



Volume 73 No. 7

"And Ye Shall Know The Truth..."

July 27, 2022

8th Annual Naturalistas PhotoShoot



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I Sat Where They Sat

By Rev. Donald L. Perryman, Ph.D.

The Truth Contributor

Unless you sit where others sit, you cannot really know them or understand them.

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Tina Butts has been able to accomplish what few others can. The Toledo native and graduate of the "University of Hard Knocks" has brought a burgeoning transformation to the Greenbelt Place Apartments.

In this tough, crime-ridden neighborhood, which even police try to avoid, people are just trying to survive rather than climb some idealistic ladder of success.

Meanwhile, most other local attempts to deal with social and economic problems prevalent in under-resourced neighborhoods have failed.

Is our failure to address massive problems in neighborhoods like the Greenbelts that the previously commissioned "saviors" arrived clothed in privilege and lived experience not present in the Black underclass?

The truth is that answers to social issues lie with those who have lived "in proximity to the problems." Having "sat where the people sat," Tina Butts' lived experience has empowered her to uniquely speak to the day-to-day realities within the Greenbelt Place experience.

I caught up and spoke with Butts about her life's journey, community work, and connections.

Perryman: You and your organization, The Movement, have done extraordinary work as the collective voice of the residents in the Greenbelt Parkway. Please tell our readers a bit about your personal history.

Butts: I grew up in the Bancroft-Upton area, on Joffre. I also lived on Mackow and then the Weiler area. I went to Rogers, DeVilbiss and Scott. I spent time in foster homes, went to Detroit, Michigan, with my uncle, and stayed there briefly. I graduated from Job Corps there and then returned to Toledo.

Perryman: Do you mind talking about your experience in the foster system?

Butts: My dad died, and my mom was in the streets and ended up going to prison. So, it was a rocky road for a minute.

Perryman: Can you elaborate?

Butts: Thank God I decided that the roads I took in life were the roads that kept me focused. At a tender age, I had seen some things that I was like, 'I ain't gone never have any man beat on me and take my money.' Life itself taught me a lot, and I was very observant. My dad was blind but would tell me this is stuff you don't want to be involved with. His word was golden, so I stuck to it whatever he did or said. Later he died, and at that point, we were living in the Moody Manor. I became a mother raising my siblings at a young age. But my dad was my best friend and mentor, who taught me how the streets were.

Perryman: How did you survive?

Butts: I worked for a law firm at age 16 while going through school in Detroit. I was intrigued by the people that worked there and how sharp they dressed. I was like, "Wow, I wish I could get out of a limo with a suit on.

This is the life I want." So, then I ended up coming back home, working at Northwest Ohio Developmental Center for a while, and being very close with some of the clients. It was kind of old school. We changed their clothes. We would take them to the stores and buy them designer clothing. We would put them in the van, take them bowling, to church, and start making them look different, take them to the beauty shop.

Then I went to beauty school. At that time, I had my son, so I would catch the bus, drop him off at Toledo Day Nursery and walk to cosmetology school on St. Clair. I went on to work at Mixed Company with Ms. Jean Cason, and then I opened up my own beauty salon, Hair It Is.

Perryman: Did you do anything else?

Butts: I worked at Chrysler for three years but was determined to get my real estate license. The factory was like a prison - no grass, no windows, nothing. So, the day I passed the real estate test, I returned to the plant, got all my stuff, and resigned. Then I worked for Danberry Real Estate for 16 years and did housing development for Friendship Church.

Perryman: How did you get connected to your bail bond company?

Butts: Friendship had an Intensive Outpatient Program. Several people going through the substance abuse program would end up back in trouble, then jail. I was like, 'We can help a lot of people that get caught up in the system with drugs by becoming a bail bond. So, that's how I started. I continued to go on to school and took the bail bond class. I've been a bail bondsman for 10 years, helping people.

Perryman: How did The Movement start?

Butts: The Movement began in the bail bond office after watching how people were treated in the system. I sought to rally the people who come here and get them engaged and registered to vote. So, we started going into the neighborhoods, getting food trucks, beauty shops and churches to get voters to the polls at election time.

We continued to advocate for the judges we felt were fair and then branched out to support other elected officials. Finally, we began to share information and resources in different areas like healthcare, mental health,

seniors, and other areas to support those who are supporting our community.

Perryman: Let's talk about your unparalleled work at the Greenbelts.

Butts: We started out doing vaccinations there, and that's another story. We saw some of the most horrible living conditions, and I said, 'I don't understand how people can pass by here every day. These are our people. This is our community, and we just turn a blind eye.



Micheal Alexander, Tina Butts, Rev. Willie Perryman

... continued on page 7



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Community Calendar

August 13

Warren A.M.E. Church Care Enough FREE Community Event will be held Saturday, August 13, Come and enjoy a variety of activities including: FREE Clothes, Commodities, Food Baskets, Music, Fun and More.

Akron Community Mourns Jayland Walker – Gone Too Soon

Special from The (Akron) Reporter

Jayland Walker was eulogized at the Akron Civic Theater where thousands gathered to remember the 25-year-old days after being shot multiple times by Akron police after an alleged traffic violation that led to a car chase and Jayland being shot 60 times while trying to flee his vehicle.

Mourners did not know what to expect as to what they were about to see during the viewing- the first homegoing service held at this historic theater. In fact, some compared Jayland's situation to that of Emmett Till, the young man beaten to death during the Civil Rights era for allegedly flirting with a white woman.

Mamie Till-Mobley, Tills mother, chose to have an open casket so that mourners could see the brutal beating that had been done to her son. Jayland's mother chose to do the same.

Some described Walker's body as being prepared for viewing but said some evidence of his wounds remained.

