



Weekly Newsletter

05 Feb 2023



Artwork by Cookie Rivera

[Visit Our Website](#)

"Won't it be wonderful when black history and Native American history and Jewish history and all of U.S. history is taught from one book. Just U.S. history."

– Maya Angelou

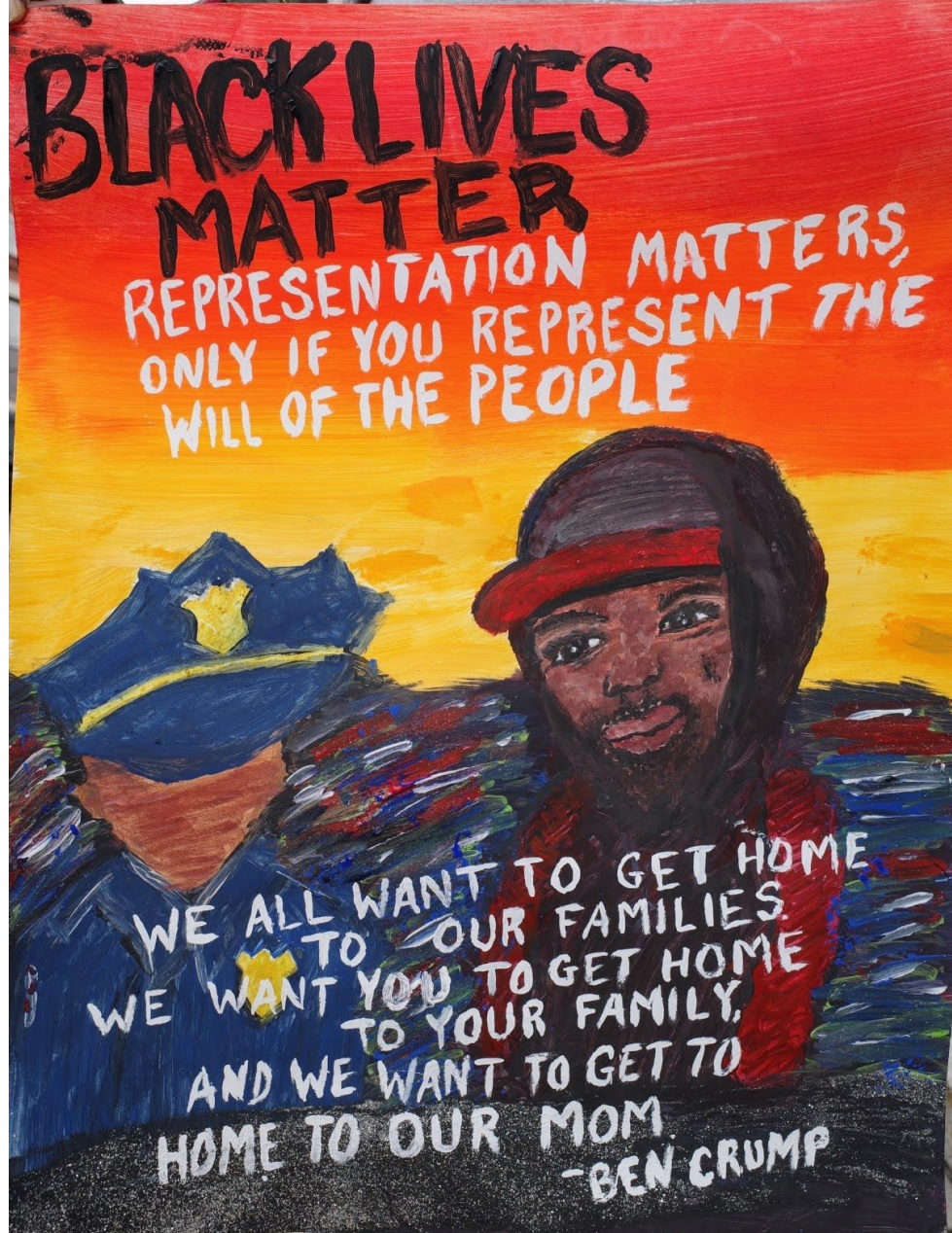
Embrace



February 5

This Week

Sunday is expected to be almost tropical after the blast of cold air that arrived Friday leaves us, so why not come down to the post office and enjoy the sunshine and warm conversations? We will share updates on ARC's work and how you can contribute. We look forward to seeing old friends and welcoming new ones!



Last Week

Gathering the morning after videos were released of the murder of Tyre Nichols at the hands of police officers in Memphis gave us pause to put our work into perspective. The images of yet another Black man crying out for his mother as he was being killed takes a heavy toll on us, especially those who are most impacted by racism. We mourn the loss of "peaceful" and "polite" Tyre, a father, photographer, skateboarder, friend and so much more. Here is a thoughtful and informative reflection from Anti-Racism Daily on what this loss means for us: [Tyre Nichols Deserved So Much More](#).

