

Valentine's Day during a pandemic

COLUMN BY ALEX CLARK

LIFE EDITOR

The pandemic stopped a lot of things: parties, eating out, going to Walmart at 3 a.m., etc. One thing it can't stop is the holidays from coming around.

Valentine's Day is this weekend, and you may feel inclined to do something special for your significant other (or yourself). When making plans, keep in mind some important steps to end this pandemic as soon as possible by practicing social distancing, wearing a mask and staying in instead of going out.

SKIP THE FANCY DATE NIGHT

This one can be hard. Going out to a nice dinner, seeing a movie or going and doing some other fun activity are important to a lot of couples on Valentine's Day.

Not going out doesn't have to mean the end of any Valentine's Day plans -- you can make that date night happen in the comfort and safety of your own home. Clean up your space, order takeout or delivery and rent a movie or watch one on a streaming service. You can even dress up if that part of the date

The IT Store is running its annual Cutest Couple Contest. Winners will receive a \$50 IT Store gift card. More information can be found by visiting the URL on the graphic.

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF FACEBOOK (@ASUITSTORE)

night is still important to you.

A lot of other couples will be going out for Valentine's Day. By staying in, you can avoid the potential spread of COVID-19 that could occur while at a restaurant or other busy public space.

EXCHANGE GIFTS

Valentine's Day doesn't require any sort of fancy date night, though. You can show your significant other (or friend, or yourself) how much you care by getting them a gift.

There's no requirement to get them something over-the-top or expensive, but if that's your jam, go all out. If not, stores like Walmart and Target have a great selection of cute gifts to give including stuffed animals, giant stuffed animals, candy and other items to show someone you were thinking of

them this Valentine's Day.

JUST DO SOMETHING NICE

It doesn't have to cost money to make another person happy. Kind gestures can make a world of difference to someone you care about.

If you share a space with your significant other, clean up and do the dishes so they don't have to. You could also cook their favorite meal for them, or the two of you can pick a meal to cook together.

Making time for someone is important. You can clear your schedule to spend a lazy evening with someone, or do something like take a walk or do face masks together. Valentine's Day is just about showing someone you care about them in whatever way you can.



Valentine's Day Bops

Valentine's Day is right around the corner! Here are a few songs to add to your playlist to match your Valentine's Day mood:

Happily in love? These songs are for you:

- "Grow As We Go" - Ben Platt
- "Adore You" - Harry Styles
- "Tennessee Whiskey" - Chris Stapleton
- "Stupid for You" - Waterparks
- "I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)" - Whitney Houston

Single? Don't worry, we've all been there:

- "Dancing On My Own" - Robyn
- "no tears left to cry" - Ariana Grande
- "do re mi" - blackbear
- "New Rules" - Dua Lipa
- "Last Night" - Ricky Montgomery

If you're cold, they're cold

With cold temperatures and freezing rain in the forecast, homeless people need a safe and warm place to escape the cold. Here are some shelter locations in Jonesboro:

SHELTER:

- Salvation Army Shelter (800 Cate Ave.), operating 24 hours Feb. 9-14, and will extend this if needed

WARMING CENTERS:

- Earl Bell Community Center (1212 S. Church St.), open Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-9 p.m. and Saturday noon-5 p.m.
- Allen Park (3609 Race St.), open Monday-Friday 3:30-9 p.m. and Saturday noon-5 p.m.
- Parker Park (1506 N. Church St.), open Monday-Friday 3:30-9 p.m. and Saturday noon-5 p.m.

CHINESE NEW YEAR APPROACHES

ALEX CLARK

LIFE EDITOR

While most of us are familiar with the Western Zodiac, the Chinese Zodiac is just as interesting. The two are similar in the way that they use a cycle of 12 and consider individuals to have personality traits based on the sign they fall under. The two differ, however, in that the Western Zodiac follows a 12 month cycle while the Chinese Zodiac follows a 12 year cycle. Feb. 12 will be the beginning of the Year of The Ox, and will last until Feb. 1, 2022. Festivities start on Chinese New Year's Eve and last for 15 days.