Bishop Timothy Clarke, pastor of the First Church of God in Christ of Columbus, told mourners during the eulogy, "We must not normalize this." "We cannot make the deaths of our sons and daughters at such an early age the normal thing. We must not try to act as if this is alright. There is nothing right about this we should not be here, and Jayland should not be in that box."

Bishop Clarke, who donated \$2,000 dollars to help defray funeral costs, urged mourners not to "spiritualize" Walker's death saying, "I will not allow anyone to say, 'God need a flower, and came and got Jayland... I'm not going to let you say that God wanted Jayland, and so he's in a better place. Jayland would be better with his family, alive and loving, and we must not cheaply spiritualize what we cannot explain, nor fully understand.'"

Pastor Robert DeJournette, who is Jayland's pastor and family member, gave a eulogy that spoke about how Jayland grew up in his Church-St. Ashworth Temple COGIC which DeJournette called, "our family Church."

He humorously recalled how as a child; Jayland had a problem pronouncing the pastor's name "Robert Earl." said Pastor DeJournett, "Jayland would call me "Robba Girl," which grew laughter from the crowd.

"We're going to keep on pushing," DeJournett told mourners. "We're going to keep on fighting and lifting our voices in celebrating the life of Jayland Walker because one must know who he was."

He reminded everyone that Jayland - and many other young Black men- were not who the media portrays. "There are many Jaylands across the country.... young, respectful, fun-loving men who have never been in serious trouble."

The pastor read names of other Black people shot and killed by police such as Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tamir Rice and others, followed by his disbelief that he would ever see something like this happening in Akron and gain this much attention.

"I truly believe this is going to be the last time that we have to do this ... we're gonna continue to push and push until change comes," DeJournett said.

Other speakers called for peace on the streets, condemned the discriminatory state of police in America, and urged a reimagining of public safety. They recalled Walker's life, his love of family, zeal for life, passion for music and basketball, and aspiration of starting his own business.

Walker's best friend, Dupri Whatley, shared not being able to speak with and seek out the advice of a man who was like a brother. "He's going to live through me," said Whatley, fighting back tears. "I'm never going to forget him."

Robin Elerick, Walker's cousin, recalled the day Jaylen was born. "I'm grateful that I was able to know Jayland his entire life as she described Jayland as soft-spoken, funny, sweet, and "so authentically genuine."

Tom Addie, the uncle of Jayland, thanked everyone for their thoughts and prayers. "I thank you for your prayers for the family...you don't know how much it means. This is a tough time; it is a storm, but we will get through this storm with your thoughts and prayers."

Although he was not on the program, Filmmaker, and activist Spike Lee and Rev. Jesse Jackson were present amongst the thousands of mourners.



Jayland Walker



Walker Funeral



Armed Guards

Pastor Mark Jackson and friends' musical selections reflected the sacred COGIC homegoing traditions. Rev. R. Walker read the Old Testament scripture while Supt. A Walker read from the New Testament. Min Marvin Walker acknowledge resolutions (to many to read) closing with the reading of Jayland's obituary

No Akron City officials were in attendance per Mayor Dan Horrigan's request. "We don't want to be any sort of distraction to Jayland and the mourning and the grief that his family is feeling," Horrigan said.

Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the Stewart & Calhoun Funeral Home. Burial at Glendale Cemetery in Akron.

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Toledo Public Schools' 2022-33 Academic Year Opening Calendar

Summer vacation has been extended for all Toledo Public School students as the first day of classes for the 2022-23 school year has changed. The new schedule is as follows:

Wednesday, August 17 - Teacher Workday; no students

Wednesday, August 17 - Elementary School Open Houses - 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, August 18 and Friday, August 19 - Staff Professional Development; no students

Monday, August 22 - First Day of School for elementary students and freshmen

Tuesday, August 23 - First Day of School for sophomores

Wednesday, August 24 - First Day of School for juniors and seniors

Monday, August 29 - EHSO classes start

Kindergarten: Students will begin the week of August 29 with a staggered start

- Families will be notified if their student will start on Monday or Tuesday
- The first day for ALL Kindergarten students will be Wednesday, August 31

• Teachers will use the week of August 22 to complete screenings and/or orientations

PRE-K: Students will begin the week of August 29 with a staggered start

- Families will be notified if their student will start on Monday or Tuesday
- The first day for ALL preschool students will be Wednesday, August 31

• Teachers will complete preservice and home visits during the week of August 22

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Competitors should bring their imagination, motivation, and determination - all other supplies are provided. Creativity is encouraged and the only rule: there are no rules!

There will be additional activities for the whole family. What's a derby without the proper headgear? Visitors can create a lucky derby hat to wear during the race. The fancier the better! For the littlest racers - stop by Little Engineers Raceway and go on your own off-roading adventure with matchbox cars and Rigamajigs.



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"Leaders think and talk about the solutions. Followers think and talk about the problems."

-Brian Tracey

R. Winspires

LMH Calls for Thorough and Dramatic Change

By Dawn Scotland

The Truth Reporter

Lucas Metropolitan Housing unveiled their Junction – McClinton Nunn Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Draft Transformation Plan Wednesday, July 20, via Facebook livestream. The plan calls for a “thorough and dramatic change” in the Junction Area. The draft has been submitted to HUD with the final proposal due in December.

Kattie Bond, senior vice president of Operations and Community Development of Lucas Metropolitan Housing facilitated the meeting. The proposal is a partnership with LMH, the City of Toledo, Junction Coalition and community partners.

The Junction Neighborhood is defined as “[being] bounded by Dorr Street on the north, I-75 and Anthony Wayne Trail on the east, and the Norfolk & Southern Railway on the south and west.” This area is noted by the plan for decades of disinvestment, lack of commerce and lack of upward mobility for residents. The plan calls “to transform the Junction Neighborhood into a neighborhood of choice.” (source: www.junctionchoice.com)

Fifty-four participants attended the zoom call to present the plan that has undergone one and a half years of planning. President of LMH Joaquin Cintron Vega remarked that [the plan]: “represents the collective vision of this community and a blueprint for action.”

