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# WINTER BLUES... or are you SAD?



Another Michigan winter is upon us—a time when the trees are glistening with falling snow, the winter clouds hide the sun and pulling the covers up while clinging to a cup of hot tea never sounded better. For some, winter is the picture-perfect scene of which Hallmark movies are made. For others, gloomy skies and bone-chilling temperatures can make for a melancholy mood. Is it the winter blues, or is it **Seasonal Affective Disorder**, also known as SAD?

Studies estimate that 10–20% of American adults experience some level of mood changes depending on the time of year. As we age, these changes can become increasingly severe.

“In seasonal depression, we see a pattern tied to the seasons, where your mood is worse in the fall and winter, and then it improves in the spring and summer as the days get longer,” said Leslie Swanson, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Michigan Medical School. “Maybe you’re feeling more down, sleeping more, or less interested in doing things you usually find enjoyable as fall and winter set in—that would be a sign that you’re experiencing the winter blues.”

As Michiganders, thriving in the winter weather can be tough, but it is possible with the help of some intentional actions.



# WINTER BLUES... or are you SAD? cont.

**“Lighten” up your day:** Michigan's geographical location, with its northern latitude and proximity to the Great Lakes, means that residents experience relatively shorter days and less sunlight during the winter months. The lack of sunlight, compounded by overcast skies, can contribute to a higher prevalence of Seasonal Affective Disorder in the state. You can combat this by getting into bright light or sunlight as often and as early as you can each day. Bright light therapy, which you can get through using a light box or light glasses for 15-30 minutes in the morning, can help stabilize and improve your mood.

**Get moving:** Exercise is critically important in supporting mood, especially in the fall and winter, when we tend to be less active. Consider going for a walk or doing some type of workout indoors, whether it's aerobics, zumba, or running / walking on a treadmill. Grab a friend and make it a social event.

**Embrace Mother Nature's gift:** There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing. We choose to live in Michigan, right? Bundle up and get outside because we know that being outdoors is great for improving our mood. Data shows that two hours of exposure to natural settings each week is best for supporting overall well-being. In Minnesota, outdoor play groups for children of all ages is a common extra-curricular activity. This is an important concept that we Michiganders can think about applying to our own lives.

**Make it FUN:** Make the most of activities that can only be done in the winter. Try ice fishing or snow shoeing for the first time. Take a trip to the Double J Ranch (Rothbury) for snow tubing or the Winter Sports Complex (Muskegon) for a luge run. Take in the World of Winter Festival (Grand Rapids) and enjoy an outdoor art tour this winter.

**Remember, you're not alone:** If your mood is down to the point where you're having trouble engaging in your usual social activities or focusing at work, that could be a sign of a depressive episode and potentially seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Talk to your physician or mental health professional if this is the case. You don't have to struggle alone.





# REAL MEN HUG

Celebrating “Sensitivity” & Navigating Authentic Conversations

As the co-host of the podcast Real Men Hug and part of the Hungerford team for the last three years, Ben Kraker invites you into a space where authenticity reigns supreme. In this podcast, alongside co-host Jim Van Stensel, Ben explores genuine human experiences, challenging stereotypes, and fostering open conversations. The idea for this podcast came about after Jim and Ben attended a 20-year college reunion and found that their life experiences and personality development were very similar.

## **Reshaping Masculinity**

As an Enneagram 4 (The Individualist: self-aware, sensitive, and reserved), Ben's journey spans nearly three decades of discomfort in his own skin before finding great satisfaction in the unique traits that shape his identity. The podcast reflects Ben & Jim's commitment to creating a safe space where vulnerability and sensitivity are not only accepted but celebrated. It's an exploration of the power of authenticity in reshaping societal narratives around masculinity, identity expression, and the tapestry known as humanity.

## **Resilience in Openness: Redefining Strength**

Real Men Hug delves into inspiring stories that celebrate resilience and openness. The podcast navigates the transformative power of sharing emotions, challenging conventional views on strength, and offering perspectives on navigating the complexities of mental health.





### **Celebrating Strength through Stories: Navigating Challenges**

The podcast becomes a platform for healing as Ben and Jim share stories that navigate the enduring impact of life's challenges. Each episode ends with actionable, practical advice that the listener can implement. Real Men Hug acknowledges the strength found in sharing experiences and the importance of community support.