The Chinese Zodiac is represented by 12 animals: the Rat, the Ox, the Tiger, the Rabbit, the Dragon, the Snake, the

Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Rooster, the Dog, and the Pig. The legend behind the animals is that the heavenly Jade Emperor wanted to split time into cycles of 12 years, with an animal representing each year. The animals were chosen by a race. The Rat took off first, but had to wait to be carried across a river by the other animals. He was carried over on the Ox's ear, and leapt off at the last second to secure first place in the race. The rest of the animals followed. The Ox is the second animal in the Chinese Zodiac.

Due to the Ox's role in agriculture, it is associated with characteristics such as being hardworking and honest. Those born in the Year of The Ox, or Oxen, don't look for praise or attention, and tend to think log-

ically and make great leaders. Recent Years of The Ox have been 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009 and, of course, 2021.

According to Chinese astrology, the year of your birth sign is actually unlucky. It is recommended that during their Zodiac year, people stick to lucky numbers and colors in order to avoid misfortune. It is considered lucky at Chinese New Year to give gifts in lucky numbers and lucky red packaging, eat lucky foods such as fish and light red fireworks to scare away evil. Accidents, giving gifts with unlucky meanings, and sweeping on New Year's Day ("sweeping all your luck away") is considered unlucky at Chinese New Year.

LUCK IN THE YEAR OF THE OX

- **Colors:** White, yellow, green
- **Numbers:** 1, 4, 7, 9, 12, 21, 34, 42
- **Flowers:** Tulips, peach blossoms, lily of the valley, lucky bamboo
- **Lucky Directions:** North, south
- **Unlucky colors:** Red, brown
- **Unlucky numbers:** 3, 6

PHOTO COURTESY OF HICLIPART

Interested in reporting? Join us every Monday at 5 p.m. in room 224 in the Communications Building.

Bill banning "1619 Project" fails



PHOTO COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA

ALEX CLARK
LIFE EDITOR

A bill which would ban Arkansas public schools from teaching the New York Times' "1619 Project" failed in the House Committee today.

Arkansas Rep. Mark Lowery proposed the bill, along with another bill banning the teaching of social justice.

The "1619 Project" teaches slavery and its consequences as a central thread in United States history. It was published in 2019, the 400th anniversary of the first arrival of enslaved Africans to the U.S., and was devel-

oped by Nikole Hannah-Jones, writers from "The New York Times" and "The New York Magazine."

Lowery defended his bill, calling the "1619 Project" a "thesis in search of evidence" which should



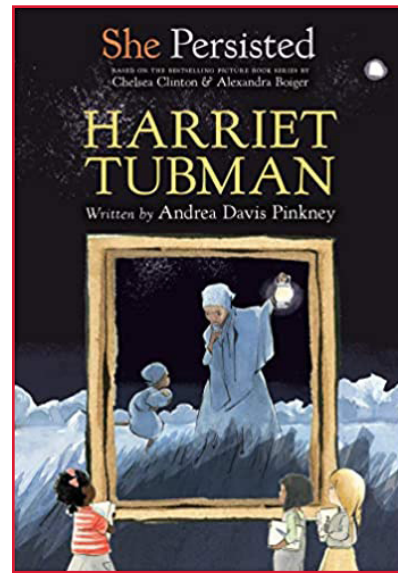
PHOTO OF REP. REGINALD MURDOCK COURTESY OF ARKANSAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

not be taught as factual in schools. Opponents of the bill raised concerns about censorship.

Democratic Rep. Reginald Murdock said, "What you're doing is censoring and you're taking away the ability of those who have been trained to stand before our students and teach and provide trained guidance in curriculum development."

Lowery's other bill, which would ban Arkansas public schools from teaching certain courses on race and social justice, has not yet failed, but Lowery indicated plans to rework it.

