

Amid the pandemic, more Black families on the brink of homelessness

By HILARY POWELL

Three times a week, an Uber ride on Indianapolis' east side helps to save the life of bright-eyed, 11-year-old Jay'Shawn Roberson.

Every other weekday, Jay'Shawn and his snaggletooth smile take a ride from his Brightwood apartment to Riley Hospital for Children to get the dialysis he needs to live. His dad, James Roberson, currently carless, uses a lunch break to take his son to outpatient care, where he leaves Jay'Shawn alone for hours, afraid to lose the job that is the lifeline for his formerly homeless family.

"I was pretty much stable," the 33-year-old father says. "I had a home [last year] and everything was going good and it all went downhill out of the blue. It takes a lot to be able to



James Roberson with two of his children. (Photo provided by James Roberson)



Jay'Shawn Roberson

handle the situation. Times are hard."

The father of five is part of a growing number of families Hoosier housing experts say have seen options to live with relatives reduced amid the coronavirus pandemic, leaving more parents and children without a permanent residence.

"If a family is experiencing homelessness and does not have a safe place to shelter, they risk losing their kids," said Chelsea Haring-Cozzi, executive director of the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP). "That's huge," she said. "[They] risk, that whole family being broken up."

Two-thirds of families in family shelters in the state are Black, she said. The factors of unemployment, income loss and housing loss exacerbated by the pandemic have led to a growing need

See **HOMELESSNESS**, A3 ►

WTHR faces lawsuit alleging discrimination

By BREANNA COOPER
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WTHR-Channel 13 and its parent company, TEGNA Inc., are facing a discrimination lawsuit filed by longtime anchor Andrea Morehead.

Morehead, an Anderson native who began working for WTHR in 1999, alleges the company failed to accommodate her following a breast cancer diagnosis in September 2018, violating the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The latter prohibits workplace discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, pregnancy and national origin.

Following her breast cancer diagnosis, which she shared publicly, the seven-time Emmy winner underwent daily radiation treatment through December 2018. Morehead shared her experience through her reporting. In February 2019, Morehead began immunotherapy, which can cause fatigue, fever, chills, weakness, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, body aches and blood pressure irregularities, according to the lawsuit



Andrea Morehead (Photo provided by Morehead family)

See **LAWSUIT**, A3 ►



IMPD laments 2020, lays out plans for 2021

By TYLER FENWICK
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Indianapolis officials offered a stark look at the violence the city experienced in 2020, including a record 215 criminal homicides, and what they hope 2021 will look like for public safety.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic fallout have been a backdrop for almost everything related to crime for the last 10 months. Crime experts predicted early in the pandemic there could be a decrease in property crimes, for example, with more people at home during the day, and those projections held up.

The year that was

Property crime decreased by 11% from 2019 to 2020, including a 25% reduction in burglaries, according to preliminary data shared by Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department during a public safety update Jan. 19. Violent crime fell 3.5%, and overall crime dropped 8%.

Homicides trended in the opposite direction, with criminal homicides up nearly 40%. There were another 30 non-criminal homicides in 2020, which includes justified killings such as self-defense. Gunshot wounds accounted for almost 90% of homicides, according to an Indianapolis Recorder review of IMPD data.

Officers are "frustrated and disappointed," Chief Randal Taylor said, because of the rise in homicides.

The number of non-fatal shootings also rose 41.6%.

Researchers with the National Commission on COVID-19

See **SAFETY**, A7 ►

'He was a king': Community mourns Johnny Purchase



Johnny Purchase, a youth success coach at Edna Martin Christian Center, was killed Jan. 12 while canvassing the community near 25th Street and Keystone Avenue. (Photos provided by Edna Martin Christian Center)

By TYLER FENWICK
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Johnny Purchase's shooting death was a reminder that those who are nearest a solution can also be closest to harm.

Purchase, a 60-year-old youth

See **JOHNNY**, A7 ►

Todd Young discusses GOP's future with minority Republicans

By TYLER FENWICK
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A group of about 15 minority Republicans met with Sen. Todd Young on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to discuss the future of the GOP and where Black Republicans, who made up most of the group, fit in going forward.

Young, Indiana's senior senator, said he has made conversations like this a priority, but sitting down for a candid talk with mostly Black Republicans less than two weeks removed from the Capitol riot and two days before the inauguration made this more unique.

One participant described the Republican Party as being in a mid-life crisis, and one of the more prominent themes of the morning was that some of President Donald Trump's most ardent supporters make it difficult for Black Republicans to know what their role in the party looks like.

The Recorder was invited to sit in on the conversation with the condition that partici-

pants could remain anonymous to encourage a frank conversation with the senator.

The conversation was never combative, but some participants took Young to task on issues such as poverty and the diversity of congressional staff.

Young, who said a few times that "markets work," said poverty in America today is much better than it was 50 years ago. Almost everyone has the bare necessities to sustain themselves, he said, and now the issue has more to do with access to housing, jobs and education.

Young also said upward mobility is a serious issue Americans face. Data from the World Economic Forum, for example, shows the U.S. ranks No. 27 out of 82 countries in upward mobility. The top countries — including Canada and the Nordic countries — get credit for their health care and education systems, along with a strong social safety net.

The future of the Republican Party, Young said in an interview after the conversation,

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Tiffanie Ditlevson poses with Sen. Todd Young after Young talked with a group of minority Republicans on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. (Photo provided by Tiffanie Ditlevson)



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Senate bill could limit cash bail

By **BREANNA COOPER**
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A new bill authored by state Sen. Karen Tallian would limit the use of cash bail in Indiana jails. Senate Bill 222 would prohibit anyone charged with a nonviolent misdemeanor from being held on bail. Those with a previous felony conviction or charged with driving under the influence would not be exempt from cash bail under this bill.

This isn't the first legislative session Tallian, a Democrat, filed a bill on the issue of cash bail. This year, however, with ongoing conversations about criminal justice reform and racial equity, Tallian is hopeful the bill will pass.

"We've known that for years, our local jails are crowded with people, a majority of whom are there pre-trial," Tallian said. "In other words, they haven't gone for trial yet, they're just held there because they haven't been able to make bond."

Tallian said of those individuals, most are charged with misdemeanor offenses and are predominately low-income and people of color.

Nationwide, 90% of Americans awaiting trial in jail cannot afford bail. According to the Commonwealth Fund, a foundation promoting health care and social justice reforms, the pre-trial population is disproportionately Black and Hispanic. Both demographics are more likely than white Americans to live below the poverty line.

Despite only making up 26.7% of the population in Marion County, 27% of Black Indianapolis residents live in poverty, according to the Center for American Progress.

State Sen. Greg Taylor, senate minority leader and a member of the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus, said SB 222 is a racial justice issue.

"I congratulate my colleague Sen. Tallian for continuing to advocate for criminal justice reform," Taylor said in a statement. "Cash bail policies disproportionately disadvantage low-income and minority communities. ... The bail system preys on people of color and perpetuates an unjust criminal justice system. ... Senate Democrats released our 2021 legislative agenda where we highlighted our demand for equal treatment for all Hoosiers in the justice system. Sen. Tallian is fulfilling that promise with this bill."

Ending cash bail is a demand from Indy10 Black Lives Matter to the city. On Twitter, Indy10 voiced support for the bill, saying, "Thank you [Sen. Tallian] for taking a bold first step in introducing Senate Bill 222."

A representative of Indy10 could not be reached for comment.

Tallian said she's heard from many people who support limiting cash bail. She said she's gotten some pushback from judges, but the No. 1 group

opposing the issue, she said, are prosecutors. However, Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mears seems to be open to discussion. "Whether or not someone should be held in custody should be a discussion about public and personal safety, not financial means," Mears said in a statement.

Tallian is currently awaiting confirmation the bill will receive a hearing.

Along with limiting cash bail, Tallian hopes to legalize marijuana in the state through Senate Bill 223. Currently, someone caught with any amount of marijuana will be charged with possession in the state of Indiana. Tallian's bill would make it so anyone found with two ounces or less of marijuana or related paraphernalia — such as hash oil — would not be charged with possession. Further, in addition to making two ounces or less legal, the legislation would repeal the possession charge for any amount over two ounces. This means individuals found with more than two ounces of marijuana would not face a Level 6 felony and instead face a lesser charge.

The bill is aligned with recommendations from members of the IBLC, who in 2020 called for the decriminalization of marijuana as part of their justice reform policy agenda. During a press conference Aug. 13, 2020, IBLC Chair Rep. Robin Shackleford said marijuana convictions are an example of how Indiana has "failed our youth."

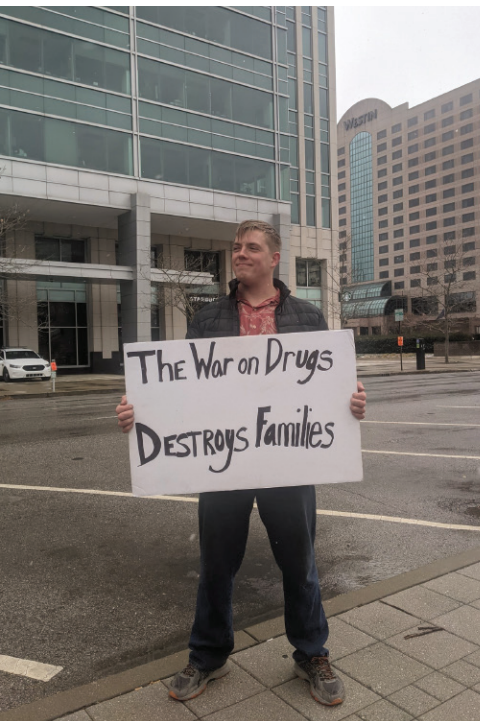
In 2019, Mears stopped prosecuting Marion County residents charged with possession if they were found with less than an ounce of marijuana. This was an effort to decrease the number of non-violent offenders held in Marion County jails.

Nationwide, the Black community faces a higher risk of incarceration for marijuana possession. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Black people are up to 10 times more likely than white people to be arrested for marijuana possession, despite comparable usage rates. A 2020 study by the ACLU found disproportionate rates of arrest in all 50 states.

If SB 223 passes, Indiana would join Michigan and Illinois in legalizing marijuana up to a certain amount. However, Tallian is aware the bill is a long shot. The sale of alcohol on Sundays was legalized in 2018.

"I've been filing marijuana bills for 10 years one way or another," Tallian said. "Even when my bills don't pass, they provide opportunities just like the one we're doing right now to air the issue. Somebody needs to speak up on these issues, even if it takes the movement one inch at a time. ... In Indiana, the discussion has moved very slowly."

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper.