The project team for the Transformation Plan include: Kattie Bond, Joaquin Cintron Vega, Rosalyn Clemens of the City of Toledo, Charlie Hogan, Bill James, Tiffanie McNair of the City of Toledo, Kathleen Reigstad, Alicia Smith, Monica Smith and Matthew Sutter

The steering committee includes: Heather Baker, Jay Black of Pathway, Shantae Brownlee of Lucas County Land Bank, Malcolm Cunningham, Kim Cutcher of LISC, Elizabeth Ellis, Katina Gaston, Eunice Glover, State Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson, Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, Laura Koprowski of TARTA, Doni Miller of NHA, Tracee Perryman of Center of Hope Family Services, Alicia Smith of the Junction Coalition, Robert Smith of AALP, Kate Sommerfeld of ProMedica, Pastor Calvin Sweeney and Veronica Wilkes

William James, principal with Camiros, Ltd. and Katie Reistad, project planner of Camiros, Ltd. “a full-service planning, zoning, and urban design consultancy based in Chicago, IL (source www.camiros.com) presented the plan via Zoom Wednesday.

The “big picture” is for the area to be a “a successful 21st Century Urban Neighborhood” by:

- Transform(ing) the area from the inside out as well as from the outside in
 - Elevat(ing) existing residents to create home grown reinvestment
 - Draw(ing) new investment from the Downtown and Warehouse District
- Mak(ing) the Junction Neighborhood a distinctive “brand”
 - Exciting housing choices; industrial lofts, renovations, new homes
 - A multi-modal transportation system; cars, buses, bikes, walking
 - High-level neighborhood aesthetics; architecture, streetscape, etc.
 - Supportive services to every resident

The key street of this plan will be Nebraska Ave that will become a retail hub. The plan also calls to create a Junction Ave Heritage District. The key sites chosen are: St. Anthony's Church, Kingdom Life Christian Center, Junction Park, The Gudowski Building, Ujima Garden, Soul City Gym, The Junction Coalition, Liddell's Barber Shop. Additionally, it calls for the development of an Art Tatum Zone and restoration of the famed musician's home.

One of the primary aims is to make the “Junction Neighborhood [a] diverse neighborhood where people of all income levels blend seamlessly; a neighborhood with a place for everyone; and a neighborhood where no one is displaced.”

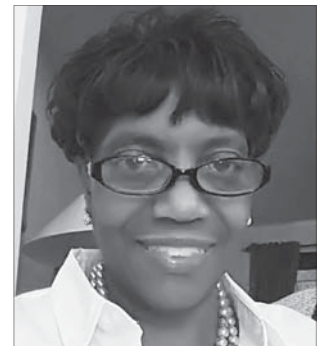
... continued on page 6



Joaquin Cintron Vega



Alicia Smith



Kattie Bond

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LMH... continued from page 5

The plan will achieve this by:

People Proposals

- A. Supporting existing businesses, including home-based businesses;
- B. Recognizing the importance of housing wealth and promoting more homeownership;
- C. Establishing a community kitchen to allow local food businesses to grow and expand;
- D. Bringing more educational resources to students who need them to close the "learning gap";
- E. Offering neighborhood real estate investment trusts (NREITs) to allow residents to participate in local development projects, including affordable housing; and
- F. Training local residents to become construction contractors on new housing developments.

Neighborhood Proposals

- A. Strengthen the physical connections between the Junction Neighborhood and the Downtown and Warehouse District;
- B. Make Nebraska Avenue the "Main Street" of the neighborhood by developing three nodes of retail at Collingwood Blvd., Hawley Street and Detroit Avenue;
- C. Transform Nebraska Avenue into a multimodal transportation facility to give people the choice of moving by car, bike, bus or walking;
- D. Make the neighborhood safe by effectively reducing gun violence through the Save Our Community program;
- E. Transform Swan Creek into a major asset offering a range of activities and attractions, including a quick multi-use trail to Downtown;
- F. Improve the appearance and function of key local streets; and
- G. Improve existing parks and create new parks along Swan Creek.

Housing Proposals

- A. Make all new housing development mixed-income developments.
- B. Prevent displacement of low- to moderate income residents by creating 825 units of income-restricted rental housing over time;

C. Help low- to moderate-income homeowners to stay in their homes by providing financial assistance for rehabbing their houses;

D. Transform the McClinton Nunn target housing site into an attractive mixed-income community offering a range of housing types,

E. Maintain the existing single family character of the community by rehabbing existing homes and infilling vacant lots with single-family homes;

F. Adaptively reuse vacant industrial buildings for multi-family residential, including new affordable housing;

G. Transform vacant industrial land along Swan Creek into a new single family "neighborhood-within-a-neighborhood".

The plan will be implemented over a 20-30 year time span. Some changes to the area are already underway- including the completion of Collingwood Green.

1-3 Years : Collingwood Green Completion; LMH (underway), Six Block Area Residential Development Initiative, New Swan Creek Parks

3-4 Years: McClinton Nun Target (could be completed in 2-4 years), Housing Site Redevelopment, Collingwood Blvd. Enhancement, Swan Creek Activation

6-10 Years: City Park Avenue Enhancement, Nebraska Avenue Multi- Modal Improvement, Mobile Home Park/Single Family Redevelopment, Swan Creek Village Single Family Development

The draft proposal has been submitted to HUD. The full draft of the plan can be found on www.junctionchoice.com and the presentation Wednesday can be viewed on LMH's Facebook page. The final proposal is due to be submitted to HUD in December. The group hopes to submit the plan early with the aim for November of this year.

A Q&A section was presented, some applauded the plan. Other community members raised questions as to whether there will be community agreements to the new retail spaces and how it was determined which housing will be preserved.

