

THE BALTIMORE TIMES

Vol. 34 No. 45

September 11 - 17, 2020

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication



Pandemic has not hindered Baltimore's emerging fitness scene

By Demetrius Dillard

In the midst of a global health crisis that has highlighted numerous racial health disparities, a number of local fitness organizations have emerged which emphasize health and wellness in the Black community.

Four groups in particular — Runners Run, MET Fitness, Building Bodies and Bonds, and Baltimore Bikers— have burst on the local fitness scene as organizations endeavoring to make a substantial impact in the Baltimore community.

MET Fitness, founded in August 2019 by Terrell Talbert, hosts dance fitness classes throughout the week for community members to participate in. The letters 'M-E-T' make up an acronym that stands for motivation, elevation and transformation— the core focus of the group.

Talbert, a group fitness instructor, said his sole purpose besides physical fitness is to promote mental health and body positivity.

"I feel as though if you change within, you change on the outside," he said. Talbert said he will be partnering with Newman's Fitness gym to provide fitness sessions as the fall season approaches with hopes of one day having his own fitness studio to operate out of.

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Terrell Talbert (pictured middle) is the founder of MET Fitness.

Photo Credit: Terrell Talbert

Generational Political Power

By Dr. Al Hathaway

All eyes will be on the Black Community in Baltimore, Maryland as we enter into the final round of the election in November. There is the distinct possibility Baltimore City will elect four Black males from four different generations to positions of power: Congress, Comptroller, City Council President and Mayor.

This is so unique that it rivals the rare and unique “planet parade” on July 4, 2020 when all the planets of the solar system—Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune plus the dwarf planet Pluto lined up on one side of the Sun at the same time.

It appears Baltimore City voters will elect Congressman Kweisi Mfume, 70’s; Comptroller Elect Bill Henry, 50’s; Council President Elect Nick Mosby, 40’s; and Mayor Elect Brandon Scott, 30’s. This unique alignment is a combination of youthful energy and senior wisdom.

The question is what will this qualified quadrilateral of political dexterity provide the citizens of Baltimore City?

We have many problems that have been exacerbated over the years. It’s not necessary to recount them, they are generally well known.

What is missing is our ten-year recovery plan? I say ten-year recovery plan because the Citizens of Baltimore City need a comprehensive redevelopment strategy and plan that will outlast the political terms of this particular cast of political personalities.

We have so many assets within our city: world-class medical institutions; world-class educational institutions; a world-class port; and the birthplace of so



Dr. Al Hathaway
Courtesy Photo

many firsts that I cannot begin to name them within this short space.

I will say, we have residing within our borders the intellectual capital to make a difference, and now I will argue we should have the political wherewithal to change the trajectory of our city to the benefit of all who live here.

The United States of America needs a comprehensive urban renewal plan. The political stars are so aligned in Baltimore City that we can become the model for that comprehensive urban renewal strategy.

Just imagine if every graduate of Baltimore City Public Schools was prepared to enter a local college if they choose to without having to take remedial courses? Just imagine if substandard housing was eliminated within Baltimore City?

Continue to imagine a community so safe that doors of homes wouldn’t have to be locked, and your neighbors were also your friends?

Just imagine when our two HBCU’s would hold sports events that would generate so much enthusiasm and be so spectacular that people would come from all over the area to witness the basketball, track and field, baseball, golf and tennis events?

Just imagine that all of the historic sites, building and monuments in Baltimore City were international tourist attractions?

Just imagine that if our mass transit system was so comprehensive that no one needed a car or had to pay for auto insurance unless they chose to do so?

Just imagine that all of our underground systems were modernized and all of our streets were resurfaced?

Just imagine full employment for area residents? Just imagine transit travel to Washington, D.C. in 15 minutes and New York within an hour?

With each level of government, oh I forgot to mention, the quality state legislators emanating from Baltimore City, were in agreement and alignment on a comprehensive redevelopment plan and strategy for Baltimore City that we could advance programs, such as the ones we advanced before—the late Senator Charles “Mac” Mathias and the late Congressman Parren J. Mitchell navigated through Congress the Nehemiah Housing Act, which produced affordable housing in Baltimore City that still stands today. Former United

States Senator Barbara Mikulski conceived the Hope VI program that demolished many of our public housing high-rise buildings and development communities of housing choice.

