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DEIB Value Statement

At Enterprise Bank, people and relationships come first. We encourage and foster a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging where everyone feels valued and respected. We are committed to a caring workplace that recognizes the importance of making a meaningful, positive difference in the lives of our team members, customers, and communities. Please [click here](#) for more information. To learn about Enterprise Bank's history and core values, [click here](#).



Greetings 2024!!

Hello and welcome to a great new year and a brand-new issue of the DEIB e-zine! I know we all have had a busy and wonderful holiday season. I enjoyed some time off and celebrated the holiday season with family and friends. I hope everyone else had a great holiday and end of the year. The past few months have been very busy here at the Bank as well!



The Salem branch supplied 50 pizzas to 700 children who participated in Salem's Annual Halloween party. The Veteran's resource group hosted a Veteran's Day breakfast to honor past and current veterans who have worked for Enterprise. The Bank also hosted four dinners to celebrate the spirit of the branches and the employees.



The Bank held the annual Santa Fun Raffle and Breakfast in November. The Tewksbury branch and friends volunteered at the community pantry to help hand out goods. The Chelmsford branch celebrated Diwali with employees and customers! Deck the doors was also brought back in full swing to the branches and back offices with the theme of "All I want for Christmas is...". They all looked great and congrats to the winners!



As we reflect on the past few months of 2023 and all the memories, we have created we can also look forward to 2024. A few people may have New Years Resolutions they want to start while others may just see what this year brings. For myself I want to focus on my career at the Bank and self-appreciation. I'm excited to begin my third year at the Bank and I'm ready to step up to any new challenges.



Personal views and opinions expressed here are those of individual volunteer contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Enterprise Bank.

Greetings 2024 (Cont'd)

I'm committed to putting my full effort into my work, while also appreciating myself more. So many of us are hard on ourselves and we have trouble looking at what we have accomplished. My focus this year is to celebrate myself and appreciate who I am and what I've done. I hope everyone can try to join me in this goal.

I hope everyone has a great 2024 and will appreciate themselves more and started making goals they can achieve. I want to thank all the contributors who wrote or helped develop this issue of the e-zine. I want to give a special thanks to Sophy Theam for always being on top of the e-zine and giving us all a chance to write about topics we are interested in. Thank you Sophy for all you do!! Please enjoy the first issue of this year's ezine!!

Megan Pardoe
Relationship Advisor
Nashua Main St branch



Contributor/DEIB E-Zine Committee Bios



Kevin Bruckenstein is the Internal Communications Specialist for Enterprise Bank. Formerly the Head of Marketing at FinMason, a fintech startup in Boston, Kevin specializes in writing, copyediting, messaging, and communications planning and execution. He earned his bachelor's degree in advertising and his master's degree in mass communication, with a concentration in communication law, from the University of Florida. In his spare time, he enjoys traveling, reading, gaming, and hiking.

Eddie Enea has been with Enterprise Bank since March of 2022. He is the Bank's Talent Acquisition Specialist. He adores his three beautiful children and says that he is terrified of how much they remind him of himself. Cooking is one of his passions, especially his Sunday dinner prep. He prefers Lake Winnepesaukee to any beach and misses the days of watching good football.



Kira Morehouse has been with Enterprise Bank since 2015 specializing in Digital Marketing. Kira has a B.A. in Communication Arts with a Cognate in Interpersonal Communication and Cultural Studies, and a Global M.B.A. with specialization in Corporate Strategy. As part of her undergraduate studies, Kira spent time studying abroad in Japan for six months, with focus on Language, Literature, Culture, and Zen Buddhism. In her spare time, Kira enjoys being a mother to her two daughters, going on family adventures, volunteering within her church community, and relaxing at home watching movies with her husband.

Contributor Bios, cont'd



Megan Pardoe is a Relationship Advisor at the Nashua Main Street branch. She currently serves as co-chair of the Pride C.O.R.P.S. ERG. She enjoys writing about LGBTQIA+, history, and women-related topics. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her boyfriend, Jonathan, and playing video games.