Duncan Lemp was the only person to show up to a demonstration at the Statehouse on Jan. 17. Lemp planned to counterprotest a protest of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. None of the protesters showed up the Statehouse. (Photo/Breanna Cooper)

YOUNG

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involves making sure people can become active participants in their government.

"Many people feel like they lack the powers and tools to do that right now," he said, "and our Republican Party needs to be attentive to that."

What does that mean for Trump's wing of the party? Republicans are trying to figure that out. One participant said he doesn't care much about what happens at the national level with Republicans because he lives and pays his taxes in Indiana.

Young called Trump an "anomaly" and "symptom" of, among other things, people feeling disconnected and searching for answers. He said Bernie Sanders was basically the same thing for the left.

He also called the Capitol riots an act of domestic terrorism — multiple steps beyond what most of Young's Republican colleagues are willing to say — and said the country needs to be more attentive to social and economic inequalities. At least one participant

left the conversation with positive takeaways.

"He gave us a really good framework for understanding the needs of the party and the path forward," said Tiffanie Ditlevson, who agreed to an interview afterward.

Black conservatives can feel like they're in no-man's land, stuck between a Democratic Party that takes Black voters for granted and a Republican Party that courts open racists and doesn't take African Americans seriously.

Ditlevson, who's part of the inaugural Indiana Republican Diversity Leadership Series, pointed out Indiana is a safe Republican state and wondered if GOP leaders feel like they actually have to worry about the party's diversity. However, it's clear they do have to, she said, because there are Black conservatives ready to contribute.

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

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HOMELESSNESS

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around family homelessness.

Throughout last year, Roberson hotel-hopped with his family to keep them out of shelters, where he feared he would be split up from his two daughters, struggling to use his \$250 in unemployment to pay for weekly stays at almost twice that amount.

“It’s often Black heads of households that have multiple children that are most at risk of eviction, which can lead to homelessness,” Haring-Cozzi said about Marion County disparity trends. “We must focus on the whole family and families of all types.”

In December, CHIP received a \$1.25 million grant from the Day 1 Families Fund launched in 2018 by Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos to provide shelter and hunger support to address immediate needs.

The kidney failure Jay’sShawn experiences is what brought single dad Roberson and his family of five from Chicago to Indianapolis last year. After living with a relative who died last January, he and his children moved to Indianapolis to seek medical treatment for Jay’sShawn.

Roberson, a certified plumber, works maintenance at the apartment complex where he’s lived for a month — an apartment paid for by nonprofit Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis. He said he’s thankful for their support.

“Times is hard now, and a lot of people are just worried about self-love so there are not too many people out there sincere about helping others,” he said.

Every day, Family Promise gets 10 calls from families that staff has to turn away because the shelter program is at maximum capacity. Organizers said other family shelters in Central Indiana report similar call rates.

IUPUI housing policy expert Kelsie Stringham-Marquis said the issue comes down to Marion County shelters that don’t always have beds considering a demographic of a father

with children.

“[There’s] a chaotic outside factor there’s not always going to be a bed available that matches my family dynamic and my family structure,” she said. “That creates a lot of tension and complication for individual families who are navigating housing instability.”

The latest Marion County Point-in-Time Count shows the number of people experiencing homelessness in Indianapolis increased by 1% to 1,588. Fifty-four percent of people counted identified as Black or African American, which Stringham-Marquis said shows there’s a disproportionate rate of Black Hoosiers experiencing homelessness.

The next count, which has already begun, should lead to a more accurate count of Hoosiers without a home.

In a year full of challenges, CHIP has responded to the pandemic by establishing non-congregate shelters throughout the city and expanding outreach to unsheltered, homeless families at high-risk for contracting the virus for rapid rehousing.

Jay’sShawn, who also suffers from asthma and high blood pressure, has siblings who are also battling health disparities including strokes and autism. Roberson said he is proud he’s able to keep his family together during their health challenges. He’ll still spend “most of” his check to pay the \$30 roundtrip for his son to get to dialysis.

February is also a time for hope for the Robersons. The single father said he’s hoping he’ll be able to take over the lease by next month and keep providing for his family with his new job.

“I am grateful to have [Family Promise] as a part of my life,” he said. “It’s starting to get a little better.”

This story was reported as part of a partnership between WFYI, Side Effects Public Media and the Indianapolis Recorder. Contact Hilary Powell at hpowell@wfyi.org. Follow her on Twitter @mshilary.

LAWSUIT

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filed Jan. 13.

According to the lawsuit, Morehead had to take “considerable time” off work because of the side effects of her cancer treatment, but she continued to come up with story ideas, conduct interviews and edit stories, among other responsibilities.

Morehead’s attorney, Terrence Kinnard, could not be reached for an interview.

According to the suit, Morehead became aware of “a very disturbing conversation” between her colleagues, a \$20 bet allegedly between four employees debating whether Morehead would return to work following her treatments.

The suit alleges while TEGNA managers were aware of this conversation and others, “no action was taken to admonish the participants and the behavior was allowed to continued unfettered.”

After Morehead discussed these issues — along with her health concerns — with WTHR general manager Michael Brouder, the suit claims he and other station managers “began a relentless campaign of harassment.”

Morehead’s complaints led to her stories being pulled from the air and credit for some story ideas being given to other WTHR employees, the lawsuit alleges. Further, it states WTHR management “persistently refused to provide production assistance to Andrea Morehead for interviews and logging tapes, even though the same assistance was provided to similarly-situated colleagues.” Eventually, after Morehead complained, she received the necessary accommodations.

The suit also alleges WTHR management disclosed confidential infor-

mation about Morehead’s health to other anchors after shifts had to be adjusted to cover Joe Biden’s 2019 speech at the Indiana Convention Center.

While not directly related to her health, Morehead describes a hostile work environment. Specifically, the suit alleges a station photographer drove past Morehead after she was in a car accident, and the reporter in the car later told her the photographer refused to stop once he realized Morehead was involved.

Brouder did not reply to a request for comment.

While Morehead filed a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on May 27, 2020, Morehead was not let go from WTHR until December of that year, which the suit claims was a retaliatory discharge for Morehead filing the complaint.

Dorothy Tucker, president of the National Association for Black Journalists, voiced her support for Morehead and implores companies to use this case as an example of what not to do.

“The Andrea Morehead case is disturbing on several levels,” Tucker said in a statement. “We first pray for her health and strength in dealing with both the physical, mental and financial aspects of her challenges. We will continue to monitor this case as it winds its way through the courts. We implore all companies to adhere to federal laws, privacy issues and best practice management protocols when dealing with such issues.”

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper.

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Meet the Artists ... virtually

By BREANNA COOPER
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For 33 years, Indianapolis Public Library has provided Black artists of every medium an opportunity to share their work with the community through its Meet the Artists event. With COVID-19 still raging, the library had to take inspiration from the artists and get creative.

Meet the Artists XXXIII will be held virtually. Starting with an opening celebration Jan. 28, people can follow along on Facebook or YouTube through March 27 as musicians, dancers, painters and more showcase their craft.

This year's theme — "All-star" — is in honor of the National Basketball Association's All-Star Game, originally scheduled to be held in Indianapolis in February and canceled because of the pandemic.

"We wanted to highlight all the all-stars in the Black community," Keshia McEntire, public relations specialist for the Indianapolis Public Library, said.

McEntire said the library has been hosting virtual events through the pandemic and has received positive feedback. A virtual Meet the Artists, she said, is a way to get more of the community involved in the festivities.

Along with viewing artwork and listening to local musicians, people will be able to participate in virtual art classes and watch a fashion show.



An untitled painting by Kenneth Hordge. Hordge's work will be featured in Meet the Artists XXXIII. (Photo provided by Indianapolis Public Library)

Art from each visual artist can be viewed on the library website.

Kenneth Hordge displayed his oil pastel paintings at Meet the Artists events in the past, but this will be the first time he participates in a virtual art gallery.

"I'm excited to see what comes from it," Hordge said. "It'll be something different, and I'm in-

trigued about the process."

Hordge, 41, is finishing a portrait of Malcolm X to include in the online event. Previously, he's painted portraits of slain rappers Nipsey Hussle and Tupac, whom he said he enjoyed painting because he's a fan of their work.

To help support the artists taking part in the event, the library is creating a program for guests that will include contact information for each artist.

While Hordge doesn't typically pull from current events for inspiration, it's hard to ignore the impact COVID-19 has had on the local arts community. From canceled gigs to a decrease in art sales, creatives — like most Americans — are feeling the effects of the pandemic in their wallets.

While buying an album or a painting may not be a possibility for many Hoosiers right now, Hordge said social media and events like Meet the Artists are a great way to help artists right now.

"People think you can only support artists by buying artwork, but that's not true," Hordge said. "Don't get me wrong, we love when you buy our work, but it's as simple as sharing and talking about our work. Social media is big nowadays, so just share the work and get it out to other people who might not see it otherwise."

Contact staff writer Breanna Cooper at 317-762-7848. Follow her on Twitter @BreannaNCooper.



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SPOTLIGHT

Locked Down

By Dwight Brown NNPA News Wire Film Critic

It may be 2021’s first viable COVID-themed movie. Hopefully it’s not the best we can expect.

Audiences who’ve been locked down, pent up, frustrated and emotionally frayed will relate. Life with the virus has been hard and the light at the end of the tunnel is tiny. And so, British screenwriter Steven Knight (Oscar-nominated “Dirty Pretty Things”) pumps out this ode to imprisonment with little flair, not much depth, lots of dialogue, no grasp of one specific genre and unlovable characters. For good measure, in the middle of what is a tiresome couple’s personal drama, he tosses in a caper. Tonal issues and plausibility be damned.

Bringing Knight’s vision to life is the well-respected director Doug Liman, whose reputation started with the hip-to-be-cool “Swingers” in 1996, includes the thriller “The Bourne Identity” and the deliciously vengeful “Mr. and Mrs. Smith.” That fairly varied and esteemed background, surprisingly, doesn’t make him well-suited for this weakly written and dry romantic/comedy/drama/crime/thriller.

Paxton (Chiwetel Ejiofor, “12 Years a Slave”), a poet/writer (aka broke dude) is having a rough go of it. He’s housebound on a tony block in London by a COVID quarantine and is down on himself: “Even my name is doom.” His foul disposition and lack of funds is putting a strain on his relationship with his lady friend Linda (Anne Hathaway, “Les Misérables”). She’s a busy executive conducting Zoom meetings with her staff from home. She does so in full makeup and fashionably dressed as if she is pulling a shift at Vogue. Without blinking, she tells her underlings that they’re being furloughed. A euphemism for “You’re fired, there’s no money to pay you.” Viewers should hold on dearly to this scene, as it is the only viable drama in the entire movie.

Cracks in the relationship have been noticeable. The strain of being around each other, under confinement, has taken them past the brink. Says Pax-

ton to his half-brother David (Dulé Hill, “The West Wing”): “Linda said she was planning to end our thing.” Yes, that’s true, but the two are still sniping housebound lovers who can’t let go.