### **Raw Conversations on Mental Health: Join the Journey**

Real Men Hug transcends being just a podcast; it's a raw and open conversation about feelings, trauma, and mental health. Available at RealMenHug.com or on Spotify, Apple, and other platforms, the show releases new episodes every other Thursday. Join the conversation, explore the power of vulnerability, re-evaluate societal norms, and embrace authenticity with us by listening to Real Men Hug.

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The podcast cover art features a green and blue background with a black circle in the center. Inside the circle, the words "REAL MEN HUG" are written in a stylized, white, blocky font. Below the circle, the text "WITH JIM & BEN" is written in white on a black background.

## **Real Men Hug**

Ben Kraker / Jim Van Stensel

Welcome to "Real Men Hug," A podcast for men and the women who love them. A raw podcast where we talk about our feelings, process trauma, and cover all things mental health.

Check us out on Spotify, Apple, or your favorite podcast platform. Be sure to like and subscribe - and if you love our show, tell your friends and leave a positive review!

New episodes every other Thursday.

Hosted by Jim Van Stensel and Ben Kraker.

A row of logos for various podcast platforms: Spotify, Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, iHeartRadio, and a plus sign icon for more options.



# INTRODUCTION TO BLACK HISTORY IN SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

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KERRY BEAN

On Friday, January 19, we had the pleasure of welcoming George Bayard, Executive Director of the Grand Rapids African American Museum & Archives (GRAAMA) to speak about black history in southwest Michigan and the founding of the GRAAMA. George is a native of Maryland with a background in art and education. He moved to Michigan in 1988 and opened the award-winning Bayard Gallery of Fine African American Art & Books which was devoted to artists of color which he ran for twenty-five years.

George shared how his own curiosity, his family history, the family history of others, and his own journey to explore black history in his adopted community led to the founding of the museum. Bayard shared memories of his grandmother's home which he described as filled with historical objects including old books, photographs, and even a Civil War uniform. The name of the museum, GRAAMA, is a tribute to his own grandmother and other grandmothers who kept history alive by saving and preserving mementos of the past.

When he was still operating the Bayard Gallery, he related how he was frequently approached by customers who didn't know what to do with the collections of magazines, books, music, and other items from their deceased family members, but they knew there was value in preserving that rich cultural history. George gladly accepted everything that was offered. Eventually he realized how important the items were in telling the largely unreported story of black Americans in Southwest Michigan so the idea of the GRAAMA was born.

Past museum exhibits have included the musical legacy of local black artists in Grand Rapids including Al Green, the DeBarge family, and others. He proudly showed one of Al Green's first 45rpm singles released by a local Grand Rapids label in 1967 several years before Green's rise to the top of the charts in 1971 with the single "Let's Stay Together".

The museum is also working on collecting oral histories to complement the historic items and artifacts that tell the story of civil rights in Grand Rapids. George talked about well-known figures from the civil rights era who stopped in Grand Rapids, including Malcolm X, who spoke at Fountain Street Church as well as Emmet Till's mother who spoke to a large crowd of several thousand people at the Community AME Church.

Bayard also talked about influential black residents including Dr. Emmett Bolden who sued and won against the City of Grand Rapids over the issue of segregated seating in a theater and Emma Ford, Grand Rapids Civil Rights activist and advocate for women's rights.

The museum was founded in 2015 and is located in a small space on Monroe Center in downtown Grand Rapids, but George is planning for a much larger space to enable the museum to bring together items stored in offsite locations and to have space to exhibit its extensive collections.





