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In Her Own Words: A Woman's 21-Day Diary of How COVID 19 Nearly Destroyed Her Family

SUBMITTED

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - Last year at this time, Ericka and Dwight Gibson of Charlotte, N.C. were living their dream life together. A happy marriage with three daughters - a 9-year-old inspiring writer in grade school; a 16-year-old studying in Spain; and a 20-year-old studying journalism at an HBCU.

They were all happy, healthy and excited about the future. And now this. Days once spent writing children's books with their youngest suddenly transitioned into days documenting the horrors of a Covid-19 infection that has hit her and her husband. This diary-like testimony, written by Ericka Gibson, 47, not only details the pain of this family, but of thousands of families around the U. S. Of course, our hearts and prayers go out to the many thousands who have actually lost loved ones to this horrid pandemic. But we publish this story with the goal to show those who read it that there is always hope. The following is the 21-day diary of Ericka Gibson:



PHOTO CREDIT / SUBMITTED

Dwight and Ericka Gibson of Charlotte, N.C.

It's been 21 days since the first symptoms appeared. From the onset, I knew this was something different. I didn't know what it was,

but as time went on, it was clear that I had never felt or seen anything like this in my life. Nothing about this was a hoax. I wouldn't wish the Coronavirus on my worst enemy. COVID-19 has forever changed our lives. Three weeks ago, everything around us was normal. Simple things like reading with my youngest daughter, taking family walks and enjoying meals with family and friends are all a distant blur. COVID-19 turned our world upside down. Smiles and laughter were replaced with masks, gloves, cleaning supplies and worst of all - isolation. Headaches, fevers, chills, bone-aching pain, and loss of smell and taste became our norm. An overall gloom cast a dark cloud over our home.

My only hope is that people will take COVID-19 seriously. What follows is my experience with COVID-19, from the day I began having symptoms to my days of being quarantined with my husband. We felt helpless and isolated, and at one point I was afraid that my husband was going to die.

Tuesday, March 3: Flew from Charlotte to Chicago to visit my sister, who is fighting breast cancer.

Wednesday, March 4: Went to the hospital again, left heading back to Charlotte Wednesday evening.

Wednesday evening.

Thursday, March 5: Arrived back in Charlotte at 1:00 AM. Felt tired, like I had done too much in such a short period of time and needed to rest. Stayed in bed a little longer.

Friday, March 6: Drove to Raleigh. Left about 3:30 PM for the drive.

Saturday, March 7: Had an event at a museum where heat wasn't working. It was cold and I was afraid of catching a cold but didn't want to get up and leave. Was there most of the day and decided to stay an extra night to stay warm and lessen my chances of coming down with a cold.

Sunday March 8: Drove back to Charlotte. Definitely feeling like I had caught a cold but feeling much better.

Tuesday March 10: Woke up feeling achy, head congested, a migraine and feeling like I couldn't pop my ears. Sneezing, coughing. Scratchy throat.

Wednesday March 11: Feeling really sick. Nauseous. Went to Urgent Care. Had trouble getting out of the car. Sat in the car for at least 10 minutes before I felt like I could get out. Swabbed for the flu. Came back negative. Told it was probably my allergies as well and diagnosed with "viral syndrome." Prescribed Flonase and Benzonatate. Stayed in bed most of the day.

Thursday March 12: Slept most of the day. Nausea, congestion, cough, lightheaded, aching all over. Cold, then hot, then cold again. Need 4 blankets to stay warm. Didn't take my temperature. Scratchy throat.

Friday, March 13: Miraculously feeling better because my daughter came home from Spain. Went into quarantine to be safe since she had been abroad in Europe for 6.5 months. Stopped for groceries and left her in the car.

Saturday, March 14: Who am I kidding? Still not feeling

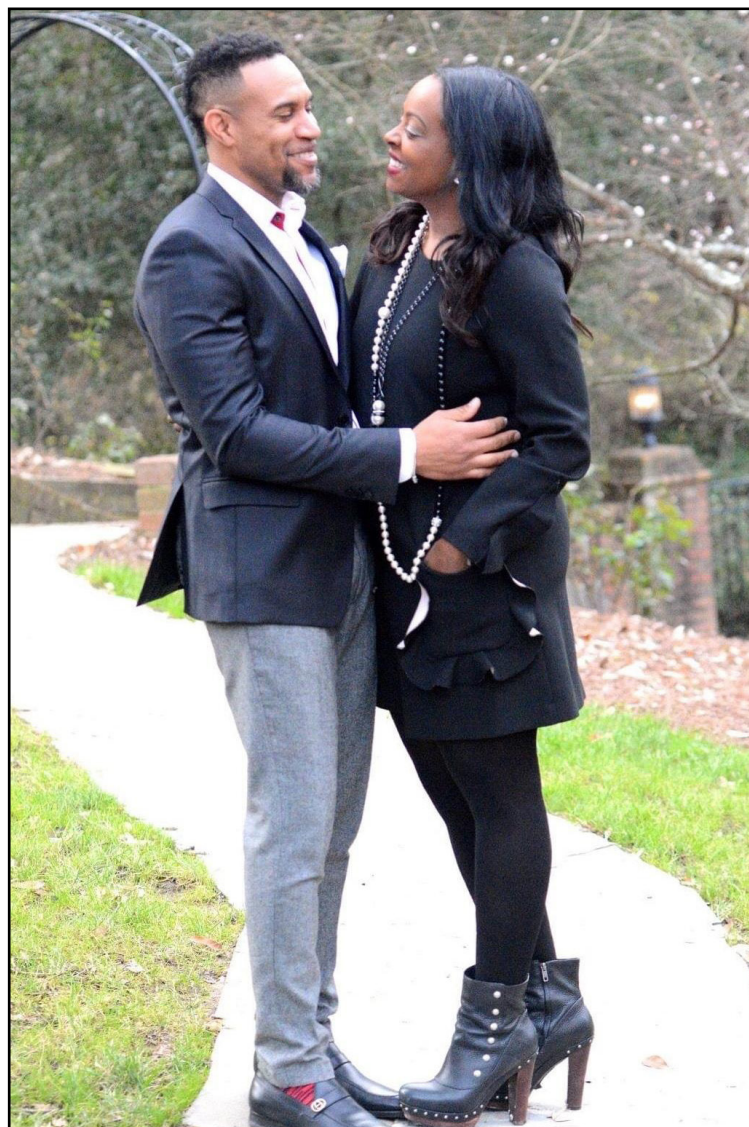


PHOTO CREDIT / SUBMITTED

The Gibson family lived a happy life before Coronavirus invaded their lives.

Continued on page 2.

In Her Own Words: A Woman’s 21-Day Diary

Continued from page 1.

great. What is this?

Sunday, March 15-March 17: My husband, a 45-year-old obstacle race runner, starts to feel sick. I’m nowhere near as bad as he was. He’s sweating. His face is red. He can’t stop shaking. He’s burning up. He’s in pain. He scares me but insists that he doesn’t need to go to the doctor.

I feel like when you’re a woman and a Mom, you’re accustomed sometimes to experiencing different levels of stress, pain with childbirth and; especially for Black women there are issues like fibroids and all kinds of things that we typically face and we’re just taught to be strong no matter what and make it through all of it. We’re so good at taking care of others that sometimes we don’t realize when we need to slow down and take care of ourselves. I just felt like I didn’t want anyone around. I just wanted to curl up in my bed and pull the covers over my head and just fight through this, like we fight through everything else.

Seeing my husband sick was a different thing. He was in really bad shape and I didn’t know how to help him...So fast forward, he was kind of doing the same thing, just trying to get through whatever he had because he’s a strong, proud man. And in my mind at this point, I’m thinking, he might have COVID 19; never during all this time was I thinking that I would have it.

Wednesday, March 18, 4:00 AM: I hear a strange noise

that sounds like someone is bumping against the walls. I sit up in bed. Then, there’s a loud crashing sound coming from my bathroom. My husband had fallen and passed out. His fall was followed by strange, unintelligible sounds. He comes to and insists that he just lost his balance. I call my doctor, who tells me to watch him carefully and to take him to be tested for COVID-19.

9:00 AM: We drive to Urgent Care, and the nurses come out to the car to test him. They wore gloves, masks and a clear screen-like face mask. I thought about how difficult this must be for them as well. They tell us the results will be back in 3-5 days.

