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Celebrating 25 years of Black History Month in Canada

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BHM 'more important than ever'

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2021 celebrations of Black History Month 'more important than ever' – Mayor John Tory

Mayor John Tory on Monday proclaimed February as Black History Month in Toronto.

Noting that every year, Black History Month is “our opportunity to learn more about the history of Black Canadians and the role they have played in building up our city,” Tory pointed that this year’s celebrations are “more important than ever as we acknowledge the protests that occurred in 2020 and the reality that COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Black



John Tory

residents in our city.”

“While we spend time this month honouring the achievements and contributions of Black Canadians, we are reminded of the work that lies ahead in building a better, more inclusive and equitable city for

all,” he said.

Tory called on residents of Toronto “to participate in this year’s events, to learn more and to better understand the history of our country and the role Black Canadians have played in it.”

A news release from

the City of Toronto notes that to comply with current orders and regulations to help stop the spread of COVID-19, recognition and celebratory programs and events will be held virtually this year.

To commemorate Black History Month, the City’s Confronting Anti-Black Racism (CABR) unit will use their Twitter account, https://twitter.com/CABR_Toronto, to highlight the work being done by some of the community-based agencies and groups that the City has partnered with to support Black residents in need throughout the pandemic.

The release also

notes that The *Awakenings* program - a virtual series of art projects by Black, Indigenous and artists of colour within Toronto History Museums - will launch today new online content, including music, film and journeys of the effects of racism on physical and mental health. The new content will include more *Awakenings* Reflections: Behind the Scenes Discussions.

Awakenings, first launched last December, “explores untold stories, awakens new perspectives and invites the public to join the conversation,” said the release

The series is part of the City’s efforts

to address anti-Black racism and operates under the principles of anti-oppression and anti-colonialism. The *Awakenings* program information and content are available at toronto.ca/museums.

In 1979, Toronto was the first municipality in Canada to proclaim Black History Month and in 1995, Toronto Area MP Jean Augustine introduced a motion that was passed unanimously by the House of Commons to recognize Black History Month across Canada.

A listing of Black History Month events in Toronto is available at toronto.ca/blackhistory/

McMaster partners with five Ontario universities to launch new fellowships for Black and Indigenous students

HAMILTON - The Faculty of Engineering at McMaster University in Hamilton has partnered with five other Ontario universities to launch new fellowships for Indigenous and Black students pursuing doctoral degrees in engineering.

Ishwar K. Puri, Dean of Engineering at McMaster University, said “the fellowships will help McMaster and other Ontario universities work towards greater diversity in engineering and technology programs.”

“A more inclusive environment leads to better perspectives, innovation and



Ishwar K. Puri

problem-solving approaches,” he noted.

The partnership includes the engineering and math Faculties at the University of Waterloo, and the engineering Faculties at McMaster University, the University of Ottawa, the University of Toronto, Queen’s University and Western University

Recipients of the new fellowships will each receive \$25,000

a year for four years as they pursue doctorate degrees and specialized engineering research. It will also help to prepare students for academic careers as professors and industry researchers.

“We hope to see graduate enrollment increase among Black and Indigenous scholars at Ontario universities with the release of the fellowships in the years to come,” said Michael Thompson, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies at the Faculty of Engineering at McMaster University.

“The initiative represents a big step towards enriching the academic landscape,” Thompson added.

Happy
**BLACK HISTORY
MONTH 2021**



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Jamaican Canadian organizations call on Trudeau to reconsider decision to suspend flights

Three organizations -The Jamaican Canadian Association, Jamaica Global Diaspora Council (Canada) and Canadian Jamaican Diaspora Christian Alliance - are calling on Prime Minister Trudeau to reconsider the recent decision to suspend flights to the Caribbean and Mexico.

Last Friday, Trudeau announced that the Canadian government and Canadian airlines had agreed to suspend flights to these “sun destinations” right away.

Air Canada, WestJet, Sunwing and Air Transat have cancelled air services to all Caribbean destinations and Mexico until April 30.

The services are suspended as Canada imposes stricter measures to stem the spread of new variants of the coronavirus.

But in a news release, the Jamaican organizations said the cancellation of air services “unfairly targets” Jamaica, the [rest of the] Caribbean and Mexico “and will significantly impact the vulnerable economies of developing countries who have already experienced massive job and revenue loss.”

They also note that “Jamaica and other Caribbean countries have made significant investments and efforts to comply with all previous protocols to protect Canadians. Jamaica has been at the forefront of curbing the spread of COVID-19 by implementing



Justin Trudeau

mobile testing labs for outbound and inbound international travellers, and by implementing testing at their Sangster International Airport.

“Jamaica was also one of the first countries to close its borders at the onset of the pandemic to curb spread, keeping its numbers down while addressing international travel safety concerns.

“Therefore, this step of a targeted ban seems unjustified.

They point out that “while Jamaica, the [rest of the] Caribbean and Mexico are no longer options for March break, Canadians who intend to travel despite

warnings, may still consider Florida and other sun destinations that have higher and increasing rates of COVID-19

“The government has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the destinations on the travel ban pose imminent danger to Canada compared to the numerous other countries that are still viable options to our



citizens.”

“We are not clear on what data was used to support this decision. No Caribbean country is in the top five for COVID-19 outbreaks. To cancel all flights until April 30 is extreme; yet this does not apply to countries that have confirmed cases of the COVID-19 variant,” said Adaoma Patterson, president of the Jamaican Canadian Association.

“We ask that this ban be rescinded and that the protocols applied to other countries be applied to flights coming from the Caribbean and Mexico, or that the ban be applied equitably to all international flights,” Patterson said.

“Our organizations would be happy to work with the federal government to explore



options that will achieve the desired outcome without causing further, and undue, hardship on nations with whom

Canada has had longstanding positive and mutually beneficial relationships.” she added.

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Canadian Mental Health Association offers help during lockdown

The Ontario government's emergency stay-at-home order to battle the spread of the COVID-19 virus is having a direct impact on the mental health of many people – especially those who were already struggling. Further measure to slow the spread of the virus may increase isolation and loneliness for many and could worsen stress or symptoms of depression and anxiety.



Rebecca Shields

Recent reports have also indicated that substance abuse has increased and continues to be on the rise. The Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region and South Simcoe has responded by introducing a dedicated support counselling telephone line for residents of the region who may be experiencing stress, low mood, loneliness, or are overwhelmed by the current situation.

The line operates Monday to Friday and is free of charge. There is no referral required and there is no wait list. "We want people to know that CMHA York Region and South Simcoe is here for you," said CEO, Rebecca Shields. "As an essential service, we've been innovative from the very beginning of this pandemic and have shifted many programs to virtual where possible. Our

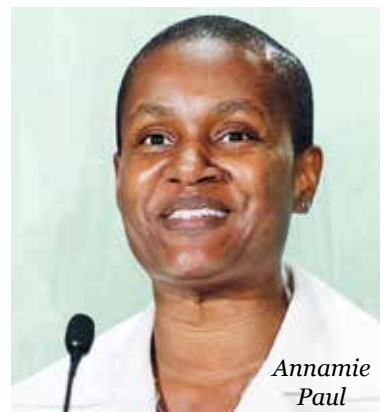
supportive phone line is a fantastic free resource for anyone in the region who is looking for help with coping for the very real stress caused by the pandemic, or simply needs someone to talk to right now." Phone counsellor Lisa Wood said she has spoken to everyone from seniors in long-term care homes who feel scared and lonely, to those with pre-existing conditions. She has spoken to people who have never

experienced a mental health challenge before but find themselves overwhelmed with anxiety about the pandemic and the long winter months ahead. "I tell callers, 'it's my first pandemic too, but we can get through this if we do it together,'" Ms. Wood said. The supportive counselling line is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m. It can be reached at 1-866-345-0183.

Green Party Leader Annamie Paul will run for an Ontario seat

Green Party Leader Annamie Paul announced on Thursday night that she's decided to run in an Ontario riding in the next

federal election. In the face of a possible federal election this year, political parties have begun getting campaign ready. Some are already nominating candidates. A confidential Green party source who was not authorized to speak publicly, said possible ridings for Paul include: Guelph, Spadina-Fort York, Parkdale High Park, Davenport, Toronto Danforth or Toronto Centre. The party will announce a final decision at a later date. In 2020, Paul lost an October by-election in Toronto Centre to the Liberal star candidate and former television personality Marci Ien. But Paul placed a close second and said the narrow result put the Liberals on notice. The Greens hold three seats in the House of Commons: one in New Brunswick and two on Vancouver Island. The decision to run their leader in Ontario marks a break for the federal party that has seen its path to growing electoral success in British Columbia and the Maritimes. "Greens are offering a positive,



Annamie Paul

progressive, daring vision for Canada, and we will be running to win all across the country," said Paul in a statement. "With this goal in mind, running in Ontario offers the perfect chance to grow the party." In October 2020, Paul became the first Black and Jewish woman to lead a federal party in Canada. Paul, who's from Toronto, has spent the last four months raising issues such as the need for aggressive climate action, a guaranteed liveable income and addressing the crisis in long-term care homes in the wake of COVID-19.