Tenesha Scarlett is one of our newer Enterprise Bank Team Members. She started with the Bank in October of 2023. Her position is DEIB Coordinator II. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in Sociology, specializing in Social Services. Her passions are spending time with her two boys Linton Jr (13) and Declan (8). She also enjoys performing with her band, Tee & The Gents. She loves her family and friends and loves to give back to the community.



Manpreet Singh joined the Bank in June 2023 as the Human Resources Intern. Manpreet is attending the University of Massachusetts- Lowell as an undergraduate pursuing a degree in Management Information Systems. He is also a member of the Army Reserves as a Human Resources Specialist. In his free time, Manpreet enjoys working out, travelling to new places, and spending quality time with friends and family.

Sophy Theam is the Manager—Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) at Enterprise Bank. In addition to co-chairing the Multicultural Alliance, she serves as an advisor for other employee resource groups and manages the Bank's DEIB program. Sophy enjoys watching historical/period dramas and high-action and investigative shows and movies. Her favorite superhero is Aquaman and she enjoys traveling! Her resolution in 2024 is to be healthy and happy!



Employee Resource Group Corner

What is an Employee Resource Group (ERG)?

Employee resource groups (ERGs), also called affinity groups, are employee groups that come together voluntarily around a common interest or background. Examples of common ERGs are those formed around race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, parental status, national origin, religion or belief, or generation. Please visit our DEIB page for more information and additional resources: [Employee Resource Groups | Enterprise Bank \(enterprisebanking.com\)](https://www.enterprisebanking.com)

ERG Name	ERG Leader(s)
Multicultural Alliance	Co-Chairs: Prema Nagathan and Sophy Theam Treasurer: Darshika Jain
Pride C.O.R.P.S.	Co-Chairs: Eddie Enea and Megan Pardoe
Veterans Resource Group	Co-Chairs: Robert Frechette and Karen Merrill
Working Parents Resource Group	Co-Chairs: Maryann Cash and Donna Saati
Young Professionals Resource Group	Co-Chairs: Samantha McNally and Jennifer Ingle

This edition, we are highlighting our **Working Parents Resource Group (WPRG)** as we are looking forward to another year of great information and connections. We have had more than 20 attendees at the Family Caregivers Workshop held in October. We have a number of topics to discuss. We look forward to planning, seeing, and connecting either in person or virtually. All team members are welcome to participate in WPRG events; if anyone is interested in helping us plan, please contact the co-chairs: Maryann Cash and Donna Saati.

The Emancipation Proclamation

By: Megan Pardoe

Most people know January 1st as New Year's Day. A time to celebrate the year ahead and make resolutions for the goals you want to accomplish. But January 1st also serves as the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation being enacted by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

On April 12th, 1861, the Civil War began in the United States, separating the country into two nations and sides. The "North" or the Union and the "South" or the Confederacy. The root cause of the war was the issue of slavery and if slavery would expand to the western territories, if slavery should be allowed in the States, and the conflict over state's rights. During this period Abraham Lincoln was serving as President and opposed slavery expanding into the western territories. In response to this, seven southern slave states seceded, from the Union to form their own nation. Thus, the Civil War began as secession from the Union is unconstitutional.

On January 1st, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation was put into act by President Lincoln. The document declared "That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free" (National Archives). This captured the hearts and souls of millions of Americans fighting and supporting the Union cause. But the document did have its limits.

The freedom granted was only given to slaves in states that had seceded from the Union and left slavery enacted in southern border states and parts of the South where the North and claimed victory. The most important note was that it's freedom was promised only if the Union won the Civil War.

But this did not delay the fight for freedom for those enslaved. Since the beginning of the Civil War slaves acted upon themselves to achieve their own freedom. The Emancipation Proclamation confirmed that the Union held a promise of freedom and that the war was fought for that purpose. It added moral force to the Union cause and at the end of the war almost 200,000 black soldiers had fought for their freedom and helped the Union claim victory over the Confederacy.

On this New Year's Day we should all reflect on the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation and its downfalls and triumphs it brought to the Union and those enslaved. Knowing our own history is one the best things we can do to reflect in the past and do better for the future.