As we processed this trauma, we recognized the importance of continuing our work for justice here in Westerly. Supporting the Westerly Schools equity audit remains a priority. Last Sunday we discussed the importance of supporting an unencumbered process and working to mitigate misinformation, dismissive comments, and attacks on the equity audit. See below for more information

We meet every **Sunday from 11:00-1:00** on the steps of the Westerly Post Office on High Street. Join us anytime!

Empower

Equity Audit Update

During the Westerly School Committee meeting on Wednesday, Feb 1 Dr. Garceau offered a thorough update of the equity audit. He explained the purpose of focus groups as one method of gathering information from the school community and clearly explained the reasoning behind using focus groups based on specific identities, a common qualitative research tool.

Dr. Garceau answered all questions from School Committee members. Two School Committee members, questioned the need for a focus group for BIPOC and other marginalized people with one member stating, "The equity in Westerly has nothing to do with the color of people's skin." Another member said the focus group format, "assumes that people want to be segregated" and implied that it violates the district's discrimination policy. They later admitted, "I wasn't paying a lot of attention, I'll be honest, because I didn't support it" when referring to a slide deck shared by PCG, the consulting group conducting the audit.

In response, the School Committee chair pointed out that no one questioned focus groups for parents of special education students in previous years, and asked, "What exactly are we afraid of?" by using focus groups. One more School Committee member reminded everyone that people of color were "laughed at, ridiculed, discredited, and called liars" after sharing their experience at previous meetings.

Clearly, your voice is needed to show your support for the equity audit, to combat misinformation, and ensure the equity audit proceeds without impediments by those willfully ignorant to the process of assessing where our schools are in relationship to caring for all of Westerly students. We will continue to share resources at our Sunday gatherings and in our newsletter to aid in this effort. Thank you to all who have begun speaking out on social media and in other spaces. You can see the [full video of the meeting here](#).



ESSAY CONTEST
HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
MARCH 2023

Essay Contest: Honoring Women's History Month

Open to **9th grade students** in social studies classes from Chariho, Exeter-West Greenwich, Narragansett, North Kingstown, Prout, South Kingstown, and Westerly High Schools, and 9th grade Home School students. **\$100 award to top winner in each high school.** [Click here to read the contest details.](#) Spread the word!

Town Meetings

Westerly ARC encourages those who can to attend Westerly Town Council and School Committee meetings. Your presence and involvement is an important way to show our elected officials that creating a more equitable and inclusive town and school system must always be a priority.



February 13 Town Council Meeting, 5:30

February 15 School Committee Meeting, 5:00

February 27 Town Council Meeting, 5:30

Here is the link to meeting schedules and agendas:

<https://clerkshq.com/westerly-ri>

Act

Here are a few ongoing ways you can support the work of Westerly ARC.

[View our Calendar](#)



Share

Spread the news!
Forward this newsletter



Donate

ARC advocate Amanda
Dunn continues to



Show Up

Stop by one of our
weekly gatherings, join

to at least one person you think might be interested in it. Ask them to sign up for our newsletter on the [Westerly ARC website](#).

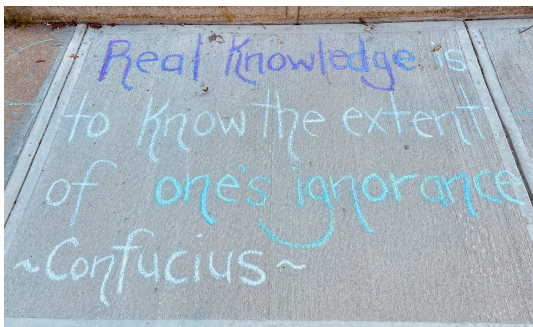
Don't forget to like, subscribe, comment, and share on our social media posts!

collect toiletries, personal care items, and non-perishable food to distribute to our community. Please bring your donations to Amanda at our Sunday rallies. Your kindness and generosity are greatly appreciated.

one of the events listed in this newsletter, attend a town meeting, etc.

*"We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."
— Elie Wiesel*

Educate



Education Being Attacked from All Sides

It's interesting to note that there is an ongoing effort to prevent the study of black history especially today as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis rejected the African American A.P. course being piloted across the country. The Florida

Department of Education said the course "lacks educational value." In the [February 6, 2023 edition of The New Yorker](#) opinion columnist Jelani Cobb writes "The state's intent seems to be to provide white Floridians, from a young age , with a version of history that they can be comfortable with, regardless of whether it is true."