The clever part of Knight’s screenplay is that it uses feelings, locations and machinations that audiences in this day and age will recognize: Quarantine anxiety. Dehumanizing video meetings. Long lines at grocery stores. Overindulging in booze, drugs, cigarettes. Shouting across streets to neighbors. Looking for jobs that don’t exist. Squabbling for no reason. It’s the new norm.

Pity Knight didn’t pick more relatable characters. Snooty Linda and the financially challenged scribe won’t muster much empathy. Which is a pity, because it would take that to enthusiastically follow and believe the second half of the script. This part involves a planned but blundering theft from Harrods — arguably Europe’s most famous department store. It’s a complete coup that the filmmakers got to run their actors and cameras up and down the aisles. Why was Harrod’s so accommodating? They’re closed due to the pandemic and likely need the publicity! Caviar, truffles, Louis Vuitton and rare diamonds all sit idly on shelves starving for tourists’ attention and wealthy buyers. But getting none.

The proceedings might have fared better if the screenplay had kept everything in the moment. Instead, it is laden with one-liner backstory details rehashing a past that doesn’t matter. So, Linda used to smoke cigarettes and she’s now sneaking them on the side. So, she had an affair with a female friend. So, Paxton was once arrested, had a drug problem and is now slipping. Their history is immaterial, doesn’t pep up anything and only mires the storytelling and momentum.

Ejiofor is a supreme actor, but with his diction and statesman-like demeanor, it’s hard to believe him as an impoverished poet moonlighting as a driver. Hathaway is a bit more convincing as an ice queen. But together they have the chemistry of a central casting pairing — nothing more. The ensemble cast



as Paxton’s boss, gives him the moniker Edgar Allen Poe on his ID. It’s a running joke that loses its power in seconds. Ben Stiller plays Linda’s boss, marooned in the Vermont woods with his disrespectful son. Mindy Kaling, Lucy Boynton, Jazmyn Simon (“Ballers”) and others add their two cents.

Fortunately, the tech crew is pretty astute. Editor Saar Klein’s timing is good. Cinematographer Remi Adefarasin’s nimble camera is where it should be at all times. The score by John Powell doesn’t wreck the mood. And production designer Laura Conway-Gordon makes all settings look quite inviting.

It doesn’t help that the couple is involved in a robbery, for money, when they hardly look destitute. They live in a strikingly handsome oatmeal-colored townhouse with pristine white shutters — not a slum tenement. If you’re looking for convincing “Dog Day Afternoon” desperation you won’t find it. And that’s a problem. Also, if the virus is so rampant, why are they and store employees walking around Harrod’s with no masks?

Easy streaming access may lure inquisitive adults to “Locked Down.” But after watching this vapid commentary on our diseased times, don’t expect audiences to stand on their balconies and applaud.

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EDITORIAL

The bar is so low

By OSEYE BOYD



As I watched former Vice President Mike Pence and his wife exit the inauguration, I commented to a colleague about how it’s refreshing to see Pence had the decency to attend the ceremony. He behaved with the dignity we’ve come to expect from our political leaders. However, that decency has been absent for four years now.

She agreed with my assessment and then she said, “The bar is so low.” That even the most traditional activity is applauded shows how far this country has gone. Ever since I can remember inaugurations happen in January. The former president wishes the new president well and keeps it moving. Past presidents also attend and smile. The winner, loser and party affiliation no longer matter. Everyone acts with grace because the focus is on the country. We celebrate our democratic republic. The pomp and circumstance require decorum and respect. All of that changed four years ago, when this country elected he-who-shall-not-be-named. The level of discourse hit an unimaginable low. I have never agreed with any president 100%, but I’ve

never thought one was actually a danger to our country until the last one. The lies, racism, narcissism, nepotism, sexism and downright disrespect that came from the country’s highest office for four years has been exasperating. Sure, I’ll give credit when it’s due, and 45 made some good moves — the First Step Act comes to mind — but it’s been a you-know-what show for most of his administration. Now, I’m not giddy with excitement about President Joe Biden or Vice President Kamala Harris, but as my dad said, I’m happy things will return to some semblance of normalcy. Living in Bizarro World was exhausting. I’m not giddy because politicians are gonna politician and no one or two people will fix all of our problems. My excitement is carefully measured as I watch what this new administration does to support Black Americans. I’m happy we now have an administration that recognizes climate change and global warming is a problem again. The bar is so low. The one thing that has me most excited about the Biden-Harris administration is the country will finally have an actual plan for COVID-19 from the White House. The previous administration’s lack of information, lack of accurate information and inability to actually lead during a crisis has left this country divided between maskers and anti-mask-

ers. COVID-19 shouldn’t even be a political issue, and it saddens me when I think about the hostility wearing a mask or not wearing a mask causes. It makes me angry that so many Americans — many of them Black — have died because of COVID-19 when they didn’t have to. The bar is so low. I look forward to press briefings again, so we have some direction of where this country is going when crisis erupts. I look forward to press briefings where the president’s press secretary doesn’t tell bald-faced lies and gaslight the press. I look forward to press conferences where the press secretary actually shows some respect for the press corps. The bar is so low. The bar is so low that transferring the White House Twitter account is a news story that several outlets wrote about. Now, that’s a shame. None of these things are groundbreaking, but it will be refreshing just to have some sense of normalcy in these mundane aspects of the presidency. This will allow us to focus on the real work that Biden and Harris need to do because there’s a lot. We’re in the midst of a pandemic, the second Civil Rights Movement, economic crisis and global warming, just to mention a few. The bar can’t remain low, and we should never let it get as low as it did.

OPINIONS

The implication of King’s message

By LARRY SMITH



“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” The great irony of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s words is that their power and prescience are often hidden by their eloquent simplicity. The above quote comes from his incomparable “Letter from a Birmingham City Jail.” King wrote the letter in April 1963 — just a few months before the March on Washington. It is his response to white ministers who opposed the NONVIOLENT demonstrations that he led. (Sound familiar?) In my view, this letter is substantially more important to read, and to act on, than his “I Have A

Dream” speech. For decades I have reflected upon the profound anger, disappointment and sadness that he continually experienced due to the lack of support from “Christians” who did not support fighting for African Americans’ full humanity. If America endures as a powerful nation — which is not a certainty at this point — our grandchildren will look back upon this period and see it as an inflection point. The last few years will be viewed as a pivotal period in history. We are experiencing what one observer has referred to as “a soft civil war.” It is imperative for all Americans to understand that we are on the brink of destruction not from China or Russia, but because of each other. (Indeed, at least one recent poll indicates that most Americans believe that we are our own greatest threat.) But recognizing that threat is not enough. What we do in the coming weeks, months and years will determine whether the American

experiment will continue. The United States is the world’s oldest democracy by far, followed by Switzerland and New Zealand. We are, at present, the world’s only “superpower.” Yet, the mightiest empires — ones that no external force could destroy — frequently have collapsed from within. While we are not an empire in the technical sense, we do have one of the longest periods of continuous governance (and world dominance) in the modern era. We take that for granted at our peril. Here’s the bottom line: If the overwhelming majority of white Americans do not decide to fight for the full equality for African Americans (and the poor of all races), this nation will fail. White Americans must learn to accept that the unapologetic demand for racial equality is not an attack on them as individuals; it is a moral imperative that is inextricably tied to their children’s future. In short, they must decide whether

to try to cling to a race-based privilege that their children will inevitably lose, or consciously decide to share that power so that their children will inherit a nation that is worth it. The grotesque wealth inequality, the immoral condition of our public schools, the third-world condition of our poorest communities and the violation of human rights (including voter suppression) WILL lead to America’s downfall. We cannot escape the forces of history, especially as regards the inevitable effects of structural, race-based inequality. Dr. King was correct. We are “tied in a single garment of destiny.” We must decide whether to prevent our shared garment from becoming our collective noose. Larry Smith is a community leader. Contact him at larry@leaf-llc.com.

Our country is better than this

By LAKIMBA DESADIER



On Oct. 20, 2020, Dr. Chaniece Wallace, a vibrant 30-year-old pediatric chief resident at Indiana University’s medical school, died of postpartum complications. Her death, two days after giving birth to her daughter, Charlotte, left her husband a widower and Charlotte was denied knowing the love of her remarkable mother. Her mother, Dr. Chaniece Wallace, had dedicated her short life to care for other children in need of quality health care. Her death was her family’s loss and a loss to our Black community. Her death underscores an ongoing high maternal mortality rate within the Black Community. The pregnancy-related mortality rate for Black women is 5.2 times higher than for white women, and the rates of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity are 3 to 4 times higher in Black women than in white women. Glaring racial disparities are present across the health care spectrum for the Black community, and Indiana leads the nation among some of the worst statistics. Just months after the death of Wallace, we were once again reminded of the inequities in our health care system. A Black female physician, Dr. Susan Moore, 52, reportedly died of complications from COVID-19. These deaths are devastating. On top of this, we are in the middle of a deadly pandemic that dispro-

portionately affects the Black community. The pandemic has laid bare the economic inequality, structural racism and public health failures in this country. The public health crises we face in Indiana and across the country must become a top priority. In addition to the health care crisis, the recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has fallen squarely on the shoulders of women, particularly BIPOC women, who made up all of the job losses incurred in December. We have an opportunity to address these systemic issues. Our commitment must be to prioritize issues around increased access to health care and reproductive freedom. We cannot confront the massive challenges of COVID-19 — poverty, hunger, economic or racial injustice — unless we address issues of reproductive health and freedom. Wallace’s husband says, “Chaniece fought with every piece of strength, courage, and faith she had available.” We must continue the fight. We have tasked our state legislators to increase access to care and bring relief from COVID-19. This session we will be supporting maternal

health, including 12-months postpartum coverage (HB 1155), health care for incarcerated women (HB 1349; HB 1430), pregnancy accommodations (HB 1309) and doula coverage (SB 298; HB 1350). We are also working to see the passage of comprehensive sex ed (HB 1366) and expanded access to 12 months of birth control coverage. What we all witnessed on Jan. 6 must not deter us. Those involved must be held accountable, but we can’t be distracted from the future we want to see. We have not lost sight of the historic change in Georgia, and we want to continue that work here in Indiana. We must expand people’s access to health care and make decisions that reflect the will of the people. More than half of maternal mortality deaths are preventable. Let us continue to take actions to recognize and remove these barriers. Let’s work together in honoring those we have lost by protecting the living — because our care can’t wait. LaKimba DeSadier is state director for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Indiana.

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MAROUJES
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SAFETY

► Continued from A1

and Criminal Justice found similar trends in other cities, where homicides, aggravated assaults and gun assaults rose sharply beginning in late May into June.