There was no comment as to whether there will be additional meetings held for input in the drafting stages.

Those interested can provide feedback in a comment box provided on junctionchoice.com, or can send comments to Kattie Bond at kbond@lucasmha.org.

A celebration of the proposal will be held at Warren AME Church, August 5, 1:00-3:30 PM.

The Truth

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Perryman... continued from page 2

Then the City jumped in, talking about 'We're gonna shut it down.' So, I said, "Wait, hold up! Where are these people gonna live? Y'all dump some money over here. We gotta help these people."

So, I met with Rene Campos, the owner, and Commissioner Pete Gerken. The Movement is now there Monday through Friday on site.

Perryman: What specific ways do you help the residents?

Butts: People have to clean their apartments. We have to develop a system and make sure that we teach people how to take care of their homes. We started working with the mothers to teach them how, if they get 'x' amount of food stamps, then how to go to the grocery store. We have to teach them how to care," and it just snowballed.

The Lucas County Children Service board comes out every Monday. They are developing friendship relationships and connecting with kids. We just had a job fair I set up over there today, and seven people start jobs next week that signed up. So, it's a long process and has a ways to go. Everybody's getting their lights fixed and refrigerators put in. Some people were without heat for two years, but they didn't know any better. So, they'd just go buy a heater.

Perryman: They couldn't advocate for themselves.

Butts: But now, they're becoming engaged. We have a couple of people that live over there. Every morning we are there from 9-12, cleaning up the parking lots. It's just so overwhelming. They see the change. They've got a new parking lot now. We just had that paved. They're getting new screen doors, getting windows put in. So now that they're seeing things changing, people take pride in what they got. Of course, everything is not picture-perfect, and I will be the first to say it. But they're getting new blinds and air conditioners and weeding out some bad people who just don't care and are helping those who want help.

Residents are getting GEDs. We're connecting people with mental issues and getting them services. So now that they know that there are resources available, we can connect the people or just bring the resources to them.

Perryman: Let's get down to the nitty-gritty. When even the police or others shy away from going into the Greenbelts, how can you get results that nobody else can?

Butts: I think the bottom line is we're them. We're one of them. The residents know us. We're grassroots. We don't have titles, so they open the door because there's no hidden agenda. It's like, 'Okay, they're not trying to get our kids taken.'

Perryman: Let's expand on that. You said, 'We're one of them.' But, there is a broad cultural difference even within the African American experience. So, there are a whole lot of Black folks that can't come over to Greenbelt and be effective.

Butts: No, there are all colors in there. I'm saying we're one of them as to what they see us as. When you're sitting there saying to them, 'You need your kids back, let us help you. Let's go and get in these programs, take these classes, get your home together, and do the right things if you really want your babies back.' Or, 'Well, Tina, they're giving me a hard time.' 'Okay, let us sit down with you. Let's talk to them together.'

That's the connection we have in helping families, making sure that they've got tidiness in their kitchen, making sure they have electricity and heat.

So, several of the residents now even want to join The Movement, and quite a few of them are engaged, arriving before we get here. They are like, 'Tina, it's 8:30. I'm here.' Then we have others that say, 'Can I get a Movement shirt? Can I get some Movement gloves?'

Perryman: So, what's next?

Butts: We'll stay until the work is done or at least till their lives and housing are better. My goal is to get computers in the community room and set up times for people to come in, get online, and learn some things. The

owner's willing to pay whatever he has to. He wants to get a playground over there. He's going to fence it in for security.

In the meantime, we're still knocking on doors, getting vaccinations, and just doing whatever we are called on to do. I'm going to follow whatever falls in front of me. If we can help, we will; if we can't, we'll just send it to those who can.

Perryman: Finally, where do you find gratitude? What makes you happy in this work?

Butts: To see somebody cry with happiness. When somebody laughs or smiles is the best thing; just knowing that we made a difference in their lives is what gives me gratitude. Because, like I tell people, that was us, that could've been me.

When I look into their eyes, I see me. I see my brother. I see my cousins. We lived in the projects too. Not in Greenbelt Place, but in reality, they're all the same.

Contact Rev. Donald Perryman, PhD, at drdperryman@enterofhope-baptist.org



Ray Wood, Tina Butts, former Mayor Carty Finkbeiner

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Naturalistas... continued from page 16

diverse people that contribute so much to the world (art, music, agriculture, architecture, science, culture, athletics) the list goes on and on. How boring and bland would the world be without us?

~ Dorothy Gray

"I am not defined by mainstream's idea of what is beautiful. I choose to wear a headwrap as an act of resistance, a visible form of freedom. I am beautiful because my anthem is worthy to be heard."

~ Sandra Gill



Donnetta Carter

"The beauty of blackness comes from a divine connection to all that is abundant, encapsulating grace, and originally designed. And that beauty is blackness clothed in the aura of Black woman. In the words of Angela Davis, we must talk about liberating minds as well as liberating society."

~ Patrice McClellan, EdD

"Black is strength, sophistication, and status. Black is a color of many insights absorbed through unique perspectives. Black is Beauty. Black Beauty is bringing your whole self to whatever you do."

~ Tamme Smith



Patrice McClellan, EdD



Tamme Smith

"Black is beautiful; we all come in different shades of melanin skin colors to highlight our beauty and attributes. I define the beauty of blackness as bold, fierce, togetherness, queens of the Nile and beautiful. To be an individual with your own identity and being original and authentic, never duplicated. Finally, to be a leader and empower other women and being creative with your own ideas."

~Donnetta Carter
BKA "The Social Butterfly"

In the words of Hoyt Fuller, "Across this country, young black men and women have been infected with a fever of affirmation. They are saying, 'We are black and beautiful.'"

