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FEBRUARY 2021 | VOL. 34

SEMAJI

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BCRC

BCRC is a growing, resource-based organization that strengthens community capacity by providing professional support to organizations and individuals in need.



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A Message From The Team

Like most newsletters, the SEMAJI' Newsletter should be accessible, informative, and engaging. It is the voice of BCRC, albeit a whisper in the midst of many voices in our community. It introduces you to the incredibly diverse thought, philosophy and action that impact our community every day. Through this newsletter, we offer a glimpse into our organization, while we use this monthly to stimulate our outreach. It is the update of the community's activities, but it can also be created by you.

Enjoy this edition, and look out for our Community News Updates that will present information on the status, needs and priorities of the English Speaking Black Communities of Montreal.

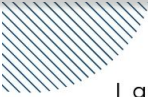


Clarence Bayne's Interview for CBC Changemaker

1. What is a changemaker? It is a sense-making action to start a conversation around this question by the postulation, " anyone can be a changemaker". This is the inclusive response. And it is true in the sense that all intelligent life forms act to overcome the inhospitality of external environments, that either has a direct or indirect impact on life or its purpose. I will offer the hypothesis that that is the reproduction of self and its perpetuation through the life of offspring and the vitality of communities of belonging. The life form of the human species is not only capable of thought, but also adapts, changes in itself, and is constantly creating responses to events/happenings in order to maximize our chances for perpetuating life and improving its quality over time and space. We are by the nature of things change makers. The real question is at what stage of life and in what context do I consider myself an innovator or a significant changemaker. Most of us are not that superman hero whose responses and choices alter the course of the entire "world". The relevance of our "change-making" must be measured and assessed in relation to others and the environments around us.

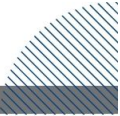
I was part of a network of change-makers that found a way to leave the Caribbean to come to Canada to study, to develop new ways to do things and react to events. I was part of a network of Black students that found ways to survive in an inhospitable environment and act to improve their objective and subjective wellbeing. I am part of a network of persons that must continue to find ways to live by using ingenuity to overcome the socio-economic and psycho-social barriers that we face as a result of competitive rivalry between sub-groups of the species expressed as oppressive and abusive use of power motivated by fear and greed. I use the concept of a network because I believe that theoretically the "superman innovator" of Schumpeterian economic theory is thinkable but in real life change-makers require the collaboration of a network of agents to achieve large scale change: change that produces benefits that are shared equitably and on a collective scale. Our responses to COVID-19 are an example of the network concept of the change-makers engaging in collaborations essential to eliminating the fear generated by the threat of the disease to the existence and vitality of the human species.

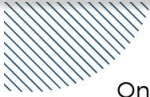
I came to Canada in 1955 to go to the University of British Columbia on the assumption that I will be able to develop the capacity to change things to the greater benefit of myself and a community.



I graduated in 1959 with a master's in Economics and came to Montreal. My intention was to return to Trinidad ultimately and help change the relationships in a society that fostered the oppression and strangulation of African, Asiatic and non-British peoples for the benefit of Expatriate inheritors and absentee owners. I was one of a network of potential change-makers that survived the surprises of Canadian anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination, that actively engaged in a plan to return to change the Caribbean landscape. But marriage and a child four years after my marriage in November 1960 changed that for good. I came to understand and to arrive at the rationalization that change had to be on a larger canvas than that of Trinidad and Tobago or the British West Indies. My social entrepreneurial responses to my environment shifted from the Caribbean to the Canadian social and economic ecosystem. Neither I nor most other persons saw me as a leader of the Schumpeter entrepreneur type. But I remember promising myself that if I was going to live here and have children being educated in the Canadian school system that this country would have to change to reflect whom I believe myself to be. Moreover, I was determined that my children would not suffer the indignities that Blacks in Little Burgundy, Hog Town, and Halifax suffered in the Canadian School system. So my initial academic interest in community development changed its focus to cultural and social change in the arts and educational sectors. I became engaged between 1960 and 1964 in the emerging student movement at McGill and Sir George Williams and Loyola to confront racism in the Schools, rental markets, the labour market, the hospitality industry, the immigration laws and practices, the arts and cultural expression, the Church, the taxi industry, health and social services.

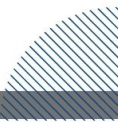
I was motivated by the fear that my children would be racialized and denied the opportunity to develop the ingenuity capacity necessary to grab the opportunities to succeed in what turned out to be a socially and economically challenging situation; and one that either misappropriated or ignored the relevance of my culture; or the history of Black contributions to Quebec and Canada. Also as a Black coming to Canada in the mid-fifties and sixties, I was prepared by a number of factors for large-scale community change. Some of them were external and some internal to Canada: I came to Canada as a young anti - British Colonialist that was schooled in the politics of Eric Williams attack on British colonial capitalism (set out in his work Capitalism and Slavery) and the promotion of Caribbean Federalism as a strategy to overcome the debilitation of the archipelago by the exploitation by British, French, Spanish and Portuguese capitalism and slavery. In addition, at UBC I was educated to value the economic advantages of Federalism for Canada and to create a society different from the United States which practiced a national social and economic policy of oppression of Blacks based on a thesis of the racial superiority of Whites.