“While that in no way excused or diminished even one killing in our city, we must seek to know why this is happening to better combat this deadly virus,” Mayor Joe Hogsett said.

Public safety in 2021

IMPD will add two more Mobile Crisis Assistance Teams (MCAT), which pair officers with a clinician from Eskenazi Health to respond to calls related to mental health or substance abuse. MCAT is part of the department’s Behavioral Health Unit, which identified 3,585 follow-ups in 2020 and made 1,144 home visits, according to IMPD.

Assistant Chief Chris Bailey said the department is working with the Office of Public Health and Safety to add clinicians to the 911 call center to better help people experiencing a mental health crisis.

Shonna Majors, the city’s director of community violence reduction, said part of her team’s gun violence reduction strategy will involve weekly meetings with IMPD to review shootings, including non-fatal shootings. Majors directs a group of “Peacemakers,” who intervene in situations that have or could become violent.

IMPD will begin to gather feedback this year

on how the community wants officers to change traditional police responses to low-level, non-violent issues such as vehicle accidents with no injuries. Officers spend too much time responding to non-emergencies, Bailey said, so developing a more efficient approach would allow officers to respond to calls where they are actually needed.

Reason for hope?

The pandemic, along with protests and riots in the spring and summer, threw off some of IMPD’s plans for the year and made Chief Taylor’s first year on the job one with constant adjustments.

There will always be distractions and obstacles, though, so what is it about the city’s plans that should make the community hopeful for a better 2021?

“We’re gonna focus like a laser this year,” Hogsett said.

One area where IMPD continues to put its faith is in the Crime Gun Intelligence Center, which helps identify and arrest serial shooters. The center removed 288 guns and arrested 302 people in 2020, according to department data. Indiana State Police will become a partner this year.

The pandemic may also lead to a more streamlined workflow, as the department realized it doesn’t need every officer and detective in the same place doing case work.

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

JOHNNY

► Continued from A1

success coach at Edna Martin Christian Center, was canvassing the community near 25th Street and Keystone Avenue on Jan. 12 when someone shot and killed him.

Details about Purchase’s death are still mostly unknown, but Shonna Majors, the city’s director of community violence reduction, said during a virtual public safety update Jan. 19 her understanding is the shooter was “expecting trouble” at the door from someone else.

Instead, it was Purchase — or “Mr. Johnny,” as he was known — placing flyers on doors to let people know about available resources, Majors said.

Community members and family gathered Jan. 18 for a vigil to remember the work Purchase dedicated himself to.

“Mr. Johnny went out on a victory, making a difference, and he’s going to be remembered for that,” Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department Chief Randal Taylor said.

In an interview, Pur-

chase’s son, Jonathan Purchase, said he wants his father to be remembered as someone who cared about uplifting and empowering his community.

“I want his legacy to be known that he was a king,” he said.

Purchase was known for working outside of the spotlight. He loved

to dance and always seemed to have a smile.

Purchase had seven children and 11 grandchildren, for whom Jonathan said his father talked about leaving behind a foundation.

Jonathan said he hasn’t gotten official facts from the city or police department and wants people to keep

pushing for answers about what happened to his father.

“I want the community to stand up and finish what my father started,” he said.

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

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InnoPower, LLC and Recorder Media Group will host the 2021 edition of their annual conference on June 14-18. The expanded InnoPower Minority Business Week will feature five days of in-person and virtual programming that aim to address the societal and economic gaps COVID-19 amplified.

“We launched InnoPower in 2019 to leverage the power of innovation to elevate minority communities,” said Emil Ekiyor, founder and CEO of InnoPower LLC. “A recent survey by SecondMuse found that non-white entrepreneurs were twice as likely as whites to describe the economy as “unfair” and even “racist.” Our current economic system was not really created for Black and Brown entrepreneurs, but the rapid growth of this conference has proved that many people of color are yearning for a shared platform to support others.”

“Something this significant hasn’t been done in Indiana during the time that I’ve been here,” added Robert Shegog, President and CEO of Recorder Media Group. “Everything the Recorder is doing with InnoPower is important to help move our city and state from where they are now to where they need to be. Too many minority and Black-owned businesses closed during COVID-19 that won’t be reopening. We have to find ways to support those that were negatively affected, but also to come together in June to help figure out a better way forward.”

Rupal Thanawala, managing director at Trident Systems, will once again serve as event chair for InnoPower. “The potential of minority entrepreneurs and professionals has been underutilized for far too long, she said. “Over the years, we have really underestimated and overlooked the talent of our minority communities, but we have to give them the right platform. InnoPower’s conference helps give them an opportunity to thrive and unleash their potential. And we really want to stretch our arms open to everyone. Our team’s desire is to uplift each and every community that has not been given the opportunities they deserve.”

INDIANA MINORITY BUSINESS WEEK WILL FOCUS ON FOUR PILLARS:

EDUCATION

The education system is ripe for disruption and innovation. To increase the achievement levels of minority and low-income students, InnoPower will focus on elevating standards and supporting visionary school leaders.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Business ownership is the key to economic growth for global and local economies, yet too many people still face significant, systemic barriers to entrepreneurial opportunity. In a time of changing demographics in the United States, local entrepreneurship ecosystems should mirror the diversity in the communities that foster them.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The nature of work is transforming rapidly in our ever-changing world. As community leaders and organizations choose the path forward, it is imperative they rethink deeply held orthodoxies in order to shape a more inclusive future of work. Generating innovative pathways to employment for marginalized populations has never been more critically needed by so many.

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‘Banner day for food access’: Council approves new nutrition, food policy division

By TYLER FENWICK
tylerf@indyrecorder.com

A new division within the city’s Office of Public Health and Safety will give local government more tools to address issues related to food access and equity.

The Division of Community Nutrition and Food Policy will be responsible for addressing racial inequity in the food system, creating food policies and programs, and reducing food insecurity in Indianapolis — all with an emphasis on food deserts and low-income areas.

The division, approved by the city-county council Jan. 11, will include two other pillars: the Indianapolis Food Access Coalition and Indianapolis Food Access Advisory Commission. The 13-member commission will act as a governing board for the coalition.

Councilor La Keisha Jackson, District 14, sponsored the proposal and said one of the biggest advantages to having a division dedicated to food access and equity within local government is it creates a more direct line to policy action.

Part of the coalition’s responsibility will be to advise policymakers, organizations and funders regarding food initiatives and investments. The commission will meet at least quarterly to collect information to assess food policies and recommend new policies.

Jackson said the new division also will be able to work on the grocery and retail component of food deserts, which are areas of the city grocery stores stay away from because there isn’t enough of a profit motive.

Part of the commission’s responsibility is to incentivize retailers with funding sources such as community development grants.

The coalition will operate independently of local government but still receive funding through OPHS. Whatever money the coalition gets will already be accounted for within OPHS; the city isn’t offering new funding.



The coalition will effectively replace the Indy Food Council, which launched in 2014 and partnered with OPHS to organize the Indy Food Fund.

“The passage of Proposal 337 marks a banner day for food access work in Indianapolis,” Mayor Joe Hogsett said in a statement. “These changes will enhance equity, empower neighborhood food stakeholders, and lay the groundwork for a sustainable food system that benefits all residents.”

Milele Kennedy, food policy and program coordinator for the city since August 2019, will be the first director of the Division of Community Nutri-

tion and Food Policy.

Pushback on the council

Proposal 337 passed easily with only one no vote, but a council Republican tried to dampen language in the proposal and said it will create redundant efforts in food access.

Michael-Paul Hart, District 18, proposed an amendment during a Community Affairs Committee meeting to remove mentions of race, but the amendment failed.

At the full council meeting, councilor Zach Adamson, District 17, said mentioning race doesn’t mean the pro-

grams will only be for Black or brown people. He compared it to thinking “Black Lives Matter” means only Black lives matter.

Hart said he also opposed the proposal because it will create “duplicative” efforts in food access work, specifically mentioning the work done by Indy Hunger Network, a coalition of organizations.

Indy Hunger Network Executive Director Kate Howe was on the council meeting, which was virtual, and said the network supports the proposal.

Contact staff writer Tyler Fenwick at 317-762-7853. Follow him on Twitter @Ty_Fenwick.

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ABC of Diabetes Classes
will Continue Virtually in 2021

The ABCs of Diabetes is a FREE four-part diabetes education series offered by the Marion County Public Health Department. Topics include eating healthier, increasing activity, and understanding medications. This program is free and open to anyone with diabetes, pre-diabetes, family members and friends.

Due to COVID-19, classes are being held online until it’s safe to meet again in-person. Participants don’t have to be tech savvy to join. Help is available if needed. Classes in February will be held on Wednesdays, Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24 from 5:30-7 p.m.

In order to receive class materials by mail, the registration deadline is four business days prior to the first class each month. The registration deadline for February classes is Jan. 27.

Participants should plan on attending all four classes. To register, please visit MarionHealth.org/diabetes, or call 317-221-2094.

The ABCs of Diabetes program is accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists.

Tobacco Product Use Among Youths Declined in 2020

A report in December from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in partnership with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), found that current tobacco product use declined among U.S. middle and high school students from 2019 to 2020.

While the report points to a decrease in e-cigarette, cigar, and smokeless tobacco use, the National Youth Tobacco Survey also found that about 4.5 million students used some type of tobacco product in 2020.

The study looked at the use of tobacco products over a 30-day period, including e-cigarettes, cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, hookah, pipe tobacco, and heated

tobacco products.

Results show nearly 1 in 4 high school students were current users of any tobacco product in 2020, down from about 1 in 3 students in 2019. About 1 in 15 middle school students surveyed were current users of any tobacco product in 2020, down nearly half from 2019.

For the seventh year in a row, e-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product among both middle and high school students.

“The decline in tobacco product use over the past year is a win for public health,” said CDC Director Robert R. Redfield, M.D. “Yet, our work is far from done. Nearly 4.5 million U.S. youths still use tobacco products, putting a new generation at risk for nicotine addiction and other health risks.”

“FDA will continue to monitor the marketplace, expand our public education efforts, and use our regulatory authority to further ensure all tobacco products, and e-cigarettes in particular, are not marketed to, sold to, or used by kids,” said FDA Commissioner Stephen M. Hahn, M.D.

Youth use of tobacco products in any form is unsafe. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the U.S. Nearly all tobacco use begins during youth and young adulthood.

The ongoing use of evidence-based tobacco control strategies, combined with tobacco product regulation by FDA, is needed for continuing progress toward reducing and preventing all types of tobacco product use among youths.

As the tobacco product landscape continues to change, monitoring youth tobacco product use, including new products, is important to inform public health policy and practice at national, state and local levels.

More information is available at BeTobaccoFree.gov and FDA’s “The Real Cost” campaign.