"We need to talk about it."

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Toronto Police release internal policy on body cameras as program begins wider rollout

The Toronto Police Service released on Friday its internal guidelines on the use of body-worn cameras to the public.

“We are proud to be the first service in Canada to release our internal BWC (body-worn camera) procedure in our continued effort to foster public trust around the use of BWCs,” said Chief James Ramer in a statement.

“These cameras are valuable tools that support and reinforce our commitment to delivering accountable and transparent police services.”

The guidelines



Louis March

dictate how and when officers will use the cameras, though the rules include numerous exceptions and circumstances.

The document also states how the recordings can be used, including situations when the footage will be turned over to police oversight agencies and,

in select cases, released to the general public.

It notes that a police officer will turn on the body-worn camera prior to arriving at a call for service or prior to asking any sort of inquisitive question. A police officer will turn off the body-worn camera when the call for service or investigation is complete or when the officer determines that continuous recording is no longer serving its intended purpose.

Erick Laming, a University of Toronto PhD student who studies police use-of-force and accountability, said the guidelines are

clearer and more comprehensive than policies released by other police forces using cameras, primarily in the U.S.

“I commend the police, and the policy creators, on a job well done in terms of making it easy for everyone to consume,” Laming said, though he noted that other services in Canada have released their guidelines before Toronto police.

Body-worn cameras are being used by some 607 Toronto police officers, concentrated in three of the service’s western-most divisions in Etobicoke and northeast Toronto.



The use of body-worn cameras, which started in August 2020, is expanding into four additional divisions this week.

Toronto police expect to have 2,350 officers using the cameras by October 2021. The service employs approximately 5,500 officers.

Police officers are ordered to activate the cameras only in instances

of enforcement or investigation. According to the document, “they are not intended for 24-hour recording.”

Experts say those rules mean officers will have some discretion to decide when the cameras are activated.

“We understand what the goals and objectives are, but do the police on the ground, the gangs

Turn to PAGE 17

The NDP Celebrates
BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Andrea Horwath
Leader, Ontario's NDP
MPP Hamilton Centre



Kevin Yarde
MPP Brampton North



Laura Mae Lindo
MPP Kitchener Centre



Jill Andrew
MPP Toronto—
St. Paul's



Faisal Hassan
MPP York South—Weston



Rima Berns-McGown
MPP Beaches—East York

Black Lives Matter

Yes, Black Lives Matter. And as we celebrate the legacy of Black Canadians during this month, proclaimed as Black History Month, we note with elation that there is now greater awareness in our own Caribbean community and indeed in the wider Canadian society, that Black Lives Do Matter.

The chants of Black Lives Matter were heard loud and clear around the world last year with the tragic passing of one George Floyd in the United States - yet another Black victim of police violence.

But Floyd's death has given new life to the Black Lives Matter movement which has been active in Canada, leading many protest demonstrations against Black racism and police brutality.

In his statement on Black History Month 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau noted "the incredible impact of young Black change makers who took to the streets last year and continue to fight to make a difference."

"We felt their anger, heartbreak, and frustration, and heard their calls for accountability, justice, and equality," said Prime Minister Trudeau.

And he noted that "with the pandemic further highlighting social, health, and economic disparities

for racialized Canadians, religious minorities, and Indigenous peoples, we know we must act now to address these complex and long-standing issues."

To that we say Amen.

And as Toronto Mayor John Tory noted on Monday in proclaiming Black History Month, while we spend time honouring the achievements and contributions of Black Canadi-

ans, "we are reminded of the work that lies ahead in building a better, more inclusive and equitable city for all."

Tory pointed out that this year's celebrations are "more important than ever as we acknowledge the protests that occurred in 2020 and the reality that COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on Black residents in our city."

Let us hope that the messages of both Prime Minister Trudeau and Mayor Tory resonates in the hearts and minds of people of all races as we move on to a higher level of enlightenment that brings with it equality, real justice and peace.

Happy Black History Month to all our readers.

Paid Sick Days a priority for our communities



By **Jill Andrew**

"How are you doing?"

That's is the question we are or should be asking each other more times than not these days. Now more than ever, with the emotional and mental health toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to stick around on that phone or zoom call long enough to really listen to the response of our loved ones and community – especially essential workers keeping our communities moving during these challenging times.

Our mental health is critical. If you are feeling particularly low and experiencing extended periods of depressive feelings or anxiousness please do not be too hard on yourself. However, it is important to connect with a loved one to share how you are feeling. If your ability to communicate with others is particularly difficult because you are living alone or you cannot

stay connected virtually and those feelings begin to worsen, do schedule an appointment with your family doctor, a counsellor, or a walk-in clinic. You do not have to deal with these feelings alone and contrary to what some of us may have been told as children, what happens in the four walls of your home shouldn't always stay there. Sometimes it's necessary to let it out so you can get support.

There are several things our provincial government should be implementing immediately to help guarantee the piece of mind of our community members. One of the priorities is providing every essential worker who needs it with Paid Sick Days.

Our communities need Paid Sick Days so that people do not have to make the emotionally draining and potentially life-threatening decision of going to work sick – possibly even with COVID-19 – because they are afraid of losing a day's pay or worse yet, their job. We cannot forget that most of the essential workers we hear every politician,

including me, referring to as "frontline health care heroes" are Black and other people of colour and are predominantly women. What does this say about the Doug Ford government when it refuses to give Paid Sick Days to hard working Ontarians but will happily increase the salaries of wealthy CEOs and abuse their powers through Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs) making 'backroom deals' with developers that make them richer while our communities feel the financial squeeze even tighter?

We, the Ontario NDP Official Opposition, have a bill tabled in the Legislature that demands Paid Sick Days and all the Doug Ford Conservative government has to do is call MPPs back to Queen's Park immediately and help us make this bill law so that our people do not have to also worry about facing homelessness during the pandemic when they are sick.

We are not the only ones demanding Paid Sick Days for all workers. Public health experts have also called for this, stating that Paid Sick Days will help prevent community

spread and allow workers the ability to heal at home.

It is time the Doug Ford government stop sitting on billions of dollars they currently have of unallocated, unspent COVID-19 funds they should be spending to help fight COVID-19 and save lives. The government is supposed to support the physical and mental health of each person in Ontario and Paid Sick Days is one way to ease the burden too many families are facing. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), the Ontario government has spent less per person on the pandemic than Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC .

Conservative Premier Doug Ford's refusal to invest money into our communities and his and his Minister of Labour,'s refusal to guarantee Paid Sick Days has and will continue to cost our community lives.

(Dr. Jill Andrew is the Ontario NDP MPP for Toronto-St.Paul's and is also a founding member of the Ontario NDP Black Caucus.)

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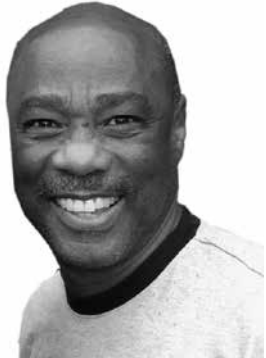
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Biden must act boldly and do what is right for the people



By **Carlton Joseph**

The inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris took place without incident on January 20 last as 25,000 national guard troops secured Washington. Biden called for unity and respect and promised to be the president for all Americans. He also recognized that the country is facing one of its most difficult moments, and called it a perfect storm: “the worst pandemic in over 100 years, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the most compelling call for racial justice since the ‘60s, and the accelerating threats of climate change.”

“Are we ready?” the President then asked.

Most Americans are ready but Republican law makers are not. In fact Republicans are using the call for “unity” to deflect demands that Trump be impeached, and insist on power sharing in order to have veto power over the initiatives of the new administration. To address the pandemic, Biden proposed a relief plan of 1.9 trillion dollars, Senior Republicans declared it dead

on arrival because it included an increase in the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, will provide \$1,400 direct payments to individuals earning under \$75,000, heads of households under \$112,500, and married couples filing jointly or surviving spouses earning under \$150,000. Republican Senators objected, saying some of the recipients don’t need the money.