Wednesday, March 18: We drive home and Dwight goes into isolation. My daughter convinced me to do a Tik Tok dance video with her to keep my mind off things and I blamed the fact that I couldn’t breathe on my age (47). Had to do multiple takes because I was having trouble breathing, was sweating and felt like I was gonna pass out. I update my doctor on my husband’s status, and she asks me additional questions. She suggested that I be tested too.

Thursday, March 19: I drive to a mobile testing facility and I am tested as well. They tell me 3-5 days. They also tell me that we should assume that we are positive for COVID-19 until we get the results, so from there I join my husband in isolation.

Isolation was the hardest part. We have three girls, ages 20, 16 and 9. Not being able to interact with them and our

Chocolate Lab was tough. They prepared all of our meals and left them at the door. We were confined to our bedroom for the next 12 days. Chills and night sweats were so bad that the sheets were soaked despite layers of clothing. My husband had uncontrollable shivers(rigors) and we both lost our senses of taste and smell.

Over the next week, my symptoms were improving and my husband was deteriorating.

Trying to work from home made recovery even more difficult for him. All this time, I had thought my test was going to come back negative, especially since I was feeling better. Then, there came a point when I knew I had it. I saw a story on the news where a woman said she and six or seven of her friends were diagnosed and they all had one common symptom. - loss of smell and taste. That’s when I knew to receive the phone

alone, check on them. They need you.

4. Learn to appreciate the introverts in your life. They provide balance and perspective when extroverts like me can’t sit still. My oldest daughter has given me peace during this difficult time.

5. Stop assuming you have time. The thought of not being able to see loved ones again leaves an awful feeling that’s hard to shake. I’ve lost an aunt this week. Not being able to attend her funeral or comfort my cousins comes with a deep pain. Stop saying “I’ll do it tomorrow” or “next month” or “next year.” When this is behind us, live life. I mean, really live. Find your purpose.

6. Connect with your family members. Tell them how much you love and appreciate them. Build them up every chance you get. The most painful part of this was not being able to hug my nine-year-old. Just devastating.

7. Stop focusing so much on dance and tennis and math and reading. Teach your kids to cook, clean, budget and pay bills because one day they will have to do all of that without you.

8. Keep God in your life. Honestly, God will be there for you when people let you down. We haven’t spoken publicly about having COVID-19, and some of the comments we’ve received from the few that we know have been disappointing. Martin Luther King Jr. said it best: “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” Even as I still have a little trouble breathing, gospel music is getting me through.

9. Spend some time outside. As we started to feel better, just a 5-minute walk (still social distancing) or sitting on our patio made a positive impact.

10. Take the opportunity to relax - read the book you’ve had on your nightstand for months, watch the movie you’ve been meaning to, write your thoughts down. It can help give you a bit of peace in a challenging time.

This was a challenging experience for me and my family. However, we took it a day at a time, we relied on each other and our extended community of family and friends. And as a result, we were able to make it through to the other side. So, please follow the guidelines being provided by the experts, take all necessary precautions and prioritize the health and safety of yourself and your family. You don’t want to go through this. You don’t want anyone in your family to go through this.

“ COVID-19 literally makes you feel like you’ve been hit by a truck. Looking across to the other side of our bedroom and seeing the strongest of men balled into a knot, trembling with a 104.3 temperature scared me terribly. ”

We talked about our will and trust and whether we had done everything our lawyer had advised. I was afraid he was going to die. He was afraid he was going to die. COVID-19 literally makes you feel like you’ve been hit by a truck. Looking across to the other side of our bedroom and seeing the strongest of men balled into a knot, trembling with a 104.3 temperature scared me terribly. Many days, he couldn’t stop shivering.

call confirming COVID-19 was an inevitable formality.

Wednesday, March 25th: We both received calls that we were positive for COVID-19 and our isolation should continue until we were 72 hours with no symptoms. On March 31, the Dept. of Public Health released us from isolation. We remain in quarantine. Where did I get it? I think I got it when I went to Chicago because an article has come out saying that 12 Nurses at the University of Illinois Hospital tested positive and that’s where I was. So that’s what I think happened. I don’t know for sure. But that’s my best guess. At this point, however, that really doesn’t matter. You can get it anywhere.

What I learned from COVID-19:

1. Make sure your financial and legal affairs are in order. Where are your documents located, your passwords, and the important items you want to pass down?

2. Being isolated away from friends and family is hard. Invest in technology that allows you to still communicate.

3. Be thankful if you have children who want to take care of you. I’m not sure how we would have gotten through this without them. If you know people who don’t have children or are living



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Economists are forecasting a recession, due to the pandemic of the Coronavirus; which has either caused businesses to shut down, or limit their transactions. Therefore, what are some of the issues that cause you to be concerned about the impending recession?



Yakub Mujaahid
Direct Care Professional

My biggest concern is being able to pay my bills, buy groceries, and other household necessities. Although the field I work in is considered essential, the particular department I work in is shut down; I'm unemployed at the moment. Even though I'll be back to working once the coronavirus is under control, a recession may cause me to lose my job.



Rencie Williams
Transportation

My biggest concern is not being fully prepared for a recession. As soon as I heard about the possibility of our country falling into another one, I started saving more money and stocking up on food, and supplies. Although my job, picking up deceased people, is recession proof, there's definitely reason to be worried.



Bianka Edwards
Oncology Coder

I'm worried about a recession causing teacher lay-offs. When that happens, it creates an unstable environment for our children, which affects learning, as well as them getting food. And I know the government is sending out stimulus checks to either, help avoid a recession, or minimize the impact, but how are we to spend it when many of the businesses we frequent are closed. And even though I do have a job that's essential, I'm still afraid of the impact of a recession.

Kesha Jenkins
Cashier

I'm concerned about my job, as well as other people's jobs. Many of us are trying to pay our mortgages and other bills. I have to pay for medications out of my pocket; so a recession would be traumatic on me, as well as most people.



Myron White
Retired

Since I'm retired, I'm not prepared for a recession; it would devastate me. So one of my biggest concerns is removing Trump from office. If he stays in, he'll only make the recession worse. Trump has already isolated us from our allies, so making sure he isn't re-elected is one of my biggest concerns.

Ongoing Events

Grace Community Center Food Pantry

In an effort to continue to serve our community during these trying times.....Grace Community Center has expanded its Food Pantry operations. The hours of service are M-F, 10 am – 3 pm. Children may also receive grab & go lunches from the hours of 11 -1 M-F. Eligible Seniors in need of food assistance please call for delivery options at 419-248-2467. Elaine Page, Executive Director, Grace Community Center, 406 W. Delaware.

Extended Due Dates for Courthouse Fines, Fees and Costs

In order to maintain the safety of court staff and citizens appearing before the Court, The Toledo Municipal Court is implementing efforts in social distancing. As part of these efforts, fines, fees and costs that are due between Now and June 1, 2020 shall be continued an additional 90 days from the original due date. In the event that a due date falls on a holiday or weekend, the due date shall be continued to the next business day. For information on a

particular case, check the Clerk of Court's website at <https://www.tmc-clark.com> The Clerk is in the process of updating due dates. If your date has not been updated, please continue to check the website for the next 24 hours. Contact: Lisa Falgiano, Court Administrator, Toledo Municipal Court, 419-245-1949 lisa.falgiano@tmcourt.org

Senior Centers Closed

At the advice of the local health commissioners, the following senior centers are closed to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus:

- Lucas County senior centers
- Sandusky County senior centers
- Williams County senior centers
- Wood County senior centers

The closure of the 12 Lucas County senior centers took place on Monday, March 16th. The AOoA/Toledo Police Department's Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Program has also cancelled all home visits. These precautionary steps are being taken since older adults are most vulnerable to contacting serious complications from the coronavirus. The Area Office on Aging is recommending that all senior centers contact their participants and determine if anyone needs home-delivered meals, medical or personal supplies or any

assistance during the period of closure. Additionally, the Area Office on Aging is recommending that a core team remain accessible to older adults and caregivers as needs arise. The Agency has also been exploring ways to support the needs of homebound older adults in need of groceries, medications, incontinence supplies and other items necessary to promote independence and safety during this coronavirus pandemic.