Where MLK and Coretta met and studied, a memorial will rise

By PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A major memorial honoring Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King is moving forward in Boston, where they met and studied in the 1950s.

King Boston, the privately funded organization coordinating the estimated \$9.5 million project, said this week that fabrication of a roughly 22-foot-high bronze sculpture depicting four arms embracing is expected to begin in March after years of planning.

When unveiled late next year, “The Embrace” will be one of the country’s largest new memorials dedicated to racial equity, the organization says. It will be installed on Boston Common near the site of a 1965 rally and march led by MLK, who would have turned 92 on Friday.

Imari Paris Jeffries, King Boston’s executive director, said organizers hope their broader effort serves as a model for how public monuments can spark positive action in the wake of the national reckoning on racism sparked by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis last year.

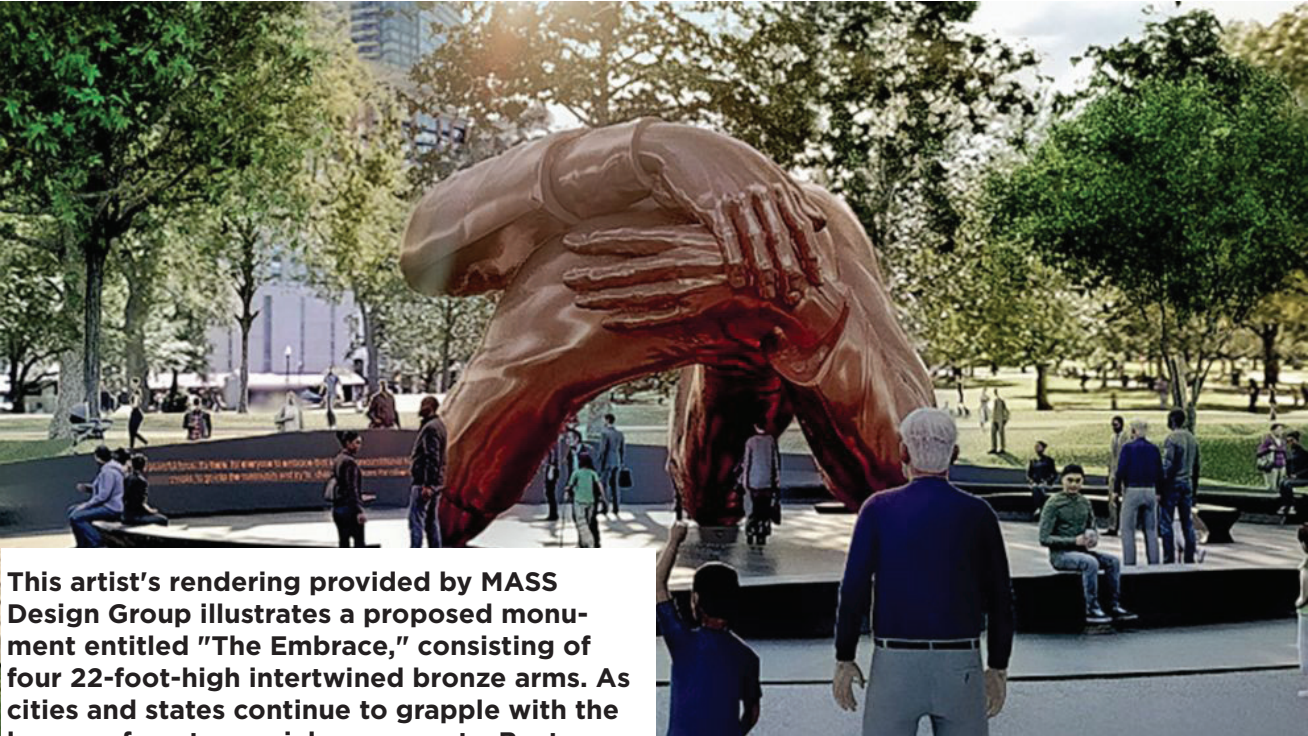
Besides the King memorial, the organization is also raising money to build an economic justice center in Roxbury, a historically Black neighborhood in Boston where MLK preached. It also plans to launch an annual gathering exploring issues of race and equity.

“It’s not only how symbols and monuments represent this commitment to equity and inclusion,” Jeffries said. “It’s also about how research, data and policy work to find new solutions, and how we use the arts and humanities to ground us.”

Dr. Vicki Crawford, director of the MLK collection at Morehouse College, the civil rights leader’s alma mater in Atlanta, said the Boston project also stands out because it honors the sizeable contributions of Coretta Scott King alongside her husband.

She founded the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta and led the successful push to make his birthday a national holiday after his assassination in 1968.

“She hasn’t received adequate recognition for institutionalizing his philosophy of nonviolence,” Crawford said. “He could not have done it without her by



This artist's rendering provided by MASS Design Group illustrates a proposed monument entitled "The Embrace," consisting of four 22-foot-high intertwined bronze arms. As cities and states continue to grapple with the legacy of controversial monuments, Boston is moving forward with a major effort commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. Organizers are building what they say will be the country's largest memorial dedicated to racial equity at the site of a 1965 civil rights rally that MLK led on the city's historic Boston Common. (Hank Willis Thomas/MASS Design Group via AP)

his side.”

Other recent monuments to MLK include a bronze statue on Georgia Capitol grounds, dedicated in 2017, and the towering granite likeness off the National Mall that opened in 2011.

King Boston was launched in 2017 to address what organizers viewed as a glaring deficiency, considering MLK spent some of his formative years in Boston. The Georgia native earned a doctorate in theology from Boston University and was assistant minister at the city’s Twelfth Baptist Church.

The memorial effort was later broadened to honor Coretta Scott King, who earned a degree in music education from the New England Conservatory. It

has been further expanded to also recognize Boston civil rights leaders during the 1960s, whose names will be memorialized in the surrounding plaza.

Like other racial justice efforts, Jeffries said King Boston has been bolstered by civic activism following Floyd’s killing. The organization collected roughly \$8 million of the total \$12 million it has raised to date in roughly eight months last year, he said.

The project also comes as Boston, which was scarred by violent protests over efforts to desegregate its public schools in the 1970s, is enjoying something of a “Black Renaissance,” Jeffries said.

The city of almost 700,000 residents, roughly a quarter of them Black, now has its first Black police commissioner and is also home to the state’s first Black female district attorney and the state’s first Black congresswoman. Soon, New England’s largest city will also have its first Black and first female mayor.

“It seems with every passing day this piece becomes so necessary,” said Hank Willis Thomas, the Brooklyn artist who designed the Boston memorial. “I never imagined how prescient this would be.”

America honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

By STACY M. BROWN
NNPA Newswire National
Correspondent

Fifty-three years after Dr. Martin Luther King’s assassination, and 38 years after his birth date became a national federal holiday, America is now facing another pivotal moment of national racial reckoning.

While parades and other festive gatherings for the heroic civil rights leader did not occur this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, national and local organizations throughout the country still honored Dr. King’s legacy.

In Maryland, the nonprofit Civic Works welcomed groups of volunteers to participate in its annual MLK Day of Service.

The 9 a.m. plans included 150 volunteers banding together across nine sites (both physically, with COVID-19 safety precautions, and virtually) to help green a vacant lot in Baltimore, landscape urban farms, sort clothes for AmeriCorps members, writing cards to seniors and clean public spaces.

The Brooklyn Academy of Music — or BAM — hosted a tribute that included a keynote address from Black Lives Matter Global Network founder Alicia Garza.

In Florida, the Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration Committee of St. Johns County hosted the 36th annual Commemorative Event in the Lewis Auditorium in St. Augustine, Florida, and online as a virtual event in a celebration of the



This Aug. 28, 1963, file photo shows Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. acknowledging the crowd at the Lincoln Memorial for his “I Have a Dream” speech during the March on Washington.

memory of Dr. King and the influence he had in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

NNPA President and CEO, Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., was the featured speaker.

Dr. Chavis addressed the theme, “Our Lives Begin to End the Day We Become Silent about Things That Matter.” Chavis stated, “Dr. King’s dream and courage for freedom, justice and equality for all must be reaffirmed and practiced in 2021 across America and throughout the world.”

The Presidential Inaugural Committee hosted “United We Serve: A Celebration of the National MLK Day of Service.”

Participants included Rev. Dr. Bernice King; Martin Luther King III; Chesca; Rep. Sharice Davids, D-Kan.; Rosario Dawson; Andra Day; Yo-Yo Ma; Rev. Al Sharpton; Sean Patrick Thomas; Diane Warren; Lynn Whitfield; and Bebe Winans.

In Houston, the 43rd Annual Original MLK Day Virtual Experience & Live Parade of Giving occurred at MacGregor Park. There, residents were asked to drop off donations to be distributed to those in need.

In Pennsylvania, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank celebrated Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy with its “Food justice is

social justice” campaign.

The food bank opened one of its warehouses to 30 volunteers to prepare food for distribution across the organization’s 11-county service area.

In Atlanta, the Beloved Community Commemorative Service capped a weeklong celebration of Dr. King’s life that featured a keynote address by Bishop T.D. Jakes. The event was online and featured remarks from Grammy-winning gospel artist Kirk Franklin and U.N. Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed.

In California, Stanford University’s four-day online festival honoring Dr. King’s life and legacy culminated on the

holiday with musical performances, documentary films and conversations inspired by the question: Where do we go from here?

“I hope the King Holiday can become an occasion for informing people about King’s legacy and how it relates to the King Institute, but more broadly, how it relates to the San Francisco Bay Area,” Clayborne Carson, the Martin Luther King, Jr. centennial professor of history emeritus at Stanford, and director of the King Institute, told the university’s news service.

“One of the things that will be made clear is that the King family has had a very special relationship

with this area and with Stanford.”

In Detroit, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History hosted film screenings and other programming that included a museum-wide livestream of the keynote speech by PBS White House correspondent Yamiche Alcindor.

Rev. Dr. Bernice King posted a heartfelt thank-you on Twitter to all those observing her late father’s holiday.

“Thank you for the loving, sincere ways that you honored and celebrated my father on his birthday,” she wrote in the post that included a photo of her, her father and her mother.

Obituary James A. Stockton

James Albert Stockton was born on September 28, 1949. He was the son of George Stockton and Alice Ruth Richardson.

James was baptized during his youth at New Garfield Missionary Baptist Church.

James received his education from Indianapolis Public Schools. While attending Arsenal Technical High School, he decided to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. He served in the military from June 20, 1968 - June 19, 1972. He fought in combat during the Vietnam War and earned the Purple Heart. He also earned his GED and then graduated with an associate degree from Ivy Tech Community College.