Works Cited:

[The Emancipation Proclamation | National Archives](#)

[Transcript of the Proclamation | National Archives](#)

World Religion Day- January 21st

By: Manpreet Singh

Religion is an important aspect of many people's lives that plays a crucial role in shaping the values, morality, and personal identity of an individual. Religion serves different purposes for everyone. For some it is a source of hope, meaning and purpose. It may provide a framework of rules to navigate through the tough obstacles of life and answer the questions that one has about this complex world we live in. For others it can also bring a sense of community and cultural involvement by bringing together people through spirituality. Religion serves a global purpose as well by being a contributor to global peace, social progress, and ethical practices.

World Religion Day is celebrated every third Sunday of January to appreciate religion on a global level. World Religion Day will be observed this year on January 21st. The day serves to celebrate the richness and diversity of religions all around the world. The concept of World Religion Day began in Portland, Maine by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í Faith in 1947.

World Religion Day- January 21 (cont'd)

The day was first officially observed in 1950 to encourage people of all different faiths to have meaningful conversations about harmony and understanding between all humans. Religion since the beginning of recorded history has played a crucial role in civilization. Often creating the cultural norms of a civilization and leading to the diverse world that we live in. There is believed to be over 4,000 different religious groups around the world! Through conversations that promote the exchange of ideas we can appreciate the beauty of all faith systems and their contributions to the world.

On January 21st let's take a moment to appreciate the significance of religion in our communities and across the world. Despite the different paths taken by people in their spiritual journey, all religions share similar foundational qualities of compassion, equality, and the pursuit for a greater meaning to life.

What it comes down to is respecting each other's individuality and connecting through the commonality between all humans. At Enterprise Bank, we have an inclusive culture that welcomes people from all backgrounds to create a workplace that embraces diversity.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

By: Tenesha Scarlett

On Monday, January 15th, we will be celebrating the life and memory of arguably one of the greatest Civil Rights leaders in American history, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. When I was thinking about writing this article, so much came to my mind because he left such an amazing legacy in the pursuit of social justice and equality. A man I know so much about and have never met, yet feel like I know him. The causes that he fought and died for are still ongoing issues within marginalized communities. His assassination over 55 years ago still affects those who loved him, were touched by his teachings, and those who continue the fight for liberty and justice for all.

My earliest memory when I first heard his name was from my grandmother (Nana). Growing up in the church, she always admired his approach of non-violence during a time when there was nothing but violence towards the African American community. She was born in South Carolina in the late 1930s. She spoke about him with such passion and admiration. I remember her stories about the early days of the civil rights movement, and how a not so well-known preacher was working with various grassroots organizations looking to make changes in this country.

Most of us are familiar with Dr. King's "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington. This can be argued as his most polarizing speech during his fight for equality. I chose to look into more of his teachings and came across a message he delivered which is called "The Other America." I was looking up archival speeches of Dr. King and came across this particular one. He speaks of the differences between white/European Americans and everyone else who is in the "other" category. On one hand you have the American beauty, prosperity, education, human decency, and the youth have a bright future. In "The other America," you have those who struggle daily with little to no hope and are made to feel inferior as though their lives do not matter. Improper living conditions, lack of proper education and healthcare are just some of the many challenges the "other America" faces. In learning of this speech, one of the statements that really stood out to me was when he said, "Morality cannot be legislated, behavior can be regulated." The law cannot change the heart, it can restrain the heartless. The law cannot make a man love me, it can restrain him from lynching me." This is such a relevant message even in 2024.

The fight for civil rights doesn't start and end with Dr. King. He was merely a vessel put on this earth to stir up the hearts of man and challenge them to look within themselves to question what their morals and values are. His dream was to see men judged, not by the color of their skin, but the content of their character. His mission was for us to look at each other as brothers and sisters, not as

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (cont'd)

enemies. He, along with many civil rights leaders, endured much abuse, harassment, and in some cases assassination. It takes a great deal of courage to go against the systems that this country has put into place since its inception. To provide hope and encouragement is one of the greatest gifts and Dr. King was a great example of that. To end, in his final public speech, Dr. King stated "I just want to do God's will, and he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. I've looked over and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land!"