11th Annual Toledo Sister Cities International Festival Postponed Until September

Jim Hartung, President, Toledo Sister Cities International Board of Trustees, has announced that the Eleventh Annual International Festival which was scheduled to take place Saturday, April 18, 2020 from 11 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. at the Toledo SeaGate Center, 401 Jefferson St., Toledo has been postponed until September 12 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Toledo and Lucas County 2020 Census

The 2020 Census is nearly here and it is EXTREMELY important to Toledo and Lucas County. Review the dates here and remember to Be Counted Toledo! What will be sent in the mail:

Events continued on page 10.

Ohio Primary Voting Extended to April 28TH

SUBMITTED

As you know, Ohioans were not able to vote in-person on Primary Election Day (March 17), due to Coronavirus concerns. So our legislators have extended mail-in absentee voting to April 28th.

Ohio just extended mail-in absentee voting to April 28th. What does that mean?

- Anyone who is registered to vote in Ohio (who has not already voted) can request an absentee ballot and mail it in.
- Ballots must be postmarked by April 27th. So you need to request your absentee ballot ASAP.

- HOW TO request an absentee ballot: <https://bit.ly/2UscC6A>.
- 1.) Fill out the request form, print it, sign it, and mail it to your County Board of Elections. One Government Center Suite 300 Toledo, OH 43604
- Find your County Board of Elections at <https://bit.ly/3buH8T0>
- Don't have a printer?
- Call your County Board of Elections (419) 213-4001.
- Ask how you can request an absentee ballot.
- 2.) Your County Board of Elections will mail you a ballot.
- 3.) When you receive your ballot in the mail, fill it out and mail it back to your

County Board of Elections or you can drop it off at One Government Center 640 Jackson, Toledo, OH 43604 in the secure drop box outside the front door. See Photo:

- NO in-person voting for most Ohioans (BUT Ohioans with disabilities or special circumstances can vote in-person on April 28th at their County Board of Elections.).
- If you already voted, you're good. Your vote will still count.
- NOTE: When the absentee request form asks for the date of the Primary Election, write March 17, 2020.
- Technically, Ohio's Primary Election Day did not change. They just extended

absentee voting.

- Check out VoteOhio.gov for more information.



COVID-19 — Even During a Killer Pandemic Trump Tests Positive for Racism



By Lauren Victoria Burke
Wire Writer

NNPA NEWSWIRE — “The FBI as-
sesses hate crime incidents against
Asian Americans likely will surge
across the United States, due to the
spread of coronavirus disease ...
endangering Asian American com-
munities,” read a report compiled by
the FBI’s Houston office and sent to
local law enforcement across Ameri-
ca. “The FBI makes this assessment
based on the assumption that a por-
tion of the US public will associate
COVID-19 with China and Asian
American populations.”

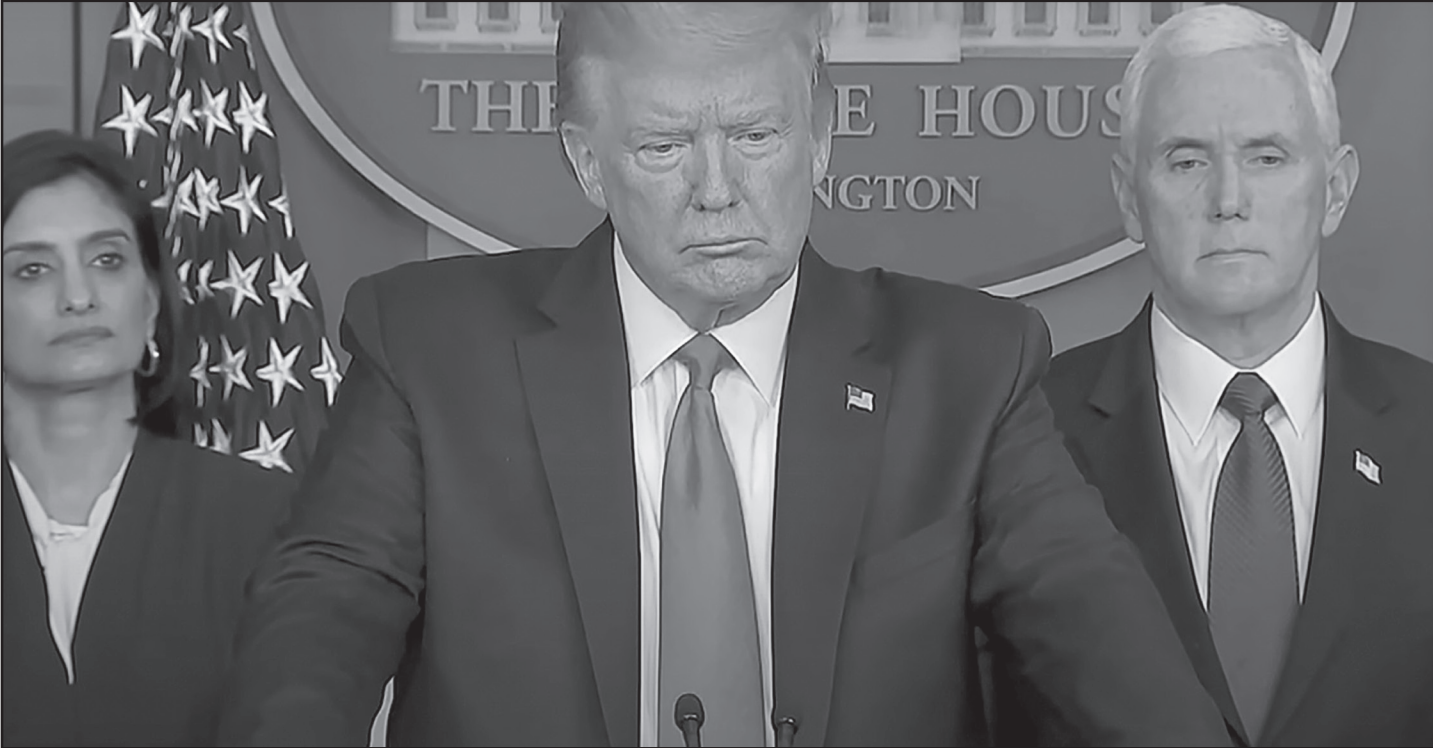
President Trump’s press briefings
on COVID-19 are carried by millions
and in multiple appearances the
President referred to COVID-19 as
“the Chinese virus.”

By Lauren Victoria Burke, NNPA
Newswire Contributor

On March 23, standing at the
podium in the White House Brief-
ing Room, President Trump was
asked whether or not using the term
“Chinese virus” when referring to
COVID-19 pandemic was racist or
was inspiring recent violence against
Asians.

“It’s not racist at all. It comes from
China, that’s why,” Trump said to
punctuate the point.

President Trump’s press briefings
on COVID-19 are carried by millions
and in multiple appearances the
President referred to COVID-19 as
“the Chinese virus.”



A reporter asked, “Do you think,
using the term ‘Chinese virus’, that
puts Asian-Americans at risk, that
people might target them?”

“No, not at all,” Trump answered.
“I think they probably would agree
with it, 100 percent. It comes from
China,” he added. The President’s
press briefings on the COVID-19 cri-
sis is viewed by millions.

Many political observers have
pointed out that labelling the virus
this way will only increase tensions
between the two countries and en-
courage xenophobia.

President Trump has a long his-
tory of racism, racist comments and
targeted words against almost every
group that is not white Anglo-Saxon
protestant. Asian-Americans have
reported incidents of racial slurs and
physical abuse over the perception
that China caused COVID-19.

Racism against Asian Ameri-
cans has surged as the coronavirus
sweeps the U.S., with reports of hate
crimes averaging approximately 100
per day, according to Rep. Judy Chu
(D-Calif.).

On television on March 31, Chu
discussed the increased violence

“
President Trump has a
long history of racism, racist
comments and targeted
words against almost every
group that is not white
Anglo-Saxon protestant.
Asian-Americans have
reported incidents of racial
slurs and physical abuse over
the perception that China
caused COVID-19.
”

against Asians in the U.S. and con-
firmed that, “at least 1,000 hate
crimes incidents being reported
against Asian Americans” after the
pandemic hit the U.S.

“The FBI assesses hate crime inci-
dents against Asian Americans likely

will surge across the United States,
due to the spread of coronavirus dis-
ease ... endangering Asian Ameri-
can communities,” read a report
compiled by the FBI’s Houston office
and sent to local law enforcement
across America. “The FBI makes this
assessment based on the assump-
tion that a portion of the US public
will associate COVID-19 with China
and Asian American populations.”