This is the opening salvo from Republicans. In exchange for “unity”, Democrats must sacrifice their pledge to deliver economic relief to the American people. But the fact that the Senate is split 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans makes governance difficult. For example, although both parties agreed that the party holding the White House would set the floor agenda and chair committees, while the panels themselves would be evenly split, they could not agree on even the basic rules about how the evenly divided body should operate.

Republican Senator Mitch McConnell finally agreed to a power-sharing agreement with Democrats, citing comments from Democratic Senators Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema, who said they would not favor eliminating the filibuster, which requires a 60-vote supermajority to advance most legislation. These two senators broke ranks before the legislative session started. If this is an indication of things to come, the Democrats will not

accomplish anything and will probably lose control of both houses in the next two years.

Senior Democrat lawmakers and groups that supported Democrats are exerting pressure on Congress to enact economic relief quickly, even if it means cutting Republicans out of the deal. Senator Elizabeth Warren said: “It’s important that Democrats deliver for America.... but if Republicans want to cut back to the point that we’re not delivering what needs to be done, then we need to be prepared to fight them.” And Senator Bernie Sanders said, “What we need to do now is, in very bold and clear ways, make people understand government is directly improving their lives.”

In a major decision that will affect Canadians, President Biden revoked the Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline permit. The decision infuriated Prime Minister Trudeau and the company’s president, Mr. Richard Prior declared that more than 1000 jobs will be lost when the company stops construction. Indigenous leaders and environmentalists welcomed Biden’s executive order cancelling the KXL project, but insists that he must cancel similar polluting fossil fuel projects, including the Dakota Access pipeline.

Currently, three major oil pipeline projects are proposed or underway in Canada for a total of 1,790,000 barrels per day. These infrastructure projects

will create jobs for Canadians, and provide access to international markets. However, Canadians must recognize that the threat of climate change is forcing the world to focus on renewable energy projects such as wind, solar and geothermal, and climate change activists are fighting the pipeline as part of the anti-fossil fuel movement called, “Keep It in The Ground” that looks to end the use of oil in favor of renewable energy.

Canadians must understand that the 2020 elections saw a historic turnout of Native Americans, who helped deliver victory for Biden in key states including Arizona and Wisconsin. They have found their voice and are demanding a halt fossil fuel projects which threaten their land, water, health, culture and security. The window of opportunity is closing for these projects, Canadian companies must begin the transition to alternate energy sources.

In the past, these companies have been disrespectful of tribal rights insisting that there is no legal obligation to work with tribes, and that they only do it because their policy position is that it’s a good, neighborly thing to do. Others insist that tribes protesting the project are not all that concerned on whether the pipeline will use sacred land, and are really just looking for a bigger cut of the revenue. Others claim that the tribes just want “easy money.”

These companies need to accept that tribes have rights and if they want more revenue for using their land, then the companies must negotiate a deal that reflects the value their property brings to the project. A history of broken promises, and treaties have informed Native Americans. They understand that Oklahoma was chosen as Indian Territory because it was thought to be worth little but the state turned out to hold substantial oil and natural gas reserves. The native people have been fighting for a toll on the crude that will pass through the pipeline. They deserve it.

Back in the Congress, Biden has to deal with the split senate that was designed to be anti-democratic from inception. Anti-democratic in that a state like Wyoming with 600,000 residents has two senators and California with 39 million residents also has two, resulting in the minority ruling the majority. This situation is replicated in many states, resulting in a general pattern where the more rural, lower population, white conservative states have significantly more voting power than the urban, highly populated multi-racial states. This is the primary source of gridlock in the senate and it’s crippling American democracy.

This 50-50 split in the senate means that the 50 Democrats represent more than 41 million more Americans than the 50 Republicans. This ridiculous

power in-balance is exacerbated when one considers that Biden won the election by more than seven million votes. The 147 Republican congressmen who voted against certifying the election clearly indicate that they desire an autocratic or fascist government.

Democrats have vowed to pass legislation that would help working families. If Biden insists on bipartisan legislation, he will be submitting to congressional paralysis, and will pave the road for the next Trump-like politician, like Ted Cruz or Josh Hawley, who will be more disciplined and dangerous than Trump.

The American system of governance is leaving too many Americans to despair and misery, too many problems unsolved, too many people disillusioned. Both parties primarily serve the interests of corporations and archaic government rules make the Congress impotent. Most people want a job, shelter and to be able to provide for their families but the economic system of austerity has decimated jobs, and forced thirty-four million Americans into poverty. Biden must act boldly and do what is right for the people. The corporate elites will just have to “suck it up.”

(Trinidad-born Carlton Joseph who lives in Washington DC, is a close observer of political developments in the United States.)

TRAVEL

Jamaica's tourism resilient corridors safe for visitors, say stakeholders

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica — With the raging coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacting and taking a huge toll on almost every sector across Jamaica, the tourism resilient corridors have been an exception to the rule, stakeholders say.

So much so that some hoteliers are openly declaring that one of the safest places to be is “the inside of a resort where there are some strict and



established protocols which have been keeping both our guests

and staff safe and in line with the health and safety guidelines mandated by the Ministry of Health and Wellness”.

Visitor Relations Manager at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), Andrea Savizon, said that as a part of the tourism restart efforts, the JTB has

successfully launched its ‘Rediscover Jamaica’ promotion, where for the past nine months, thousands of Jamaicans have benefited from attractive rates to visit local hotels and attractions across the island.

“Not only is this a win-win for our Jamaicans wanting

to enjoy their own country, but it greatly helps putting back many of our fellow Jamaicans to work in the tourism sector. But even more importantly, these fellow Jamaicans are now our greatest ambassadors to the fact that the COVID-19 mitigation protocols work,” she said.

The Ministry of Tourism mandated the creation of the Tourism Resilient Corridors, encompassing much of the northern coast, southern coast, and New Kingston.

In these corridors, tourism businesses must be certified by the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo) for having implemented, to the letter, all the COVID-19 prevention protocols with internal systems enhanced, with governmental surveillance and enforcement to ensure compliance.

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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Black Academy now plans awards show

After launching The Black Academy in early December, actor-brothers Shamier Anderson and Stephan James are now planning an awards show to celebrate and uplift Black talent across Canada.

But getting financial backing is proving to be a challenge, they say.

The Toronto-raised performers say they want to debut the live, national telecast in the latter half of 2022 in their home city so they can have an in-person audience hopefully without COVID-19 fears.

The Black Academy has teamed up with

Insight Productions on the show, which will celebrate both anglophone and francophone Black talent across film, television, music, sports, and culture.

While the Canada Media Fund has already provided financial support to The Black Academy, the organization needs more investment. They've had "a lot of meetings" but money hasn't come through, said Anderson.

"We have some other corporate entities, some of these individuals, come up in Black History Month to have one-off relationships and one-



Shamier Anderson

Stephan James

off things like, 'Hey, we want to support you, because it's a part of our mandate,'" he said in an interview. "And for us it's like, being Black doesn't happen in 28 days, the shortest month of the year. Being Black happens all year round."

Award categories, juries, and the submission process for the show will be announced at a later date.

Anderson and James are executive producing alongside John Brunton, Shannon Farr and Lindsay Cox of Insight Productions, which has worked on many awards shows and TV programs.

The telecast will feature awards presentations, performances, and tributes to honour established and emerging Black talent.

Anderson calls the event "groundbreaking and history-making."

"It's the first of its kind in Canada, nationally. It's kind of crazy when you say that — that this is the first in 2021. It just makes you think for a minute: 'Why?'" said the actor, whose credits include the series "Wynonna Earp," the upcoming Netflix sci-fi thriller "Stowaway" and Halle Berry's directorial debut, "Bruised."

"The Black awards show is a small piece of the work we're going to be doing with the academy but it's a big deal," said James, the Golden Globe-nominated star of the Amazon Prime Video series "Homecoming," whose film credits include "If Beale Street Could Talk," "Race" and "Selma."

"It's a big deal to finally have a place in which people can see themselves be recognized, be honoured. We can give folks their flowers while they're in Canada trying to develop their careers

and build a livelihood for themselves."

The Black Academy and Insight Productions are now looking to hire a Black showrunner and Black creatives and crew for the event. They're also planning a skills development program for multiple positions in advance of pre-production. Interested applicants can submit their resumes to BlackAwardShowResumes@insighttv.com.

Farr said she's been on several calls with the Black Academy as they've spoken with potential partners, funders and government bodies over the last several months. Some people are under the false impression they have a lot of money to launch an awards show, she said.