In closing, today we honor and remember a great leader of our nation. We continue to dream and make strides towards progress for a greater America.

Photos from this past February's Local MLK Jr. Day Celebrations with Enterprise Bankers in Haverhill for the Merrimack Valley NAACP's 40th Annual Breakfast, and Greater Lowell for the Annual Living the Dream Partners "Change Starts with Me" Celebration



Please follow this link ([Living the Dream \(mass.edu\)](https://www.mass.edu/living-the-dream)) to see more information about the annual Living the Dream event in Greater Lowell, for which we at Enterprise Bank are proud to be among the community partners. By visiting the link above, find details about how you can make a donation to the Living the Dream Scholarship which benefits local students who attend Middlesex Community College and the University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

Community Partners:

Afro-American Community Collaborative
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
Center for Hope & Healing • Coalition for a Better Acre
Community Team Work, Inc. • Enterprise Bank
Greater Lowell Community Foundation • Helen's House
Lowell City of Learning • Lowell Community Health Center

Black History Month

By: Tenesha Scarlett

When I think of Black History Month, I think about how much I love being black and celebrating black history and black culture. The celebration is in February and designed to honor the achievements and contributions of African Americans throughout history. It originated from the efforts of Carter G. Woodson, who wanted to highlight the often-overlooked impacts of the black experience in the United States. Some of the well know key figures are Rosa Parks, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman and Malcolm X. The months serves as a reminder to acknowledge and show appreciation for the rich diversity and the resilience of the Black community.

Black History Month (cont'd)

In addition to honoring our black heroes and trailblazers, we also honor the struggles, contributions and achievements through the black lens as citizens of the United States.

Some of those highlights are the civil rights movements, cultural achievements and movements for social justice, which are still relevant and ongoing to this day. The month, for me, also serves as a reminder of how far we've come, however how much more we are capable of. The black culture has so much influence in all aspects, from music, fashion, entertainment, food and more.

Black American cultural influences have profoundly shaped various aspects of American society. In music, genres like jazz, blues, gospel, hip hop, and R&B have roots in the Black Community, influencing the broader musical landscape.

Some icons such as Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Etta Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson, and Beyonce have made lasting impacts across the musical industry. Some have passed on but their legacy and influence as musical icons is eternal. In literature, the Harlem Renaissance brought about well known writers like Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. We also had a amazing writer in Maya Angelou, who famously penned, "And Still I Rise." Black artists have also played a role in visual arts, with Jean-Michel Basquiat, who challenged the visual norms.

In sports, black athletes like Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan, Serena Williams, and Arthur Ashe have broken many barriers and have left their mark in each of their respective sports. Some were the first to ever play in their sport and dealt with heavy criticism but persevered and are some the greatest athletes in history. Additionally, black culture influences extend to fashion, language, cuisine and activism, contributing significantly to the diverse fabric of American culture.

IN HONOR OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MADAN SARA

A documentary film
by Haitian journalist
Etant Dupain.

02.28.2024
5:30pm | 8:00pm
Richard and Nancy Donahue Family
Academic Arts Center
240 Central St, Lowell

This powerful film offers a unique perspective on the vital role that Madan Saras plays in Haitian society and the inspiring stories of their determination and resourcefulness.



Scan here to sign up



Representation Matters: Senator Tammy Baldwin

By: Megan Pardoe

On February 11th, 2023, US Senator Tammy Baldwin from Wisconsin will turn sixty-two years old. You may be wondering why the birthday of a former House of Representative and Senator should be celebrated by all. This is because Senator Baldwin was the first openly LGBTQIA+ member of the House of Representatives and Senator elected in 1999 and 2013.

Tammy Baldwin grew up in Wisconsin and was raised by her grandparents. This was because her mother struggled with mental health issues and addiction. This forced Tammy to mature fast and care for herself and her mother. But when Tammy turned nine, she grew ill and suffered from a disease like spinal meningitis. Her grandparents struggled to pay for her three months stay in the hospital as their insurance refused to list Tammy as a dependent. Even after Tammy was better no insurance provider would cover her for any cost because she was ill before. This inspired Tammy to fix the system that had harmed her grandparents.