On March 27, the FBI warned of a
surge in hate crimes against Asian
Americans because of coronavirus.
On March 30, several members of
Congress spoke out to address the
issue and bring more attention to the
FBI’s findings. Legislators includ-
ed Reps. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY),
Katherine Clark (D-MA), Judy Chu
(D-CA), Karen Bass (D-CA), Joaquin
Castro (D-TX) and Grace Meng (D-
NY).

Lauren Victoria Burke is an inde-
pendent journalist for NNPA and
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Who Gets the Ventilators?

By Julianne Malveaux
Wire Columnist

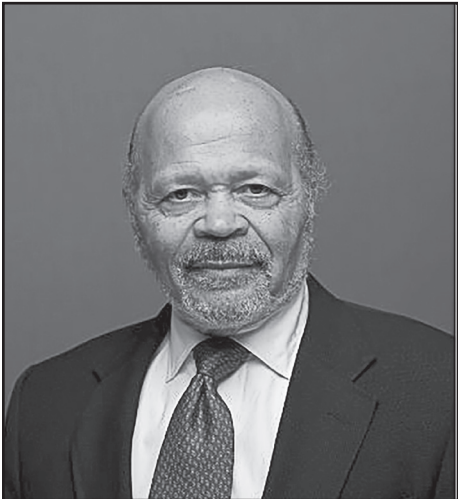
(TriceEdneyWire.com) - The "big
and bad" United States is seeing
its world dominance recede. We
are being vanquished both by a
virus and by the ignorance of the
"Commander in Chief". We now
know that there are not enough
tests to detect the coronavirus, nor

enough ventilators to treat all of
those who are ill. Medical profes-
sionals are talking openly about the
choices they will make and the fact
that some people will be judged
more likely to survive than others.
Through which lens will these med-
ical professionals decide who gets
a ventilator? Will age be the only
lens, advantaging a 30-year-old
over an 80-year-old? Will there be
other filters? Will a man with chil-
dren get preference over a single
woman? An author over a home-
less person? A white person over
a person of color? Medical profes-
sionals are being asked to choose
and to judge. How will their con-
scious or unconscious bias play a
role in their judgments?
The Institute of Medicine (IOM)
describes itself as "an independ-
ent, nonprofit organization that
works outside of government to
provide unbiased and authoritative
advice to decision-makers and the
public" On its website, it acknowl-

edges "evidence of racial and eth-
nic disparities in health care." Will
this evidence influence the distribu-
tion of ventilators?
People will need these ventila-
tors to breathe. They may need
them for weeks, not days. Some
will survive, and some won't. The
survival rate is a function of the bi-
zarre avoidance our so-called lead-
ers make decisions about this pan-
demic. But who will be saved? An
innocent infant or the despot who
lives in the house that enslaved
people built?
Dr. Dorothy Irene Height was 98
when she died in 2010. She was
productive until her final days. In
her own words, she was "dressed
and In her right mind" until the
end. Would the doctor choosing
who got a ventilator see the histo-
ry contained in that precious black
body? Or would he make choices
based on stereotypes? I know that
by Black 92-year-old mama, dis-

continued on page 5

ASHES AND RUBBLE



By Oscar H. Blayton
Wire Writer

Unless you have serious psychological issues, you recognize the grave danger the COVID-19 pandemic poses for our global community. This is a time of great loss. The worst tragedies are the loss of our loved ones. And in addition to these heartbreaks, we also must bear the simultaneous catastrophes of the loss of income, the destabilization of our families and the destruction of whatever marginal security we may have had.

Because COVID-19 is going to leave communities around the world in ashes and rubble – financially, socially and emotionally – it is extremely important that we, as people of color, stay strong and focused.

This murderous virus does not discriminate based on race or economic status, but the social structures under which we live leave some of us more exposed than others to its dangers. And facts, borne out by data, show that people of color and the poor are dying of the virus at a rate disproportionate to our percentage of the general population.

In the midst of this pandemic, it is not easy to see clearly all the circumstances contributing to the misery we now suffer. Amid the scramble to survive, we are left with little time to reflect on why it is killing African Americans and other people of color faster than wealthy white people. As in the fog of war, the fog of crisis nar-

rows our focus on the enemy directly in front of us from moment to moment. And it takes critical analysis to understand why this is happening to us.

The answer to this question also reveals why whites generally live longer than people of color: We live in different worlds.

This might be an extraordinary thing to say if it was not for the reality of environmental racism.

Environmental racism creates different worlds for different people. It created the toxic water crisis in Flint, Mich. It is one reason Puerto Rico has not fully recovered more than two years after Hurricanes Irma and Maria left it devastated in 2017. And for years after New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward was flooded by Hurricane Katrina, its rehabilitation was neglected because of environmental racism. These tragedies, which never would have been tolerated in predominantly white and wealthy communities, are only a few examples of environmental racism. Interstate highways and exchanges cut through predom-

of commercial hazardous waste facilities in the United States." Those facilities have been deliberately located in and near communities of color, resulting in a disproportionate number of individuals having their health compromised and being more susceptible to the COVID-19 virus.

For people of color, our fight for survival must be fought on multiple fronts, and now COVID-19 has

children while building lives, communities and institutions in the face of racism set an example for us to follow. We must support and rely on each other while demanding fair treatment from a reluctant government. Threats to our health and welfare have always been compounded by social injustice. And so it is with this COVID-19 pandemic.

With one arm we must shield our-



“

Our greater vulnerability to COVID-19 is the result of conscious and deliberate decisions by policy makers under the influence of racial bigotry and belief in white superiority. It is not enough for us to beat back this deadly virus. We also must also strategize and work to eliminate those injustices that make us the most vulnerable in its path. And we must work with those who recognize these injustices in order to tackle these problems collectively.

”

selves and our communities from encroachments and threats like pandemics and, with our other arm, we must wield the sword of justice to eliminate public policy inequities born of racism and notions of white superiority and then inflicted upon us.

Our greater vulnerability to COVID-19 is the result of conscious and deliberate decisions by policy makers under the influence of racial bigotry and belief in white superiority. It is not enough for us to beat back this deadly virus. We also must also strategize and work to eliminate those injustices that make us the most vulnerable in its path. And we must work with those who recognize these injustices in order to tackle these problems collectively.

Out of the ashes and rubble of this worldwide tragedy we must build a new and more just world.

Oscar H. Blayton is a former Marine Corps combat pilot and human rights activist who practices law in Virginia.

inantly Black urban areas. Many urban areas populated by people of color are classified as food deserts by the federal government. And in a 1987 study titled “Toxic Waste and Race in the United States,” the United Church of Christ’s Commission for Racial Justice found that “indeed, race has been a factor in the location

opened yet another one.

We should not despair, however, over the dangerous road ahead. Instead, we should take a lesson from our ancestors, many of whom suffered slavery or oppressive colonialism in times past. The generations that emerged from under these evils to educate themselves and their

Who Gets the Ventilators?

continued from page 4

abled by a stroke, still gives her children strength and love, smiles, and sharp reprimands (yes, the lady hit me when I used profanity in her presence. Whose life would I trade that for?)

We must not forget the many ways that Black bodies were used for medical experiments, from the use of Black women’s genitalia to develop gynecology through the Tuskegee syphilis studies that lasted from 1932 through 1972. Black people’s lives have too often been white people’s experiments. It is not paranoid, but merely cautious, to wonder who will get the ventilators, and whose needs will be sidelined. Now the words “Black Lives Matter take on a more pointed meaning.

This coronavirus illustrates our nation’s faultlines by class race and gender. The coronavirus also refutes the notion of our nation’s exceptionalism. The United States just ain’t all that, despite our “greatest” rhetoric. We are stumbling compared to other countries – Italy, Chi-



na, Spain – who have attempted, generously, to show us the way forward.

One of the populations I’ve heard

very little about is incarcerated people. How do you socially distance when you are confined, with another

person, in a small cell? Given our collective disdain for the incarcerated, will an incarcerated person with coronavirus have a chance?

Incarcerated people aren’t the only people at risk. All marginalized people are, in one way or another, at risk. Ventilators cost between \$25,000 and \$50,000 and even more when there is competition to obtain them. Will hospitals with limited resources be able to obtain ventilators? Those who are income-challenged are more likely to go to hospitals that are under-resourced. Lower-income people are at greater risk and have less access to quality health care.