For the majority of his career, James worked for two companies, AM General and Rolls-Royce Corporation. At Rolls-Royce Corporation, he served as a Skilled Trades Parts Inspector.

James was an avid gardener. He grew a variety of fruits and vegetables each year and kept some for himself and shared the rest of his harvest with family and friends. Nicknamed "The Professor" by his mom, he could regularly be found reading a book and anyone near him would find themselves on the receiving end of the information he had learned. In addition to reading books, he loved watching football and read the newspaper daily. He rarely missed an opportunity to complete the crossword puzzles and sudoku puzzles in the paper.

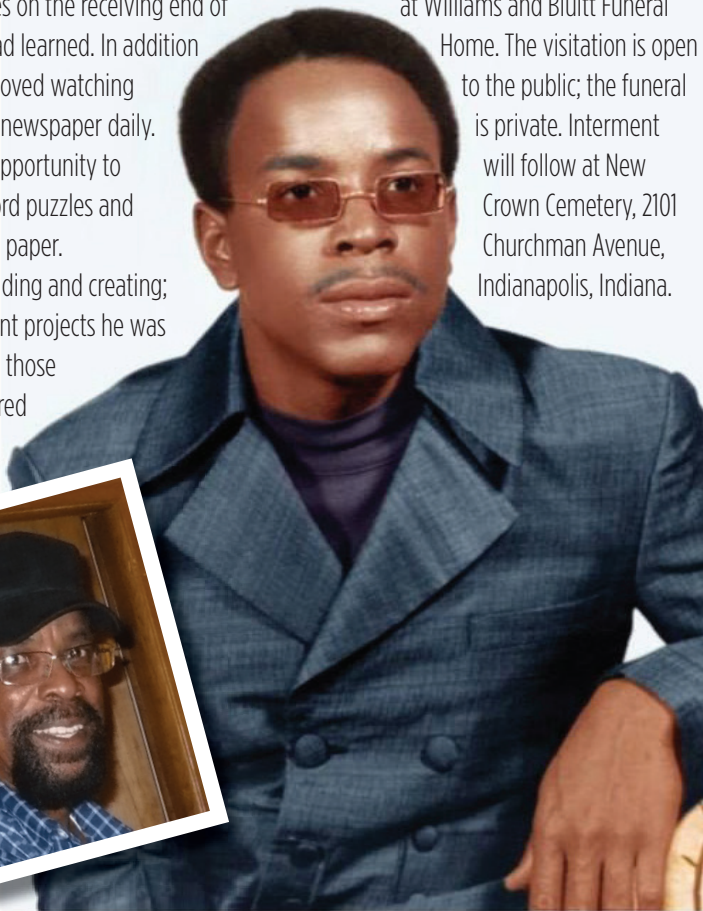
James enjoyed building and creating; he always had different projects he was completing. However, those projects never interfered with his devotion to his family

and friends. He was known to be dependable. If a person needed help, no matter the hour, he was there.

James was married to his wife, Lisa, for 35 years. He loved spending time with his three daughters and four grandchildren. He enjoyed making games for them to play in his backyard.

James Albert Stockton, also called Jim by family and friends, departed this life on January 2, 2021.

James is survived by his wife Lisa K. (Towns) Stockton; daughters Shawnta (Jermaine) Barnes, Alice Stockton, Sherry Stockton; siblings Paul E. Stockton, Martha Stockton, Ruth (Ronnie) Curry, Everett Stockton; four grandchildren Zoe Bruce, Jeremiah Barnes, James Barnes, Phoenix Bruce; and a host of other relatives and friends. Service for James will be held, 12:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 27, 2021, at Williams and Bluit Funeral Home Peoples' Chapel, 5252 E. 38th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, with visitation held from 10:00 a.m. until time of service at 12:00 p.m., all taking place at Williams and Bluit Funeral Home. The visitation is open to the public; the funeral is private. Interment will follow at New Crown Cemetery, 2101 Churchman Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana.



SPIRITUAL OUTLOOK

What is your dream?

BY REV. MARION J. MILLER

"I will pour out my Spirit on all people ... your young men will see visions ... and your old men will dream." Acts 2:17

We live in a rapidly changing world of inequality. This inequality is based on religion, race, gender and social status. The result of this inequality is social injustice, racism, discrimination, wars and genocide. This is NOT God's kingdom!

But God's kingdom is coming! When it fully arrives, there will be no inequality in it. For in God's kingdom there will be social justice and equality for all! This is the kind of dream God gave Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for our nation. It is the same dream that God wants like followers to have. This is why Christ's followers persistently and continually pray and ask for God's kingdom to come! "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Followers of Christ are not only praying for God's kingdom to come, but His followers are also living now for social

justice and equality. His followers are empowered and enabled because a deposit of God's kingdom has been placed within each of us. And with this deposit of God's kingdom within us, we become ONE.

Every person in the world has this opportunity! It is an opportunity that we must all live and proclaim. It's the opportunity of the cross that allows individuals to be born into God's family regardless of who their parents are, where they are born or their gender. This opportunity is not just for the rich or the poor, the educated or the uneducated. This opportunity is for all!

Christ died for all! The reason that Christ died for all is because God loves all people. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world — that He gave His one and only Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Dr. King willingly shared his dream with this nation. He won the bus battle, the Civil Rights Act and the Nobel Peace Prize. But the basic battles for liberation, justice, freedom and peace continue yet today. This could cause one to fear that we are losing our collective national dreams or that we are losing our dreams and visions for a great and imaginative nation.

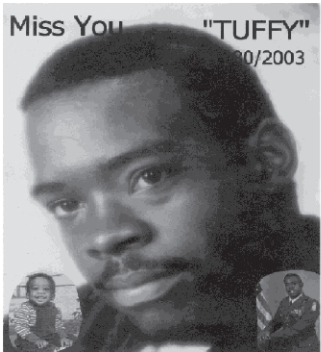
Without a dream, life withers and dies. Only a dream can bring a person back from death's door. And only great dreams, and the sacrificial energy to achieve them, can restore our nation back to good health. We need to ask ourselves as a nation: "What is your dream?"

A person and a nation thrive on a vision and the possibility and not on fear, negativity and violence. This is why Acts 2:17 is so important. It says, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people ... your young men will see visions, your old men will dream."

Dr. King invites us to a dream of national healing. This will help keep Dr. King's dream alive! The Bible says, "That the young and the old shall dream dreams." And when we do, we all can cry out: "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, I'm free at last!"

Rev. Marion J. Miller is senior pastor of Wesley United Methodist Church, Jeffersonville. Contact her at 812-283-3747 or wesley1201@sbcglobal.net.

In Loving Memory




Thomas D.H. Penn
"Minister Tuffy"
2/1/1980 - 1/22/2003

Thomas' murderer Jerome Howard was tried & sentenced on December 28, 2004 to 41 years in prison The family would like to thank everyone for their support & prayers

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Pastor

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Lady Edna M. Sheppard


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Morning Worship	11:00am
Sunday Evening Service	6:30pm
Wednesday Bible Study/Prayers	7:00pm/8:00pm
Friday Bible Study	11:00am


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Morning Worship 10:45
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Indpls, Indiana 46208
phone 925-4382
fax 283-5615

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10:50 am
Sunday School
9:15 am
Monday Morning Prayer
6:00am
Wed. Bible Study
12:00 noon & 7:00pm
Thurs. Family Living
7:00pm
Fri. Victory Over Addictions
7:00pm

St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church
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543-9505
www.stlukeindy.org

Sunday School 8:30 a.m.
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Not a Coffee Shop aims to create conversation, change

By OMER YUSUF
The Daily Memphian

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — The creator of a new coffee club in the Heights neighborhood seeks to create conversations about the historical intersection between Black people and one of the world’s most popular drinks.

Three days a week, those driving or walking on National Street will see a sign that reads “We Got Black Coffee, Mane!” next to a circular table with a coffee thermos and two chairs. The coffee is prepared inside the space named “Not a Coffee Shop.”

Bartholomew Jones opened “Not a Coffee Shop” in early January. Jones, whose given name is Maurice Henderson, is a rapper and coffee entrepreneur who lives in the Heights — a neighborhood around Summer Avenue and National Street encompassing Brinkley Heights, Mitchell Heights, Highland Heights and Graham Heights.

Jones and his wife, Renata Harrison, are the founders of cffeeblack, which also produces original content, sells apparel and its own roast, Guji Mane.

Not a Coffee Shop is the company’s latest endeavor to re-imagine the Black narrative around coffee in Memphis, and Jones could not think of a better place to open the coffee club than his own neighborhood.

“Us being in the neighborhood, in the ‘hood, gives us the advantage of talking to Black and brown people every day about coffee,” Jones said. “They’re my neighbors. ... It gives us an advantage because we get to create our own market.”

Not a Coffee Shop offers first sips of all of its products for free, and then charges \$2 for a full serving.

The search for a “Not a Coffee Shop” space ended when the Heights Community Development Corporation loaned one of its spaces on National Street to Jones for his business. It’s a unique partnership between a nonprofit centered on housing and Jones’ focus on cffeeblack.

“He’s a visionary. He has a deeper meaning to everything, that’s been really helpful,” said Heights CDC Executive Director Jared Myers. “The relationship has been one of learning.”

Jones’ interest in coffee grew during his college years in Chicago and intensified after his wife gave him an espresso machine several years ago. That allowed him to explore coffee both in terms of making and learning about its origins — it hasn’t slowed down.

That inspired cffeeblack’s mission to educate Black people about their history and the origin of coffee, which as told in one legend, can be traced back to Ethiopia in Africa centuries ago, according to the National Coffee Association.

“Maybe the issue is Black people haven’t had coffee presented to them as something that is inherently Black,” Jones said. “I started doing a lot of art and education (on coffee’s origins) because I was a teacher and rapper. I used those two skill sets to present information to people.”

Memphian J.C. Cofield manages “Not a Coffee Shop.” A former Starbucks manager, Cofield used to serve a far bigger variety of drinks to



Not a Coffee Shop, where J.C. Cofield brews black coffee for customers, opened in early January. (Photos/Brad Vest/Daily Memphian)

customers in a shorter period of time, in about 30 seconds or so. By comparison, a pour over of black coffee at the coffee club takes about 3 to 4 minutes.

Cofield has grown to appreciate the beverage in its pure form.

Just as she also hopes natural coffee can be accepted, she hopes through building relationships and conversations at the coffee club, the same can be achieved in ending racism.

“I think people look at coffee and think in order for this to be good it needs x, y and z, and I think for Black people in order for these people to be acceptable in this society they need x, y and z they can’t just be who they are intrinsically,” Cofield said.



J.C. Cofield pours a cup of coffee.

