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Opinion

Black history: Stick with love in February and beyond

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Paul Tong / Op-Art

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In the conclusion of his final book, “Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community,” published in 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned, “this may well be mankind’s last chance to choose between chaos or community.”

Now, more than 50 years later, we are still making this choice every day. Too often, we as a nation allow chaos to prevail. Systematic racism, bitter partisanship, refusal by some to accept the results of free

and fair elections, a violent attack on the Capitol — these are examples of not just chaos, but threats to the very democracy on which our nation is built.

We must come together as a community and a nation to chart a path forward and decide where we go from here. With the force of history pushing us forward, we must use this moment as an opportunity to take strides toward making equity, dignity and hope a reality for all.

In 1967, and throughout his life, King chose community and hope over chaos and despair, writing, “I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

I often find myself reflecting on these words, especially in February, as the nation celebrates Black History Month and Valentine’s Day.

At the [Northwest African American Museum](#) (NAAM), we are dedicated to bringing the Seattle community together in collective healing through love and building a community that allows everyone to understand and celebrate the history, art and culture of people of African descent in the Northwest. Cognizant of the Black community’s continuous evolution, NAAM aims to elevate all Black voices and connect our shared heritage with the history and future of Seattle and the nation.

On Saturday, Feb. 13, we will partner with Seattle Opera to host, “[A Night at the Opera: Celebrating Black Voices](#).” This special drive-in movie concert will feature contemporary Black artists performing pieces that highlight and celebrate Black history. Spectators can purchase tickets [online](#) and enjoy this evening of artistry and elegance safely from their vehicles at our off-site location, the parking lot of the Museum of Flight.

The following Saturday, Feb. 20, we will uplift the voices of local young people with “The First 30 Days: Black Futures on Black History,” a special virtual conversation that will take place on NAAM’s [YouTube Channel](#) exactly one month after the inauguration of the Biden-Harris administration.

NAAM celebrates and uplifts Black voices not only during Black History Month but 365 days of the year. Our February programming is just the start of what we are calling NAAM’s “Year of Excellence & Resilience.” We started the year with a virtual [Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Celebration](#) featuring a keynote address by Dr. Eddie Glaude Jr. of Princeton University and MSNBC. Upcoming 2021 programming includes virtual youth activities, Juneteenth collaborations with other Black museums across the nation, outdoor Knowledge is Power Book Giveaway pop-ups throughout the region

and more. In November, we will host a special event commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Dr. King's historic visit to Seattle in 1961.

I urge you to join NAAM in building a stronger and more loving community this year by tuning in to our Year of Excellence & Resilience, starting with our dynamic [Black History Month programming](#).

I also invite you to join me in committing to actively choose love and community over hate and chaos every single day. I cannot think of a better way for us to begin collectively charting a path toward a better future.

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Link: <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/black-history-stick-with-love-in-february-and-beyond/>