



Branch Newsletter

June 2023

By the
Communication, Press & Publicity Committee

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

Our regular general membership meeting will be 7 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at the Ricketts Center, 658 Beech Street. For those who can't make the meeting, we'll also have a Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84995648174?pwd=QlAyaHZkWIJXZWk1T3FWcHNFVnJlOQQT09>

Meeting ID: 849 9564 8174 Passcode: 937480

JUNETEENTH!

The fun goes from 2 to 6 p.m. this Saturday, June 17, at the Ricketts Center, indoors and outside.

The jazz band, Hidden Treasure, will perform, and there will be a DJ. Expect food, health education, community programs, dancer Fallon Peay and her singer husband, Moe. At booths for kids, youngsters can get their faces painted and engage in arts and crafts projects. (Thank you, Marie Haigh, of Pottstown Community Arts!) There will be an inflatable bounce house.

Need to spruce up your look? Sal Ramsey and Jontae Harper, of Sal's Barber Shops in Douglasville and Royersford, will give kids free haircuts.

During the celebration, leaders from the community, including 2023 Pottstown High School Graduate Mark Ellison Jr. – school board member and class president -- will read portions of the original Emancipation Proclamation.

“Our first Juneteenth celebration, last year, was a big success,” said Marlene Hedgepeth, the branch’s Juneteenth organizer. “Good things came of it. Churches and the community came together. We want to build on that.”

This year, the event has a marketplace theme, featuring businesses owned by people of color. For those who can’t be present, a table will display their business cards. Vendors will be selling T-shirts, jewelry, fashion accessories, home-made candles, art work and new and gently used clothing and household items.

Some of the organizations present: Tower Health, Family Services of Montgomery County, Community Health and Dental Care, Montgomery County Prothonotary’s Office, and more.

Johnny Corson, president of the Pottstown Branch, said his goal for the day is “to just have fun, to relax and celebrate. With the price of everything now and other hardships, maybe we can forget about that for a day, put out cares aside, and enjoy the celebration of Juneteenth.”

Deanna Paschall is preparing the free food – fried fish, collard greens, mac’n’cheese, candied yams, hot dogs, hamburgers, baked beans, cole slaw, fruit cup and dessert. Corson noted they will be feeding the senior citizens first, respecting and honoring “those who paved the way for us to be doing what we’re doing now.”

But because, in truth, holidays often have a good-food component, the event will also feature food vendors – Smoothie Q, Deezy’s cheesesteaks and wings and such, plus mini-donuts by DonutNV.

Corson noted the significance of having the event at the Ricketts Center, which “is part of Black history in Pottstown. Without the Ricketts Center, many children would not have had a place to go. People got their lives turned around there. The Ricketts Center saved a lot of lives.”

Pottstown attorney Levi Wolf, Hobart’s Run and Genesis Housing Corporation gave donations to help fund the event.

For everyone who needs a history reminder: Juneteenth, which became an official federal holiday in 2021, celebrates the end of slavery in America. President Abraham Lincoln announced the freedom of enslaved people with his Emancipation Proclamation on Sept. 22, 1862. But communications in that era were not what they are today. It wasn’t until June 19, 1865, that Union Army General Gordon Granger came to Texas – the last state to officially have enslaved people – and demanded that the state’s 250,000 slaves be set free.

GET READY TO MARCH ON JULY 4

Put on your yellow NAACP t-shirts, your marching shoes and your patriotic finery! The branch is registered to participate in Pottstown's July 4 parade, and we're eager to strut our stuff. We'll also be joined by our annual marching buddies and tempo-keepers, the Pine Forge Drum Line. The parade begins at 10:15 and goes down High Street, from Adams to York. We'll be lining up starting at 9:30 a.m. just west of the Post Office.

Afterward, we'll staff a table at the Street Fest, from 11:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THIS! If you can participate, please contact Larry Cohen at chickenhill99@hotmail.com.

By the way, it's still not too late to purchase – or sell -- tickets for the Rotary Club's Duck Race fundraiser. (The more the branch sells, the more we benefit.) If you'd like to sell some, or if you'd like to buy some, TEXT Annette Kobb at 484-366-1466 or email her at annettek53@gmail.com. Winners will be announced on July 4.

Here's a [news story](#) in the Mercury about the event. The official website is www.pottstowngofourth.com

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE MEETS WITH TRACY PENNYCUICK

Branch Political Action Committee members, in their first meeting with the State Senator-elect, found common ground on the idea that all students should be afforded equal educations. Now that the courts have ruled for Fair Funding advocates, the state legislature is working on details of what is called "Level Up." The amicable, hour-plus meeting, which included PAC Chair Larry Cohen, Marlene Armato, Bob Bauers and the senator's chief of staff, Lisa Walter, covered various aspects of education. Also, Ms. Walter and the senator seemed genuinely shocked and outraged by our briefing on the racism incidents our branch has been dealing with in local schools.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT. BE THERE!

August 1 is the date this year. The time is 6 to 8 p.m. If you want to be a part of the heart and soul of a community and feel that warm vibe, be there! We'll be coming out to show we care, to show we're watching, to show we won't tolerate vandalism, crime or – God, forbid – shootings. The two gathering spots are Washington & Chestnut, plus Hanover & King by Trinity Church.

NAACP BOOK CLUB

The book club has decided to take the summer off. Too many other wonderful things happening! So the next meeting Monday, Sept. 11, 6 p.m. at the Pottstown Library.