teaching the youth about leadership, sportsmanship, and respecting others. During the winter months, you would oftentimes find Kermit working closely with the youth at his club to serve the elderly residents of Mulberry St.– shoveling pavements and parking spots. Kermit was committed to meeting the unique needs of the youth he served as well as the needs of the neighborhood he served in. He hosted several food drives, clothing drives, sports tournaments and school drives as well as several neighborhood cleaning events during his time as Program Director.

Kermit was very person-centered and valued every relationship and memories he created over time with his students. He was most proud of the opportunities he provided for the youth through many partnerships, field trips and programs he created. Kermit made sure every student was seen and felt empowered and left the club better than when they entered! Kermit alongside his wife Emma Stern both were strongly committed to sponsoring youth who were unable to afford membership costs.

If Kermit were here today he would share various stories of times when he coached several teams at the club and provided jerseys and sneakers for the team to look their very best, or the times he hosted healthy cooking classes for students to learn about healthy nutrition, the various Blue Mountain Summer Camp experiences and of course the dances and concerts he led. Following retirement, you would find Kermit sitting on the porch of his home of many years on West Greenwich Street sharing his many stories from during his time at the club.

We congratulate these unsung heroes, and we extend kudos to the Reading Chapter of the NAACP for honoring them.

**Stevie Mitchell Is The Gatorade Basketball Player Of The Year**

Four weeks ago, Stevie Mitchell, a graduating senior at Wilson High School, was named the Gatorade Player of the Year. He made an unmatched historical feat of being the only player in the history of Berks County basketball to score more than 2,000 points while leading the Wilson Bulldogs to two county championships.

The co-sponsors of this award, Colonial Fitness and the Reading Eagle Newspaper, awarded Mitchell a $1,000 scholarship. Mitchell will be attending Marquette University in the Fall, where he received an athletic scholarship. Mitchell has also been a “Straight A Student,” while being enrolled in the “Academically Gifted and Talented Program.” He is a National Honor Society student.

CONGRATULATIONS Stevie Mitchell!

**Bee Zaila Avant-garde Is An Academic And Athletic Superstar**

On July 8, 2021, 14-year-old Zaila Avant-garde finished in first place in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Orlando, FL. This native of Harvey, LA is the first African American winner in the 96 year history of this activity. She was awarded the $50,000 winner’s prize.

Avant-garde is also a gifted basketball player. She holds three Guinness World Records for simultaneously dribbling three basketballs.

Congratulations Zaila Avant-garde!

**Still Another Accolade For Awesome Alex Auston**

On June 21, 2021, the Berks County Football Association announced that it added seven new members to its HALL OF FAME, one of whom is Alex Auston. He is a native of Berks County, and a graduate of Wilson High School, where he was an outstanding football running and defensive back. Auston amassed 3, 272 career yards and a record 10 interceptions in one season.

After graduating from Wilson in 1998, Wilson played a season at Michigan State University and two seasons at Southern Illinois University on athletic scholarships. Unfortunately, his football career was cut short by injuries.

Auston has used the academic and athletic disciplines he used in college to develop into being a military leader in the United States Army. He is presently stationed on the west coast at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State. Our native son has had tours of duty in Hawaii, South Korea, Iraq, and Germany. His rank is Sergeant First Class. He will retire, after a twenty year military career in May 2022.

Having already earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from Grantham University, he is currently studying for a Master’s Degree at the same University.

Auston was elected to the Wilson Hall of Fame two decades ago. His more recent election to the Berks County Football Association’s 18th Hall of Fame class is an even more impressive accolade.

CONGRATULATIONS, Alex Auston!