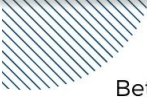




Once in Quebec, like many other English-speaking Black immigrants, I supported the movement towards multiculturalism, a Federal state, and the French rejection of what resembled British colonial domination and oppression similar to that experienced in the Caribbean. But we quickly realized that Canada was not structured to give equal rights and opportunity to Blacks and Asiatics, nor to the indigenous peoples. We began to realize that the American South was not as far away as we thought from the campuses of Mc Gill, Sir George Williams, Loyola, the University of Montreal. It was in Little Burgundy. It was in Halifax Nova Scotia, New Brunswick. Reinforced by the Black world renaissance of the fifties and sixties and the liberation movements against old colonial systems, from the campuses of Mc Gill and Sir George a group of us began to seriously re-examine our position in Quebec and Canadian society. There were many factors and influences operating and vying for influence. Between 1960 and 1970 The McGill and Concordia campuses and student ghettos around the downtown campuses created spaces for debate among students, World scholars (CLR James, Lloyd Best, William Demas, Stokeley Carmichael, Kari Levitt) and community leaders (Dr. Dorothy Wills, Carl Whittaker, Alfie Roberts, Professor Clarence Bayne, Carl Taylor, Winston Nicholls, Leyton Hutson, Dr. Leo Bertley, Leroy Butcher, Roosevelt Douglas, Reverent Este, Mr. Stanley Clyke, Richard Leslie, etc). From this debate, we defined the mission and mandates that launched social entrepreneurial organizations in the community.

I became one of the key architects of the new structures. I worked in collaboration with Dr. Dorothy Wills, Richard Leslie Ashton Lewis, Carl Whittaker, Curtis George, Dr. Leo Bertley, Carl Taylor, Winston Nicholls, Ricardo Gill, Garvin Jeffers, Dr. Horace Goddard, Michael Gittens, to name a few. These new organizations were quite different in their approaches and methods to the established organization created by the indigenous Black populations concentrated in Little Burgundy. The new Black organizations were constituted largely of Black immigrants that arrived here from the Caribbean, Africa, and the African diaspora in the sixties and seventies and after. They were students, domestic workers, refugees, sponsored persons under the liberated immigration laws of the sixties and seventies. The population in Quebec as per the Census numbered 6000 in 1960-61. Approximately 5000 of this population lived in the little Burgundy district in Montreal. A study on the demographics of the Blacks in Montreal conducted by Professor Bayne, Anama Joy, et al in 1986 estimates that approximately 59 000 Blacks came to Quebec between 1969 and 1983. (0 percent of this group came from the Caribbean. However, the population was fragmented and lacked the unity of voice that characterized the small community of Blacks in Little Burgundy. The first order of business was to organize to find this collective voice. That is where my entry into the business of community development began actively.

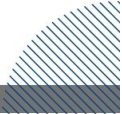




Between 1963 and 1995 I had become engaged as a Founding member, President or VP of the key new and dynamic English-speaking Black agencies in Quebec, and the Co-founder, and President (1970 -1971) of the National Black Coalition of Canada. I created the Trinidad and Tobago Association in 1963 and wrote its first constitution with the support of a fellow Trinidadian, Arthur Goddard. This was in direct response to the voiceless status of the West Indian population of the West Indian population in Quebec. We made a commitment to our very pro-Black and Federalist colleagues of the time that this was only a stepping stone to the creation of a West Indian Association and the establishment of a Caribbean Indian House. The Jamaican Association under the leadership of Ivanhoe Morrison was supportive of the plan. We were not able to get sufficient groups to sign the agreement for creating the Caribbean Indian Association but we were successful in establishing a West Indian House in 1974.

This was entirely due to my organizing and selling the plan to a network of Caribbean students and Caribbean residents. This opened up the discourse between the leadership of the West Indian Island Associations and the Pan Canadian Black leadership. It had the effect of bridging the gaps in cross-culture communication caused by the fragmentation in the community as a result of dispersion resulting from immigration from the World Black and African diaspora. The commitment of the Trinidad and Tobago Association to creating a strong West Indian culture and presence and support for Multiculturalism was very influential in the creation and support of key pan Black Canadian agencies: the Black Theatre Workshop; the Quebec Board of Black Educators, the National Black Coalition of Canada, and the Black Studies Center. The unity of purpose and support of the QBBE, the BSC and the BTW is significant in the creation and sustaining of the BCCQ and its outreach community associations. They also played a significant role in the group I Lead to City Hall In 1991 that convinced Mayor Jean Dore to name February Black History Month to be celebrated by all Montrealers.

