



GREATER BRIDGEPORT BRANCH NAACP

The Vision of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights and there is no racial hatred or racial discrimination

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P.O. Box 287, Bridgeport, CT 06601 • Phone: (203) 397-6758 • Email: NAACP@bridgeportnaacp.com
Representing Bridgeport, Fairfield, Stratford, Trumbull • George Mintz, Branch President

Message from the President



The 2017 theme for the Greater Bridgeport Branch is Collaborate, Collaborate, Collaborate. The following committees and the elected administrative officers, known as the E-board, is the engine that drives the Greater Bridgeport Branch: **Housing, Community Relations, Young Professionals, Job Creation & Training, Environmental and Climate Justice, Women in the NAACP, Education, Criminal Justice, Prison Ministry, Legal, Economic Development, Communications and Membership.** **E-board members attended the NAACP Mandatory Training for Branch Officers on Saturday, March 11, 2017, at Southern CT State University, New Haven, CT from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm.**

Join us at our monthly meetings on the 4th Thursdays at the Burroughs community center 2470 Fairfield Avenue, 6:30-8:00 pm, 1st floor, and become a part of the **CHANGE** that the NAACP seek in Bridgeport. We cannot do this alone, **We Need You. Become a member of an NAACP Committee Today.**

Why We Need You and Why We Need Statistics

We must stop the Aggressive Foreclosures taking place in Bridgeport.

Our police department, fire department, city government and city commissions must represent the racial composition of Bridgeport at all levels.

Who lives in public housing? Public Housing must be fair and equitable for all of Bridgeport. Economic Development, Contractors and Jobs must include minorities.

When We Collaborate

- The Bridgeport City Council established an African-American Hispanic Caucus
- The African-American Educators Network organized
- The Hispanic Educators Network Scheduled Bridgeport Community Summit to address Housing, Education, Economics and Health
- Racial & Implicit Bias Train the Trainer Program this summer
- Community conversations with elected officials
- NAACP Bridgeport Debate Groups for middle & high school students
- Internships for Bridgeport students
- NAACP College Chapters at area colleges and universities

Complaints may be emailed to [complaints @bridgeportnaacp.com](mailto:complaints@bridgeportnaacp.com)

Annual memberships are available for a one-time membership fee of \$30.

GREATER BRIDGEPORT NAACP NEEDS YOU

**Join, Get Involved, Speak Up,
Speak Out, Register, VOTE!**

Greater Bridgeport NAACP will hold 2017 meetings monthly on the fourth Thursday at Burroughs Community Center, 2470 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT at 6:30 pm. Our next meeting is April 27, 2017.

Public Housing and Section 8 Issues or Concerns?

Do the living conditions where you reside affect your life?

What happens when a burst water pipe creates such damage that the Fire Department is called upon to shut the flow because local management does not “know the source of the flow”? The water damage to wallboard is allowed to continue so that it harbors mold colonies of different colors? And a previously healthy young resident develops asthma where formerly there was no health issue? And managers or inspectors of the premises in regular “review” ignore the damage and the failure to perform remedial work; though “work orders” are produced showing notice?

Why do some with Section 8 Housing fail to receive annual renewal paperwork after completion, a right, though they ask for it and are told it is because the manager is “saving paper”? How are infestations of rodents, roaches and bedbugs not quality of life issues? What about altercations over parking spaces between residents and non-resident vehicle owners who

have no right to reserved space? Is there a problem when mail service is interrupted for months at a time because of fire damage to boxes and failure to work out an alternative solution? Bulk disposal alternatives?

What about the fear of eviction without a destination, felt by many that stifles complaint to the supposed authorities who are in charge? When ‘public housing’ is managed in a fashion such that one or more of these issues continues ongoing without repair, where is “public service” in “public housing”? What to do when you lose faith in elected resident representatives?

The NAACP Housing Committee is currently responding to complaints about the handling of late WPCA fees in Bridgeport. Have you hit a stone wall in pursuit of one or more of the issues above? File a complaint with NAACP to attention of Housing Committee.

