

Editorial

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Editorial Policy: As a community newspaper, VOICES covers varied topics and issues. As a result there are diverse opinions published on those topics. The views expressed by columnists and contributing writers do not necessarily represent the opinions of the publisher or editors.



Letters to the Editor

Voices:

Psalms 68:11

"The Lord gave the word, and great was the company of those who published it"

I would like to take this time to congratulate the Voices newspaper for once again gracing the Madison community with positive and relevant news.

I am glad to see Gaddi, Betty, Jeanne, and the rest of their staff promoting youth and the African American community. Let's all support the Voices newspaper. This paper gives voice to all, especially to those who don't get heard often. So, go out, and get involved in your community. Who knows, maybe your voice will be the next we'll hear.

God Bless!

Pastor David A. Smith, Sr.

Faith Community Christian Church

President of the African American Council of Churches

2010 African American Council of Churches Lenten Celebration Schedule

Date	Host Church/Pastor	Location	Preacher
February 17th Ash Wednesday	Second Baptist Church Pastor A. Wade	4303 Britta Parkway Madison	Pastor Larry Jackson
February 24th	Fountain of Life Pastor A. Gee	833 W. Badger Rd. Madison	Pastor Godfrey Stubbs
March 3rd	Northside Christian Assembly Pastor J. Oby	709 Northport Dr. Madison	Pastor Richard Jones
March 10th	Now Faith Ministries Pastor E. Maiden	1711 Thierer Rd. Madison	Pastor Barry Garrett
March 17th	Mount Zion Baptist Church Pastor R. Jones	2019 Fisher St. Madison	Pastor Joseph McLean, Jr.
March 24th	Faith, Hope, and Love Pastor H. Rayford	51 Tower Dr., Sun Prairie	Pastor Anthony Wade
March 31st	St. Paul AME Church Pastor T. Flint	4525 Diamond Dr. Madison	Pastor Alex Gee
April 2nd Good Friday	Faith Community Pastor D. Smith	605 Spruce St. Madison	Pastor Erick Maiden
All services start at 7 pm	Theme: "We bring the sacrifice of Praise"	Scripture: Hebrews 13:5-9, 15-17	

Hello VOICES Readers!

MAP(Madison Apprenticeship Program) continues to work on helping people change their lives one person at a time. We are currently in our 13th class and we have 12 students who are going very strong. MAP is excited as we forge ahead with a promising new expansion to our program coming in the very near future.

Be on the look out for our announcement and remember, to the world you may be just one person; but to one person you just might be the world.

"MAP, where lives are changed!"

Diana Shinall , Director *Photo to Right - Graduation of MAP Class #12*

When it Comes to Black History, Don't Let History Repeat Itself

The irony of how teaching Black History evolved, or hasn't, is that many obstacles are steeped in our past mistreatment of Black History. Today's instructors were themselves educated during a time when it was ignored. Having only cursory understanding of Black History, many struggle to impart knowledge to a new generation of learners.

Consequently what students do learn now, though an improvement over what their parents didn't learn, is truncated, sanitized, dates and names, simplistic and primarily focused on the inspirational. It does very little to enlighten them about the origins, the struggle, the tangible contributions and the spirit of Blacks in American History.

"There is a lack of confidence and familiarity with the African American experience," said Gerald Smith, a University of Kentucky Professor who teaches secondary schoolteachers. Due to the fact that many instructors don't enter the classroom with a good grasp on Black History, they have to find additional time to do the outside reading and supplement a scripted lesson plan "So they develop a primary narrative and a secondary narrative and more often the African American experience is the secondary narrative."

What many students are left with: Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, Martin Luther King Jr. was a great man who wanted peace and died for it, and Rosa Parks refused to ride the back of the bus.

Will they know that Rosa Parks didn't just spontaneously decide to refuse to sit at the back of the bus? That youth, and even children, were at the forefront of the movement because organizers knew their innocence would best illustrate the brutality of those who violently opposed them? Will they understand that Black History did not begin and end with the Civil Rights movement? Will they learn slave labor built the Washington Monument?

Will they be told the Square where so many Black men, women and children were sold in Washington D.C. still stands? Will they know the entire Southern economy was based on slave labor? Will they learn that Kansas, the Jay hawk state, got its name primarily due to escaped slaves who fled Missouri and found refuge there? I doubt it.

Good intentions are not good enough.

The confidence issue is fundamentally about a lack of knowledge among the teachers, but also reflects our collective tendency to avoid our racist history. Teachers have inherited from past generations. Their students, however, crave a better understanding.

"It's very apparent that a lot of these teachers were never exposed to this information during their college career. For many of them, its the first time they are getting a breath as well as depth of the African American experience," Smith said about teaching the teachers. "One of the issues, people are trying to get an idea of where to start and even how to present information in a society that is politically correct."

How do we fix it?

"One of the things we do is tap into the existing major themes and topics surrounding traditional American history," Smith said. "You need to think: Where are black people? What are black people doing during the Civil War? How are these events shaping their life and what are they doing to shape American history?"

"You don't have to step out of bounds. You can keep teaching what your teaching and weaving in the African American perspective and history. And what you are doing is bringing in a depth and breadth of understanding of the African American experience," he added.

The preceding is an excerpt from Devona Walker, a veteran print journalist.

She has worked for The Associated Press and the New York Times company.

Currently she is the senior political and finance reporter for theloop21.com.

She lives in Columbia, Missouri where she is working on a Master's in Public Policy and her first novel.

The article is originally posted at www.blogs.alternet.org/speakeasy