Follow us online at: www.thedrumnewsonline.com
How to Define Your New Work Normal
By Roger Jackson, Editorialist for The Drum

As the country slowly begins to re-open, for many of us who were not deemed “essential workers” (and even those of us who were), the re-opening of America and our work presents us with unique challenges, and unique opportunities. It is important to our collective health and self-care that we recognize the changes that have occurred, and the changes that NEED to occur as we navigate our way back to the workplace and among the population at large. Some questions we need to ask ourselves:

What changes have I undergone physically that may impact my return to work? For many people, the opportunity to work from home (WFH) also created the opportunity to develop some very healthy, or some very unhealthy lifestyle choices. Whether its weight gain, or significantly more time to sleep, these physical changes must be accounted for as you return to work. Weight gain may make performing your role more difficult. Loss of sleep time, because of a commute, may have an impact on your daily productivity, and there are others. It doesn’t matter the genesis of the physical change or its manifestation, being aware allows you to take the steps necessary to mitigate the impact of the changes and maintain peak productivity as you return to work.

What routines have I or my family become accustomed to that I need to reconsider? This question is mostly about managing STRESS. Working from home allows many tasks to be performed more easily than when you were regularly going into a workplace: Doctors visits, home repairs, grocery shopping, meal prep, helping kids with (online) learning, and extra sleep. For over a year, we have grown used to “easily” managing these and other things. Return to work will create challenges in managing these tasks – be aware, plan ahead, and don’t let them become a source of stress or frustration.

Have I acquired any new skills or credentials during the pandemic that may increase my opportunity for growth/promotion? Some people (unfortunately, not THIS author) utilized the pandemic time to learn a new skill or gain a new credential. Sometimes it was voluntary, sometimes it was out of necessity to continue to perform your job. Whatever the motivation, these new skills are now YOURS – available to you to enhance your opportunities for promotions, greater responsibility, and/or higher pay. Share this information! We all grow every year, but this pandemic may have prevented those who work with from recognizing (and rewarding) your growth.

Do I really need to go back to the job/office full time? Many of us have figured out how to maintain productivity and results remotely. We have figured out how to navigate team projects via Zoom, Teams, Skype, and SharePoint. And we have done it for OVER A YEAR, demonstrating that it wasn’t a “fluke” and that it CAN be done. Do you really have to go back to a specific work location to get your job done? If you were more productive at (WFH) and maintained a better quality of personal and family life, this is a question you may want to pose to your employer. Can I remain remote? Can we figure out a hybrid of in-person and remote? Obviously, for many “place-based” businesses, this isn’t an option for discussion. But for MANY businesses, it can be. If WFH has worked for you, ASK.

Has my place of work created any adaptations as a result of this pandemic closure? We are still navigating our way through a pandemic, and new strains of the COVID virus. What protocols has your company put in place to protect you? Does everyone have to be vaccinated? What physical workplace changes and accommodations were made? Are there (WFH) or hybrid options available versus a full return to the office? What work norms have they altered? What personnel policies and protocols have they revamped? How are they ensuring equity of treatment for all employees in the choices of work style they are offering? How are they ensuring workers won’t be penalized for choosing one option over another? All of these are questions you should be asking your employer to ensure that you have the opportunity to return and continue your employment in a work setting that is safe, healthy, and equitable.

Return to work is not as simple as “come in on September 1.” The process requires careful planning and consideration – by your employer AND by you and your family. Take the time to evaluate what YOU need to make the full return to work as safe, productive, and positive as it can be for you and your family. BE SAFE!

For many people, the opportunity to work from home (WFH) also created the opportunity to develop some very healthy, or some very unhealthy lifestyle choices.”

Answers to Do You Know
1. The answer for all three positions is Grace AsBerry Jones.
2. Carol Moseley was elected to represent Illinois in 1993.
3. Jean-Baptist-Point Du Sable, (born circa1790, St. Marc, Sainte-Domingue [now Haiti]—died Aug. 28, 1818, St. Charles, MO., U.S.), black pioneer trader and founder of the settlement that later became the city of Chicago.
4. William Grant Stills.
5. Richard Johnson.
6. Martin Luther King. The Nobel Peace Prize.
7. In 1959 the New York Drama Circle named “A Raisin in the Sun” by Lorraine Hansberry, “the Best Play of the Year.”
8. The former Bessie Reese(now Bessie Crenshaw) graduated from Kutztown University in 1950.
9. Jay-Z
10. Thurgood Marshall was an American lawyer and civil rights activist who served as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from October 1967 until October 1991. Marshall was the first African-American Supreme Court Justice in the history of the United States.