Movie Review

“I Am Not Your Negro” and “Get Out” Current Views of Race in America

By
Ashli Giles-Perkins

“The story of the negro in America, is the story of America. It is not a pretty story.” James Baldwin

Raoul Peck’s film *I Am Not Your Negro* gives an intricate look at that story utilizing clip after clip of race here in America: it hangs from trees, manifests itself in Jim Crow, and crowds who torch buses, it is the KKK, and is even above water fountains. The film draws its inspiration from Baldwin’s unfinished manuscript, *Remember This House*, that followed the lives of his friends, Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr.—all of whom were assassinated. Baldwin is able to walk us through these earth-shattering events and tie them in a way that is easy enough to follow yet still feel emotionally devastated by. Unlike usual documentaries that divert to family members, friends, and experts to shed light on the film’s subject, *I Am Not Your Negro* relies almost exclusively on Baldwin’s writings and famous interviews. This decision allows viewers to fully appreciate Baldwin’s words for what they were and form a likeness of the artist through them.

Baldwin gives a raw account of what it means to be black in America that will leave you stunned, hurt, and hopeful all at once. It is simply a must see; Baldwin recalls the rise of black power and black leadership, and how time after time, was struck down. This was done through legislation, and with bias rooted in segregation, fears leaving them

hell-bent on keeping it that way, or just plain murder. Still, as the narrative would have it, white people have something to fear when it comes to people of color, especially black people. However, as the movie *Get Out* will demonstrate it might be black people who have more tangible reasons to fear white people. Baldwin showed us images of white people hosing, lynching, spitting, pushing, choking, shooting, black people.

Jordan Peele, then introduces us to an interracial couple who at the 4 month stage is headed off to meet her white, suburban, quirky parents. Initially, you assume the parents are nervous because their daughter forgot to mention that her boyfriend was black. Then you may consider the parents are uncomfortable because they are white and their slaves – excuse me – their help is all black. Too late that you realize they aren’t nervous, they are excited, and they are playing a very sick game with our protagonist’s life. In most the striking scene, they are taking bids on him at an auction to the other people in the town to see who would get to have his strong, black body as their own. You cannot help but think of the slavery auction block and how far *not*, removed we are from it. Both movies, *I Am Not Your Negro* and *Get Out* compel you to stop and think about the roots of this country and the complex turning point we find ourselves at this very moment.

The Dream Continues...



Today I celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of social justice and equality. I want to share with you my personal experience as a much younger child. As I look back, I was a six year old living in Caribou, Maine; I recall it was a very sad time for me. At that time, I did not understand why I experienced such a difficult time. I am now soon to be thirteen years old and I better understand what

word like equality, racism, and judgment really mean. So, I share my story because it reminds me of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s message when he made his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Let me begin by saying that I went to a school where I was the only Puerto Rican girl with tan skin. There was just one other African American child, and another was Indian. The rest of the students were white. When I first got to Maine, I really did not see the difference because it was never talked about at home in Connecticut. We just liked people if they were nice good-hearted people. Well, I could tell you that I quickly felt different and I didn't feel like I belonged there. I only wanted to go back home to Connecticut. The children made fun of my tan skin, spit at me, threw food at me, pulled my hair and hit me. All I knew was that Caribou, Maine was a bad place to live. You see, in Caribou they did not know what it meant to be a person of color or that in our world, in America, we are "ALL" very different but equal. It was a small country town that was mostly farmland. They only knew what they read in books,

I told my grandmother, who was in Connecticut, and she spoke with the school. She had a conversation about diversity. Soon the teachers talked more about diversity in the classroom. My grandmother was a HERO!!

Today I feel sad for those who live in areas that do not have much diversity. It is wonderful to live among so many people with different backgrounds. It is so interesting to know how people live so differently and also share so much together; like going to the same school, church, parks and parties. Not to mention, that memory I so long ago wanted to forget made me a stronger person; like Martin Luther King was. He stood up for what was right and he wasn't afraid to risk his life. He shouted equality for all of us regardless of the color of our skin. He said, "I have a dream that someday little black boys and little black girls and little white boys and girls will join hands like brothers and sister, and that our children will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

To conclude, I hope that someday we can all get along together no matter the color of our skin and that we will be judged by who we are as people and not by how we look on the outside. I believe this is what Martin Luther King Jr. meant by equality and social justice. Most importantly, this message should be heard in a peaceful way rather than choosing violence!

Eliana Llanos, John Winthrop School, 7th Grade was prize winner in 2017 Fairfield University/Connecticut Post Essay contest is pictured proudly with Winthrop School Principal Selena Morgan. In addition to writing essays, Eliana enjoys basketball and art.

Introducing Chris Taylor, Economic Development

Newly appointed chair of the Bridgeport NAACP Economic Development Committee, Chris Taylor has a clear vision for what it will take to improve opportunities for minority businesses.