"The truth of the matter is, there's still a lot of talk happening; there's not a lot of action," Farr said. "You can issue press releases, you can give speeches from thrones, you can do all that stuff. You can appoint various ministers of this, that and whatever. But until something happens, nothing is going to change."

"And we hear all kinds of excuses: 'The government is slow, we don't have this, we don't have a program for that, talk to this department.' And really, at the end of the day, I believe the general public believes that there's stuff happening, when really, it's a lot of nothing right now."

Anderson and James co-founded The Black Academy as a permanent, year-round operation to showcase Black talent,

break down barriers of discrimination and combat systemic racism.

The academy is a national division of the brothers' not-for-profit group B.L.A.C.K. Canada (Building A Legacy in Acting, Cinema + Knowledge).

The awards show idea came about after the brothers met with Insight Productions in 2019 to co-develop a different, yet-to-be-announced project.

"There's one thing we do know for sure in the Black community, and that's: we want to do things big, bold and colourful," James said of their vision for the show.

"We want there to be an element of this that just seems grand, and long overdue, which of course it is. And so maybe we have a black carpet instead of a red carpet leading people into the awards show."

While the show is to celebrate and honour Black talent, those who attend it "will extend far past the Black community," he added.

"We count on seeing our white counterparts there who are standing with us and supporting us. We want to see the diversity that exists in Canada, what makes Canada Canada, and how being Black is factored into that as well," James said.

"From the guests who will be attending, to the overall look and aesthetic, they're definitely going to be in for a treat. I want to say this will feel like the NAACP Image Awards, it'll feel like the Oscars, it'll feel like the Soul Train awards all in a little bit of a mashup."

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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Actress Cicely Tyson dies at 96

NEW YORK — Actress Cicely Tyson who gained an Oscar nomination for her role as the sharecropper's wife in "Sounder," won a Tony Award at age 88 and two Emmys for playing a former slave in the 1974 television drama "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," died last Thursday at 96.



Cicely Tyson

Tyson began her screen career with bit

parts but gained fame in the early 1970s.

"She took pride in knowing that whenever

her face was on camera, she would be playing a character who was a human being — flawed but resilient; perfect not despite but because of their imperfections," wrote former President Barack Obama, who awarded Tyson the Medal of Freedom in 2016.

Tyson's parents moved from the island of Nevis in the Caribbean to New

York, where she was born, the youngest of three children. When her parents separated, her mother went on welfare. At nine, Cicely sold shopping bags on the streets of East Harlem.

When she graduated from high school, she found work as a secretary at the Red Cross. Her striking looks prompted friends to advise her to take

up modeling and that led to acting schools, theater, movies and television.

"My mother told me I could no longer live in her house because I was determined to be an actress," she told an interviewer in 1990. "I said 'OK,' and I moved out."

Tyson's memoir, "Just As I Am," was published last week.

Calypsonian Singing Sandra dies at 64

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - Singing Sandra (Sandra DesVignes-Millington), a two-time Trinidad calypso monarch, died last Thursday. She was 64.

Her death was

announced on her social media page. No cause of death was given.

Singing Sandra was born in East Dry River, Port of Spain and grew up in Morvant. From an early age, she started singing

and performed in Trinidad and Tobago "Best Village" productions.

In 1985, she joined the Mighty Sparrow's Youth Brigade calypso tent and won the National Calypso Queen title in

1987.

She went on to win the Carifesta Monarch and Calypso Queen of the World titles in 1992.

And in 1993 and 2003, she won the Trinidad and Tobago

calypso monarch title.

Her popular social commentaries included *Sexy Employees (Die With My Dignity)*, *Voices From The Ghetto* and *Nobody Wins A War*.



Singing Sandra

Let us celebrate the incredible achievements and contributions of Black Canadians to our country.

Happy Black History Month!



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SPECIAL FEATURE

TCBN is working to address challenges in local economic development and

By **Lincoln DePradine**

Each day, right across Toronto and the rest of Canada, millions traverse their neighbourhoods and cities and towns.

It's certain that few people ever think of who would have constructed the homes, apartments, offices and other imposing edifices that dominate the landscape. Fewer still will know that many of the construction projects in Canada, including the building and rehabilitation of roads, involve the work of Black Canadians, such as architects, bricklayers, carpenters and electricians.

Skilled artisanship is not a new phenomenon in the lives of Black people, whether they live in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, Asia, Europe or Canada and the United States.

Clearly, the ideal place to begin an examination of the history of Black folk in the building and construction industry is in Africa. Pick any country. For example, start in the north in what's known today as Egypt where the famed pyramids that are located.

The construction of the pyramids involved moving huge quantities of limestone blocks that were transported along the Nile River. Today, more than 100 of these amazing masonry structures are still to be seen. "The Pyramid



Working on one of the subway projects

of Khufu" is the largest Egyptian pyramid. It's the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still existing.

Another striking example of African skilled workmanship was in southern Nigeria. Its capital was known as Benin City, which dates back to the 11th century.

The planning and design of Benin City followed strict rules of symmetry and proportionality.

Benin City lays claim to being one of the first cities anywhere to have a semblance of street lighting. Huge metal lamps, many feet high, were built and placed around the city, especially near the king's palace.

Africans, forcibly kidnapped and transported across the Atlantic, to European colonies in the Caribbean, Canada and other parts of the Americas, brought with them their knowledge



Desiree Smith is among Black women working in the construction sector in Toronto

of building and their artisanship. The capital cities of Caribbean nations, from Jamaica in the north to Grenada in the south, owe their majestic beauty to the workmanship of African people.

Various people have called for Kingston, the Jamaican capital, to be recognized as a "historic district". Well known for its network of streets, Kingston was built on African slave labour.

Work initially started following a deadly 1692 earthquake in nearby Port Royal. A 1703 fire triggered an exodus from Port Royal, with many seeking refuge in Kingston that soon became Jamaica's commercial capital. Grenada, too, has been lauded for its colonial French- and English-styled architecture

in the capital, St George's. From the wooden fortification constructed in 1666 under French colonialism, to the buildings with their red roof tiles that were erected after a huge fire in 1771 under British rule, the construction work was carried out by enslaved African men and women.

Toronto, once part of a British slave-holding colony, also benefitted from the unpaid labour of Africans. In the aftermath of the abolition of slavery, and the liberalizing of the country's immigration policies, tens of thousands of people of African descent have been contributing to Canada's infrastructure development.

Today, Black Canadians run their own construction companies. Some

are architects and designers. Many are involved in various skilled trades. Others are leaders in unions representing construction workers.

are architects and designers. Many are involved in various skilled trades. Others are leaders in unions representing construction workers.



Rosemarie Powell
Toronto Community Benefits Network

"These are rewarding jobs. Especially here in Ontario, these are good unionized opportunities, where you can really earn a sustainable income for yourself and your family," says Rosemarie Powell, executive director of the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN).

TCBN, established just over five years ago, is a coalition of 120 members drawn from community and labour organizations and groups and social enterprises. Among its members are Ontario's largest construction unions.

The network says it's working to address the challenges of "access to good jobs, local economic development and neighbourhood revitalization", with the goal of ensuring Toronto becomes "an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to

Challenges of access to good jobs, and neighbourhood revitalization

contribute to healthy communities and a prospering economy”.

The primary objectives of the Benefits Network include training and workforce development, as well as contributing to “sustainable communities with neighbourhood and environmental improvements built through new transit infrastructure”.

TCBN, in pursuit of its objectives, successfully applied for provincial funding to set up the “NextGen Builders Mentoring Program”. The mentorship initiative was piloted in 2018 to prepare racialized workers, women, and newcomers – groups that have been historically under-represented in the construction industry – to enter the workforce of skilled trades’ employees.

Program funding covered three years and TCBN’s early collaborative partners were the Carpenters’ & Allied Workers’ Union and the African-American/Canadian Caucus of LiUNA, the Labourers’ International Union of North America.

“This mentoring program was funded by the government of Ontario Black Youth Action Plan project and allowed us to really pull together a number of partners,” Powell says.

“The work was initially supported by LiUNA. They stood



Kimoy Francique
IBEW Local 353

behind us to do it. The Carpenters Union came on board and they just really took it and ran with it. Chris Campbell, he has been an incredible leader. He brought a number of Black journey people from his union and they became mentors to the young people.”

Campbell, a co-chair of TCBN, also is business representative of Local 27 of the Carpenters’ Union.

In addition, he’s the equity and diversity representative of the Carpenters’ District Council of Ontario. He’s believed to be the highest-ranking Black labour leader in the province.



