



ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

★ MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ★

Greetings fellow alumni! I hope you are all staying safe and adhering to the advice/guidelines of our scientists and medical experts. This is our **2nd Special Edition** of the **Alumni Newsletter** and on behalf of FOS/Alton Black Alumni Association, we dedicate this special edition to the memory of our beloved charter member, Sandra "Sandy" Berry. We will miss her passion and dedication to our organization.

We are doing our best to keep you informed of FOS/ABAA activities as well as things of interest in A-town. In this edition we are featuring some of our Community Outreach program activities. We are also highlighting 'news you can use', e.g., updates on Health...reminders to vote and be counted (Census)...alumni/community Highlights, update on 2021 reunion plans.

This past school year FOS/Alton Black Alumni (FOS/ABAA) and the Clayton & Virginia Williams (CVW) Foundation forged a partnership with the Alton Middle School (AMS). We had a successful launch of a project focused on addressing the question: "What do students (of color), who have difficulty in school, need most to be successful?" We reached consensus on an overarching problem: students of color **do not feel connected** to the school or the Alton community. The primary root causes included: parental engagement, extra curricula distractions, insufficient cultural/historical awareness, and a shortage of positive/successful role models and mentors.

We worked directly with the AMS' AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program. The intent of AVID is to identify and uplift students who are often overlooked...or... who most likely do not have advocates. This aligned with our objectives and enabled us to implement activities and programs that addressed the root causes, and thus, the connection challenge. Check out program details and event photos in the '**Community Outreach**' section.

★ FOS/ABAA MISSION ★

To reunite colleagues who attended Alton area schools and to utilize their life and career experiences to lead, strengthen, and mobilize the Alton community to prepare our youth for productive adulthood.

★ NEWSLETTER TEAM ★

- David Frye
- Denise Frye
- Bonnie Fox
- Staci Herron
- Jimmy Killion
- Michele Keeper
- Marquato Rattler

★ FOS/ABAA LOSES ONE OF ITS CHARTER MEMBERS ★



Sandra "Sandy" Kaye Berry, 74, left her earthly home and entered her Heavenly Peace on Thursday, July 2, 2020.

Sandy retired from the Alton School District where she served many years as a special education paraprofessional. After retiring, she devoted her time to the Mother's Board at Morning Star MB Church, Church Women United, and Friends of the 60s/Alton Black Alumni Association.

Sandy was a founding member of FOS/ABAA.

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★ HIGHLIGHTS ★ *What's Happening in A-Town*

- Sept 5, 2020 **CANCELED** - Leo C. Cox Memorial Scholarship Golf Event
- Sept 12, 2020 8th Annual Walk for Sickle Cell – A Precious Organization
- Sept 19, 2020 **CANCELED** - Alton's Jazz and Wine Festival in support of Alton Museum of History and Art
- Resched 2021 Alton YWCA Women of Distinction Program
- Sept 24, 2020 Alton's 100 Black Men Golf Tournament
- Sept 2020 Killion Park Beautification
"Commemorative Brick" Unveiling
- Nov 3, 2020 Election Day
- Nov 6, 2020 **CANCELED** - Elijah P. Lovejoy Annual Meeting and Banquet
- Nov 21, 2020 **CANCELED** - ABAA Scholarship Trivia Night
- Dec 5, 2020 Alton Section NCNW's Toast of the Season
- Dec 2020 Christmas Donations \$50 (5) Gift Cards to Alton School District families



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★ Community Outreach ★ Alton Middle School AVID Program

FOS-ABAA/CVW team began in the fourth quarter of 2019 with a full agenda of classroom and general assembly presentations as well as field trips for the 6th, 7th and 8th grade AVID classes. The **classroom presentations** focused on models of success in various careers. The alumni presenters shared their life/career stories...stressing linkages to students' current state. Example references: "what was I thinking/doing at your age?"..."were there challenges and failures along the way?"..."how did I deal with them?"..."when did I begin to figure things out?"..."what did it take for me to figure it out?"..."who helped me and how?" On October 21, Jim Killion spoke to 7th and 8th grade classes about his journey from Alton schools to a career as a business executive. In November Eugene Baldwin spoke about his pathway to career experiences as an educator, actor, playwright and author.