Senator Baldwin then started her journey into public service when she graduated from law school in 1989. In 1992 she was elected to the Wisconsin State Assembly and served three terms. Then in 1999 she broke the glass ceiling for the LGBTQIA+ community by being the nation's first openly gay member of Congress. As a former member of the house and current Senator, Baldwin has dedicated herself to serving the state of Wisconsin. She helped pass the Affordable Care Act with President Obama, addressed growing student debt, and helped to guarantee Wisconsin products are protected in US markets.

Tammy Baldwin is an important model of representation for the LGBTQIA+ community. Being the first openly gay member of Congress came with some backlash. But Baldwin held herself high and did not stop working to improve her home state. She also serves as a role model to those in the LGBTQIA+ community who prefer to keep their sexuality to themselves but still be open about who they are. Tammy has done the same for years in Congress by putting her work first but is not afraid to go out with her partner Maria Brisbane.

February 11th is a great day to celebrate a key role model in the LGBTQIA+ community and her work for Wisconsin. Tammy has worked hard to be where she is today by putting her work first while keeping her identity a key part of who she is. We should all celebrate the birthday of Tammy Baldwin.

Nirvana Day/Parinirvana

By: Eddie Enea

When people talk to me about Nirvana, I'm instantly transported to the flannel wearing, loose-jeaned days of middle-school, spending hours that I'll never get back listening to grunge rock.

Thankfully, I don't have to relive those days on Parinirvana Day celebrated this year on February 15th. This day commemorates the point on the journey that is Buddhism, where devotees finally experience nothingness.

Logically, we have a difficult time wrapping our heads around this. Ask a Buddhist and they'll nod, or smile, and maybe even help you to understand by telling you it's neither this nor that, it has no being, or that there is no example of it because there is no frame of reference for it.

Get it?

I'll admit, it's not exactly the easiest thing to understand. Don't worry though, you're not alone. Monks have tried to understand this concept for over 2500 years, so you're in good company.

Nirvana Day/Parinirvana (cont'd)

Imagine a life where you desire nothing, where you are released from your own suffering. That's Nirvana.

But there's more to it. In fact, there's so much more to attaining this that it can mean different things to different people. You can't have Nirvana until you know about Moksha, Samsara, Dharma, the 10 fetters, and of course, the Noble Eightfold Path. Don't be overwhelmed, one person we know for sure reached Nirvana, so there's hope.

Siddhartha Guatama left the life he knew, was deeply troubled by the pains of people he saw around him in abundance, sat under a tree for a while, and was enlightened about life in the deepest and most intimate way anyone could imagine. He solved the mystery of life and death, became free from hatred, fear, greed, ignorance, and all mental poisons. His enlightenment was so complete, that today, we call him Buddha. It was because of this enlightenment, that Buddha finally reached Nirvana at his death at 80 years of age.

A lot has happened in 2500 years and to think of being free of all these mental roadblocks can be daunting. The interesting thing though, is that life has a funny way of inviting us to that peace, or at least hinting at the possibility of it.

I remember taking an elective in college that required me to visit the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. I roamed, got bored, and giggled at some of the statues. But something drew me to the Asian exhibit. It turns out Samurai swords look a lot bigger in the movies. Then I saw a room with tall doors where people were walking in and out of a dark room. Curiosity drew me closer, and I stepped in.

There were statues representing the Buddha in different positions. One statue pulled me closer. I stared at it for quite some time, even sitting on a ledge along the back wall where I lost track of time. It was as though that statue looked into me. There was wave after wave of calmness and an unbiased welcoming that I can only describe as peaceful, and emotional. I know it wasn't Nirvana. But I know it felt good. I've been chasing that feeling ever since.



Photo: Sophy Theam

On February 15th, focus on something or just close your eyes. Pause and hold yourself in that moment and imagine being released from the things you think you need.

If it's any consolation, Kurt Cobain would totally approve.

