



# Branch Newsletter

## May, 2026

**Membership meeting 7 p.m. Thursday, May 28, Ricketts Center**

Corrine Landauer, Director of the Montgomery Chapter of the Democratic Black Caucus, will explain a new law governing cell phone use while driving. She also will talk about Juneteenth.

For those who can't make it in person, the Zoom link is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84995648174?wd=QIAyaHZkWIJXZWk1T3FWcHNFVnJQQT09> Meeting ID:849 9564 8174 Passcode: 937480

### Health and Wellness Committee

Joanne Washington, chair of the branch's Health and Wellness Committee, recently participated in a health fair at the Ricketts Center. She brought fresh fruits — which President Johnny Corson seems eager to try — and plenty of information.

Washington is also starting a pop-up health event for youths. They will be held from 5 to 6 p.m. the fourth Thursday of each month at the Ricketts Center, starting in June. These events will be open to anyone and are in collaboration with Washington's public benefit corporation, Joanne Washington, Inc.

"We want to teach them lifestyle wellness, how to eat healthy," Washington said. There will be taste-testing plus live demonstrations and activities.

## Hometown Heroes — Are white veterans the only ones?

The Executive Committee recently spent a lot of time discussing Pottstown's Hometown Heroes program. Adopted in communities across America, the goal is to honor past and current service members with banners along main streets.

Pottstown started its program two years ago. It was initiated by the Elks Lodge 814 Veterans Committee.

Nice. But it turns out that the 74 banners that were ultimately installed along High Street featured only white veterans. Not a single veteran of color.

Joseph Brown (pictured at right), a retired U.S. Army colonel who is Black, spoke about the issue at a recent NAACP general membership meeting, after writing a letter to Pottstown officials and others recently, asking for change.

"Unfortunately, Pottstown's program does not yet reflect the full veteran community. Among Hometown Heroes banners displayed on High Street, there is no visible minority representation. This is not a reflection of a lack of military service. Pottstown

enjoys a long, well-documented history of minority and African American veterans, and others, who served with distinction in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and beyond," he wrote.

However, there was no immediate action taken to change anything. Was there space? Who would handle it? Fingers were pointed.

At our Executive Committee meeting, members wondered why it was unclear who had the authority to do anything. And was this really inadvertent, or was no effort made to reach those in the Black community?

President Johnny Corson noted that with Memorial Day and July 4th — the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, "people are going to be coming to town, and if they look up, the only Hometown Heroes they're going to see is white heroes. It doesn't feel right."

He said he even proposed an easy fix: Interspersed with the Hometown Heroes banners are numerous banners for Hobart's Run and the Pottstown Development Corporation. Why not replace some of those with more Hometown Heroes banners?

Pottstown Mercury reporter Evan Brandt recently wrote an article about the issue. You can read it here: [tiny.cc/4dl3101](http://tiny.cc/4dl3101)

## HOMETOWN HEROES BANNER PROGRAM™



## Branch Vice-President Larry Cohen receives Gold Life membership in NAACP

Congratulations to Larry Cohen, the branch's long-time Vice-President, who recently re-upped to Gold Life membership, which signifies a higher level of commitment to the NAACP and its mission of social justice and equality. He's pictured with Executive Committee members (from left) Heather Anderson, Paula Corson, Johnny Corson. Bobby Watson, Joanne Washington, Craig Way, Annette Kobb, Sandy Bauers, Judith Memberg, Rev. Robin Barrow and Keith B. Stevens.





## NAACP Youth Council members learn about courts, financial literacy



*State Auditor Tim DeFoor is introduced at the event.*

Members of our Youth Chapter recently visited the Montco Courthouse, learning about the court system — including going to a live court proceeding — and county government.. They met with the judges, who answered pre-submitted questions, and also talked with the county commissioners and their staffs. Pictured above are (center, seated) Judge Steven C. Tolliver, Judge Lauren Hughes, and Judge Virgil Walker, along with Youth Council members and Regina Astheimer and President Johnny Corson, who helped organize the event.

On another day, state Auditor General Timothy DeFoor — who makes sure state money is spent correctly — visited and spoke to the students about financial literacy and how important it is.

News articles about both events appeared in the Mercury. Here are links: <https://tinyurl.com/22dt4576>; <https://tinyurl.com/5fvbm45a>

## MLK Art Contest winners

This year, the Branch’s MLK Art Competition, organized by Religious Affairs Committee Chair Rev. Robin Barrow and Pottstgown Community Arts Chair Marie Haigh, drew 33 entries. The theme was “Changed for Good: MLKJ changed the world for good. How can you change the world for good?”



*Rev. Robin Barrow and May Ghaafin, with her artwork.*

The winners :

**High School:** 1st - Brooke Haigh; 2nd - Elly Haigh. **Middle School:** 1st - Mahogany Mickey Green with YWCA Center; 2nd - Auria Allen with Ricketts Center; 3rd - Payton Scholl with YWCA Center. **Elementary school:** 1st - Hannah Baker with YWCA Center; 2nd - May Ghaafin with Ricketts Center; 3rd - Gavin Ocasio Smith with YWCA King St; Honorable Mention - Eden Allen with Ricketts and Samiyah Robson with Ricketts.

Partnering organizations were ACLAMO, Ricketts Center, YWCA Tri-County Area, Pottstown Regional Public Library and Pottstown School District .