The intent of the **field trips** was to enhance civic awareness by exposing the students to the workings of local government and the county court system. It also enabled the students to meet with local officials and judges.



February 25, 2020: **Enabling students to interact and connect with models of success...and...to see/understand workings of city government.** FOS/ABAA & CVW Foundation arranged a visit to Alton City Hall for the 7th grade AVID students where they met with Mayor Brant Walker and his executive staff in the City Council chamber. The mayor and his staff addressed the students...with each sharing their journey from middle school years to their current positions.



Persons From Left to Right:

Kim Wilson (AMS-AVID staff), Jim Killion (FOS/ABAA), Police Chief Simmons, Greg Caffey (Director, Development & Housing), Kim Clark (Chief of Staff), Mayor Brant Walker, Jarvis Swope (Director, Information Technology), Jesse Jemison (Fire Chief), Pat King (CVW), Cameo 'Foster' Holland (City Treasurer), Chelsey Anderson (AMS-AVID staff), Cameron Youngman (AMS-AVID staff).

NOTE: J. Killion, G. Caffey, J. Swope, J. Jemison, P. King, and C. Holland are all Alton High School alumni.



March 9, 2020: **Insights in social and criminal justice systems.** Judge Veronica (Felton) Armouti discussed "Worries of the World Wide Web" with 6th and 7th graders in the AMS auditorium. The session focused on internet and social media cyberbullying. Circuit Judge Dennis Ruth joined her and actively engaged in the Q & A session. A visit to the Circuit Court was planned for May. Judge Veronica (Felton) Armouti planned to host the students and educate them about the justice system and how a case goes through the system. Unfortunately, this event was canceled due to pandemic lockdown.

NOTE: Judge Armouti is an Alton High School alumna.



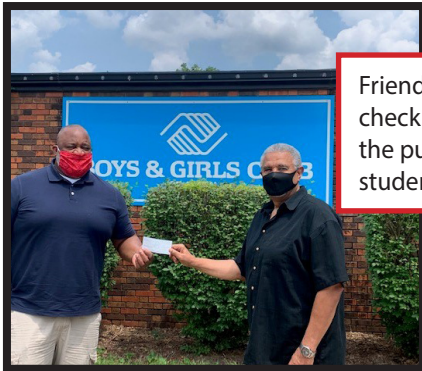


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★ Community Outreach Photo Reel ★

Friends of the 60s/Alton Black Alumni Association participates in the Alton High School's Class of 2020 graduation parade.



Friends of the 60s/ABAA's President Jim Killion presented a check to Alton Boys and Girls Club Director Al Womack, towards the purchase of Personal Protection Equipment as the staff and students prepare to return to a COVID-19 safe environment.

Friends of the 60s/ABAA continues their annual donation through the nation's pandemic. Members will remain safe and participate virtually in the organization's 8th annual walk.



★ Voting ★ Why Should I Vote?

About 150 million American citizens are qualified to vote. Unfortunately, many don't. Voting is one of the most important rights and responsibilities that U.S. citizens have. Why is that so important? Because every vote counts! An election might be decided by a single vote and history would be changed because a person got...or lost...that one vote! You Can Make a Difference!

- Respect your right to vote! Many of our ancestors died so that we could have the privilege to vote!
- Remind everyone 18 and older to vote

HOW TO VOTE.....