Transgender Day of Visibility

By: Eddie Enea

March 31st will mark this year's **Transgender Day of Visibility**. Tough topic to talk about lately. Social media showcases a disturbing and current temperature on views and opinions about members of the LGBTQ+, trans community. You don't have to scroll too far on social media before something related to this topic comes up. It's a news outlet trigger-topic, clickbait, a heated subject. The comments on these posts can be incredibly revealing of social tolerance, and ignorance. Comments asking why is this relevant, why is this news, why is this important?

It's important because kids are dying.

Statistic after statistic has proven that students and youth in the LGBTQ+ community that identify as transgender receive more hostility for their lifestyle than those within the LGTBTQ+ community that don't.

- 320 trans and gender-diverse people were killed this year (Forbes). This number by the way, is as close to a guess as we're going to get.

Transgender Day of Visibility (cont'd)

- The day Jacob Williamson turned 18 he made the choice to identify as a man and used he/him pronouns. Twenty-eight days later, his body was found on July 4, 2023, fifteen feet from a rural backcountry road (WCNC Charlotte).
- Approximately 586 anti-LGBTQ+ bills were introduced to state legislature across the country, most of them targeting the transgender community (ABC News).

And yet, grit defines the trans community. Despite the clear message and acts of hate, within the past 5 years, the number of teens and young adults who identify as trans...has doubled (SpectrumNews).

These are real people, with real feelings, real risk, real deaths, and an amount of bravery that could break the strongest of us. But not this community.

March 31st is Transgender Day of Visibility. All they are asking is to be seen for who they are, not what others think they should be.

Travelogues

Kira's Travelogue: A Visit to Our Sweet Home Alabama

This past summer I attended a family reunion in Northeast Alabama which was something to look forward to since it would specifically take place on the land, which is still owned by members of our family, where my grandparents once lived side-by-side next door to my great grandparents. It is the land where my mother was born and lived the first few years of her life before the family resettled in Michigan during the Great Migration of African Americans from Jim Crow South.

My grandparents moved North in the early 1950's with me being among the first generation born outside of Alabama and other southern state such as South Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia. Since we decided to drive from our home in New Hampshire, which was essentially a 21-hour road-trip, we were able to pass through each of these states on our way to our destination, to pay homage to some of our ancestral heritage.

Upon arrival to our destination, one of our first stops was to see some local landmarks I had been hearing about since childhood, specifically the official state historical marker that had been installed to tell the story of my maternal great grandfather who was a high school principal and educator who touched the lives of many of his students at what was at one time a segregated colored only high-school. His name was Mack Matthews, and at one point the town of Ozark, Alabama named the school after him in his honor, so this is something I had always wanted to visit in person since my family has always been proud of this legacy.



In addition to visiting the high school, we visited some of the family gravesites, including one cemetery that dates to the early 1800's prior to Alabama's statehood. Local pioneers and their enslaved people, both groups to which my ancestors belong, are buried in this ancient land which is now owned by the United States as an Army base which we had to gain clearance to enter. It was exciting to go through the process of getting permission to enter, and then actually see and touch the land where my relatives, some of whom were born in the late 1700's, are now laid to rest. I could look around at the trees and dense forest around the cemetery and just imagine what it must have been like to be alive back in those days.

Travelogues

Kira's Travelogue: A Visit to Our Sweet Home Alabama

Eventually, we were able to visit the land where my grandparents had once lived as next-door neighbors with my grandfather's parents who owned that property and settled it so that they could have a place where all the family could settle and call home. Although the actual structures of the houses in Newton, Alabama are now gone except for a few foundational pieces such as the front steps made of stone and brick, and an old storage shed as monuments to the past - The land remains and is well maintained.

As part of the family reunion group, in a caravan, using Zoom as a means for each car to hear our lead organizer guide us on a tour of my great grandfather's daily bicycle route from his work in the Newton Alabama Electric Company...past one local elementary school where my older cousins were forced to racially desegregate back in the 1960's, versus the nearby colored school where my grandma Pearl's father had been the principal back in the 1940's... in between both schools is the long road where the family property is located.