I must mention the unique contributions of the former Assistant Housing Secretary Robert Embry in the creation of the Community Development Block Grant program; and David Cornish in the management of the long ago Urban Development Action Grant program.

Prior government and elected officials without the benefit of the political alignment we now enjoy, took these significant and transformational actions to benefit Baltimore City.

Now the baton is in the hands of Kweisi, Bill, Nick and Brandon to run their leg of the relay race with the excellence the people of Baltimore City deserve. Hopefully, they will take this opportunity to cast a vision for Baltimore that is inclusive and comprehensive and develop a ten or twenty-year plan that will guide Baltimore City well into the future.

Do not allow the allure of political power to overcome the need for political service. I will say there is a crowd of witnesses cheering you on, and if necessary “Act Now Baltimore” will critique you as need be. The future of our city is in your hands! Let’s reimagine our beloved community together!

Dr. Al Hathaway serves as the Senior Pastor of Union Baptist Church located at 1219 Druid Hill Avenue in Baltimore.

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The Baltimore Times

(USPS 5840) is published every Friday by *The Baltimore Times*, 2513 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218. Subscriptions by mail \$60 per year. Standard bulk postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21233. Postmaster send address changes to:

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Guest Editorials/Letters

COVID-19 contributes to uptick in opioid-related deaths

By Dr. Paul Christo

Social isolation and reduced access to healthcare during the lockdown, among other factors, have led to a rise in opioid-related deaths, experts say. And according to their estimates, it's only going to get worse. Similarly, Authorities across Texas, Pennsylvania, Florida and New York are also reporting rises in overdoses during the COVID-19 crisis.

On the frontlines working to curb the impact of the opioid crisis is Dr. Paul Christo, an Associate Professor in the Division of Pain Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

"The number of fatalities from opioid-related overdoses could be nearly 30 percent higher than reported due to missing information or incomplete death records," he says. "The worst fear is that because of social isolation, and people are not being found or treated immediately."

The opioid epidemic today progressed in three phases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The first involves deaths caused by prescription opioids, the second, an increase in heroin use, and the third, a surge in the use of synthetic opioids or fentanyl. Experts say the U.S. is right in the middle of the third phase of the epidemic, due to the increasing availability of fentanyl and increasing rates of overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids.

According to a recent study there were 632,331 drug overdoses between 1999 and 2016. Most of these deaths (78.2 percent) were drug overdoses with known drug classification. Moreover, 21.8 percent were unclassified drug overdoses. A further investigation revealed that for unclassified drug overdoses, 71.8 percent involved opioids, translating to 99,160 additional opioid-related deaths.

There were over 70,000 drug overdose deaths in 2017, according to an estimate from the CDC. Based on findings from the new study, over half of those deaths — about 47,000 — are suspected of having involved opioids.

Another study on opioid overdoses found that the number of drug overdose deaths decreased by 4 percent from 2017 to 2018. In 2018, more than 67,000 people died from drug overdoses, making it a leading cause of injury-related death in the United States. Almost 70 percent involved a prescription or illicit opioid of those deaths.

"COVID 19 impacted the drug supply chain by closing borders on some regions, and it led to the higher death rate," Dr. Christo explained. He added that drugs become more challenging to get, and the potency of overdose goes up. It also impacts the price, everything goes up, and in that sense, it becomes more deadly each day, according to Dr. Christo.

Dr. Paul Christo serves as director of the Multidisciplinary Pain Fellowship Program at Johns Hopkins Hospital. He is the author of Aches and Gains, A Comprehensive Guide to Overcoming Your Pain. Dr. Paul Christo also hosts an award-winning, nationally syndicated SIRIUS XM radio talk show on overcoming pain called, Aches and Gains®. For more information about Dr. Paul Christo. Please visit www.paulchristomd.com.

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Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Re: Voting by Mail

Voting by mail should replace voting at the polls in its entirety.