Chris Campbell
Carpenters Local 27

Campbell is encouraging more young Black men and women to consider careers in the construction industry where, even as an apprentice, “you have the best pension, you have best benefits and you have free training,

once you’re a member of the union”, he says.

Wages, after four years of finishing an apprenticeship, average between 40-to- 45 dollars an hour and it’s higher with overtime work, according to Campbell.

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) has given its complete support to TCBN and its NextGen Program. “We’ve been working with them,” says Yolanda McClean, CBTU president and a national executive board member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

CBTU, who members include Black workers represented by trades’ organizations, CUPE and the Public Service Alliance of Canada, has been engaging the Ontario Federation of Labour in the drive at finding more apprenticeship positions and construction jobs for young men and women, McClean says.

But, she explains that it’s not merely finding job, but equally about Black workers being retained and staying on the job.

“The retention is really our key,” McClean emphasizes

TCBN is not only commemorating February as Black History Month but also is celebrating “the work that we’ve been doing over the last three years through our NextGen Builders’ Mentoring Program,” Powell says.

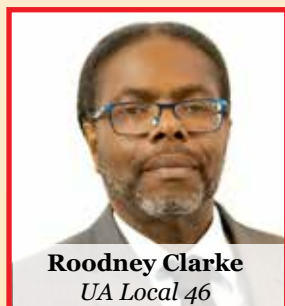
“The program



Mamadou Bah
LiUNA 506

has seen significant growth,” she points out. “In 2020, even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to support 200 people to go into the program and over 100 were able to get jobs and get into unions.”

TCBN’s mentorship of trainees and its negotiations with employers have led to workers’ hiring on a number of construction job sites, including the Eglinton Crosstown transit line that is being built by Metrolinx. More than 350 workers, according to TCBN, have obtained employment on the subway project.



Roodney Clarke
UA Local 46

“Jobs like these are opportunities to help build the infrastructure in your community and in your country,” Powell argues. “When we invest locally, that money remains locally, for the most part; it



On the job at the St Lawrence Market

gets circulated within the economy and it is going to help to build the economy within our local communities and within our Black community in particular.”

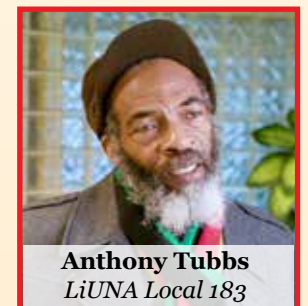
TCBN not just strives to increase Black representation in construction and the skilled trades, but Powell believes that not enough recognition has been given to African-Canadians’ contribution to infrastructural building in Ontario and Canada.

“The history of our contribution to this industry is really missing,” she says.

“Many of the Black journey people, who for years have been working to build up infrastructure in our communities have not gotten the recognition they deserve. It’s just so important that there is a recognition of the hard work and sweat that Black people have put into building up this country.”

The Toronto Community Benefit Network (TCBN) is proud to offer this

in-depth look at the remarkable roles of Black people in the building trades in Toronto and Ontario.



Anthony Tubbs
LiUNA Local 183

This is the first in a series of articles will appear in both the Caribbean Camera and Share newspaper during Black History Month.

The second will appear in Share newspaper

The third will appear in the Caribbean Camera and the final article in Share newspaper.

They all are written by Lincoln De Pradine with research provided by Francis Jeffers of Multicultural museums.

TCBN hopes that this series of articles will be of great interest to readers of both newspapers.

BBPA launches 'Little Jamaica' Black Business Emergency Recovery Grant

The Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA) has launched its Black Business Emergency Relief Grant (BBERG) to support small businesses in the Eglinton West 'Little Jamaica' community.

A news release from the BBPA said that the 'Little Jamaica' business district has been particularly hard hit by the Pandemic and the LRT construction and that the funding will provide some immediate relief to Black businesses during the second COVID-19 lockdown stage.

"The BBPA will provide funding of

\$150,000, from which grants of \$3,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000 will be made available to qualified Black businesses in need of relief, in the 'Little Jamaica' district," the release noted.

"The BBERG is open to all Black businesses registered in the BBPA's 'Little Jamaica' Initiative. Black businesses requiring relief will apply directly to the BBPA, which will disperse BBERG funds according to their needs. The relief program will begin immediately, as the need is dire," it also said.

BBPA's President, Nadine Spencer, is



Nadine Spencer

calling on corporate Canada and others to support this Initiative "as part of honouring Black History Month" and to enable the survival of Black busi-

nesses where they are severely impacted.

"I recognize this is just a start," Spencer said.

"The need in 'Little Jamaica' is urgent and we are soliciting assistance from all.

While the support from the City of Toronto has been encouraging

and fundamental, we acknowledge that there is still a long way to recovery ahead of us. The goal is to raise at least \$500,000 during Black History Month to help the businesses survive during the lockdown period," she added.

BBPA Treasurer Michael Pinnock described 'Little Jamaica' as "a Toronto treasure."

"Until the LRT construction limited traffic and COVID-19 hit, it was a place where people came from all over to dine and shop and be entertained – not just from the GTA but also tourists seeking authentic Caribbean culture. It's sad that this area was badly disadvantaged," he said.

The BBPA's Black Business Emergency Relief Grant program

is a component of its Business Advisory Implementation Development Services program (BAIDS), which was established as part of the Black business COVID-19 sustainability and recovery strategy.

In addition to financial services, BAIDS addresses systemic anti-Black racism and provides business solutions to access capital and strategic development designed to mitigate hindrances impacting Black businesses.

Businesses in 'Little Jamaica' can apply online for funding at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdXg2sP-wh2aO-ouM79LP-FQMRyYRpn-QikRZ504vIQoomkW38g/viewform>

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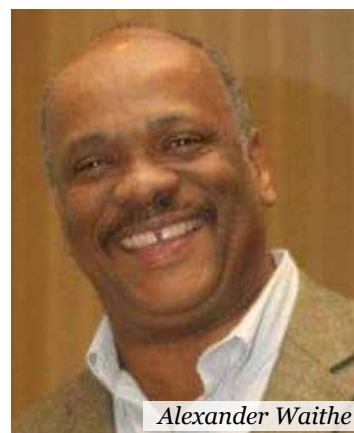
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Former Barbados-born educator dies in Toronto at 63

Former Barbados-born educator Alexander Waithe who was diagnosed with pancreatic and liver cancer last December, died in Toronto at the home of his daughter, Alexandra, on January 31 last. He was 63.

Alexandra said that her father came to Canada as a teenager to finish his high school education. He then went on to the University of Toronto where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education.

In 1976, he started teaching at a Catholic school in Toronto. He taught at several schools in the Greater



Alexander Waithe

Toronto Area before he retired in 2011.

Friends of the former educator recall that he was well known in the Barbadian community in Toronto as a promoter of Caribbean music.

"He produced numerous concerts, special events, festivals and various projects which featured top

soca/calyпсо acts such as Red Plastic Bag, Grynner, Ras Iley, and many, many others," Roger Gibbs, a close friend of Waithe, told the Caribbean Camera.

Gibbs said that since Waithe's retirement, he had been spending his time between Toronto and Barbados.

He leaves four children -Alexandra, Julian, Andre De Grasse, Camadian Olympic sprint champion, and Dantee -and two grand-daughters, Liana and Yuri.

A celebration of life for the late Alexander Waithe will be held both in Toronto and Barbados on a date to be fixed.

Most minorities disproportionately dropped from civil service hiring process: audit

OTTAWA — A new report says Black Canadians and people from most other minority groups tend to disproportionately lose out on federal civil service jobs they apply for compared with other Canadians.

The audit report on the representation of employment equity groups in public service recruitment appears to back a push by the Trudeau government to make federal departments and agencies more diverse.

The audit results, released Thursday, show that most employment equity groups did not remain proportionately



represented throughout the recruitment process compared with the rate at which they applied for government jobs.

Women were the only group to see an increase in representation from the application stage through to the hiring stage.

The representation

rate of Indigenous people, members of visible minorities and people with disabilities decreased at different stages of the application process.

As a sub-group, Black candidates were more likely to be dropped from the hiring process than other visible-minority groups.

The audit reviewed 15,285 applications to 181 publicly advertised jobs in 30 departments and agencies.

It looked at employment equity

group representation over five stages from the initial job application to the successful hiring of applicants.

However, the audit did not specify whether job applicants lived in the National Capital Region or other locations in Canada, nor did it differentiate candidates based on their educational background.

The Treasury Board Secretariat has begun looking at changes to the Public Service Employment Act to

remove barriers to diversifying the federal workforce.