Books recommendations for Black History Month



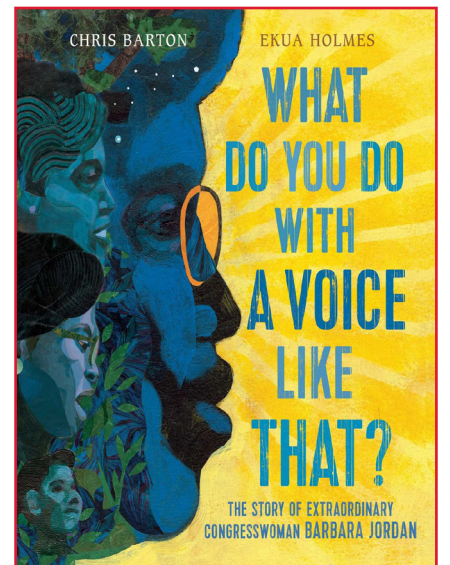
BOOK COVER COURTESY OF AMAZON

She Persisted: Harriet Tubman
by
Andrea Davis Pinkney

"She Persisted: Harriet Tubman" tells the story of Harriet Tubman, a formerly enslaved person who became one of the most well-known conductors of the Underground Railroad. Tubman's courage and work helped others reach freedom.

What Do You Do With A Voice Like That?
by
Chris Barton and Ekua Holmes

"What Do You Do With A Voice Like That?" is about Congresswoman Barbara Johnson who had a bold, confident voice. During her career, she used her voice to fight for civil rights, equality and justice.



BOOK COVER COURTESY OF AMAZON

THIS WEEK'S POP PICK

"Moonlight" (2016)



PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

"Moonlight," a 2016 film directed by Barry Jenkins, follows a young African-American man as he struggles with his identity while also facing the other challenges in his life.

The movie shows the three stages of Chiron's life: Little, Chiron and Black, which respectively represent his childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

As a child, Chiron lives in Miami and is called "Little." Juan allows Chiron to stay with him and his girlfriend. Juan mentors Chiron and gives him a safe place to be, as his mother is an addict.

During his adolescence, Chiron is still being bullied and now has to deal

with his mother taking money from him to fuel her addiction.

One night, Chiron and a boy named Kevin sit on the beach together smoking a blunt, and the two kiss. The next day, as a sort of hazing ritual, a student who bullied Chiron named Terrel makes Kevin beat him up. Kevin beats Chiron until he can't stand, then watches as the other bullies begin to attack him. Instead of telling the principal who did it, Chiron smashes a chair over Terrel's head and is sent to juvenile hall.

Once he is an adult, Chiron goes by the nickname "Black" and is a drug dealer in Atlanta. He travels to Miami and visits his mother in the drug treatment center she now lives in, and the two finally reconcile. He also visits Kevin at his job, and the two catch up on their lives.

"Moonlight" won the Academy Award for "Best Picture" in 2017.

HOROSCOPES

ALEX CLARK

MYSTIC CORRESPONDENT

<p>ARIES (March 22 - April 19)</p> <p>Be practical about things. Don't work yourself to death, and allow yourself to seek comfort.</p>	<p>TAURUS (April 20 - May 20)</p> <p>Leadership positions may be overwhelming right now. Focus on the big picture rather than small details.</p>	<p>GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)</p> <p>Don't dwell on things too much. Make decisions quickly before you lose opportunities.</p>	<p>CANCER + (May 21 - July 22)</p> <p>Be generous with your time and your energy. The people around you will give back.</p>
<p>LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)</p> <p>You have everything you need to move yourself in the right direction. You are more in control than you think.</p>	<p>VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)</p> <p>You may be feeling unmotivated. Find inspiration in the things and people around you.</p>	<p>LIBRA + (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)</p> <p>You're a hard worker and you can overcome the obstacles in your way. Just keep going.</p>	<p>SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)</p> <p>Avoiding change won't stop it from coming. You may lose something, but you will be OK.</p>
<p>SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)</p> <p>You are in a period of growth. The people important to you will support you, even if you change.</p>	<p>CAPRICORN + (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)</p> <p>Not everything is going to work out in your favor. The way you accept failure will make a difference.</p>	<p>AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)</p> <p>Not everything is what it appears to be. Trust your gut feelings about things, or admit truths to yourself.</p>	<p>PISCES + (Feb. 19 - March 21)</p> <p>You are working hard to improve your skills. This will all be worth it.</p>