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” ~ Malcolm X
Curly Hair Texture Discrimination
By Rosa Parra*

Did you know that hair texture is a very sore topic? However, what a lot of non-Latinos may not know is that many Latinos discriminate against other Latinos for it. I understand that it was an issue in the 1800s and up to 1970 where Beverly Jenkins was denied a promotion at her job by her white supervisor due to her afro but it’s 2021. It’s so sad to know that many Latinos who fought and continue to fight hard against discrimination are the same ones discriminating other Latinos for their curly textured hair, among other things.

As a Latina, I speak from experience as a curly textured woman, who is proud of her curls. But once, not too long ago, I wasn’t so proud as I, myself, have been a victim of hair texture discrimination and sadly, from my own people. Yes, many lighter skin, non-curly hair Latinos think they are the better side of the Latinos. There, I said it!

From the age of about twelve, straightening perms, flat irons, and hair grease where part of my life. I believe it was due to my own family and friends who would make comments about kinky, curly, unmanageable hair. So, for many years I felt ashamed of my hair, and I thought it was something that I needed to disguise. Sadly, it wasn’t till about 12 years ago at the age of 36 I was tired of wearing my hair in a bun. So, I let it loose and I felt free. It was in that moment I decided I didn’t want to process or do anything to my hair anymore.

But I knew I needed to be strong as in the Latino and other communities hair discrimination came from both men and women. It’s commonly known that men always refer to women as being pretty when they have long hair or are of lighter skin, and even of light-colored eyes, but we can touch that topic on another edition. I’ve also noticed it’s still acceptable in our Latin and Black society to make fun of or bully women with curly textured hair. They refer to it as “bad hair” and when you ask them what is the definition of bad hair? You usually get responses like; “you know what I mean.” It’s to the point that many women are wearing everyday wigs. For many Latinos curly hair texture is generally referred to as a Pajon, which means some type of Big-FRO or untamed bush. I also learned that in many Latino countries such as Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Colombian, Puerto Rico, etc., little girls are taught young that if they have curly textured hair they have “bad hair.” Still today, girls and women will spend lots of money in the salons disguising their natural hair. If you know anything about curly hair it likes to return to its natural state really fast. Therefore, women feel obligated to run to the salon every week damaging their hair under intense heat to make it look straight. Sadly, self-esteem is being damaged right at home. We need not only to start educating our children to love themselves as they came to this world but also as parents’ we need to learn what is coming out of our mouths.

In honor of back to school and young children, I did some research and there are over 30 children’s curly hair books that celebrate the beauty of it. If you have children, boy or girl, make sure to get them one or two of these books and you may need to read them yourself and check to see if you are one of those adults who discriminates as well.

Did you know? Because of awareness to the issue, California passed the Crown Act in July 2019, becoming the first U.S. state to prohibit discrimination against workers and students based on their natural hair. However, still today afro styled curly hair is considered a symbol of resistance. People, we still have lots of learning to do.

Rosa Julia Parra CEO Palo Magazine List of a few books for children:
• I don’t want curly hair by Laura Ellen Anderson
• Hair Love by MatthewA.Cherry
• Curls by Geneva Bowers
• My Hair is Magic by M.L. Marroquin
• Hair like mine by LaTashia M. Perry
• My Curly Coily Crown by Darcel Craft
• Getting To Know My Real Curls is Fun! By Trina Diakabanza
• Coco Loves Her Curly Hair by Colleen Dixon
• My Big Natural Hair by C.J.
• Hair Love by Matthew A. Cherry
• The Curly Hair Club by Saccheen Laing

*Rosa Parra is the CEO of Palo Magazine

THE DRUM
Question of the Month

LOCATION: YMCA OF READING, PA

THE QUESTION: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE EXERCISE AND WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE NUTRITIONAL FOOD?