The Public Service Commission recommends departments and agencies review their own hiring process and practices, to identify and remove barriers for hiring from equity groups.

The commission also says it will review its own recruitment practices and calls on departments to require training on unconscious bias to job recruiters.

February is Black History Month.

Hon. Bill Blair, MP
Scarborough Southwest
2263 Kingston Road M1N 1T8



Canadians are invited to honour the legacy and achievements of Black communities in Canada who have helped shape the country that we know today and to celebrate the immense contributions, along with the recognition of the resilience of Black Canadians across the country. To learn more about the federal government's investments in the economic and social empowerment of Black communities please contact my office.

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'It's important that we move forward with the knowledge of the past' – Jean Augustine

By **Lincoln DePradine**

Generations of African-Canadian and Caribbean nationals, who actively struggled against racism and for genuine inclusion in society, have established structures to allow today's young people to carry the baton, according to former Canadian MP Dr Jean Augustine.

"We need to see that work continue," Augustine said Sunday in addressing an event of the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAH).

The online event marked the launch of 2021 Black History Month (BHM) activities

of CCAH, which offers programs to residents of Oakville, Milton, Halton Hills and Burlington.

The Coronavirus pandemic, which has limited person-to-person group gatherings, also has forced many organizations to resort to hosting virtual events.

The Ontario Black History Society (OBHS), like CCAH, kicked off its annual BHM commemoration Sunday via social media.

"History... Who We Are" was the theme of the first virtual Black History Month launch of the OBHS, which lists

the number of online participants at more than 2000 people.

"The Ontario Black History Society is passionate about the rich history of Black Canadians and in sharing the experiences and contributions across the country," OBHS president Natasha Henry said in remarks Sunday.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, in a statement Monday, encouraged everyone in the province "to take a moment and participate in the many virtual events available to celebrate Black History Month".

The events "will allow us to learn more



Jean Augustine

about the important role Ontarians and Canadians of African descent have played in the history of our great province", Ford said.

"Black History Month takes on even greater meaning with the events of the past year. It strengthens our resolve and our commitment to fight racial discrimination and intolerance in all its forms," the premier added.

"By shining a light on the injustices committed against the Black community, both past and present, we can begin to heal wounds, promote intercultural understanding, and ultimately build bridges between communities."

The OBHS, following the founding of the organization in 1978, embarked

on a campaign that resulted in the City of Toronto issuing the first proclamation in 1979 recognizing February as Black History Month in the city.

In 1993, the OBHS successfully filed a petition in Ontario to proclaim February as Black History Month. The next step was an effort at a Canada-wide observance of BHM that culminated in 1995 when Augustine, then Liberal MP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, was a member of the Liberal Party government. The House of Commons unanimously adopted a motion, piloted by Augustine, calling for Black History Month to be recognized across Canada

Canada's parliamentary position

on Black History Month was completed in 2008 with the unanimous approval and adoption of the "Motion to Recognize Contributions of Black Canadians and February as Black History Month". The motion was introduced by African-Canadian Donald Oliver, who served in the senate from 1990 to 2013.

Augustine, speaking at the CCAH's virtual event, recalled that the generation of her day and before, started organizations – with out-of-pocket personal funding – in places such as "church halls and in basements, at people's apartments, to bring us together to talk about issues".

"It was important for us to do the activism and the advocacy in order to make some changes; to see people of colour in every section in our society, including media, in corporate board rooms, in leadership in schools," said Augustine, who arrived in Canada in 1960 from Grenada.

The unavailability of resources, to

Turn to PAGE 18

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Hon. **MARY NG, MP**
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I am often contacted by persons whose sponsorship applications are rejected because of their failure to establish that their marriage is genuine, according to Canadian immigration law.

These persons often blame their legal representative for their neglect in either (1) not submitting the correct information on their application forms or (2) not including the relevant documents establishing genuine relationships. As a result, their applications are refused and they are unable to be reunited with their loved ones in Canada.

In a family class application, which is processed at a visa office abroad, the sponsor has a right of appeal, if a negative decision is made. The Notice of Appeal is sent to the Immigration Appeal Division (IAD) which will screen the file for an Alternative Dispute Resolution or a full hearing. In some cases, a sponsor may proceed with both options. An inland sponsorship refusal is challenged at the Federal Court.

I wish to point out that there are some well-established and objective factors that the IAD has developed to assess whether a

marriage is genuine. Those factors, confirmed by the courts, facilitate the task of deciding if a relationship falls within the ambit of the law. A couple's behaviour before and during the marriage, the evidence of contact, communication and interaction before and after the marriage, their depth of knowledge of each other, their contact with extended families, their activities of daily life, intermingling of finances, and shared responsibility for the care of children brought into the marriage.

These are all considerations that assist evaluating whether a marriage is genuine. The second test articulated in the said law is, whether the relationship was entered into primarily for the purpose of acquiring any status or privilege under the IRPA, which is self-explanatory. The indications of such intent will be gleaned from examining the circumstances of the marriage or will be exposed incidentally while examining the evidence and testimony about the genuineness of the marriage. An applicant has to meet this test in an application.

So, let's examine a summarised version of a recent case which was negatively decided by the Immigration Appeal Division with respect to a case in which the sponsor (appellant) blamed her consultant for the errors in the application.

The appellant is from Ethiopia and is 35 years old and was previously sponsored to Can-

ada in 2007. This is her second marriage, and her spouse is 37 years old and this is his first marriage. The appellant has two children from a previous relationship, and they were married in April 2017 in Uganda, where the Applicant was a refugee claimant.

An application to sponsor the Applicant was filed in December 2017 and a procedural fairness letter was sent to the Applicant in July 2018, indicating concerns about the genuine nature of the relationship. In the appellant's reply to these concerns, additional documents were submitted. In August 2018, based on a review of these documents and the application, the visa officer was not satisfied that the marriage was genuine and/or not entered primarily for the purpose of acquiring status or privilege under the IRPA and consequently refused the application.

The appellant appealed this decision to the IAD and both appellant and the applicant testified at the hearing and additional documentary evidence was submitted. The member ruled that on balance of probabilities, the marriage is not genuine and the case was dismissed. Throughout the hearing

and in their submissions, the parties spoke to the discrepancies identified between testimony and the evidence before the panel. The discrepancies between the documentary evidence, predominantly the application to sponsor and the testimony of both the appellant and the applicant, they blamed most of these inconsistencies on a consultant.

The appellant argued that most of the inconsistencies were immaterial to a finding a genuineness and were the result of a consultant who assisted her to complete the form due to her challenges in writing and understanding English. She testified that the version of their meeting, as stated in the application, was not correct. Although the application spoke to a connection between the two based on the intervention of a mutual known third part, the appellant and applicant testified that they had known each other since childhood. This was not the sole discrepancy.

Other material discrepancies noted by the appellant in the application related to the following: proof of communication between the couple – the appellant indicated that

she has provided this to the consultant, yet the application contained limited information, predominantly showing missed calls between the couple; and the marriage certificate provided with the application listed an agent who facilitated the marriage arrangement.

The appellant indicated that this person was a friend, not an agent, and provided an amended marriage certificate to show this change. The application did not align with the appellant's testimony with respect to the time when the applicant attended school, became a businessman or his living arrangements in 2014-2017.

The appellant testified that the consultant took the information from her, he did not ask her to confirm it and told her to submit it, "as is." She stated that she recognized him as a competent consultant, and it was not until after the refusal that she discovered the changes. The appellant argued that the consultant bears responsibility for the missing and erroneous information in the application and the inconsistencies that occur between the application, documentation, and testimony.

The appellant stated that the application itself is very specific on dates related to the applicant's circumstances when he was in Ethiopia and Uganda and it provides clear particulars on the appellant and applicant and their families and also provides details as to the appellant's life in Canada.

The panel found that the knowledge of the missing or limited information in the application was not beyond the appellant's and the applicant's control. They did not demonstrate due diligence to ensure that the applications were prepared correctly.

The Federal Court confirmed that an applicant is responsible for reviewing any application and ensuring completeness. Therefore, the panel did not accept that the consultant bears responsibility for the missing information and dismissed the appeal based on the evidence that it was not genuine.

SUKHRAM RAMKISSOON is a member of ICCRC and specialises in immigration matters at No. 3089 Bathurst Street, Suite 219A, Toronto, Ontario, Phone 416 789 5756.

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NEWS

Trinidad–Tobago’s ruling party loses ground in local government elections

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad - The Opposition United National Congress (UNC) won three of five local government by-elections last week, wresting the Arima Central seat from the ruling People’s National Movement (PNM).