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TAKING YOU PLACES

Toledo Opera Returns to Valentine Theatre with *Blue*

Toledo Opera will present the Tony Award®-winning composer Jeanine Tesori and NAACP Theatre Award-winning librettist Tazewell Thompson's new opera *Blue* on Friday, August 26 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, August 28 at 2 p.m. at the Valentine Theatre, 400 North Superior, Toledo, Ohio. Influenced by gospel music and using vivid flashbacks, *Blue* places timely issues at the forefront of modern opera and invites audiences to the emotional epicenter of their impact. Toledo Opera will also host a free Pre-Opera Talk one hour before each show in the Grand Lobby of the Valentine Theatre. Local scholars provide historical context and insight and are available to take questions after the talk.

First performed in 2019 at the Glimmerglass Festival, and the recipient of the Music Critics Association of North America's 2020 Award for Best New Opera, the plot of *Blue* centers on an African American couple in Harlem as they anticipate the birth of their firstborn, a son, with both hope and fear. As the baby grows into a young man, the mother worries for his future, and the father tries to prepare his son for the realities of 21st century America, while wrestling with his own identity as a police officer, a "Black man in blue." When their deepest fears come true, the family is forced to navigate a devastating reality seeking answers and support from their church and community. Chelsea Tipton, II returns to Toledo to conduct the opera and librettist Tazewell Thompson serves as the stage director.

Kenneth Kellogg, who originated the role of The Father at the Glimmerglass Festival, will once again sing The Father with Toledo Opera. He has also performed the role in numerous opera houses such as Detroit Opera, Seattle Opera, and at Pittsburgh Opera as



Kenneth Kellogg



Aundi Moore

the Metropolitan Opera's new production of *Porgy and Bess* last season. Notable performances include the Washington National Opera, L'Opéra de Monte Carlo, Sarasota Opera, Atlanta Opera, and Virginia Opera.

The role of The Son will be played by **Darius Gillard**, who is steadily gaining momentum on regional operatic circuits. He has been praised for his warm legato and thoughtful interpretation, excelling in the lyric repertoire. Mr. Gillard has appeared in principal, supporting, and comprimario roles with companies that include Detroit Opera, Opera Caro-



Darius Gillard

lina, Connecticut Lyric Opera, Arbor Opera Theatre, Capitol Opera Raleigh, and Hartford Opera Theatre.

Dramatic baritone **Gordon Hawkins** will sing the role of The Reverend – which he originated at the Glimmerglass Festival. Hawkins has garnered an international reputation as a "Rigoletto specialist," delighting audiences as the tragic Verdi underdog in more than 200 performances, most recently with the Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Vancouver Opera, Washington National Opera, Arizona Opera, and Opera Colorado.



Gordon Hawkins

Kayla Hill Oderah (Girlfriend 2/Congregant 2), **Kaswanna Kany-**

inda (Girlfriend 3/Congregant 3), **Tyrese Byrd** (Policeman 1/ Congregant 1), **Ernest Jackson** (Policeman 2/ Congregant 2), and **Clayton Matthews** (Policeman 3/Congregant 3) bring national and international musical prowess of their own, with past performances at Detroit Opera, Amalfi Coast Music Festival, Berlin Opera Academy, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Seattle Opera among many others.

For Toledo Opera's Executive Director **Suzanne Rorick**, *Blue* is a project years in the making. It is the latest installment of new productions chosen specifically for the Toledo community in order to highlight opera's relevance to today's audiences.

"We are so pleased to finally present *Blue* to the Toledo community after. This project was begun in 2019 but was delayed by the pandemic in January of 2022. The themes of this story remain in the news and the hearts of the Toledo community," said Rorick. "Our hope is to continue the conversation that this opera was meant to raise. We invite you to join us in late summer for this important, stunning, and award-winning opera."

Toledo Opera will perform *Blue* at the Valentine Theatre on Friday, August 26 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, August 28 at 2 p.m. To learn more about *Blue* cast and production team and to buy tickets, visit: toledoopera.org. *Blue* is made possible by The National Endowment for the Arts, Owens Corning, and Ohio Humanities. For media access, please contact Rachael Cammarn at rcammarn@toledoopera.org.

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Eight Hacks to Save Money Fast

By Derick Gant

The Truth Contributor

You must have heard; the earlier the better when it comes to investing. But when you are earning less money you would wonder how can you start saving and investing money when you are barely making ends meet.

Half of your salary might be your rent or you could be paying debt while making just enough money to pay for the necessities afterward. In such a situation saving can be very difficult and might even seem impossible.

Well, you don't have to be an expert to take control of your finances. There are simple and effective finance tips that you should know if you are trying to make your life better. Mastering simple financial skills to save money will help you in the coming life years and you will be grateful that you cultivated those habits early.

Many rich people were not born rich but they became rich because they knew when to save and when to spend money. Everyone has to start saving money at some point, you don't have to wait to earn a six-figure income first. There are numerous six-figure earners out there who spend their entire paycheck every month and save nothing.

Here are eight hacks to save money when you have a low income.

8. Make a Budget

It may seem like an easy job to create a budget but the hardest part is sticking to your budget. You should learn how to budget money for everyday needs. Regularly writing down the expenses not only keeps a record of how you spend money, but it also helps acknowledge where your money is going.

You can use an 80-20 budget or 50-30-20 budget to spend a major portion of your money on necessities, around 30% on happy hours such as eating out, movie nights, and fashion accessories, and also save 20% of the income.

Even if you save less, let's say a hundred dollars a month, and put it towards your retirement, you will be saving money that will help you get financially independent. Every penny counts.

7. Automate Savings

If you are too busy to separate your savings from your expenditure, you can automate the process. Let your bank deduct a fixed amount weekly, bimonthly, or monthly from your salary account and transfer it to your savings account. You won't have to worry about it and there will be no chances of overspending money because you have put the savings aside first.