**HUNGERFORD**  
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## 2024 Calendar of Events

# Women's Affinity Group



Wednesday, January 10: Vision Board! Creation

*Adriane and Barb Camp*



Tuesday, February 13: Burnout- Book Discussion

*Stacy M & Dana T*

May, Exact Date TBD: Golf Etiquette

*Off Site*



August, Exact Date TBD: In the Profession

*TBD- External Speakers*



Thursday, September 26: Fall Solstice Yoga

*Nicki Young*



Monday, November 11: Managing Holiday Stress

*Pine Rest*



December, Exact Date TBD: Hike the Lights

*Off Site*

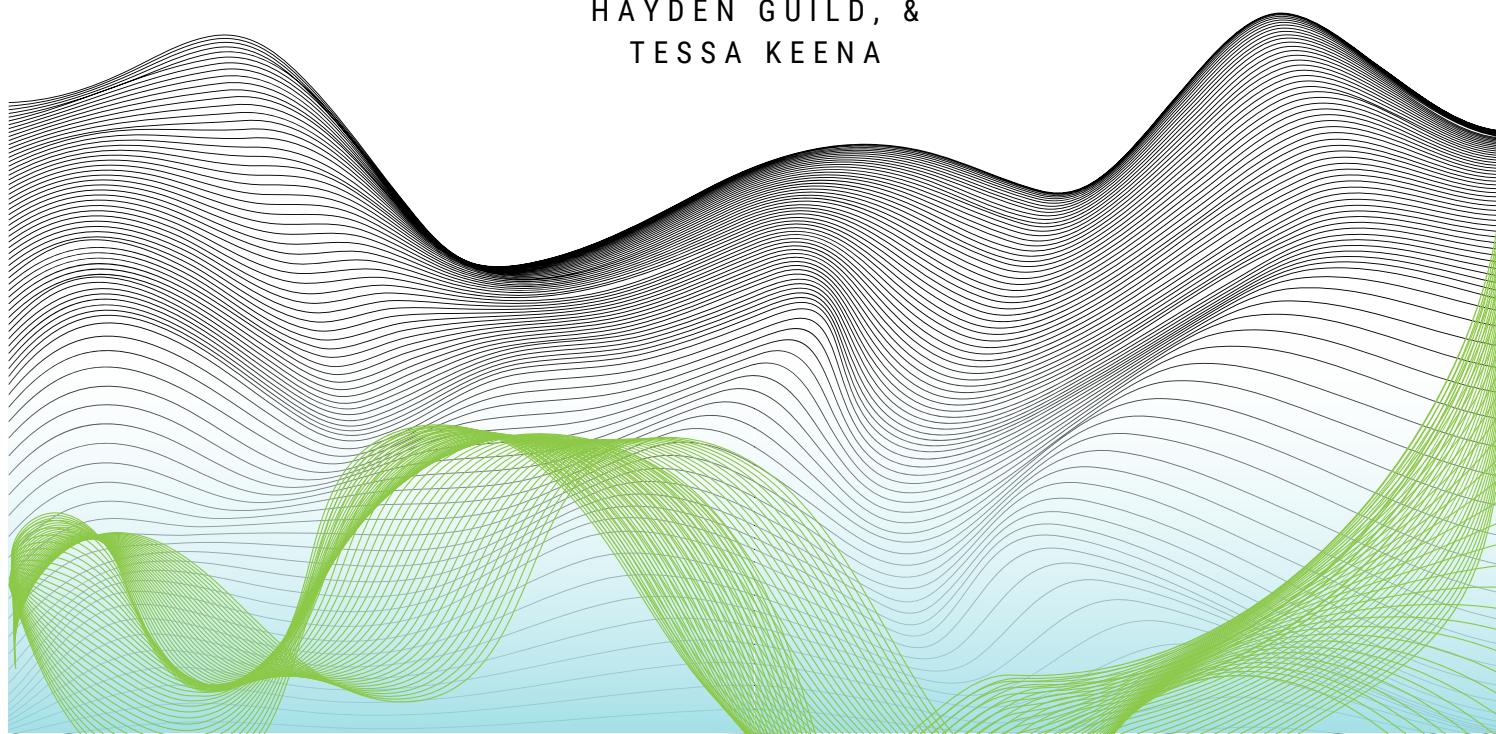
See Hillary, Heather, Adriane or Stacy with questions or ideas for future events!





**O R I G I N ( 2 0 2 3 )**  
**M O V I E R E V I E W**

CELTON WALES,  
HAYDEN GUILD, &  
TESSA KEENA





One of the many aspects I enjoyed of the film *Origin* was the depiction of the personal struggle of author, Isabel Wilkerson. To put it simply, without spoilers, it was a chaotic period in her life, and despite all the influences, pressures, and eventual pushback as she was 'fine-tuning' her thesis, her perseverance was a testament to the strength it takes to pursue what you want to do. *Origin*, based on Isabel's book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, paints the picture beautifully, showing how racism is a symptom and can be a superficial way to look at the poor treatment of certain groups. Part of the film that really struck a nerve for me is how the film talks about individuals and groups. When individuals are only seen as part of the group, once you can establish a label or other stereotype about the group, the individual struggles to disprove that label, until others get to know them personally. Overall, *Origin* is a great film detailing the author's personal struggles but also hits on important points from the book. It's a fantastic way to be introduced to the ideas and concepts presented in *Caste* but still leaves plenty of depth to be found if one wants to pick up the book and read. – **Celton Wales**