The upset in the Arima Central district

saw UNC candidate Sheldon Garcia emerging victorious over Dr. Juliet Henry Bernard of the PNM.

The UNC also won seats in the Cunupia and Hindustan/St Mary’s districts which it held before the polls.

The PNM, meantime, retained two of the seats it

previously held – Alyce Glen/Morne Coco and Hollywood.

The PNM’s deputy leader, Fitzgerald Hinds, was disappointed, but said: “in this business of electoral politics, you win some, you lose some.

“We’ve been there before. What we do

after is a post-mortem to see our strengths and soft spots and use our experience to examine things whether it means rearranging people or policy.”

“We have been in opposition before and we have worked ourselves out of opposition back to the



government,” Hinds added.

The PNM also lost ground last week in the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) elections which ended in a 6-6 tie with the Progressive Democratic Patriots (PDP).

The PNM held 10 seats in the previous term while the PDP had just two.

‘It’s important that we move forward with the knowledge of the past’ Jean Augustine

from PAGE 16

ensure organizational sustainability, has been a problem for community groups, Augustine said.

“We, in the African-Canadian community, in the Caribbean community,

are very good at building organizations, getting organizations off the ground. But sustainability has always been a deterrent to those organizations blossoming and surviving and creating the kind of synergies

that they must create,” she argued.

Grenada-born Augustine, 83, a former school principal, was parliamentary secretary to former Prime Minister Jean Chretien from 1994 to 1996. She also served

as minister of state for multiculturalism and the status of women.

Augustine noted that in order to overcome the resource deficit, community groups now must apply for government and private sector funding to maintain the work of seeking systemic change and greater inclusion.

“We’ve written reports upon reports. We have so many things that we can now look to and see how can we push forward,” Augustine said. “, so that we can make some really god decisions as we go forward into the future.”

The Black and Caribbean community is at a “good point” and in a “reflective time” to move forward, said Augustine, who was recently named Maclean’s

magazine’s recipient of its Parliamentarian of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award.

“We have moved the needle a bit; but, we have not moved the needle far enough or fast enough. It’s like a work in progress,” said Augustine. “Each year, each time the issues come up, we move an inch; we work on it, we come up with a report, we come with some recommendations and then we sit back and then it comes up again.”

In 2008, after Augustine reetired from frontline politics, the Jean Augustine Chair in Education was established in the Faculty of Education at York University.

The former MP also has set up the Jean Augustine Centre for Young Women’s Empowerment, which is founded on the belief

that “an empowered young woman can improve her life and have a positive impact on the world around her”.

The centre, which offers programs focused on arts, life skills, academic success and leadership, has been impacted in its operations by the COVID-19 pandemic, Augustine said.

It lost its major funder but has been receiving “really good community support,” said Augustine. Further assistance from the community would be welcomed, she added.

Augustine was surprised by the unexpected announcement on Sunday of a \$1,000 donation to the centre from the Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton.

Join me in celebrating Black History Month

and taking the opportunity to reflect on and pay tribute to the history that has collectively shaped us, and to share Black Canadians’ triumphs and challenges.

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➔ FOCUS ON HEALTH

Leading a more sedentary lifestyle can have a negative effect on our health

By Virginia Nsitem

Since the COVID-19 restrictions were put in place last March, many of us have enjoyed spending more time with our families, finding new ways to entertain ourselves, trying out new recipes, and decluttering our homes. But working from home means less time being active. We no longer stand in bus and train lines, run to catch a bus, go for a walk at lunch or walk up and down stairs. Leading a more sedentary lifestyle can have a negative effect on our health. This article discusses some common aches

and pains associated with decreased physical activity, and how to relieve the pain.

Sitting

When we sit for prolonged periods, our body endures forces that put pressure on the spine and muscles. The discs (shock absorbers) in the low back begin to compress, the hip muscles tighten, the body tends to slouch, the blood flow to the buttock muscles decrease, and there is increased pressure on the nerves and other sensitive structures in the low back and pelvic region.

Your body will signal that you have been

sitting too long when you start to feel achy and stiff back muscles, tender and sore buttock muscles and tailbone, difficulty rising from the seated position, pain radiating into the groin, and numbness and tingling in the buttock region or legs. The longer you sit, the more painful it may be to walk and stand straight after getting up from your chair.

Computer and phone work

Staring straight at a computer screen for hours, working with your computer on your lap, cradling a phone between your neck and shoulder, or bending



your head down to text on your phone, are all poor postural habits. These activities, performed over long periods of time, can lead to headaches, neck pain, arm pain and numbness, and other muscle and joint conditions. Straining your neck can increase the pressure on the discs in the neck, and also increase the tension on the muscles of the neck, shoulders, and upper back. Maintaining a poor posture in the neck and upper back can have a negative effect on the muscles you use for inhaling and exhaling.

Your body will give you painful signs when you have stayed in one position too long, and it is time to stretch and change your position. You may feel stiff and tight neck muscles, achy shoulder muscles, tight chest muscles, and numbness and tingling in the fingers. As the muscles and joints in the neck tighten, you may also experience difficulty turning your head from side to side.

Rehabilitation

If you begin to experience symptoms from inactivity and

poor posture, see your chiropractor or family physician for advice. Your chiropractor or physician will examine you before providing a diagnosis. Your rehabilitation program may include:

- **Chiropractic manual treatments** to improve flexibility, balance, and strength of the spine, and restore proper movement to the muscles and joints of the spine. Laser therapy may help reduce the pain associated with the muscle spasms and inflammation.

- **Rehab Program.** - It is important to practice specific exercises to strengthen the postural muscles and increase the flexibility of these spine, arms, and legs. These exercises are usually performed during the treatments and at home.

- **Physiotherapy and Massage therapy** - The addition of massage therapy, physiotherapy, and acupuncture to your rehab program may help relieve pain.

- **Posture and Ergonomics.** - Education on proper sitting

and working on the computer is important.

To keep your day active, schedule “micro breaks” in your appointment calendar, at least three 10-15 minute breaks every day. Use that time to get up from your chair, take a few brisk steps, re-hydrate, and stretch your spine, arms, and legs. By scheduling the breaks as “appointments”, you are more likely to take the time to follow-through with your activity routine.

Stop the Pain ... Before the Pain Stops You!

(Dr. Virginia Nsitem is a chiropractor specializing in laser therapy for spine, muscle, joint, and nerve injuries, and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences in Canada. She may be reached at (905) 275-4993, or by email at totalhealth@bellnet.ca)




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CARICOM calls for release of Guyanese fishermen

GEORGETOWN – The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has added its voice to calls for the immediate release of the Guyanese fishing boats and crew detained by Venezuelan authorities.

In a statement issued late Wednesday, CARICOM expressed grave concern about the escalation of tensions between the two countries, caused by the interception and detention of the two vessels, the Lady Nayera and the Sea Wolf, and the 12 seamen by a Venezuelan naval vessel on January 21.

The Guyana government said the

boats were intercepted when they were off the coast of Waini Point, within the country's Exclusive Economic Zone, and the captains were instructed to make their way to Port Guiria in Venezuela.

Recalling its statement of January 12, in which it had firmly repudiated any acts of aggression by Venezuela against Guyana, CARICOM on Wednesday urged Caracas to “respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana and to desist from aggressive acts that will seriously undermine the peace and security not only of Guyana and Venezuela but the entire



Caribbean region”.

“The Caribbean Community calls for the immediate release of the crew members and vessels,” the statement concluded.

Earlier on Wednesday, the

Organisation of American States (OAS) demanded the prompt release of the boats and crew as it condemned “the illegal detention by the Venezuelan dictatorship”.

Guyana's Minister

of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hugh Todd has issued a protest note to Chargé d’Affaires of the Venezuelan Embassy, Moses Chavez, firmly condemning the

illegal detention of the captains and crews and calling for their immediate release.

Minister of People's Power for Foreign Affairs Jorge Arreaza subsequently undertook to pursue the crew's early release.

The owners of the detained boats in Guyana have said they made contact with the crews who reported that they had appeared in court, though not yet charged with anything, and authorities were given 45 days to investigate the matter.

Venezuela has claimed the men were illegally fishing in its territorial waters.

Toronto Police release internal policy on body cameras as program begins wider rollout

from PAGE 5

and guns personnel, understand that? And will they use it in good faith?” said Louis March, founder of the Zero Gun Violence Movement and a longtime advocate for community safety.

Other concerns

centre on how footage will be used, especially during investigations into police behaviour.