The coronavirus will hit princes and paupers, members of Congress and embers of the clergy, computer whizzes and those who don’t have computers. We may all be at risk from the coronavirus, but class, race, and gender will likely determine who has the best chance at recovery. We can’t call ourselves “great” unless we are fair. Will everyone have a chance to recover from this virus?

Booker T. Washington stamp issued in 1940

SUBMITTED
BlackmansStreet.Today

The Booker T. Washington stamp, the first stamp honoring an African American, was issued on April 7, 1940 by the Post Office Department, predecessor of the U.S. Postal Service, as part of its famous Americans series.

Born a slave in Hale's Ford, Virginia, Washington served as a role model for other struggling African Americans, and, as founder of Alabama's Tuskegee Normal Industrial School (renamed Tuskegee Institute in 1937), he profoundly influenced the black community's self-esteem and self-reliance.

In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, responding to numerous petitions from African American supporters, recognized the timeliness of such a stamp and directed that Washington be considered for this



PHOTO CREDIT / SUBMITTED
The Booker T. Washington Stamp

important stamp series. The stamp sold for 10 cents, a high price at the time, but blacks were urged to buy the stamp for special mailings.

Tuskegee Institute owns the first

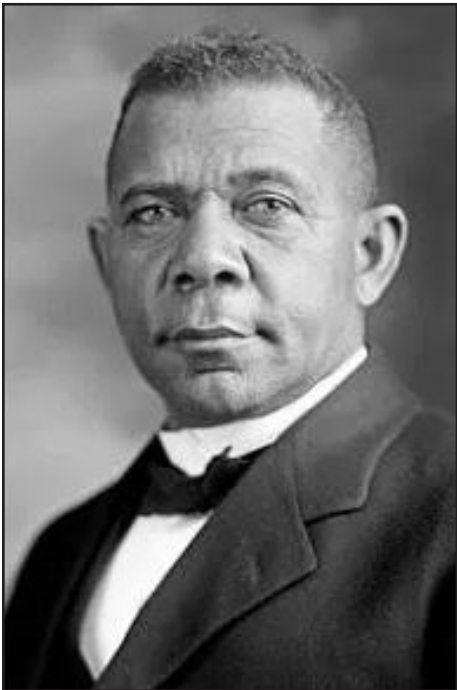


PHOTO CREDIT / SUBMITTED
Booker T. Washington

sheet of Booker T. Washington stamps sold, but it passed through several hands before reaching its destination.

Captain Alvin J. Neely, Tuskegee General Alumni Association's executive secretary, purchased the sheet, autographed by James A. Farley, postmaster general under two administrations of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Neely presented the sheet to Washington's daughter, Portia Washington Pittman, who then gave it to Dr. William J. Schieffelin, Tuskegee's chairman of the board, for preservation.

Adding to the memorable event, the Tuskegee Philatelic Club issued covers with a hand-stamped cachet showing a likeness of Washington's graveside monument.

Booker T. Washington died November 14, 1945 of high blood pressure, according to his medical records. He was 59.

Tyler Perry Gives \$21,000 Tip to Fired Workers at His Favorite Restaurant

SUBMITTED

Nationwide — Filmmaker and actor Tyler Perry is making headlines once again for his generosity. He reportedly ordered take-out and then left a \$500 tip for all 42 workers at a Houston's

restaurant located in Atlanta. That comes to \$21,000.

Perry reportedly has been ordering take-out at the restaurant for a long time, and has been especially regular there during the lockdown. The



PHOTO CREDIT / SUBMITTED
Tyler Perry continues to support those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

employees were not only shocked about the tip, but also shocked to learn that they had been serving food to Perry whose studios are located not too far from the restaurant.

The act was very kind and generous since hundreds of thousands of restaurants have closed around the country, forcing them to lay off their employees. Some, however, are managing to stay afloat by offering take-out and delivery services.

But Perry is no stranger to generosity. He once paid for a local non-profit organization's parking lot to be repaved, and he even rebuilt an 88-year old woman's home that was destroyed in a fire.

Most recently, he paid off the balances of everything that was on layaway at two Walmart stores in the Atlanta area during Christmas time in 2018.



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Civil Rights Lawyers Demand State Numbers with ‘All Deliberate Speed’ as African-Americans Die Disparately from COVID19

By Hazel Trice Edney
Wire Writer

(TriceEdneyWire.com) – It is often said that when America gets a cold, Black America gets pneumonia – or far worse. That has proven to be the case once again this week in the wake of reports that Black people are contracting and dying from the Coronavirus in much greater numbers than other races.

“We are deeply concerned that African American communities are being hardest hit by the COVID19 pandemic, and that racial bias may be impacting the access they receive to testing and healthcare,” said Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. “Equal access to health-care is a critical civil rights



Kristen Clarke.

issue, and during this novel pandemic, the public deserves nothing less than full transparency from this Administration and state public health

officials. To fully confront this pandemic, we must ensure that communities of color receive equitable health care and treatment during this crisis. Com-

prehensive and publicly-available racial data is a necessary weapon in the fight to confront COVID19.”

Clarke said in a phone conference with reporters this week that the Lawyers Committee hopes to obtain volunteer responses and compliance by federal agencies and the states.

“But we’re prepared to use every tool in our arsenal as we move forward” if those responsible for the data do not move with “all deliberate speed.” She implied that the situation could end up in court based on Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits race discrimination by any program or activity that receives funds or financial assistance from the federal government as do hospitals and

states.

Clarke announced that the Lawyers Committee and more than 400 medical professionals have sent a letter to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services demanding “the release of daily racial and ethnic demographic data related to COVID19 testing, cases, and patient outcomes,” according to a news release.

Medical experts say the elderly and people with diseases that compromise their respiratory and immune systems are most vulnerable to the coronavirus which has killed more than 12,000 in the U. S. as of Wednesday this week. African-Americans are already disparately in this vulnerable category. However the Lawyers Committee appears to

be angling to assure that blatant race discrimination is not playing a roll in the disparate deaths. Some states appear to be refusing to release the numbers by race.

“Recently analyzed health data indicates that African Americans in some states and counties are being infected and dying from COVID19 at higher rates than whites,” says the release, which gives the following statistics:

- In Illinois, African-Americans make up 14.6 percent of the population, but 29.4 percent of confirmed cases and 41.2 percent of deaths as of April 6.
- Similarly, Michigan’s population is 14 percent Black, but African-Americans currently make up 34 percent of COVID19

continued on page 8

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Lawyers Demand State Numbers with ‘All Deliberate Speed’ as African-Americans Die Disparately from COVID19

continued from page 7

cases and 40 percent of deaths.

•On April 3rd, Pro Publica reported that in Milwaukee County, where the population is 26 percent Black, African-Americans currently comprise “almost half of [the] County’s 941 cases and 81 percent of its 27 deaths.”

“The data coming out of these states is likely indicative of the disproportionate impact that COVID19 is having on Black communities and other communities of color throughout the country,” the release states.

The Lawyers Committee points out that the “CDC is not currently

cialized health inequities, further devastating Black and other marginalized communities. Collecting racial and ethnic demographic data on testing, cases, and health outcomes will be imperative to mitigating the effects of the COVID19 pandemic on our already vulnerable populations and will ensure healthcare resources are allocated equitably.”

In the press call held Monday, reporter Stephen Johnson of the New York Amsterdam News asked why New York State would release infection numbers by counties, by burrow and zip

“Despite significant advances in healthcare and health technology over the last five decades, racialized health disparities have been both persistent and profound. Black Americans have carried the highest burden of chronic diseases, shortest life expectancies, and highest maternal and infant mortality rates”

publicly reporting racial or ethnic demographic data for COVID19 cases or tests performed across the country. Yet, the CDC requests this critical information from health departments through the COVID19 Case Report Form “to track the impact of the outbreak and inform public health response.”

Dr. Uche Blackstock, founder & CEO, Advancing Health Equity says the COVID19 crisis will bring racial health disparities to the forefront of health policy issues.

“Despite significant advances in healthcare and health technology over the last five decades, racialized health disparities have been both persistent and profound. Black Americans have carried the highest burden of chronic diseases, shortest life expectancies, and highest maternal and infant mortality rates,” Blackstock said in a release. “As we have already seen, the COVID19 pandemic has and will undoubtedly amplify ra-

code; yet has not taken the extra step to release the numbers by race since that can be deduced by zip code.