A past candidate for the 23rd State Senate district in Connecticut, as well as a 2015 candidate for Mayor of Bridgeport, Taylor has strong ties to Bridgeport. As a business owner, he also has first-hand experience in bidding on local contracts. He sees a need to expand access to city projects for minority business contractors. This means having an experienced resource person on hand in the city's Minority Business office to help bidders wade through what can be seen as complicated bid specifications. Taylor would also like to see the city relax some of the union restrictions called for in smaller jobs.

Taylor talks about raising the bar for employment opportunities for youth of color. Rather than limiting the focus

to minimum-wage jobs, Taylor is eager to expand the options for young people to prepare for higher paying positions. He is confident they have the skills to obtain jobs in finance, for example, that require passing the Series 7 exam for the securities industry.

As the Bridgeport chapter of the NAACP grows, Taylor will be able to add a few committee members to work with him, but for now, he is the lone representative. When asked how he became involved in the NAACP, Taylor noted that despite his outward appearance, he traces part of his ancestry to the African country of Mozambique. His great grandfather immigrated to the United States via Italy after working in Mozambique and marrying Taylor's great grandmother there. The couple lived in Norwalk, Connecticut, for awhile at the turn of the century before returning to Italy.

By Lori Hashizume

Honoree: Willie C. McBride, Jr.



On Friday, October 14, 2016 the Greater Bridgeport NAACP gathered for its Annual Freedom Fund Dinner. The Keynote Speaker that evening was Dr. Claud Anderson, President of Povernomics Corporation, a strong advocate for economic advancement by black entrepreneurs. A local Economic Development honoree was Willie C. McBride, Jr. President of

McBride Electrical Contractors, LLC located at 1027 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport CT.

Willie, as he is properly called, wears a smile ready to appear at any moment as he tells about his life experiences. He was raised in Bridgeport with first memories of home in Father Panik Village. Family members had positions in Housing Police and Fire Department and Willie attended public schools in preparation for four years at Bullard Havens where he studied in the electrician track. He spent 15 years as a union

journeyman working around the State before going to work for the City of Bridgeport BOE. During this time he served as employee representative on the Civil Service Commission. He has viewed the past 10 years of major public school development in Bridgeport from both the City side and private side.

He is a believer in continuing education as well as careers based on proper training and education. He provides mentoring advice through union position and talks about “grades to the trades” as a way for advancement. He declared that it was a “tough decision” to leave the City and it took him considerable time and lots of that in prayerful reflection. He started in 2014 two employees. Among recent projects was the installation of a state of the art parking meter system at many downtown locations.

After three years in business McBride Electric proudly provides regular work and compensation for 22 employees, with 16 union members. Twelve of his employees are Bridgeport residents and four of them are “second chance” persons. The firm is registered as an Afro-American small/minority business enterprise

Readers Corner

“They Can’t Kill Us All” (November, 2016 Little Brown) by wesley lowery

In spring 2017 it may be difficult to remember the details from 2014-15 that brought forth the banner cry “Black Lives Matter” and a variety of responses. Wesley Lowery has written a powerful narrative connecting Ferguson, Cleveland, North Charleston, Baltimore, Charleston, and back to Ferguson. As a rookie newsman for the Boston Globe for one year he was hired by the Washington Post to cover Congressional news, but got sent to Ferguson where he was likely the first news person arrested for “failure to disperse” among 150 people who were peacefully protesting.

The travel from city to city where police and civilians were at odds developed a “focus on race and justice....like another strong wave, only to reside right back into the wide ocean.” The difference according to Lowery was that “America was forced to consider that not everyone marching in the streets can be wrong.” Use of social media by young people brought

interactions believed to be injustices to wider notice, and “exposed white friends and family members to their experiences.”

In these visits he found “police departments whose largely white ranks looked little like the communities of color they were charged with protecting, officers whose actions were at worst criminal and at best lacked racial sensitivity, and black and brown bodies disproportionately gunned down by those sworn to serve and protect.”

In 2014 Lowery reflected on the subject and wondered about what “best practices” had to say on the issues exposed. But where were the statistics on police shootings? And if Police Departments were organized to promote public safety, but did not understand the broad facts from data in the moment, how could they genuinely respond?

Editor’s Last Words

We are awaiting police department data that has been promised and which we have expected....

- Crime Statistics (FBI Data) for Bridgeport promised December of 2015 is not yet available
- Racial employment statistics by decade for 40 years to show police department employment relative to community population

If you see someone from the PD, ask someone from the PD why these numbers are so difficult to find?