Derick Gant

Saving as little as \$20 every week can let you save up to \$1000 a year. It is that simple. Sacrifice eating once a week and put the money in savings. The more you will save and invest, the sooner you will be able to get rich.

6. Use Cash Often

Paying using cash enables you to see how much money you are spending. Paying for things using a credit card gives you a false sense of having money until you check your account. Many people overspend when they use credit cards because they don't keep a check on the funds they have.

Next time you head out to shop or pay bills, use cash instead of your credit card. Your hard-earned cash should be spent wisely.


5. Get Rid of Debt

If you are making less money and have lesser to spend every month then there is a high chance that you have to pay back money that you used for college tuition, auto loan, mortgage, or credit card bill. If you have to pay back a student loan, credit card loan, or any other type of debt, then you should get rid of it as soon as possible.

High-interest rate loans are the ones that you should pay off immediately

...continued on page 11

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Social Security Column

Celebrate Your Independence with Social Security

By Erin Thompson

Social Security Public Affairs Specialist in Toledo, OH

Every July, we take pride in celebrating our nation's independence. For nearly 90 years, our programs have helped provide financial independence to millions of hardworking people. We have useful online tools like the *Social Security Statement (Statement)* and our benefits estimator tool that help people not yet receiving benefits. The Statement shows the benefits that you and your family may be entitled to with personalized fact sheets tailored to your age and earnings situation. The benefits estimator tool allows you to get estimates based on different ages you want to begin receiving benefits. These tools can help you plan the financial independence you deserve in retirement.

Don't receive benefits? You can get the most out of your online experience if you have a personal *my Social Security account*. You can:

- Get your *Statement* instantly.
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in nearly every state and the District of Columbia).
- Find out if you qualify for benefits.

- Appeal a decision we made on your claim.

Already receiving benefits? If so, you can use your personal *my Social Security* account to:

- Request a replacement Social Security card (in nearly every state and the District of Columbia).
- Get an instant benefit verification letter for Social Security, Medicare, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Start or change your direct deposit. (Social Security beneficiaries only)
- Check your information and benefit amount.
- Change your address. (Social Security beneficiaries only)
- Request a replacement Medicare card.
- Get a replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S instantly for tax season.
- Report your wages if you work and receive disability benefits or SSI.

... continued on page 12

8 Hacks... continued from page 10

when you can. If you let the high-interest rate loans stay for longer, they may add up and become very difficult to payback. Pay the debt first and then move onto the next expense.

4. Keep an Emergency Fund Ready

You never know when you get into an accident, an appliance stops working, you lose your job or get medical bills. For such unexpected events in life, you should always stay ready mentally and financially.

No one wants to go through the embarrassment of asking for money from friends and family even if they can pay it back. After you get rid of debt, you should immediately set up an emergency fund. In your savings account hold an amount at all times that you can only use during hardships. You might also be able to get a trickle of interest on your savings.

3. Learn Not to Shop Impulsively

We are bombarded with millions of ads every month when we check our newsfeed. Social media allows us to look at things that we may like to buy but at some point, it may get beyond the comfortable limit. Numerous people end up withdrawing their credit cards every month because they want to look updated.

Learn to ignore these ads and instead spend your time doing more productive things. Scrolling and swiping is no good for your health and if you feel addicted to doing it, its time you should delete the app for a while to give yourself a break.

Spend time in learning new things. Let's say you have been struggling to work on Excel, if you have your phone while you are waiting in a queue, pull out earplugs and watch a basic excel tutorial video.

2. Pay Yourself First

Make a goal to save anywhere between 10%-20%. Every time you receive the paycheck, put aside the money you want to save in an envelope. Voila! You just paid yourself first. With the rest of the money, you can make a budget to cover your expenses.

You can also automate the process by enabling your money to go di-

rectly to your savings account on the 1st of every month. The money will go directly into the savings and it will lower your chances of tapping into your account to spend once they are in your savings account.

1. Take a List with You and Exact Amount of Cash to Shop

If you go to the grocery store without a list of things that you need, you will probably end up buying too many snacks, cosmetics, and things that you don't need. Too many snacks also mean unhealthy eating for a week.

Make a list every time you head out to the grocery store. Calculate how much money you would need and keep the exact amount of cash with you. Leave your credit card at home.

If you want to treat yourself, keep a little extra money that can buy you a few bonus snacks. Do not keep a lot of money with you. When you know you don't have a lot of money in your pocket you will probably spend what you have and won't go over the limit.

Bottom Line

Although you are making less money and have a lot of things on your bucket list, there are a lot of things that you need to learn about money first. If you want to achieve a higher income stream, learn to give up material things that make you happy. Don't buy that beautiful pair of shoes you saw at the mall or cook at home for a week.

You will be able to save money and learn to be happy with simple things in life. If you have a phone that is working, you don't need to upgrade. Save money and learn to say 'No' to yourself when you need to.

Living within your means and spending only what you earn will give you a sense of being in control. Try to save money and invest it, the earlier you save the better returns you will be able to receive. Consistency in saving money and investing it is the key to getting rich!

Derick Gant is an American author, speaker, financial advisor, and money coach with over 25 years of entrepreneurial experience. In 2019, Derick published The 24K Life Code: The Only Difference Between Mediocrity and Greatness. This book guides people step-by-step to achieve their best and get the results they so desperately desire.

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Social Security... continued from page 11

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With so many services and helpful information available online, we are here for you when it's convenient for you. Be sure to tell friends and family about all they can do with us from any device at www.ssa.gov.

Apply for Social Security Benefits Online

Did you know, you can do much of your business online with Social Security? This means no need to call or visit a local Social Security office. You can take your time completing our online applications and even save your progress to return to later.