“It’s hard to understand intent,” Clark responded. “What we do know is that we face a grave crisis. And everything that we have seen, including reports from health professionals on the front lines and the data that have emerged from pockets of the country, all make clear that this crisis is having a starker impact on African-Americans. We hope that officials will find the political will to do their part and to bring transparency to the crisis to shine a light on all of the ways in which the crisis is impacting communities.”

She continued, “We have seen data along lines of geography and gender. We’ve seen it broken down by day. And it’s critical that officials right now take the next step and shine a light on the racial impact that COVID19 is having across the country.”

12-Year Old Genius Makes Historical Mathematics Discovery



Chika Ofili, a 12-year old boy from the UK has made a significant mathematical discovery. He has unearthed a new formula that makes the study of math much easier to understand than ever before.

Chika, who attends Westminster Under School in London, made the discovery while completing a homework assignment given to him by his teacher, Mary Ellis. She gave him a book called “First Steps for Problem Solvers” while on break. The book contained several division problems that required him to determine if various numbers are divisible by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9 before completing the full problem, but his math book didn’t contain a memorable test for dividing by 7.

Chika created a new method that consists of taking the last digit of any whole number, multiplying it by 5 and then adding this to the remaining part of the number to get a new number. He found that if this new number is divisible by 7, then the original number is also divisible by 7.

The method was backed with algebraic proof, and it has successfully changed the way math is understood all around the world.

Chika was receive a prestigious award for his history discovery back in November at the TruLittle Hero Awards, which recognizes youth ages 7 to 16 for their outstanding achievements.

TARTA Requires Riders to Wear Facial Coverings to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

(Toledo, OH) – Effective Saturday, April 11, 2020, riders will be required to wear a cloth or paper facial covering while riding TARTA. In collaboration with the Lucas County Health Department, this policy will be enacted to further protect drivers and riders from the spread of COVID-19.

On Friday, April 10, 2020 TARTA ambassadors will be present at the Hub on Cherry Street to educate riders about the new policy.

Continuous communication messages have been shared across a broad social media network that only essential trips should be taken on public transportation during COVID-19, yet TARTA continues to transport 1500-1600 riders every day in the Metro Toledo Region.

“Our top priority is to protect our employees and bus riders,” said Kimberly Dunham, TARTA General Manager. “We have taken swift action, often before the transit industry at large, by implementing protective protocols such as fare free, rear door boarding, 10 passenger limit per fixed route bus, shadow service for overflow, and social distancing barrier between the driver and riders. I credit our strong partnership with labor leaders representing



TARTA employees and our collective goal of protecting our people as part of our success during this crisis.”

According to Dunham, “At no other time is it more evident that public transportation is absolutely essential. The Department of Homeland Security defines transit workers as part of the critical infrastructure sector. Just the fact that so many people still rely on TARTA right now is evidence that we are viewed by the community as essential infrastructure. And as we begin to move back to a life of normalcy in the upcoming

months, so many people who have lost their jobs will need affordable transportation access to apply for new work, get to their jobs and shop during transition.”

Transportation resource information is available by contacting 211. Additional information on COVID-19 safety guidance is available via the TARTA website (www.tarta.com), Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov), Office of Governor DeWine (www.governor.ohio.gov) and Lucas County Health Department (www.lucascountyhealth.com).

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING: Just How Strange Are You?



By James A. Washington Jr.,
Publisher of the Dallas Weekly Newspaper

You know God has a history of using people in the strangest ways. Or is it that He uses the strangest people to carry out His divine will? After all, isn't the bible which let's us know that those who feel quite strange about it, are chosen by God to carry out heavenly tasks here on earth?

Moses was a murderer. Paul (Saul) killed a few Jesus lovers in his time. Rahab was a ho and Jacob was, well, y'all know all about Jacob's shortcomings. And David, I ain't gone even talk about this guy.

The point is that God uses the least of us (by our definition) to carry out His plans in spite of what we think we're capable of or, what we think we're worthy of. I mean most of the prophets were reluctant participants at best as implementers and vehicles of God's message to His people and those around them.

As a matter of fact, most wanted nothing to do with their assignments because they didn't think anyone would listen, they weren't worthy or someone else was better suited for the challenge.

Whatever the reason, we should all be mindful that the Hand of God is at work where He deems it will do the most good, regardless of what we think. Anyone and everyone are candidates for greatness in the eyes of the Lord, including you, and yes, including even me.

I used to think that only those called to preach had the gift of ministry. Try telling that to anyone who has accepted Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and watch how quickly they get corrected. I know I did or was. Slowly and reluctantly, I've accepted we all have a ministry according to the gifts given to us by God.

Neither economic status, academic achievement or social standing means anything if God says 'tag' it's your turn to do His bidding, carry His message or, simply let others see Him in you.

One thing is for certain. You cannot refuse to hear Him, when God comes knocking. Just ask Moses, Ezekiel, Isaiah or Jeremiah. More importantly, ask yourself as I have lately, what are you reluctant to do in the name of God?

Only you know if you're in denial. Only you know if you're trying to convince God to choose someone else.

The question is how long will it take you to realize that eventually, as have so many others, you're going to do what God is telling you to do? I think you might want to get to that conclusion before God stops asking and starts telling. God is apt to stop asking and abandon you altogether and accept your no as a final answer.

The prospect of that gives a whole new meaning to "When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die.' and you do not war him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sins and I will hold you accountable for his blood." Ezekiel 3:18.

I now believe that the measure of your life and mine is how we respond to God's call and not how hard we work, even if we judge that work as beneficial to others. According to what we're called to do.

The question then is how do we know when God is the one doing the talking? I believe God doesn't confuse us. I also believe He's talking all the time. The key for us is to make a conscious and deliberate effort to listen and hear Him. That requires persistence and prayer. Combined, listening then becomes habitual.

All I'm trying to say is I'm trying each and every day to hear God. In doing so, I'm obligated to share with you that maybe my calling and my job is to accept as a blessing this platform, use it as but another wonderful conduit for God's will and continue to say loudly and publicly that Jesus is Lord.

And if you also believe this, then you probably better tell somebody. May God bless and keep you always.

James A. Washington is a father, husband, Christian, writer, entrepreneur and the owner/publisher of the Dallas Weekly.

Expressions of Faith: When things fall apart



By Minister
Patti Nicole Wheeler,
Guest columnist, Nashville
Pride Newspaper

Often in our lives we feel hurt or broken for a variety of reasons: People pass away. People walk away. We are laid-off. We're fired, or we quit. Maybe we dropped out of school or we're kicked out—or we didn't have the money nor the grades to even start an education past the high school level. We currently have a job, but the money just isn't enough. I could go on and on listing the innumerable things that could bring us down in our lives, but consider this:

1) Sometimes when things are falling apart, God may be planning something better for us.

I'm sure that we all remember the story of Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob. Because of jealousy, Joseph was sold to a band of traveling Ishmaelites by his own brothers. God was with Joseph and enabled him to flourish in that situation so much that he was able to save his family during a time of great famine (Genesis 37).

Joseph didn't know why he was in that circumstance, but he trusted God. He listened to His voice and he was blessed in the mist of what seemed to be a broken situation. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you," Deuteronomy 31:6. When we stay humble and thankful unto God for just who He is in our lives, He will provide for us; He will take care of us, because He loves us. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your worries on Him, because He cares for you," I Peter 5:6-7. Sometimes God is working on a plan for us that we may not be able to see nor even under-

stand. When we trust and believe that He will never leave us nor forsake us, He can and He will make a blessing out of the broken.

2) Sometimes when things are falling apart, God may be trying to remove elements from our lives.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John 8:36. There are so many things that could hold us down or hold us back, preventing us from blossoming and growing, that we need Jesus Christ to help us break free from low self-esteem, addictions, jealousy, anger, envy, casual drugs-use, casual alcohol-use, casual sex and absorbing negativity. It is very difficult to be hopeful and positive when we constantly play video games, watch shows, listen to music, read literature and socialize with individuals that demonstrate violence, display negativity and pour conflict into us. Those are not nurturing energies. Those are not caring/loving spirits.

Not all friendships and relationships are "till death do us part." Some people were only meant to be in our lives for a period of time. Some folks we were meant to help; some folks were meant to help us. Some folks are meant for the duration. We need to learn the difference between who is to stay, how long they should stay and then (if need be) find the strength to let them go. If a relationship is falling apart, maybe God is tearing down some old walls, and some old habits just to build something fresh and wonderful and new. Not all broken relationships were made to be pieced back together. Some relationships are like glass and are best left broken because we would only continue to hurt ourselves by trying to put them back together.