Laming said that in instances where police are involved in a death or serious injury, any existing body camera footage will likely not be released to the public

“for a very long time, if ever.” Body camera footage is often released more quickly in the U.S. due to more lenient laws.

However, the guidelines say that in certain cases where “compelling public interest” exists,

Toronto's police chief can release footage to the public. Examples include instances of alleged misconduct or excessive use of force by an officer.

“What does that mean? What does it look like when it happens? How often

are they going to release that type of footage?” Laming said. “We just don't know what it's going to look like.”

Louis March, founder of the Zero Gun Violence Movement of Toronto, said the policies will likely need to be

fine-tuned as more officers begin using the technology in the coming months.

“We should try it but we should not be afraid to review and fine tune and fix it, if we find that it's not working in the way it's been designed,” March said.

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SPORTS

Carifta Swimming Championships postponed as Barbados goes into lockdown

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados -The Carifta Swimming Championships which were originally scheduled to be staged at the end of March and early April in Barbados have been indefinitely postponed after Prime Minister Mia Mottley announced a national lockdown last Tuesday night.

Lady Cheryl Forde, president of the Barbados Amateur Swimming Association (BASDA), announced the postponement in a news release.

“It is with greatest regret that I must inform you that Carifta 2021 will not take place in Barbados, as scheduled for March 26th -April 7th. An

executive decision was taken this evening by the BASA to postpone Carifta 2021 after a review of the current COVID-19 situation in Barbados and, by extension, in the region.”

“It was agreed that a new date would be decided after the ‘national pause’ lockdown that is



expected to end on February 17th and after we have had an opportunity to meet with the COVID-19 Monitoring Unit.”

With Caribbean countries struggling to access a vaccine, the decision to postpone the event became necessary, Lady Forde

said.

“In the absence of a vaccine, with the new variant present in Barbados, community spread locally, the general spiking of COVID-19 cases in neighbouring countries and changing travel protocols locally and in a number of our

neighbouring countries, it was agreed that it would be prudent to postpone this regional competition at this time.”

This year’s event was set to be a FINA approved qualification competition for the 2021 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

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Nitish Kumar

Canadian cricketer Nitish Kumar named to Leeward Islands Hurricanes roster

Canadian cricketer Nitish Kumar has made the Leeward Islands Hurricanes' 15-man roster for the 2021 CG Insurance Super50 Cup. The Hurricanes are one of six Caribbean

teams in the 2021 edition of the annual Cricket West Indies 50-over tournament that runs Feb. 7-27 in Antigua. The other teams competing are the Barbados Pride,

Guyana Jaguars, Jamaica Scorpions, Trinidad and Tobago Red Force, and the Windward Islands Volcanoes. Kumar is the only non-Caribbean-based

player on any of the tournament rosters. He made the Hurricanes squad after attending a pre-tournament camp earlier this month in Antigua. The Hurricanes

open Feb. 7 against the Windwards Volcanoes at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua. Teams will play a round-robin with the top four advancing.

Reifer, Da Silva shine in final day draw

CHATTOGRAM, Bangladesh — All-rounder Raymon Reifer and Joshua Da Silva produced solid performances to highlight the final day of the drawn three-day tour match against the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) XI here on Sunday

Reifer struck an unbeaten 49 while Da Silva weighed in with 46 to get West Indies up to 291 in their second innings.

Left-arm seamer Reifer then picked up the only wickets to fall as the BCB XI, set 389 for victory, reached 63 for two.

The hosts were



Raymon Reifer

tottering on 14 for two after Reifer struck in successive overs but opener Yasir Ali (33 not out) and Shadman Islam (23 not out)

consolidated in an unbroken third-wicket stand worth 49.

Resuming from their overnight 179 for five at the MA Aziz



Joshua Da Silva

Stadium, West Indies lost Nkrumah Bonner in the day's fourth over before he had added to his 80, caught at the wicket off seamer Khaled Ahmed (3-42).

And when Rahkeem Cornwall perished for four just three overs later, West Indies were tottering on 190 for

seven but Reifer and Da Silva calmly pulled the innings around in an 82-run, eighth-wicket stand.

The left-handed Reifer counted five fours and a six off 94 deliveries while Da Silva, yet to score overnight, faced 116 deliveries and hit three

fours.

They took the Caribbean side to lunch on 258 for seven but Da Silva, unbeaten on 39 at the interval, fell inside the first half hour following the resumption with a well-deserved half-century in sight.

Reifer missed out on his half-century too as West Indies lost their last three wickets for 19 runs in 36 deliveries.

New ball seamer Mukidul Islam, 20, grabbed two of the last three wickets to finish with four for 59, while 22-year-old off-spinner Saif Hassan supported with two for 45.

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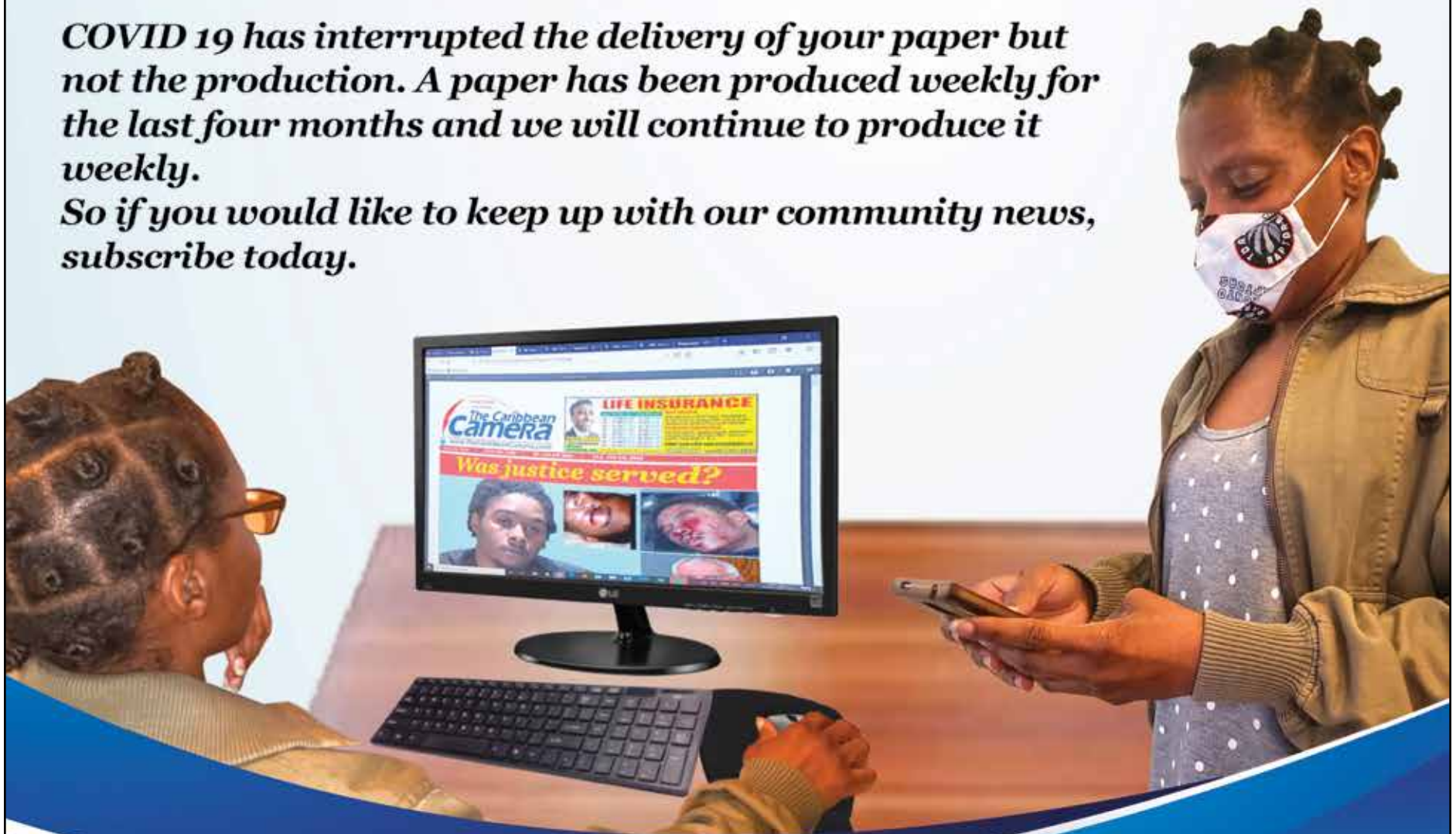
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