Upon arriving at the family land, all members of the caravan parked their cars, turned off the Zoom meeting, and were invited to exit vehicles to explore the lay of the land on foot. We spent a good amount of time here before eventually being ushered back into our cars to travel a very short way further down the road where the property adjacent to the family land is a church cemetery which is set back from the street, nestled away is an eternal resting place for many of my Boyd ancestors including my Grandfather Ike who is buried next to my great grandparents John Gore Boyd and Lizzie Scott Boyd, along with majority of their children as there is only one remaining survivor among us now who is thankfully still healthy and strong at the age of 93 years!

Ultimately, it meant a lot to me that I was able to see and be near my grandfather Ike's headstone, especially now since my grandmother Pearl (his wife) passed away earlier this year in March. I was wearing a piece of my grandmother's jewelry and with intention I reached out and inconspicuously touched this piece of jewelry against the headstone to symbolically reunite the two of them since her body is now laid to rest in Michigan.

Eventually, we left that cemetery as one of the last stops of our visit to Alabama. The caravan turned the family Zoom call back on, and our reunion guide pointed out to us all that on the other side of the cemetery is the family's church - a little white chapel type of building, with the current pastor also being one of our Boyd cousins, this church has also been our faith home for many generations.

A story was relayed to us over the Zoom call about how our great grandfather Ike used to walk from his house up the road, passing by the church cemetery, to the chapel each Sunday and along the way he would pick up the neighborhood children (many of whom were related to us) so that by the time he arrived at the church they had been following him like a little trail of ducklings in a row behind him, all dressed up in their Sunday clothes. It brought a spark of joy.



Travelogues

Finally, from the church, we landed with the caravan of cars back at the school where we first started our sightseeing, the one which was named after my grandma Pearl's father, Mack Matthews, since he had been the principal there. I learned something new that day, as I had not known that many of the Boyd side of the family attended that school as children of the 40's, 50's, and 60's since it was the "colored" school until desegregation, and it was also within walking distance. It was a full circle moment for me to realize this, as I had only thought of that school as exclusively belonging to my grandma's legacy not knowing it is also part of her husband's/my grandfather's legacy too.



Just as we left the family reunion group to embark upon the 21-hour long drive ahead of us, something interesting happened. We had driven a bit on a back road to eventually get back onto the highway. However, before we could get too far, the road before us started to populate out of nowhere with a flock of red and black birds – cardinals to be exact. The thing about cardinals is that they are commonly seen as a sign that a loved one who has passed away has come to visit. They are a symbol of reassurance to those who are grieving loss. So, all of this in mind, there we were the only car on the road there headed to the highway to go home from Alabama, being stopped by one or two birds at first. Then a few more, and a few more kept coming out of the foliage and trees on either side of the road until there was a deep flock of red with a few darker colored black cardinals scattered in front of our car which forced us to a complete stop.

My daughters and I were in awe for a quick moment, as I blurted out, "Look, it's my ancestors coming out to wish good-bye and safe travels!" No sooner than I said these words, my impatient husband honked our car horn and started to drive forward, scattering them all away even though they seemed reluctant to leave us as we had been reluctant to leave the nearby reunion caravan. I felt that these cardinal birds were a spiritual message acknowledging that they saw us and that they were happy we had come to visit the land, the cemetery, the church, all the places and all our cousins during the reunion.

It feels great knowing all these places are now another destination which we can refer to as our home – our ancestral home.



Travelogues

Megan Pardoe: Universal's Halloween Horror Nights

This past September I went on my first ever road trip! My fiancé, Jonathan and I drove down to Florida to see his family and go to Universal's Halloween Horror Nights. Every September to October at the Orlando theme park they host a spooky celebration for Halloween. This year they had ten haunted houses including: Stranger Things, The Exorcist, and The Last of Us. The park also has scare zones throughout, great food, and a few rides are open. My top three highlights included eating the vegan "Voodoo Doll" doughnut, going through the Stranger Things house, and meeting the leader of this year's Halloween Horror Nights theme "Never go Alone." I had such a wonderful time during Halloween Horror Nights and driving for my first road trip. I'd recommend any fans of horror to go at least once and experience the frights and great food!