3) Sometimes when

things are falling apart, God may want us to change our hearts so He does not change our situations.

Sometimes we need to carry the cross that we are bearing. If we try to lighten our load, we may lose some valuable tools that we may need for our journey. God knows what we need and how much we can carry, so we just need to trust Him. He will not give us more that we can bear, so we just need to trust Him. When we cannot see our way, God is guiding our every footstep, so we just need to trust Him. "Trust in the

Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths," Proverbs 3:5-6.

We can't grow up or move forward if we remain in the same space. So remember: sometimes when things are falling apart, they may actually be falling into place.

(The Celebration Christian Center, Inc. is located at 1215 9th Ave. N., Nashville, Tenn. 37208. For more information, visit their website at www.celebrationchristian.online.)

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BLACK HISTORY

April 15, 1928: Norma Merrick Sklarek, the first African American woman architect, is born.

April 16, 1862: President Abraham Lincoln signs law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia

April 17, 1990: Ralph Abernathy, former President of Southern Christian Leadership Conference, dies.

April 18, 1966: Bill Russell becomes the first African American Coach in the NBA

April 19, 1975: World renowned African American Chemist and Humanitarian Percy Lavon Julian dies.

April 20, 1971: United States Supreme Court rules that busing, for the purpose of desegregating school district is constitutional.

April 21, 1940: James C. Napier, African American businessman and politician dies.

As a child, **Muhammad Ali** was refused an autograph by his boxing idol, **Sugar Ray Robinson**. When **Ali** became a prize fighter, he vowed to never to deny an autograph request, which he honored throughout his career.

Ali, the self-proclaimed "greatest (boxer) of all time," was originally named after his father, who was named after the 19th-century abolitionist and politician **Cassius Marcellus Clay**.

Allensworth is the first all-black Californian township, founded and financed by African Americans. Created by **Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth** in 1908, the town was built with the intention of establishing a self-sufficient city where African Americans could live their lives free of racial prejudice.

Jazz, an African American musical form born out of the blues, ragtime and marching bands, originated in Louisiana during the turn of the 19th century. The word "**jazz**" is a slang term that at one point referred to a sexual act.

During the 1930s, painter **Charles Alston** founded the 306 group, which convened in his studio space and provided support and apprenticeship for African American artists, including **Langston Hughes**; sculptor **Augusta Savage**; and mixed-media visionary **Romare Bearden**.

Before **Wally Amos** became famous for his "Famous Amos" chocolate chip cookies, he was a talent agent at the William Morris Agency, where he worked with the likes of The **Supremes** and **Simon & Garfunkel**.

Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on friend **Maya Angelou's** birthday, on April 4, 1968. **Angelou** stopped celebrating her birthday for years afterward, and sent flowers to King's widow, **Coretta Scott King**, for more than 30 years, until **Coretta's** death in 2006.

Home Learning, at 7:00 a.m. WGTE change its programming to educational programming to help students ranging from high school to early learners. This programming is designed for students who may not have computer and online access. This new programming will be available until schools resume. For more information contact Theresa A. Bush, Marketing Communications Manager at theresa_bush@wgte.org.

SOCIAL SECURITY UPDATES



New Guidance about COVID-19 Economic Impact Payments for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Beneficiaries
from Social Security Commissioner Andrew Saul

Submitted By: Erin Thompson, Public Affairs Specialist Social Security Administration

"The Treasury Department launched a new web tool allowing quick registration for Economic Impact Payments for eligible individuals who do not normally file a tax return, and also announced that it would begin making automatic payments. However, for some people receiving benefits from the Social Security Administration—specifically those who have dependent children under the age of 17—it is to their advantage to go to this portal to ensure they also get the \$500 per dependent Economic Impact Payment. I encourage them to do this as soon as possible, and want to provide the following details:

People who receive Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability insurance benefits and who did not file a tax return for 2018 or 2019 and who have qualifying children under age 17 should now go to the IRS's webpage at www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments to enter their information instead of waiting for their automatic \$1,200 Economic Impact Payment. By taking proactive steps to enter information on the IRS website about them and their qualifying children, they will also receive the \$500 per dependent child payment in addition to their \$1,200 individual payment. If Social Security beneficiaries in this group do not provide their information to the IRS soon, they will have to wait to receive their \$500 per qualifying child.

The same new guidance also applies to SSI recipients, especially those who have qualifying children under age 17. To receive the full amount of the Economic Impact Payments you and your family are eligible for, go to the IRS's *Non-Filers: Enter Payment Info* page at www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments and provide information about yourself and your qualifying children.

Additionally, any new beneficiaries since January 1, 2020, of either Social Security or SSI benefits, who did not file a tax return for 2018 or 2019, will also need to go to the IRS's *Non-Filers* website to enter their information.

Lastly, for Social Security retirement, survivors, or disability beneficiaries who do not have qualifying children under age 17, you do not need to take any action with the IRS. You will automatically receive your \$1,200 economic impact payment directly from the IRS as long as you received an SSA-1099 for 2019.

For SSI recipients who do not have qualifying children under age 17, we continue to work closely with Treasury in our efforts to make these payments automatically. Please note that we will not consider Economic Impact Payments as income for SSI recipients, and the payments are excluded from resources for 12 months.

The eligibility requirements and other information about the Economic Impact Payments can be found here: www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center. In addition, please continue to visit the IRS at www.irs.gov/coronavirus for the latest information.

We will to update Social Security's COVID-19 web page at v/coronavirus/ www.socialsecurity.gov/coronavirus/ as further details become available."

COMING EVENTS

Continued from page 3

Now - April 16 - A reminder letter and paper questionnaire.

April 20-27 - A final reminder postcard before we follow up in person.

SISTERS IN POWER FUNDRAISER/DONATION DRIVE

Several programs and services for the community and its all free by ways of donations and fundraisers that are conducted throughout the year. A supply drive or diaper drive is needed to support some of these outreach programs. Donations that are needed for Children's clothing in any size, Baby diapers in size newborn to size 6 for Diaper Pantry, School Supplies, Printer Ink for Epson-212, and Gift Cards to Michael's. More information 419-984-2799.

Every Saturday GLASS CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST FREE MEAL

Soup kitchen now open at 901 Hoag. Hours: 1:00-2:00 pm every Saturday. We are reaching out to individuals and families in need of a free meal. Please see our Facebook page for menu items and any updates.

Every 3rd Saturday RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH

Hosts "The Storehouse" free food distribution from 11:00am to 1:00pm, 3611 Upton Ave., Toledo, Ohio 43613. Ephesians 6:7 - NLT - Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

Now - Until Further Notice
WGTE Public Media Home Learning
WGTE Public Media in collaboration with all of the Ohio Public Broadcasting stations announces AT

How COVID-19 is Disrupting My Wedding Planning

By Brianna A. Smith, The New Tri-State Defender

My advice for navigating wedding planning during this unprecedented COVID-19 situation is to take a pause, don't make any hasty decisions, and really think about what you value most for your wedding.

On March 20, exactly eight months until our destination wedding in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, my fiancé, Lorenzo Herman and I received a notification on our phones that the United States restricted non-essential travel to Mexico.

I was shaken, stunned, flabbergasted. COVID-19 is affecting our wedding a tad bit differently than the other couples I wrote about.

Luckily, in January I said 'yes to the dress' and we had our site visit to Mexico in February.

However, finding bridesmaids gowns and accessories have become a hassle because many retailers in the United States import dresses from China, where the outbreak is said to have started

and where many factories have been forced to close.

As a result, bridal stores have been struggling to source garments since the pandemic picked up and the safer-at-home order means that bridal stores, such as David's Bridal have been ordered to close.

For a bride, groom or wedding planner, the challenge is every day that passes is a day closer to the special day. So, for people to have to sit tight or even try to plan for a pivot in the face of so much uncertainty is especially tricky.

Our wedding venue has temporarily closed, causing communication to be delayed.

"The shutdown of the venue is not ideal, but I understand the measure," said Herman. "It puts me more at ease knowing that it has been shut down and it gives them time to clean, disinfect and change anything that needs to be changed prior to our wedding day."