The City's continued active engagement in the opening event for Black History Month as well as its support of the BTW Vision Celebration has lifted the artistic and cultural profile of the Black Community in the City and Province. The role I have played in organizing support among the leadership of the community and the City and the MCM party leadership certainly qualifies as a change-making process of significance. In fact, it needs to be stated that the Black History Month Round Table is a creation of the change-making representations of the community leaders that met Mayor Jean Dore and got him to set up the Task Force that made the memorable declaration 28 January 1992 that February is "Mois de l'Histoire Noire." My pan- Black approach to living has been and is a search for identity and the need to belong and enjoy physical and emotional security.



The constitutional arrangements of the country guaranteed rights to English Speaking Whites of British ancestry and the White European French. Blacks were excluded and at best ignored. This was exacerbated by the fragmentation in the Community. It was clear that the more open and cross-communication among competing sub-groups in the community is the more sense-making strategy. indeed the one most likely to reduce the gaps in access to opportunity between Blacks and the privileged Whites.

I made this my central argument in the debate and recruitment of collaborators to the building of the Canadian Pan-African movement that would bring Black leadership across the Country together to ultimately form the NBCC. In Montreal, I was a link between the Carl Whittaker Pan-African movement of the BCCQ and the Canadian Pan-Black National movement of the NBCC, represented in Montreal by an alliance of sub-structures of specialist organizations and Caribbean Island Associations. Thus when members of the BCCQ moved to set up the more inclusive Black Community Forum on July 3-5 1992 I gave the move my full support.

In 2016 from my position of President of the BCRC I have revitalized the BCF and the recommendations and regulations handed down by some 40 Black agencies. In order to avoid the conflict resulting from the demand among organizations for their independence in planning and the right to participate more fully in the decision-making process I proposed that the Forum Organizations conform to the protocols of the 1992 Agreement, but that they account directly to their Boards and members, and that they respect the principle of " collaborative unity and existential responsibility." This has made it possible for some fourteen Black Agencies to collaborate to achieve collective objectives set by them at the Forum annual meeting.

This has not been as attractive to those Black potential political leadership that have a more psycho-social need which they find in the traditional Schumpeterian definition of the changemaker as a single innovator that creatively replaces existing agents by producing a superior product or service. The presence of such personalities in the population has retained a degree of socio-economic rivalry in the community.



BCRC Seniors

Program

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE



CONVERSATION TUESDAYS

Every Tuesday Afternoon from 1:00-2:00 PM
Join us every Tuesday for group conversations on a variety of unique, fun and interesting topics.

DIGITAL SKILLS FOR SENIORS

Every Friday Morning from 10 AM-11:30 AM
These workshops will help seniors gain new digital skills like how to use Zoom and teach tips on how to safely use the internet.




FUN NIGHT FRIDAYS

Every Friday Night from 6:00-7:00 PM
Join us every Friday, for an evening of fun! During this workshop seniors gather to take part in fun activities such as Kahoot, Trivia games, Painting, Group cooking sessions and much more!

THE BCRC SENIORS PROGRAM AIMS TO ENHANCE THE LIVES OF SENIOR IN OUR COMMUNITY AND REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION

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***YOU WILL GAIN NEW SKILLS**

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***AND HAVE LOTS OF FUN!**

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SHAPING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

BCRC & CEDEC ARE BRINGING A TALENT MATCHING EVENT THAT WILL PAIR ENGLISH-SPEAKING BLACK QUEBECERS WITH EMPLOYERS WHO NEED TO FILL FORWARD-LOOKING AND QUALITY POSITIONS.

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The Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC) and Community Economic Development

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Education and Public Administration sectors.

This event is intended to address the current employment and underemployment situation facing the English-Speaking Black Community (ESBC) in Quebec. The event will be held on Wednesday, March 10th, 2021, 11 am - 2 pm and will be hosted online using the Brazen Virtual Job Fair Platform.

DETAILS :

- ▶ Date: Wednesday, March 10th, 2021
- ▶ Time: 11am - 2 pm (EST)
- ▶ Location: Brazen
- ▶ Cost: FREE
- ▶ Register at: <https://www.employesbc.com/registration/>

This event is made possible through the financial support of the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise and the Government of Canada.

How do I submit articles to the Semaji newsletter?

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Articles for submission are accepted 7 days prior to publication. Issues are published every first of the month.

Send articles to communications@bcrcmontreal.com.

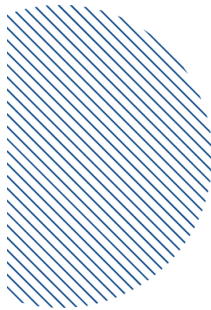
If you are submitting photos please send a jpeg with credit.

SEMAJI VOLUME 34 | ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 2021

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Funded by the
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of Canada

Financé par le
gouvernement
du Canada

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