



Branch Newsletter

April 2022

By the Communication, Press & Publicity Committee

NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING: We are continuing to hold meetings via Zoom because of the pandemic. The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 28. Pottstown School Board member Laura Johnson, who also is a member of the branch, will give a presentation on fair funding for schools. Each Pottstown student is shortchanged \$3,700 a year. Johnson's group is inviting people to participate in an advocacy project in support of the governor's budget, which would bring an additional \$8-9 million to Pottstown schools annually. She'll talk for 10 minutes and then answer questions.

Here's the link: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84995648174?pwd=QlAyaHZkWIJXZWk1T3FWcHNFVnJlOQT09>

Meeting ID: 849 9564 8174

Passcode: 937480

EARTH DAY, APRIL 23. BE THERE!

Think climate change doesn't really have anything to do with you? Poorer communities and communities of color are known to be unfairly burdened when it comes to pollution and weather disasters. So come out on Saturday to learn more about it and push for solutions.

The branch will participate in a climate march that begins at noon in front of the Hill School, 701 E. High Street. It will end at the Smith Family Plaza, 100 E. High Street, where an ECOfest

will be taking place. Among booths for plant-based foods, rescue animals, kids' crafts, etc., we'll be staffing a branch table with voter registration forms and NAACP info.

HEALTHY KIDS DAY

For 30 years, the national YMCA has hosted Healthy Kids Day as part of an initiative to improve families' health and wellbeing. It's been a great success in Pottstown, where families can learn about healthy diets, the benefits and fun of exercise, and the importance staying active. This year, the branch's WIN (Women in the NAACP) Committee is participating in the event, which will be held Saturday, April 30, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Y, 724 N. Adams St. Look for vendor booths plus games and activities to keep kids moving and learning.

OUR BRANCH IN THE NEWS

Johnny Corson's letter to the editor hailing Unity Day at the Daniel Boone Area School District as a step in the right direction ran in the [Mercury](#) and the [Reading Eagle](#).

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Voting is one way you can have a say in what happens in your community. While the NAACP does not endorse candidates, the organization has always been a strong advocacy of voter registration and voter participation. With that in mind, here are a few important dates:

MAY 2: This is the last day to register to vote if you want to vote in the primary election.

MAY 17, ELECTION DAY: This is the day to make your voice heard! Polls are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. To find your polling place, click here: <https://www.pottstown.org/231/Voting> Also, mail-in ballots must be received by county boards of elections by 8 p.m. on Election Day, regardless of postmark. If you can't vote in-person, we urge you to vote by mail or ballot drop box promptly when mail-in ballots are received.

ISSUES

Greg Nestor, Montco's Chief Public Defender and a member of the branch's Political Action Committee, reported that cooperation between the PD's Office and the county prison has been good and that some of the recently incarcerated have registered to vote. Greg said the Branch's effort to highlight the issue of unregistered prisoners may have had an impact.

Also, the PAC strongly supports branch participation in – and possibly hosting -- an expungement clinic.

BRIGHT HOPE PLAYGROUND UPDATE

The branch has long been pushing to have the ancient playground equipment at Bright Hope replaced, and our president, Johnny Corson, has been working with officials to make it happen. The latest is that the Montgomery County Housing Authority has applied for a grant from the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation. If the grant is approved, the current timeline calls for planning, design and approval in 2022 and early 2023, with an opening later in 2023.

REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. ART COMPETITION WINNERS

Youth artists submitted 24 pictures for the MLK Art Competition held by the Branch's Religious Affairs Committee, in partnership with the YMCA and YWCA Tri-County Area. Congratulations to the winners! Ages 6-9: Logan Morton, first place; Malcolm Haigh, second place; Cora Petruno, third place. Ages 10-15: Naia Sanford, first place; Evalee Wyatt, second place; Jahvaira Rolle, third place.

STEEL RIVER PRODUCTION'S ACTORS TALK ABOUT RACE

The Steel River Playhouse is hosting performances of "Sweat," a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Lynn Notage that centers on the closing of a steel mill in Reading in 2000. In part, it explores the tensions among the White, Black and Hispanic workers and community members. We wanted to know what a few of the cast members thought the play says about race in America today. Here are some of their answers.



Kim Cyrus (pictured), a Pottstown actress: "This play has allowed me to look beyond my own circumstances and view race from different perspectives and points of view. It helped me to realize that people from all backgrounds have different struggles and difficulties and that they are being affected by laws and conditions that make them feel just as disenfranchised as I do as a Black woman."

Caitlin Monohan: "The de-industrialization of America has, in a way, awakened the white population to the some of the realities the non-white population has faced for decades. Now, as I read the news and see labor movements like /antiwork gaining momentum, I wonder if those benefiting from white privilege see more clearly just how far that privilege has taken them."

Eric Crist: “There will always be an ‘us’ and ‘them’. We can reduce the number of ‘them’ by expanding the ‘us’ but it will never go away. We can push ourselves to know the ‘them’ so we don’t automatically judge ‘them’ and this is a life-long process and mindset.”

The play runs from April 22 through May 1. For more information and to order tickets, go to <https://www.steelriver-playhouse.org/>

BRANCH TO SPONSOR BLOOD DRIVES

Last fall, the branch partnered with the American Red Cross to sponsor a blood drive at the Ricketts Center. It went really well; all the appointment slots were filled. So now the Executive Committee has voted to sponsor regular blood drives in Pottstown, perhaps every three or six months. Ever since the pandemic, blood had been in short supply. Blood donations are of special value to the Black community because of sickle cell disease, which affects mostly Black people. It can cause debilitating pain, joint and tissue damage, plus strokes. There is no cure, but among the treatments: blood transfusions from Black donors. Many patients need them throughout their lives. Stay tuned for more details, and get ready to roll up your sleeves.

LEGAL AID CLINIC

Speaking of expungement, that’s one of the areas of free legal help being offered in Pottstown and Norristown on Tuesday, May 3, from 3 to 6 p.m. The virtual legal aid clinic is being offered by the Community Justice Project, Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Utility Law Project. Other areas include custody and family, utilities (gas, electric, water), employment, landlord/tenant and housing and immigration. Registration is required. You can do so by clicking here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0e4fada923a1f4ce9-norristownpottsto>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

JUNE 16, JUNETEENTH: Branch leaders are working on a plan to mark the day in 1865 when Union soldiers arrived in Texas to announce the end of slavery. Stay tuned.

JULY 4, DUCK RACE: The Executive Committee has approved the branch’s involvement in the Rotary Club’s annual July 4 Duck Race. Branch members will be selling tickets, and we’ll get some of the proceeds.