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• **Retirement or Spouse's Benefits** – You can apply up to four months before you want your retirement benefits to start. You must be at least age 62 for the entire month to be eligible to receive benefits. If you were born on the first or second day of the month, you meet this requirement in the month of your 62nd birthday. If you were born on any other day of the month, you do not meet this requirement until the following month. When you're ready, apply at www.ssa.gov/retireonline.

• **Disability Benefits** – You can use our online application, available

at www.ssa.gov/disabilityonline, to apply for disability benefits if you:

- Are age 18 or older;
- Are not currently receiving benefits on your own Social Security record;
- Are unable to work because of a medical condition expected to last at least 12 months or result in death; and
- Have not been denied disability benefits in the last 60 days. If your application was recently denied, our online appeal application is a starting point to request a review of the determination we made. Please visit www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html.

• **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** – SSI provides monthly payments to adults and children with a disability or blindness who have income and resources below specific financial limits. SSI also makes payments to people who are age 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial qualifications. If you plan to apply for SSI, you can tell us you want to apply and we will make an appointment to help you complete the application. Or you can complete a large part of your application online at www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi.

• **Medicare** – Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people age 65 or older, some people younger than 65 who have disabilities, and people with end-stage renal disease. If you are not already receiving Social Security benefits, and are not working, you should apply for Medicare three months before turning age 65 at www.ssa.gov/medicare.

• **Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Costs** – Some people with limited resources and income may be able to get Extra Help paying their monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments related to a Medicare prescription drug plan. People who need assistance with the cost of medications can apply for Extra Help at www.ssa.gov/i1020.

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Our Gen: A Novel by Diane McKinney-Whetstone

By Terri Schlichenmeyer
The Truth Contributor

Sometimes, you just have to lay your burden down.

When it's heaviest, when your arms can't support it and your back breaks from the weight of it, when your shoulders and your heart ache from it, release it. Let it go, let it be. Or, as in the new novel, *Our Gen* by Diane McKinney-Whetstone, ask a friend to lend a hand.

Cynthia hated everything about the Sexagenarian, an over-55 complex to which she'd moved. She hated that her son and his wife had all but forced her to move there, that The Gen wasn't her old house, and that all her belongings were in boxes. As she lamented to her best friend, Gabrielle, Cynthia missed her old neighborhood and her old life.

Having said that, now, she did have to admit that her newly-built cottage was airy and bright and, contrary to what she was afraid of, she wasn't the only Black person in a sea of white faces. Oh, and she also met a man, not even 24 hours after moving in, although he didn't seem like he was exactly single.

Bloc never meant to sleep with Cynthia because he thought he was dating Tish – although Tish could be cruel sometimes, like she was better than everybody. Still, he enjoyed being around her and her friends. Being the only Black man living at The Gen was very interesting...

c.2022
Amistad
\$26.99
256 pages

It had been years – decades, actually – since Tish's father had died on the floor of a brothel, but she never forgot the humiliation of it. Imagine: her father, a widely respected professor, a charismatic speaker, in the arms of a common trollop!

Tish spent her entire life erasing the idea of it all.

Having worked as a sometime-spy for most of her adult life, Lavia loved living at The Gen. It was a great place to practice her skills and besides, she was born on a cruise ship and never really had a home before. Lavia didn't talk about her past, but she knew things – things like, for instance, that secrets and half-truths can't stay hidden forever.



Our Gen author

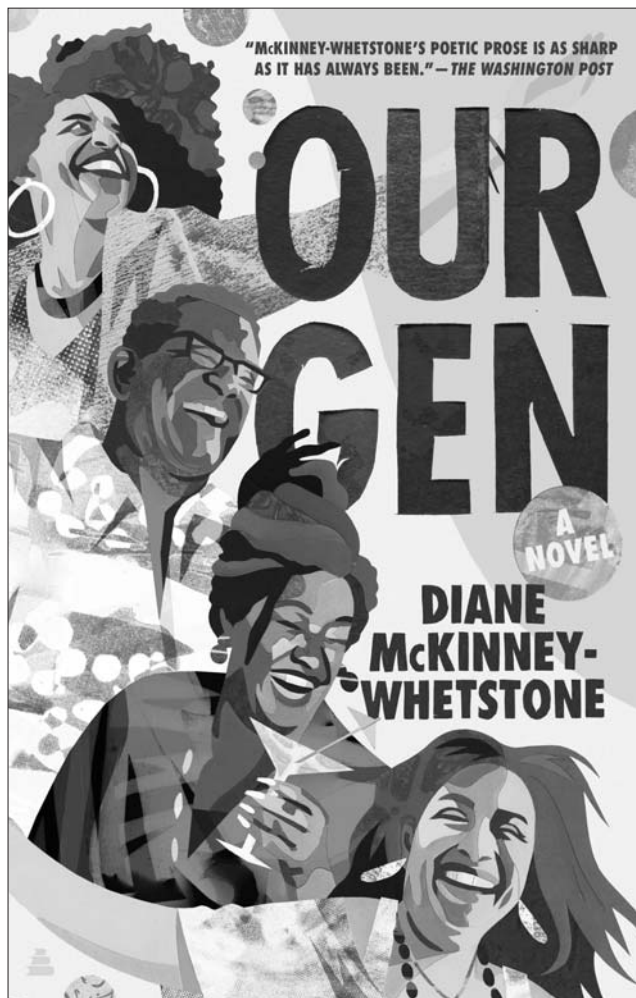
Ahhhhhh. That's what you're going to say when you have a cold beverage next to your chair and this wonderful surprise of a book in your lap.

You have to love a novel that starts out like *Our Gen* does, with a holistic medicine that works too well, and a hazy tryst on an air mattress. Everything moves up from there in an easy story told with the feel of a lazy-hot afternoon spent listening to music with good friends.

But don't get too comfortable.