He continues, "Today, during a period in which states, particularly with Republican-led legislatures, have taken to removing books from libraries, stoking fears about [critical race theory](#), and eviscerating diversity-equity-and-inclusion programs in schools—forty-two have proposed restrictive measures—it's scarcely surprising that a discipline built on an interest in exploring Black humanity would find itself in the crosshairs. That such a thing would happen in Florida is even less so."

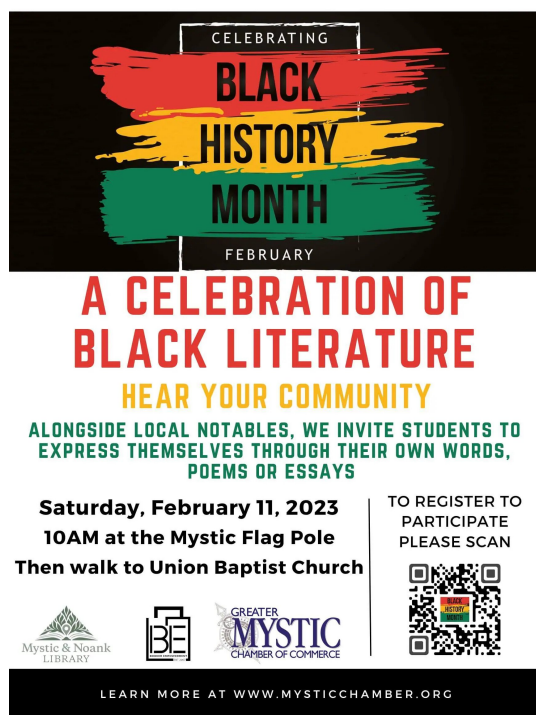
You can read the entire article here: [Ron DeSantis Battles the African American A.P. Course—and History](#)

Feb 4

CT State Poet Laureate at the La Grua Center

Antoinette Brim-Bell, Connecticut's 8th State Poet Laureate, will present her poems and reflect on her own life, the power of words for social change, and

the importance of poems and spoken word in her community. **Saturday, Feb. 4 at 2:00 pm.** [Find more information here.](#)




CELEBRATING
BLACK HISTORY MONTH
FEBRUARY

A CELEBRATION OF BLACK LITERATURE
HEAR YOUR COMMUNITY

ALONGSIDE LOCAL NOTABLES, WE INVITE STUDENTS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH THEIR OWN WORDS, POEMS OR ESSAYS

Saturday, February 11, 2023
10AM at the Mystic Flag Pole
Then walk to Union Baptist Church

TO REGISTER TO PARTICIPATE PLEASE SCAN



MYS TIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
MYS TIC & NOANK LIBRARY

LEARN MORE AT WWW.MYSTICCHAMBER.ORG

February 11

Mystic Celebration of Black History Month

The Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Mystic & Noank Library and **Kevin Booker Jr.** are presenting our second annual Celebration of Black History Month Program. Saturday, February 11 from 10am to 12:30pm, starting at the Mystic flag pole.

Find [more details here.](#)

February 21

How to Talk about Race in 2023 with Ray Rickman

“How to Talk About Race in 2023” enables us to discuss race and racism with people who may be different from us. Ray is an expert on helping individuals talk with others about race in a positive manner. The subject of language use and how to value people who may be different or new to your community is part of this discussion. Ray enjoys helping people find a positive personal role to play in improving race relations during these challenging times.



Culture Calendar

February is Black History Month

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African

American History Month, the event

grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.



The Black History Month 2023 theme, “Black Resistance,” explores how “African Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression, in all forms, especially the racial terrorism of lynching, racial pogroms and police killings,” since the nation’s earliest days.

“Black people have sought ways to nurture and protect Black lives, and for autonomy of their physical and intellectual bodies through armed resistance, voluntary emigration, nonviolence, education, literature, sports, media, and legislation/politics.” Read more about how Black people have demonstrated [Resistance](#) here.

And you can learn even more about Black History Month at [The Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#).

28 Days of Black History

Want to learn something new about Black history in just five minutes a day? We recommend signing up for Anti-Racism Daily’s [28 Days of Black History](#). You will receive a daily email to honor and celebrate Black history. Each email includes a cultural artifact, action steps, and discussion questions. Sign up and tell us what you learn!

Up Next

Calendar of Events

February 11	Mystic Celebration of Black History Month , 10:00 am at the Mystic flag pole
February 13	Town Council Meeting, 5:30 pm
February 15	School Committee Meeting, 5:00 pm
February 27	Town Council Meeting, 5:30 pm



Westerly Anti-Racism Coalition

Join our weekly gatherings

Sundays 11-1

Downtown Westerly Post Office steps



westerlyarc@gmail.com

You received this email because you signed up on our website or at one of our events.

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