The two institutions that can definitely be trusted are the County Board of Elections and the United States Postal Service. The money saved by eliminating the need for poll workers could be used to offer free postage on the envelopes used to vote by mail.

The person voting would also have more time to consider what they are voting for and would not be confined to the hours of the polling place. It would also prevent unwanted entry to schools and churches from anyone trying to

harm someone. In addition the voter would not be harassed by someone trying to place unsolicited campaign literature in their hands.

The additional revenue would boost the Postal Service and perhaps keep it afloat until we as a country are able to vote online.

Voting by mail would solve the registered voter problem and guarantee safe passage of the ballots to the County Board of Elections. It might even prevent further spread of the Covid-19 Virus.

Joe Bialek
Cleveland, OH

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Black Americans and COVID-19 Clinical Trials

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
President and CEO, National
Newspaper Publishers Association

The unrelenting spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) throughout the United States of America in 2020 continues to pose an unprecedented public health crisis for all Americans, but in particular for Black Americans and other people of color who are disproportionately negatively impacted by COVID-19.

As the trusted voice of Black America, the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) in March of 2020 established the NNPA Coronavirus Task Force as a means of increasing public awareness about the overall preexisting health disparities in Black America and the disproportionately fatal consequences of COVID-19 for Black Americans and other people of color.

In fact, the NNPA and our Coronavirus Task Force were the first to issue a

national “State of Emergency” declaration on April 3, 2020 to warn Black Americans and others about the evolving dangers and public health risks of COVID-19.

Earlier this year, there were just too many myths and other misinformation circulating primarily via social media

the COVID-19 pandemic. We cannot afford to be silent, detached, denied, or prevented from being at the decision-making tables in terms of COVID-19-based public health policies, research, clinical trials, remedies, and vaccine development. Our lives and future are at stake.”

In other words, Black American engagement is crucial and critical in the development of a COVID-19 vaccine—including participation in clinical trials—to make sure that the new vaccine is effective to prevent Blacks and others from COVID-19 infections.

Three years ago, the NNPA, Howard University and Pfizer collaborated to do a national landmark poll and study of awareness of Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) among Black Americans. This was important because Black Americans are disproportionately impacted by SCD across the nation.

Included in that NNPA-Howard University-Pfizer poll was the issue of Black Americans’ willingness to participate in clinical trials with respect to SCD. We were pleased to learn and to document that 76 percent of the Black American poll respondents had positive or neutral attitudes toward SCD clinical trials, and a majority indicated a willingness to participate in future clinical trials for SCD, given appropriate knowledge and recommendations from health care professionals.

It is urgent that in the strategic rush to develop an effective COVID-19 vaccine for all people that Black Americans are not left out of the process. The health of our families and communities necessitates our involvement to raise all the questions that need to be raised, and at the same time to participate responsibly in the COVID-19 clinical trials.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. is the President and CEO of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and can be reached at dr.bchavis@nnpa.org

***Black Americans have to be involved at all levels
of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
We cannot afford to be silent, detached, denied
or prevented from being at the decision-making tables
in terms of COVID-19 public health policies, research,
clinical trials, remedies and vaccine development.
Our lives and future are at stake.***

falsely asserting that “Black people and people of African descent were immune to COVID-19 because of the presence of melanin.” Of course, that assertion is not true. Yet, unfortunately, too many people in our communities began to risk infection to COVID-19 because of falsehoods and misinformation.

The media has a responsibility to research and report the truth.

This year marks the 193rd year of the Black Press of America. Since *Freedom’s Journal* was first published in March of 1827, the Black Press has remained on the front lines of publishing and speaking truth to power by demanding freedom, justice and equality.

All of this brings me to state categorically, “Black Americans have to be involved at all levels of responding to

The good news is that today there are many Black American physicians, infectious disease scholars, clinicians, medical researchers, nurses and others on the front lines as first responders and as leaders inside the major pharmaceutical companies that are striving to develop a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19.

We are profoundly aware that within our communities there has been a historical and contemporary distrust of medical research. However, the challenge today is for more Black Americans to be involved at every point of the development of a COVID-19 vaccine to ensure that the medical rights and interests of Black Americans are thoroughly protected, respected, and addressed effectively and truthfully.

