CELEBRATING FREEDOMS WITHOUT EXERCISING THEM [COMMENTARY]
AMERICANS FOUGHT FOR YEARS FOR EQUAL ACCESS TO THE RIGHT TO VOTE, WHICH IS TAKEN FOR GRANTED TODAY DESPITE ONGOING THREATS
THE BALTIMORE SUN/JULY 06, 2014 BY E.R. SHIPP

As [summer] draws to a close, please pause from the cookouts and fireworks to reflect on the meaning of this freedom we've been celebrating, knowingly or not. When 50 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964, he placed it in the context of "a long struggle for freedom" that began when the Founding Fathers adopted the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776. "They pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor, not only to found a nation, but to forge an ideal of freedom; not only for political independence, but for personal liberty; not only to eliminate foreign rule, but to establish the rule of justice in the affairs of men." Now, we know that the noble ideal of 1776 did not really embrace blacks, women, Native Americans or whites without property.

As President Johnson noted, people of all colors have died in every American battle "to protect our freedom," even when it was denied to them. So, as he dramatically signed the bill into law, using more than 70 pens that he handed out to men and women instrumental in bringing the nation to that turning point, he acknowledged the imperfection of 1776 in a televised address. "Those who founded our country knew that freedom would be secure only if each generation fought to renew and enlarge its meaning."

Fortunately for us — including the 75 percent of registered voters who routinely ignore primary elections...and 40 percent who do so in years when the presidency is at stake — there have always been people taking seriously that directive to keep on fighting. In [the summer of '64], 50 years ago, hundreds of young people — many of them college students... were doing that. They converged upon Mississippi to take part in Freedom Summer, securing for blacks the rights that a Civil War 100 years before had supposedly granted with the blood of 750,000 dead...

To read the complete article and full text, go to: http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2014-07-06/news/bs-ed-shipp-0706-20140706_3_freedom-summer-nation-blacks

WORDS OF WISDOM
"For Africa to me ... is more than a glamorous fact. It is a historical truth. No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place" Maya Angelou

"I have observed this in my experience of slavery, that whenever my condition was improved, instead of increasing my contentment; it only increased my desire to be free, and set me thinking of plans to gain my freedom” Frederick Douglass

"I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge. Harriet Tubman was a bridge. Ida B. Wells was a bridge. Madame C. J. Walker was a bridge. Fannie Lou Hamer was a bridge” Oprah Winfrey

"Freedom is never given; it is won” A. Philip Randolph
UPCOMING EVENTS:

Black to School Tour, August 24, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm at Center for Black Studies

S-PLAN Meet & Greet, August 24, 12 - 4 pm at Center for Black Studies

Neighborhood Block Party, September, 10, 4 - 7 pm at MLK Commons

Professional Girls Rock
September (Date/Time – TBA)
T-MINUS _ DAYS AND COUNTING...
Classes begin August 25th : )

PICTURED ABOVE – CENTER FOR BLACK STUDIES STAFF [LEFT TO RIGHT]: Mr. Derrick Smith, Community Outreach Coordinator; Dr. LaVerne Gyant, Director; Dr. Joy Coates, Associate Director; and Ms. Regina Curry, S-Plan Coordinator (not pictured, Ms. Ronnie, Office Support Specialist)