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SUMMONS

STATE OF INDIANA
COUNTY OF MARION
MARION COUNTY SMALL
CLAIMS COURT
1 STOP HOUSING LLC.
VS.
JASON ARNEY
CAUSE NO.
49K01-2010-SC-002968
In the Marion County
Township Small Claims
Court, Cause 49K01-2010-
SC-002968
1 Stop Housing LLC, Plaintiff
vs. Jason Arney
You are notified that you have
been sued in the above-ref-
erenced Court. The nature of
the suit against you is: claims
for breach of lease, back
rent, and property damage
pertaining to the real estate
located at 3536 n. Illinois
in Marion County, Indiana. This
summons by publication is
Specifically directed to the
following named Defendant
whose address is unknown.:
JASON ARNEY.
If you dispute or have a claim
for relief against the Plaintiff
arising from an interest in th
above-referenced real estate,
or other claim, you must as-
sert it in your written answer.
You must answer the Com-
plaint in writing by you are
or your attorney on or before
thirty (30) days after the Third
Notice of this lawsuit. OR you
may do so by appearing in
the Center Township Smalls
Claim Court on March 10,
2021 at 9:00 a.m. If you fail to
do either judgement may be
entered against you for what
the Plaintiff has demanded
including Service by Pub-
lication and attorney fees.
Bench Trial was originally
scheduled on 02/03/21 at
9:00 am was rescheduled to
03/10/21 at 9:00 am Reason:
By Request.
By: Debbie Taylor
Plaintiff P.O Box 26623
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46226
Cause No.
49K01-2010-SC-002968
Jason Arney
EVENTS & ORDERS OF THE
COURT
10/30/2020 - Notice of Claim
for indebtedness filed for Plain-
tiff 1 Stop Housing LLC.,
Bench Trial, scheduled for
12/16/2020 at 9:00 AM.
11/20/2020 - Service Re-
turned Served, Copy of
Service left by Constable: R.
Watson on 11/5/20
12/16/2020 - Bench Trial
(9:00 AM), Parties Present:
Plaintiff, 1 Stop Housing
LLC
12/16/2020 - Per Judicial Of-
ficer Service of process not
completed. Matter continued
to 02/03/2021 @ 9:00 AM for
service.
01/04/2021 - Motion for Con-
tinuance Filed by Plaintiff, 1
Stop Housing LLC
1/4/2021 - Bench Trial
originally scheduled on
02/03/2021 at 9:00 AM was
rescheduled to 3/10/2021 at
9:00 AM.
01/05/2021 - Automated Pa-
per Notice Issued to all Par-
ties granting continuance.
Myla A. Eldridge, Clerk
01/15/21
01/22/21
01/29/21

SUMMONS

STATE OF INDIANA
COUNTY OF MARION
IN THE MARION SUPERIOR
COURT
CAUSE NUMBER:
49D11-2008-MF-026192
TJAA, FSB,
Plaintiff,
vs.
CLIFFORD EARLE
THE GRAND B. TRUST
UNKNOWN OCCUPANT,
IF ANY
BANK OF AMERICA, NA-
TIONAL ASSOCIATION AS
SUCCESSOR BY MERGER
TO BANK OF AMERICA,
FSB AS SUCCESSOR BY
MERGER TO LASALLE
BANK NATIONAL AS-
SOCIATION, AS TRUSTEE
FOR FIRST FRANKLIN
MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST,
MORTGAGE LOAN ASSET-
BACKED CERTIFICATES,
SERIES 2007-FF1
ALLIANCE FUNDING, A
DIVISION OF SUPERIOR
FEDERAL BANK, FSB
CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS,
DEPARTMENT OF CODE
ENFORCEMENT BUREAU
OF PROPERTY SAFETY
AND MAINTENANCE
CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS,
DEPARTMENT OF METRO-
POLITAN DEVELOPMENT,
DIVISION OF DEVELOP-
MENT SERVICES
MARION COUNTY PUBLIC
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS OF THE
CONSOLIDATED CITY OF
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
Defendants.
NOTICE OF SUIT
SUMMONS - SERVICE BY
PUBLICATION
The State of Indiana to the
defendants above named,
and any other person who
may be concerned. You are
notified that you have been
sued in the Court above
named. The nature of the suit
against you is a foreclosure
of the real estate mortgage,
legally described as:
SUBJECT TO ALL LIENS,
ASEMENTS AND ENCUM-
BRANCES OF RECORD.
The following described real
estate in Marion County,
State of Indiana: Lot Num-
bered Thirty (30) in Maple
Hill Addition corrected, an
Addition in Marion County,
Indiana, as per Plat thereof
recorded in Plat Book 17,
Page 112, in the Office of the
Recorder of Marion County,
Indiana.
PARCEL NUMBER(S) 49-07-
15-117-027.000-401
This property is commonly
known as 3841 North Grand
Avenue, Indianapolis, IN
46226
This summons by publication
is specifically directed to the
following Defendants whose
addresses are known:
Clifford Earle
5720 State Highway 173 N.
Devine, TX 78016
Unknown Occupant, if any
3841 North Grand Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46226
Bank of America, National
Association as successor by
merger to Bank of America,
FSB as successor by merger
to LaSalle Bank National
Association, as Trustee for
First Franklin Mortgage Loan
Trust, Mortgage Loan Asset-
Backed Certificates, Series
2007-FF1
Serve Highest Officer Found
100 North Tryon Street, Suite
170
Charlotte, NC 28202
Alliance Funding, a Division
of Superior Federal Bank, FSB
Serve Highest Officer Found
650 College Road E
Princeton, NJ 08540
Marion County Public Health
Department
Serve Highest Officer Found
3838 North Rural Street
Indianapolis, IN 46205
Department of Public Works
of the Consolidated City of
Indianapolis, Indiana
Serve Highest Officer Found
200 East Washington Street,
Suite 2460
Indianapolis, IN 46204
And to the following defend-
ant whose addresses are
unknown:
The Grand B. Trust
In addition to the above
named Defendants being
served by this summons
there may be other Defen-
dants who have an interest
in this lawsuit. If you have
a claim for relief against
the Plaintiff arising from the
same transaction or occur-
rence, you must assert it
in your written answer. You
must answer the Complaint
in writing, by your attorney,
on or before the 28th day of
February, 2021, (the same
being within thirty (30) days
after the Third Notice of Suit),
and if you fail to do so a judg-
ment will be entered against
you for what the Plaintiff has
demanded.
/s/ Joel Bornkamp
Matthew C. Gladwell (30493-
49)
Joel F. Bornkamp (27410-49)
Gregory A. Stout (29517-15)
Amanda L. Krenson (28999-
61)
Attorney's for Plaintiff
Reisenfeld & Associates
LLC
3962 Red Bank Road
Cincinnati, OH 45227
Voice: 1-513-322-7000
Facsimile: (513) 322-7099
ATTTEST:
Clerk of the Marion County
Superior Court
01/15/21
01/22/21
01/29/21

SUMMONS

STATE OF INDIANA
COUNTY OF MARION
IN THE MARION CIRCUIT/
SUPERIOR COURT
CAUSE NUMBER:
49D06-1512-MF-042754
SECRETARY OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS OF WASHINGTON,
D.C.
Plaintiff,
vs.
UNKNOWN HEIRS,
DEVISEES, LEGATEES,
PERSONAL REPRESENTA-
TIVES, AND CREDITORS
OF ROCHELLE CAMP
(DECEASED), ET AL.
Defendants.
NOTICE OF SUIT
SUMMONS - SERVICE BY
PUBLICATION
The State of Indiana to the
defendants above named,
and any other person who
may be concerned. You are
notified that you have been
sued in the Court above
named. The nature of the suit
against you is a foreclosure
of the real estate mortgage,
legally described as:
LOT NUMBERED 86 IN
ROSE HILL AN ADDI-
TION TO THE CITY OF IN-
DIANAPOLIS, AS PER PLAT
THEREOF RECORDED IN
PLAT BOOK 16, PAGE 31.
IN THE OFFICE OF THE
RECORDER OF MARION
COUNTY, INDIANA.
SUBJECT TO ALL LIENS,
EASEMENTS AND ENCUM-
BRANCES OF RECORD.
This property is commonly
known as 4939 East 39th
Street, Indianapolis, IN
46226
This summons by publication
is specifically directed to the
following Defendants whose
addresses are known:
Tommy Camp
5811 Brigade Lane, Apt. 117
Indianapolis, IN 46216
Rhonda Tourner
7722 Crooked Meadows
Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46268
Roxie Lomax
3840 Knickerbocker Place,
Apt. T2
Nora, IN 46240
Rosemary King
5234 Wedgewood Way
Indianapolis, IN 46268
Richard Lomax
5234 West Raymond Street
Indianapolis, IN 46241
Robert Lomax
6134 Nelson Place
Indianapolis, IN 46219
James Lomax
3310 Hammock Glen Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46235
Michael Lomax
4239 Wedgewood Court
Indianapolis, IN 46254
Unknown Occupant, if any
4939 East 39th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46226
American Acceptance Co
LLC, its assignee of Wash-
ington Mutual Finance
Serve Glenn Vician, Regis-
tered Agent
8605 Broadway
Merrillville, IN 46410
State of Indiana Department
of Revenue
Serve Highest Executive Of-
ficer Present
100 North Senate North 105
Indianapolis, IN 46204
State of Indiana Attorney
General
Serve Highest Executive Of-
ficer Present
302 West Washington Street,
South 5th Floor
Indianapolis, IN 46204
And to the following defend-
ant whose addresses are
unknown:
Unknown Heirs, Devisees,
Legatees, Personal Repre-
sentatives, and Creditors of
Rochelle Camp (deceased)
In addition to the above
named Defendants being
served by this summons
there may be other Defen-
dants who have an interest
in this lawsuit. If you have
a claim for relief against
the Plaintiff arising from the
same transaction or occur-
rence, you must assert it
in your written answer. You
must answer the Complaint
in writing, by your attorney,
on or before the 28th day of
February, 2021, (the same
being within thirty (30) days
after the Third Notice of Suit),
and if you fail to do so a judg-
ment will be entered against
you for what the Plaintiff has
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/s/ Joel Bornkamp
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New Big Hackberry Nature Trail takes shape with waterway collaborations

By JULIE L RHODES

What transpires when community volunteers working along three of In-dianapolis' waterways come together for a common effort?

Hard work, nature and a new trail unveils a spectac-ular, new waterway-adjacent destination.

How does engaging youth in that effort create even more positive impacts?

When adult volunteers work alongside young people, an even richer ex-perience results for all who participate.

Reconnecting to Our Wa-terways' waterway commit-tee volunteers meet monthly to determine fun, positive and unique ways to connect the community with the waterways nearby. Last fall, discussions began between ROW's Fall Creek and White River waterway com-mittees to remove invasive (and harmful) honeysuckle, open up views to Fall Creek and create a rustic hik-ing path to what might be Indiana's largest hackberry tree. Soon, they connected with ROW's Central Canal Committee to work with youth from Groundwork Indy in a mentoring project to continue to further the connection between nature and young people in our waterway neighborhoods.