As a result of the coronavirus some of ours friends have been laid off from their jobs



PHOTO CREDIT / ARIEL COBBERT

On March 20, exactly eight months until our destination wedding in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, my fiancé, Lorenzo Herman and I received a notification on our phones that the United States restricted nonessential travel to Mexico.

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”

and now lack the financial resources to afford to attend our wedding. Many have had to renege.

Herman said, “Because some of our guests have been financially impacted it makes accounting for them difficult, the longer there is a safer-at-home order and things remain closed the longer our guests may not have the funds to afford to be in attendance by

November.”

The most important factor right now is taking care of ourselves, our well-being and not putting our loved ones at risk.

We are staying calm and keeping faith that our big day will still happen as planned. There are too many uncertainties right now, and everyone is learning how to handle the situation to the best of their abilities.

L.O.V.E is the Answer



By Dr. E. Faye Williams
Wire Writer

(TriceEdneyWire.com) —A few years ago, I met A.J. Ali. A.J. is a service-disabled veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Air Force as a Journalist and Media Relations Specialist. He was based at Vandenberg AFB in CA, Comiso Air Station nuclear missile base in Sicily, and McClellan AFB in CA. He was a member of the USAF Soccer Team. He's an actor, TV host, director, producer and writer. He asked several friends to write on the

subject L.O.V.E Is The Answer for a book. The book was meant to put principles of love into action to build a stronger police-community marriage with people of color. At that time, I was unsure what my approach would be. I just went to my computer, like others asked to contribute to the book, and began writing. I sent my interpretation of what he was asking the very same day. He sent a note back and told me what I had written was perfect.

What I didn't know was that he had a lot of friends and he'd asked them to address the same subject! I'm sure you would recognize names of other writers who did a masterful job addressing the subject. The book was recently released, and now that we're all basically confined to home this is the perfect time for you to be introduced to L.O.V.E Is The Answer. Along with the

“*Remember, this too shall pass. When we get the all-clear, do we want to return into the same broken communities, or do we want to use this time to heal our communities from the inside out? Use this time to better prepare yourself to be a bridge in your community when we are all able to reconnect in person and go about our daily routines.*”

”

book is an award-winning film called WALKING WHILE BLACK: L.O.V.E. Is The Answer. See the trailer for the film at www.WalkingWhileBlack.com.

The book was developed pre-coronavirus time, but it is so appropriate for such a time as this. You can learn more about the book and the L.O.V.E Is The Answer Movement and

its writers who rose to the challenge as I tried to do putting it together with A.J.'s guidance. See <http://loveistheanswermovement.com/the-book/>

The film and the book can be the answer to equip our nation to learn how to utilize the power of transformational love to break down walls and build bridges of reconciliation. When we fi-

nally come to a close of this coronavirus and all of the destruction it is leaving behind, many people will be looking for ways to be better souls. A.J. encourages us to “Learn about your community. Open your heart to the people in it. Volunteer to be part of the solution in their lives, and Empower others to do the same.” That is the acronym for the book—L.O.V.E. E!

He reminds us to, “Remember, this too shall pass. When we get the all-clear, do we want to return into the same broken communities, or do we want to use this time to heal our communities from the inside out? Use this time to better prepare yourself to be a bridge in your community when we are all able to reconnect in person and go about our daily routines. I challenge you to read the L.O.V.E. Is The Answer book, watch the film, participate in our

webinars, and make this difficult time a time of learning and growth.”

While we're confined to home, this would be a good time to invite friends to participate in Zoom calls with you and to participate in podcasts and webinars that are conducted by A.J. and the contributors. I urge you to better prepare yourself to be a bridge in your community when we're all able to reconnect in person with others.

A.J. knows we will return to a totally different world when the coronavirus finally ends, and he won't mind a bit if you contact him at one of these numbers to assist in preparing you for being that bridge in your community at 323-577-5976 | 443-463-5009.

(Dr. E. Faye Williams is National President of the National Congress of Black Women. She is also host of “Wake Up and Stay Woke” on WP-FW-FM 89.3)

Ex-NFL star Chris Johnson accused of masterminding murder-for-hire scheme

By: TERRY SHROPSHIRE
RollingOut.com

Former NFL star running back Chris Johnson is accused of planning and financing a successful “murder-for-hire” scheme that left two dead and being heavily involved in a major drug trafficking operation in central Florida, prosecutors allege.

According to court documents obtained by TMZ, an informant claimed that Johnson sought and obtained retribution after alleged gang members shot him and killed his friend in a drive-by shooting in Orlando, Florida, on March 8, 2015.

Prosecutors relied on



PHOTO CREDIT / INSTAGRAM – @CHRISJOHNSONTWO8

Former star NFL running back Chris Johnson.

testimony from the informant, who alleged that Johnson forked over a handsome stack of bills to have rising gang member Dominic Bolden

kill the suspected shooters. The informant said Bolden successfully carried out the murderous mission, killing one of the suspected drive-

by shooters on Jan. 19, 2016, and the other on June 24 of the same year.

Bolden’s reward was multipronged, the informant said in an affidavit, according to the documents obtained by TMZ. Not only did Bolden get the bag for killing Johnson’s gang enemies, but he also rose up the ranks of the local gang in Florida, eventually becoming the “de facto leader” of the drug trafficking organization (DTO). Thirdly, Johnson allegedly provided seed money and a major contact in order for Bolden to traffic as much narcotics as possible, according to the documents.

Neither the state’s attorney’s office nor the Florida attorney general returned media inquiries to confirm this information.

Johnson, 34, who last played in the NFL in 2017, has not been charged with any crime and vehemently denied involvement in any murder or drug operation through his representative.

The former star running back rose to national fame when he rushed for more than 2,000 yards for the Tennessee Titans, a rare feat in the NFL. He played six of his 10 seasons with the Titans before being traded to the New York Jets.

Car Care: Keep Maintaining Your Vehicle Even If It Sits Idle

By: CAR CARE COUNCIL
PR Newswire

With a majority of vehicle owners living in areas of the country that have stay-at-home orders, many vehicles may be sitting idle for days or weeks at a time. The non-profit Car Care Council recommends starting your car at least once a week and keeping up with routine auto care to help prevent potential maintenance issues.

“Just as it is recommended that people stay active during

this time of social distancing, your car should get some activity as well,” said Rich White, executive director, Car Care Council. “If your vehicle sits idle for too long, the battery could die, the tires can develop flat spots and the engine oil may start to deteriorate. Just a short solo drive once a week



PHOTO CREDIT /SUBMITTED

Starting your car at least once a week and keeping up with routine auto care to help prevent potential maintenance issues.

Checking the tire pressure frequently is more important if the car is parked for long periods of time. Vehicles that sit idle too long can develop flat spots, so taking a brief drive every once in a while will help prevent bald spots, and recharge the battery, too.

Fuel – Today’s modern fuel systems help preserve the life of the gas in your tank and also prevent fuel oxidation. Keeping a full tank of gas helps limit gas-tank condensation. If you are still concerned about the gas in your tank going bad, a fuel stabilizer may help extend the life of your fuel.

Oil – If a car sits too long, the oil can deteriorate, so continue to change the oil at the proper time intervals, even if you are not driving your normal mileage. It is always best to check the owner’s manual for the maximum time you should wait between oil changes.

Brakes – If a car sits idle, rust can start to form on the brake rotors, especially if the car is parked outside. Driving your car at least once a week will help prevent rust buildup.

Cleaning – Removing the grime and sediment that builds up on the outside of your car helps prevent rust, and cleaning the interior is important, too. Wipe down the dashboard, steering wheel, cup holders, door handles, vents and console with a quality, all-purpose automotive cleaner that will help disinfect the interior areas of your vehicle.

For more helpful information about maintaining your vehicle for safety, dependability and value, visit www.carcare.org/car-care-guide to order the Car Care Council’s free 80-page Car Care Guide.

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and a little car care will keep your car running efficiently and safely.”
When starting your car weekly, let it run for at least five minutes. If the vehicle is started in a garage, make sure the garage door is open and there is plenty of ventilation. In addition, the Car Care Council suggests monitoring the following areas of your vehicle if it sits idle for long periods of time.
Battery – Today’s vehicles have several computers that are always in operation, so if a car sits too long without recharging, the battery could die within a couple of weeks.
Tires – Maintain proper tire pressure to improve vehicle performance and gas mileage. Doing so is also important for vehicle safety.