Author Diane McKinney-Whetstone has some shockers in store for her readers, the kind that don't seem like much until two pages later and then.... boom, there's love and fifty-year-old heartache. Snap, the past comes roaring back. Pop, and secrets are gracefully kept.

Beware that there are some adult themes inside *Our Gen*, but truly, it's an otherwise delightful surprise. Enjoy, and ask yourself if your book club might not be down with it, too.



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QUALIFICATIONS:

Law Degree and current license to practice law in Ohio.

At least two years of housing related legal representation working with diverse groups. Alternatively, five or more years of experience in civil litigation, especially if maintaining a large caseload.

Possess the ability to investigate rental, sales, lending, insurance, zoning, harassment, and appraisal complaints in a timely manner.

Experience in a non-profit environment is preferred.

Possess strong financial management, budgeting skills, organization, presentation, and writing proficiencies.

Possess strong knowledge of fair housing principles and local, state, and federal laws governing housing discrimination and the landlord-tenant relationship.

This is a full-time position that includes a competitive salary and benefits package. Monday-Friday, 9a-5p, with evening and weekend hours as needed. Reliable transportation is required. TFHC offers a competitive wage and benefits package. Interested applicants should email their cover letter, résumé, and references in PDF form to hr@toledofhc.org. No phone calls, please.

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Candidates should possess a High School or GED Graduate. Some college preferred. Prior experience working with at-risk teens highly recommended. Must possess the necessary organizational skills to supervise, lead, coordinate, facilitate and design activities and programs. Must have the necessary computer and technical skills to coordinate participant files and coursework. Must possess good public relation skills and have the ability to establish and maintain effective communication with youth, staff, volunteers, and community partners. Must have a good driving record. Maintain a professional attitude toward participants and parents/guardians.

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If interested, please send resume electronically by July 27, 2022 to Debbie Frison at dfrison@ymcatoledo.org

Call to place your ad:

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www.TheTruthToledo.com

The Browns Mill Women's Golf Association's Women's Only Golf Tournament

The Truth Staff

"Twenty-six years ago, four friends took a trip," says Deborah Barnett of the women who decided they wanted to play golf in a different resort area. The number of ladies on that annual trip grew over the years.

"Now it's a full-fledged tournament with over 150 women participating from all around the country," adds Barnett of the Brown Mills Women's Golf Association's annual gathering in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

In 1996, those four friends – Oneda Castillo, Bernice Mitchell, Mattie Peterson and Mary Allen – sought the help of William Lewis, course manager and head pro at the Browns Mill Golf Course, who helped get the women off to a great start.

Browns Mill remains the home course for the Association.

Barnett herself has been playing in the tournament since 2015, along with various other Toledoans. This year the group gathered from July 7-10 at the Legends Golf Resort in Myrtle Beach for the annual Women's Only Golf Tournament.

As the tournament has grown, so has the organizational effort to make sure everything works smoothly. A webinar is held in February for prospective golfers to walk them through the process – the costs and the expectations – then they can register online.

The goal this year was to have 150 women playing on the links but the demand was so huge – especially since the event was canceled in 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic.

The tournament is the signature event hosted by the BMWGA but is among a number of year-round events held at Browns Mill and other venues – such as the 9-Hole League, in April; the Play Days in various months; the Founder's Day Cup Competition starting in June; the BMWGA Anniversary Invitational in August; the Polar Bear Tournament in December, among others.



Pathy Davis, Terri Sutton, Phyllis Wadley and Debbie Barnett - all these ladies belong to the local golf club - The Par Breakers

This year four Toledoans played in the tournament – Barnett, Pathy Davis, Terri Sutton and Phyllis Wadley. Barnett's hope is to increase that participation to 10 golfers in upcoming years.

More information on BMWGA and the tournament can be found on the Association's website.



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- ✓ Implement Common Sense Gun Laws

Early Vote Center has moved to 3737 W Sylvania
Paid for by Ortiz For Ohio

NO MORE DEMAND ACTION
GUN SENSE CANDIDATE

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The 8th Annual Naturalista Photoshoot – Black Is Beautiful

Carla Thomas

Now entering our eighth year, the Naturalista Photoshoot is a much-anticipated event highlighting African-American women and girls, who have proudly embraced the natural hairstyle.

The women are free to wear their hair in their style of choice; braids, locs, twists, afro, wraps or the much-needed protective style of natural-styled wigs . . . all expressions are accepted in this space.

This year our declaration is “Black Is Beautiful” and features the women dressed in black against a sienna-colored backdrop.



Alexus McCoy



Carolyn Rankin



Cassidy McClellan

“Black Is Beautiful,” a movement that emerged in the 60’s, encouraged Black men and women to embrace their skin tones, facial features and natural hair as acceptable. For Black women specifically, the movement stated it is ok to push back against European beauty standards and proudly wear our natural hair in a mainstream way.

The Naturalista photoshoot highlights Black women who have chosen to walk away from Western beauty standards.

Several of this year’s participants agreed to share their thoughts on what “Black Is Beautiful” the beauty of blackness, means to them.



Dorothy Gray



Charise Stokes

“I love being black because of the richness of our history. Our ability to overcome and endure past and current struggles demonstrates our resilience. I love how my hair can stand up to gravity. I love how my skin glows in the sun! We are a beautiful, creative, and

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EARLY VOTING HAS A NEW HOME!

It's that time again. Lucas County Board of Elections in-person early voting has begun. And this year, there's a new place to cast your ballot. Our Early Vote Center has moved to 3737 West Sylvania Avenue, just across the street from the Franklin Park Mall. Every vote matters. So join us now through August 1st, and let your voice be heard.

For more information and directions to the Center, visit LucasCountyOhioVotes.gov

**VOTE
NOW**

3737 WEST SYLVANIA AVE.

**THROUGH
AUGUST 1**



Sandra Gill



LaRhonda McCoy