On Nov. 8, 2020, adult volunteers worked to clear some of the spaces and mark the paths. On Dec. 13, 2020, 15 youth joined along in a mentoring day with all three waterways working side by side toward a com-mon goal while a red-tailed hawk pair looked on. In to-tal, about 8,000 square feet of invasive honeysuckle was removed, clearing between 3-foot and 7-foot wide paths that make up the ¼-mile trail loop. The crew also cleared area along the Fall Creek Greenway for easy ac-cess to the loop trail, includ-ing a new space perfect for fishing. The Groundwork Indy's Green Team members also returned to the space soon thereafter and repur-posed railroad ties into steps along a particularly steep sections of the trail.

"It was great to be able to get out and work on the Big Hackberry Trail — it's a great escape into nature and right in our very own urban backyard," said Montell Hendricks, youth programs coordinator for Ground-work Indy.

The youth seem to have similar sentiments.

"It was exciting to watch their faces light up as they explored a natural para-dise that they never knew existed," Hendricks contin-ued. "Many said that they had been curious about the location for a while but were never able to have clear ac-cess to satisfy their curios-ity."

Time working on the trail led to many more great questions from the Green Team youth, including:

Q: "How much does it cost to visit and use?"

A: There is no cost to visit and use the Big Hackberry Nature Trail, and that is true of all of the trails and green-ways in and around Central Canal, the Canal Towpath and other Indianapolis waterway areas located on public parks greenways properties. Eagle Creek Park is the one Indy Parks property that does have an entrance fee.

Q: "Who is allowed to use the trail?"

A: Anyone can use the Big Hackberry Nature Trail, other parks, trails and greenways from dawn to dusk. These are public spaces that are acquired and maintained with public tax dollars.

Q: "What other trails are hidden around here?"

A: There isn't a compre-hensive map of "hidden" trails, but one we are aware of is the Urban Wilderness Trail, a 4-mile natural loop trail along White River and Fall Creek near downtown and Near West Indianapolis.

Q: "Can you ride bikes on the trail?"

A: The Big Hackberry Na-ture Trail is a natural path that probably isn't suitable for bikes. However, there are many paved or more defined paths throughout Indianapolis' trails parks and greenways systems that are suited for bikes and can become a path through your own neighborhood or to connect with other neigh-borhoods, our downtown and other areas throughout the city.

"It was nice to be able to engage with and educate them on their public lands and give them some power to get out and take advan-tage of their neighborhood and all the resources that it has to offer both natural and physical," Hendricks contin-ued. "It was just as reward-ing to observe the sense of accomplishment that can be seen in the youth from sim-ply seeing a project steadily improve from an unusable community resource to

completion as a functioning transportation route and re-source for their community."

The highlighted hackberry tree is suspected to be the largest of its species in Indi-ana, estimated between 150 to 200 years old, a rare size and age for the species. Lisa Milton, White River State Park and new White River committee co-chair, intends to get an accurate measure of the tree soon.

You can see the route and plan a hike to check out the new Big Hackberry Nature Trail at tinyurl.com/Big-HackberryNatureTrail

The event was accom-plished using ROW's stringent COVID-19 guid-ance that dictated social distancing and masks, to ensure safety of all who participated. Later this year, when COVID restrictions are anticipated to ease, the three waterway committees hope to organize a Hackber-ry Canoe Race to introduce canoeing and kayaking to urban youth who have not had the opportunity to enjoy on-water experiences. In the meantime, the new trail of-fers another beautiful space along our waterways and greenways to view wildlife, get fit and experience the beauty of the waterway in the middle of the city.

This project is an excellent example of collective impact at work. In addition to the collaborations of water-ways and partners, ROW was able to provide a grant to pay the youth and for supplies through the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust Event Grant funding. Keep Indianapolis Beauti-ful provided work gloves and trash bags, and Land-Worx Engineering pro-vided support and expertise. Indy Parks leadership also provided their assistance by walking the space with the eager community volunteers and granted permission for the invasive removal and nature trail installation.

Those interested in get-ting involved on the Central Canal Committee efforts, contact Groundwork Indy at phyllis@groundworkindy.org or call 317-737-2810. Get Involved in ROW's other waterway efforts at www.ourwaterways.org; follow ROW on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @ourwaterways, or call 317-371-2788.

Julie L Rhodes is collective impact director for Recon-necting to Our Waterways.



Large Hackberry tree

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Oladipo’s expected departure personifies today’s NBA

By **DANNY BRIDGES**

Some time ago I had the “audacity” to say Victor Oladipo had to be jettisoned out of the Indiana Pacers fold, and I received a ton of backlash from both the IU basketball brethren and Indiana Pacers loyalists, most of them grown men sporting his jersey as a staple of their respective wardrobes. They said I had a constant bone to pick with the talented yet enigmatic young man, and I couldn’t be objective. Forget the fact that I had sung his praises via print prior to his catastrophic injury, as many of his hard-core supporters pummeled me via email and social media calling me out of touch, a hater and, my personal favorite, a curmudgeon who didn’t understand the “modern” NBA game and its intricacies.

For the record, I only spoke to Oladipo a few times in a group setting as he tired quickly of my attempts to discuss his off-court endeavors, which I felt were a huge distraction to his development as a person, and not just as a basketball player.

Allow me to cut you off at the pass and concede that he doesn’t need any advice from me and it’s his career to manage. In reality, who am I to question who he surrounds himself with for guidance and direction in his life, both personally and professionally?

The fact that I can’t begin to fathom how on-the-court success is bungled today by so many exceptional athletes is totally irrelevant, as after all, I’ve never experienced the scrutiny that comes along with being the focal point of a team that gives you every opportunity to distinguish yourself in exchange for some \$20 million annually.

Sure, the exorbitant salaries are indeed commonplace and Oladipo’s contract that came with him from Oklahoma City when he was acquired was certainly commensurate with how the business works. When a player recognizes that, the inevitable process of developing a brand occurs, and while that is a slippery slope in itself, it remains a daunting challenge to balance that transition along with one’s responsibility as a player on the court as well. Simply put, there are just a chosen few that can pull it off, and unfortunately for Oladipo, those who whispered in his ear that he could do it had their own agenda and not his best interests in mind.

Prior to his injury, the man who was stellar in the

community and aloof with the media seemed to have it all by the tail and appeared to be capable of playing at that illustrious high level that is reserved for the true all stars of the game.

He said all the right things and quickly made people forget about the ultra-talented Paul George who had worn out his welcome in this community by simply expecting the Pacers to be active in the free agency market and acquire some good players to augment his ability.

Yes, Oladipo had arrived and when it happened it was downright magical in terms of a small market team finding the proverbial diamond in the rough and riding that wave that comes along with the surprise known as a truly budding star.

However, the romance was really over before it started, and when he became bigger than the team in his own eyes, the whispering began as to his inability to focus on basketball as opposed to being a singer and a fashion designer, both of which were his right to do.

Before you categorize me as simply envious, let me remind you that I can’t carry a tune in a bucket and my wardrobe is strictly outdated and off the rack, so there really isn’t anything here other than how mind boggling it was for me to admire yet another young man for his gifted basketball abilities and at the same time scratch my head at all the other shall we say ancillary off-the-court activities.

Yes, I understand all the opportunities there are for players today in terms of endorsements and the financial rewards that accompany those who can truly perform in that rarefied air, but there is a difference in being an all-star and a superstar in the NBA.

While Oladipo’s camp thought he was a maximum contract player even after his injury, the simple fact that he wasn’t such even prior to his unfortunate physical setback made the decision to trade him on the final year of his contract a simple business decision and not a personal vendetta that some have recently implied.

Sure, he disrespected both the

medical and media relations staffs of the organization, but that too is something that occurs in the game today and can be overcome with a series of triple-doubles and simply saying the right thing when a microphone, accompanied by the camera, is thrust in your face. Soundbites are everything in terms of forgiveness, and Oladipo was given every opportunity to do just that, but he simply chose not to, banking on the leverage that sadly evaporated when his knee exploded that fateful evening at Bankers Life Fieldhouse and changed his world in a profound manner.

By virtue of falling behind Malcom Brandon and Domantas Sabonis as the main cogs in the lineup, Oladipo quickly became sullen and relied on those around him outside of the franchise to enable him as the true superstar he felt he was and begin the process of dropping more than subtle hints of his intention to play elsewhere and prove everyone wrong about his ability to return to form.

While the Pacers were willing to offer him a contract consistent with his physical condition, they had no intention of tendering a high-dollar, long-term deal, and when Oladipo’s camp showed their fangs, Pacers President Kevin Pritchard pulled the trigger on a trade to avoid receiving nothing in return for the disgruntled fan favorite who clearly will never be the explosive player he once was due to the horrific injury.

Sadly, many NBA careers are cut short by virtue of similar circumstances, but Oladipo can still contribute to a team despite his physical limitations. The Pacers wanted him back and defined what they would pay and, more importantly, what his reduced role would be.

That didn’t settle well and the rest is history, but much of the drama that has transpired in the last two years could’ve been avoided, and I truly feel Oladipo realizes that now after being traded. The bigger question is: Can a young man who took bad advice from others separate himself from that faction and make good decisions moving ahead?

While a reduced contract might not seem palatable at this juncture, it’s right around the corner and it will probably be his last one. Before you cry for Oladipo or Argentina, please remember he’s already grossed nearly \$100 million in his career, and there’s more on the horizon. It won’t be a maximum-deal contract, but it surely will pay the light bill. One has to wonder why he couldn’t have made it work in a community that revered him, but he made his choice and seems comfortable with it. Something tells me his former employer certainly is too.

Danny Bridges who wishes Victor Oladipo good health and prosperity, can be reached at 317-370-8447 or at bridgeshd@aol.com.

Victor Oladipo

Chatard wins city tourney



Bishop Chatard won its first city tournament with a 62-61 win over Heritage Christian on Jan. 15.



Bishop Chatard’s Zakia Rasheed scored 28 points in the title game, including a buzzer-beater for the win. (Photos/David Dixon)



Heritage Christian’s Ari Wiggins scored a game-high 33 points.



Warren Central point guard Malik Stanley scored 22 points on eight field goals and two free throws.



Lawrence North guard Shamar Avance had a game-high 24 points.

LN wins county tourney



Lawrence North won the Marion County Tournament by beating Warren Central, 59-56, on Jan. 16. (Photos/David Dixon)



Warren Central’s Tae Davis finished with nine points in the championship game.



Lawrence North’s C.J. Gunn, one of the top players in the state, scored 18 points.