RESPONSES:

Clayton Noah Gibbs
My favorite exercises are benching and pushups. My favorite nutritional food is pineapple.

David Collado
My favorite exercises are chest exercises. My favorite nutritional foods are vegetables.

Earl (Brother E) Robinson
My favorite exercises are jogging and pushups. My favorite nutritional foods are vegetables.

~ Dr. Seuss
"You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself any direction
you choose."
We Are Still Here:
An Update on the Central Pennsylvania African American Museum (CPAAM)

In 2018, the board of directors of the CPAAM gifted the holdings of the museum to Albright College. Dr. Brenda Ingram-Wallace was named as the Director of the CPAAM collection. Under her leadership, two committees were formed to provide support for this transition. There is an internal committee of faculty, staff, and students as well as a committee consisting of community stakeholders including former CPAAM board members. Since then, the college has been working diligently to prepare for the display of this collection. The name of the collection has changed! The name change was vetted by both of the aforementioned committees, and the new name is the Black Cultural Collection and Resource Center (BCCRC). This change incorporates the expansive range of items, including not only African American culture, but culture throughout the African Diaspora.

Many may not know that there is a tedious process for museum work. Over the past two years, a part-time registrar and a student were hired to accession each item into the college’s collection. So far, 2500 items have been registered. The permanent home for the collection will be in Albright College’s newly renovated Student Success Commons and Library on a floor devoted to History and Cultural studies. Renovations are scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2023.

In the meantime, a small display from the cultural collection is in the window of our bookstore in the Lex O. MacMillan Student Center. Additionally, items were displayed at two Black History events held on campus. The collection will be featured in a Spring history course focused on public history. Tyler Dubose, a history major, created a short video highlighting Clarence Hubert and his endeavors with the local Boy Scouts.

“One of the lessons that I grew up with was to always stay true to yourself and never let what somebody else says distract you from your goals. And so when I hear about negative and false attacks, I really don't invest any energy in them, because I know who I am.”

~Michelle Obama
SOUL TOUR
By Wesley Butler

So far I have spent my summer winning a primary election, speaking at community events, and having summer basketball workouts. My parents and my brother have been working hard as well and agreed that we needed to take a trip or vacation. We decided to go down south to Georgia and Alabama to visit family and visit educational sites. My brother calls it the “Soul Tour.” I went to black history museums, bridges, and parks. I wanted to share my top 3 “Soul Tour” places and give you my takeaways.

Number three:
The first place I went to in Alabama was the Tuskegee Air Museum. If you did not know, before 1940, African Americans were barred from flying for the U.S. military. Civil Rights organizations changed that in 1941 when they created the Tuskegee Airmen. The Tuskegee Airmen could be pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, instructors, and all the personnel who keep the planes in the air. My biggest takeaway from the Tuskegee Air Museum is that those who served had to go through segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II.

Number two:
Another historical place that I went to in Alabama was the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. On September 15, 1963, a bomb exploded on the steps of the church. The result of the bombing ended up with four little girls, 14-year-olds Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and 11-year-old Cynthia Wesley, were killed. It also left Addie’s sister Susan alive but permanently blinded. My biggest takeaway from visiting 16th Street Baptist Church is that those little girls did not deserve to have their lives taken because of the color of their skin. This was the result of racism and bigotry.

Number one:
My favorite experience on the Soul Tour was visiting Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park in Atlanta, Georgia. The park has several buildings that are a major part of the life of Martin Luther King Jr. One of them was his boyhood home on Auburn Avenue. I like how they have preserved the houses on that street by fixing up all the old wood and repaving the street to make it resemble houses in the 1930s and 1940s. My biggest takeaway, however, is that Martin Luther King’s neighborhood “Sweet Auburn” was a place of hope. I say that because Black-owned businesses were thriving and Black churches were places of joy and expression. King proved that African Americans could achieve economic and cultural significance in spite of segregation.

Education is the key to unlocking the world, a passport to freedom.
~Oprah Winfrey

One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world.
~Malala Yousafzai

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Praying is to the Soul what breathing is to the Body

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