Megan with the Leader of HHN



Megan & Jonathan at Voodoo Doughnuts

Sophy Theam: Echo Forest Farms Cabin, Mt. Holly, VT



The last time we traveled out of the country was in 2019 when my husband and I traveled to Southeast Asia, mainly visiting Cambodia, Thailand and Singapore. Since then, we have not traveled abroad. We only traveled one time by plane since the pandemic and the rest of our trips were by car because it was the most affordable way for us to travel.

One place that was very memorable this past summer was a three-night stay at an off-grid cabin at Forest Echo Farm Cabins at Mt Holly, Vermont, about a 3 hour and 45-minute drive from our home in Chelmsford. My husband, Sayon, our two kids, my two sisters, my nephew, and Mom stayed in a two-bedroom cabin that only had a solar panel to power the refrigerator, some gas for the stove, and two fireplaces to keep us warm. We went in late August so the nights and mornings were quite chilly in the mountains. There was no internet and any other electricity available, except for a couple of times we had to go down to the main house to power our son's nebulizer.

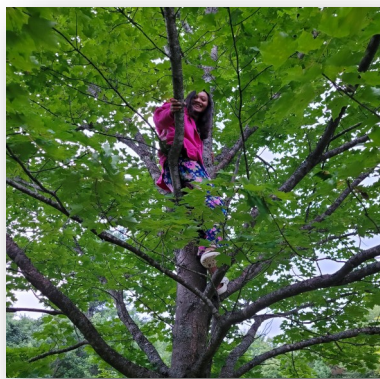
Some of you might be saying, please, haven't you been camping? Well, we have, in fact for many years while we dated and early on in our marriage we went camping often. We took our kids twice.

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The last time we camped was just a couple of summers ago on Cape Cod when we were swarmed by mosquitoes – even in our tents, and the rain poured down on us like there was no tomorrow. So now our kids now refuse to go tenting. Plus our backs now can't take sleeping directly on the ground anymore which was how we always slept, no matter how many layers of mats we put down.

Anyhow, the off the grid cabining experience was really wonderful for our souls! My daughter who's not so athletic climbed trees, my nephew who was always gaming with his friends made a nice spear/walking stick and loved fishing and jumping into the freezing cold natural pool at Buttermilk Falls nearby, and our eight year old boy loved being able to use a boxcutter to make his own spear (with supervision of course). Mom even didn't complain about missing her You-tube shows on cooking and Buddhist sermons! We all had great laughs playing games at night. Even I was able to try a hand at watercolor, of course my daughter the family artist fixed a few things and made it so much better!

Going forward it seems we can only go cabining with our kids (and Mom) from now on. They really enjoyed the experience and they now want to do this at least once a year, and for longer than the three nights at a time. The only request from our kids is that they want to try different locations! It was truly a great way to decompress and get our minds ready for the "back to school" rush the following week.



New Year Traditions from Around the World

(Read more: www.thepioneerwoman.com/holidays-celebrations/new-year-around-the-world)

The following traditions and customs are done in different countries to drive out bad luck, let go of the past, and bring in good luck!

1. Ireland: Banging bread on the walls
2. Johannesburg, South Africa: Throw old furniture out the window
3. Greece: Bake a coin into a cake and smash pomegranates
4. Switzerland: Drop ice cream on the floor
5. Spain: Eat 12 grapes at midnight
6. Colombia: Carry empty suitcases around the block
7. Brazil: Toss white flowers into the ocean
8. Japan: Eat soba noodles
9. China: Decorate in red
10. Puerto Rico: Clean homes, streets, cars and more!
11. Czech Republic: Cut apples
12. Italy: Eat lentils
13. Turkey: Sprinkle salt
14. Denmark: Jump off chairs at midnight
15. France: New Year's Feast—"le réveillon de la Saint-Sylvestre"
16. Germany: Lucky Pig—"Glücksschwein"

**Our DEIB E-Zine
Committee
wishes every-
one a happy and
healthy 2024!**