General Voting Information can be found at: <https://www.usa.gov/how-to-vote>

Voting rules and deadlines for individual states: <https://www.vote.org/voter-registration-rules/>

To register in Illinois you must:

- be a citizen of the United States
- be a resident of Illinois and of your election precinct at least 30 days before the next election
- be at least 18 years old on or before the next election
- not be in jail for a felony conviction (but you can vote if you have completed your sentence)
- not claim the right to vote anywhere else

Important Dates

- October 6, 2020 – In person Voter Registration Deadline
- October 18, 2020 – Online Voter Registration Deadline
- October 19, 2020 – November 2, 2020 Early Voting
- November 2, 2020 – Absentee Ballot (in person) Request Deadline
- November 3, 2020 Illinois General Election
- November 17, 2020 – Absentee Ballot Return Deadline

★ Census 2020 ★ Have you responded to the census?

The 2020 Census is happening now!

- Census results help determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year.
- The results determine the number of Congressional seats each state gets.

You can respond online using your computer, phone, or tablet. You can also respond by phone or by mail. Visit my2020census.gov to begin.



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★ COPING WITH STRESS DURING A PANDEMIC ★

Public health actions, such as social distancing can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. Those who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis (COVID-19) include people at higher risk for severe illness, children and teens, people caring for family members, frontline workers, racial and ethnic minority groups, homeless people, those with disabilities and the socially isolated.

Stress during a pandemic may cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of tobacco and/or other substances
- Mixed emotions including grief
- Sadness, anger or frustration
- Guilt
- Emotional reactions to being separated from others due to exposure to COVID-19

Here are some healthy ways to assist with coping with stress during a pandemic:

- Know what to do if you are sick
- Contact a health professional before starting self treatment for COVID-19
- Know where and how to get treatment and other support services
- Take care of your emotional health
- Take care of your body (exercise, eat healthy foods, stay hydrated)
- Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories
- Connect with others (phone or video calls)
- Connect with your community or faith-based organization

Call your health care provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

Numbers to call for immediate help in a crisis:

Disaster Distress Helpline: 800-985-5990 ★ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233 ★ National child Abuse Hotline: 800-422-4453 ★ Eldercare Locator: 800-677-1116

STAY CALM, READ PSALM ★ *Psalm 91 will also help you cope!*

★ 2020-2021 School Year Tips ★

Schools will look different for the 2020-2021 school year. Here are a few tips for parents to help teachers.

What I'm Thinking →	Kids will NEVER wear Face Masks.	Kids will NEVER Social Distance	Constant hand washing/sanitizing is impossible
What I Can Do ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the importance of wearing them • Try choosing face masks together that they like - make them special • Practice wearing them for longer periods of time - start small and work upwards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the importance of keeping a distance from others • Talk about new ways to greet others - Waving and thumbs up instead of High Fives and Hugs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the importance of good hygiene. • Teach your children how to wash their hands appropriately. • Teach your children songs so that they are washing their hands for an appropriate length of time. • Try using a washable marker to place a mark on your child's hand(s). When the mark is gone, their hands are clean.

Strode School Counselor-in-Training

Visit your state's education website for more information
Illinois - www.isbe.net **Missouri** - www.dese.mo.gov

★ Donor Support & Campaign ★

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly limited our fundraising activity options. Next month we will launch a **2020 DONOR CAMPAIGN**. Help us continue our mission of mobilizing the Alton community to prepare our youth for productive adulthood. Your financial donations enable us to sustain the Leo C. Cox Memorial Scholarship fund and enhance/expand our Community Outreach programs. THANK YOU!

Donation options: Check, PayPal or Cash App (\$FOSAB)

Remit checks to:

FOS/ABAA Donor Campaign, P.O. Box 1033, Alton, IL 62002

★ Trivia Questions ★

1. On what street in Alton did James Earl Ray grow up?
2. What street in Alton does the Elijah P Lovejoy Monument entrance face?
3. Before integration where did Black people have to sit at the Grand and Princess Theatres?
4. Bonus: If you were entering the Uptown Theatre where did you have to sit?

Answers: 1) W 9th Street; 2) 5th Street; 3) Princess and Grand balcony; 4) Uptown (Left back seats as you enter)