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Morgan State University star athlete leaves legacy of talent and determination

By Andrea Blackstone

Jordan Alexander Cofield possessed all of the critical attributes of a rising star. He was multitalented, courageous, intellectually and athletically gifted, and was also known for his unforgettable smile. Cofield 20, died in a motorcycle accident on August 22, 2020.

His mother, Dr. Chere M. Goode, recounted sweet memories of her baby boy who was born at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore City, as she choked back tears. Missing her child is still a fresh wound and the realization that she will never see more of her son's dreams come to fruition is truly devastating.

Jordan was entering his junior year at Morgan State University (MSU) as a double business major who earned a reputation of shining on and off the football field. The football team's wide receiver was also a track and field team member. He loved dressing in high-end attire, shopping and hanging out with friends and family, and of course football. "Football was the love of his life,"

Goode said. "Well, he was on full-ride scholarship to Morgan, so he saved me a lot of money. I didn't pay anything for his education, and he actually was on the Dean's List at Morgan State. If you know anything about two-time athletes, and being on the Dean's list, that's like huge. He (Jordan) actually was an NFL (National Football League) prospect. They were looking at him already, although he was only a junior. They actually released a statement about him, saying that although he was small in stature... his speed was amazing. He was a speedster."a

Goode spoke proudly about her charming son who placed number one in



Jordan Cofield, age 20 died in a motorcycle accident on August 22, 2020. He was a multitalented football and track star who attended Morgan State University. He was a junior and was on the Dean's List. His big dream was to play in the NFL since he was eight years old. Courtesy Photo/#Tag The Shooter Photography

2019 in the men's 60-yard dash out, of all Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Goode added that whatever her son was determined to do, he was going to do it. The graduate of New Town High School, located in Owings Mills, became a football buff at eight years old. His family was proud of their star athlete who loved to blow kisses to his fans, whenever he made a touchdown. His mother says that she will probably miss capturing those moments on video the most. Jordan inherited the love of football from his parents. His father, Jeffrey Cofield was a part of the trio's Dallas Cowboy fan club.

Jordan earned his own fan club. One

of Goode's favorite memories was the time when Ernest Jones, a former coach at MSU, came to their home in an effort to draft her son. Goode said that he informed them that he was not leaving without Cofield.

"That just made me so proud, like wow, my son's dreams are coming into reality. Now he just smiled and said, 'Mom, what am I going to do?' I just said, 'that's up to you. You're the one who has to put in the work,'" Goode said. "Jordan is really like the first one, especially from his father's family and everything, to really go to a university, so everybody was really proud of him that he took his education seriously."

Dr. Cheryl Wood, Goode's twin sister and Jordan's aunt is also navigating through the loss of their family's star.

"Our slogan for him and everything for the funeral was, 'Everything he touched turned to gold,'" Wood said. "I loved his tenacity. He was a go-getter. I mean just to see somebody set something [in] their mind, and you already know, nothing is going to stop them. That's who Jordan was."

Wood recounted a comical yet telling story. Her husband, James Wood, once remarked to a very young Jordan that he didn't know his numbers beyond a certain point. He shocked his uncle, when he informed him that he did know them. The child rattled off his numbers way beyond the point at which he was challenged.

"To me, it's a reminder of how smart he was academically," Wood said. "And you know he was going to go far, because he was always like— 'I'll show you, not tell you.'"

Layers of loss accompany great disappointment. Jordan's loved ones will never see him get married, have children or earn an expected NFL contract. However, Wood identified ways the community can support Jordan's family. Praying for their strength is one; keeping Jordan's memory alive is another.

"Don't stop talking about him and his legacy in 20 short years," Wood said. "I would just say if you want [something], go get it. Just don't let anything stop you. And that's what I would say was his mindset and his attitude."

To support his mother and enable her some time off work during this time of bereavement, donations can be made via Cash App to \$cheremgoode or Pay Pal via cherecofield@hotmail.com.

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September is National Recovery Month

LTC To Hold Virtual Fundraiser September 25

By Ursula V. Battle

National Recovery Month is a national observance held every September to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with mental and substance use disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives. Now in its 31st year, Recovery Month celebrates the gains made by those living in recovery.