*Origin* is a film for cinematography lovers, TED Talk enthusiasts, the DEI-involved, and biopic enjoyers; but it is also a film for the non-DEI initiated, the everyday person, and those unaware of the vast and varied struggles faced by those around the globe for their visible heritage. As a repeat reader of *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson, I admittedly did not read the entire ad copy for the film before deciding to purchase a ticket. As a result, I was surprised when the movie began more akin to a drama than an approachable academic argument presented in film form. That, however, did not stop me from becoming engrossed in the narrative of Isabel Wilkerson's life, as it was wielded heavier handed in the film compared to the book to hold the viewer emotionally engaged and draw metaphors of hope. The same engagement is true of the asides to historical figures who made similar arguments about the existence of pervasive caste systems or as clear examples of such a system. The ability to watch and become engrossed in these stories emotionally and engage with anecdotal evidence presented through the dialogue is a direct result of the fantastic writing, acting, and directing. The viewer will find themselves at the end of the movie with a feeling that they now have enough information to begin their own journey in search of more – regardless of whether they agree with Isabel's thesis. *Origin* is not without fault though, just as the book is not. Isabel's own story can at times distract from the core ideals presented and the ending feels like a long reach of a metaphor that mostly works. I concede that someone who has read the book should expect the latter as it was the same one used in the book, and people who have not read the book may need the former to digest the concepts with empathy. I can only hope the viewer who has not yet read *Caste* finds as a bread crumb to more knowledge, instead of a peculiarity and minimization, the very brief mention of the core of the thesis presented – the "Pillars of Caste." This detraction is a small one in the grand scheme and feels more of a pacing choice rather than intentional obfuscation or bad writing. All in, *Origin* is a wonderful film I highly recommend to all – DEI minded or not. I suspect my friends and family will be tired of me pestering them to watch it by the end of the year. – **Hayden Guild**

I attended the film *Origin* with Celton and Hayden, and not only enjoyed it but had a great discussion afterward. We talked about what stood out to us the most and favorite quotes from the movie. For me it was when actress Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, who plays the role of Isabel Wilkerson, says, "Racism as the primary language to understand everything isn't insufficient." I didn't understand the concept of what "caste" was about until this line was spoken, and the heart of the story began. The storyline went on to explain some of the pillars of the book, not discussing all the pillars, but helping to provide a framework for further exploration. *Origin* was a powerful and thought-provoking movie. It showcased the inner struggle of a writer who was searching for answers amidst racial injustice and "caste systems" that continue to occur in our country and around the world. It shared stories of heroes and those less fortunate in each "caste system" that helped to advocate for change, even if it came at the cost of their personal wellbeing, and those that endure the injustice that most of us would find completely unacceptable. While at times I found myself feeling anger and sadness during the movie, I also found comfort in the hope that others will see the film or read the book and be inspired to understand and take action against the issues of systematic oppression of black people in America as well as other forms of caste within the United States and abroad, changing our world for the better. – **Tessa Keena**

*Origin* is a film written and directed by Ava DuVernay and based on the book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, by author Isabel Wilkerson. *Caste* went on to receive multiple nominations and awards, and was listed as a No. 1 New York Times bestseller, and the 2020 summer/fall selection for Oprah's Book Club. Wilkerson is also a Pulitzer Prize-winning author for her 2010 book *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*.





The West Michigan Welcome Plan Collaborative (WPC), formerly known as the Kent County Welcome Plan Collaborative, is a network of non-profit, for-profit, and governmental agencies created by the same and administered by Kent County, MI for a single purpose – to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for new Americans, immigrants, and refugees in West Michigan. The collaborative operates similar to a “grassroots” movement with many different individuals and organizations across West Michigan contributing time, effort, and resources to achieve the collaborative’s goals, often without remuneration. The structure of the organization consists of a steering committee, 7 workgroups, and a coordinator who serves as a go-between for the committee and workgroups. While the steering committee sets strategic objectives, the coordinator (the only full time Kent County employee dedicated to the WPC) and the workgroups themselves ensure coordination and achievement of specific objectives through collaboration with other area organizations. At the time of writing, among those workgroups, Neil Cambridge and Hayden Guild (author) both from Hungerford CPAs + Advisors are serving in their various capacities within the WPC as the firm’s contribution to the collaborative.

Since the initial release in 2020 of the Kent County Welcome Plan, outlining ways all members of the community could contribute to the core mission of the WPC, it has done much more. One of the many highlights from the year just ended was the creation of a FAQ From Immigrants to Law Enforcement, which was itself a result of public Q&A sessions hosted with various area law enforcement agencies. The FAQ was then subsequently translated into 5 of the most common immigrant languages in West Michigan. All of this was a direct result of Neil Cambridge’s workgroup, the Safe and Connected Communities Workgroup; co-chaired by Catherine Villanueva (YWCA of Kalamazoo), Under Sheriff Chuck DeWitt (Kent County), and Princess Konneh (African Collaborative Network). Later in the same year, the Data and Metrics Team, co-chaired by Hollin De La Cruz (Welcome Plan Coordinator) and Hayden Guild (Hungerford CPAs + Advisors), published the WPC’s first annual report detailing some of the achievements and changes guided by the Welcome Plan since its inception in an easy to digest format all are encouraged to check out.

In the coming year, the West Michigan Welcome Plan should receive funding from the State of Michigan’s Equity & Inclusion Office and continue to serve as an example to other budding collaboratives across the State. With direct support from the Governor’s office for the success of new Americans, immigrants, and refugees and the WPC’s activities – West Michigan is poised to be on the front lines in ensuring the success of all.

While the West Michigan Welcome Plan Collaborative is alive and well, it could always use new members. If you would like to learn more about the collaborative and how to get involved, consider visiting <https://kentcountynewamericans.org/welcome-plan-collaborative/>.



# DATES TO REMEMBER

## FEBRUARY

- Black History Month

February 1 – National Freedom Day

February 11 - International Day of Women and Girls in Science

February 13 – Mardi Gras

February 14 – Ash Wednesday

February 16 – National Caregivers Day

February 16 – Magha Puja Day

February 17 – Humans of Muskegon: Unjudge Someone (Egelston Branch of Muskegon Area District Library)

February 20 – World Day of Social Justice

February 24 – Makha Bucha Day

February 26 – EmpowerHER (Holland Civic Center Place)

February 29 – Black History Performance (Coit Creative Arts Academy)

## MARCH

- Women's History Month
- Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
- Irish American Heritage Month

March 1 – St. David's Day

March 2 – Granting of U.S. Citizenship to Puerto Ricans

March 8 – International Women's Day

March 8 – Maha Shivaratri

March 10 – Harriet Tubman's Birthday

March 10 – Ramadan

March 16 – St. Patrick's Day Parade (Calder Plaza)

March 16 – 11th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade (Downtown Muskegon)

March 17 – St. Patrick's Day

March 17 – 51st Annual Raising of the Irish Flag

March 18-24 – Neurodiversity Celebration Week

March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UN)

March 21 – World Down Syndrome Day

March 21 – Cultural Lens: Heroes of the Homefront: Rosie the Riveter and the Women Who Helped Win the War (Holland Museum)

March 21 - A Glimpse of Africa Annual Gala (Goei Center)

March 21 – OutPro Celebration: The Art of Being Out (The Goei Center)

March 23 – Women of Accomplishment (Greater Muskegon Woman's Club)

March 23-24 - Purim

March 24 – Palm Sunday

March 25 – Holi

March 25 – International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery

March 28 – Maundy Thursday

March 29 – Good Friday

March 29 – National Vietnam War Veterans Day

March 31 – Cesar Chavez Day

March 31 – Easter

March 31 – International Transgender Day of Visibility

## APRIL

- Celebrate Diversity Month
- Arab American Awareness Month
- Autism Acceptance Month
- National Deaf History Month

April 2 – World Autism Awareness Day

April 5 – Laylat al-Qadr

April 6 – National Tartan Day

April 7 – World Health Day

April 9 – Ramadan Ends

April 13 - Vaisakhi

April 22 – Earth Day

April 22-30 - Passover

April 26 – Lesbian Visibility Day