Since its inception in 1999, Light of Truth Center, Inc. (LTC), a residential therapeutic treatment program for women, has held its major fundraising activity during National Recovery Month. However, COVID-19 threatened to bring LTC's 21-year record of having their annual fundraiser to a halt. But as they say in entertainment, "the show must go on." For LTC, their annual event is going on – just virtually.

On Friday, September 25, 2020, from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m., LTC will hold "Surrender to Love." The event will feature entertainment, speakers, a live 50/50 Raffle Wheel, and Silent Auction.

"Over the years, we have grown into a beautiful annual fundraiser," said the Rev. Vaile Leonard, founder of Light of Truth Center, Inc. "We did not want to lose that momentum. People look forward to our annual fundraiser."

She added, "We thought about canceling it due to COVID-19, but made the decision to have a virtual fundraiser. We also did not want to miss having the event during National Recovery Month."

Rev. Leonard said the event will feature six different entertainers from various genres including Spiritual, Jazz, Folk, and New Age. She also said Vicki Stewart will share her experience at LTC, which operates four recovery houses and a training center.

"The virtual event is something new, and we were trying to find things to do to make it exceptional and exciting," said Rev. Leonard. "The 50/50 Raffle Wheel is one of them. When a person donates, the wheel will spin and show their name. The 50/50 will be through Cash App, and a person can donate as many times as they would like. The wheel is pretty cool. We really had to get creative."

She added, "We will also show pictures throughout the night from past annual fundraisers, and will close out the evening with a virtual line dance."

LTC provides residential therapeutic treatment for women recovering from addictions. The homes have been credited with helping dozens of women overcome drug addiction.

Rev. Leonard said this year's fundraiser is vital to keeping the heartbeat of the organization going strong. The fundraising goal is \$10,000.

"Due to COVID-19, we could not have the events we normally would have," she said. "They include an annual fundraiser given by LTC Center board president Ginny Robertson. Ginny's fundraiser takes us through half the year. In addition, many funders have been inundated with requests."

She continued, "We need to raise funds. Because of



The door to recovery. Light of Truth (LTC) Founder Vaile Leonard pictured in front of one of the organization's locations.

Photos by Ursula V. Battle



LTC's Amanda Owens, Abell Foundation; Ginny Robertson, President of the Light of Truth Board of Directors; (back row left to right) Elizabeth Perriello Rice, France Merrick Foundation; and Betty Scott, Peer Housing Specialist LOT.

COVID-19, we had to shut down admissions for a while, and that drastically cut our income. Not having admissions, coupled with not having fundraisers really cut us back. We want to catch-up and put ourselves back on board."

Rev. Leonard said that while times have changed amidst COVID-19, the need for addiction services have not.

"Before the pandemic, we were in an epidemic in terms of overdoses," she said. "That has not subsided. The recovery

community was just at the peak of getting people's attention, and then COVID hit. It has basically been pushed to the side. Folks overdosing is not what people are talking about, but people are dying daily."

She added, "One of the challenging things for us was sustained recovery in isolation. COVID really had a serious impact. Especially on young folk. They use multiple items to get high such as spray cans and cleaning products. They were in isolation, stuck at home with no support, and had everything they needed at their disposal to get high. Even for our ladies at LTC, a month in, they were getting antsy. We had to find things for them to do. They had Game Night, and we got a van to take them shopping. We had to find innovative things to keep them spiritually and emotionally safe."

Rev. Leonard is encouraging everyone to support LTC's virtual fundraiser.

"I invite people to come to an extraordinary experience of music, love and surrender," she said. LTC is a love-based organization. For me, I don't care what the challenge is. The answer for me is always love. I am inviting the community to surrender to love. All they have to do is show up."

To virtually attend the event, join via Zoom at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86439497666?pwd=a1ZQUGxiWWw2NS9NcGdXK2U2Ny94Zz09>. The Meeting ID is 864 3949 7666, while the Passcode is 742099.

LTC is also looking for volunteers. For more information call (443) 393-2109.

Pandemic has not hindered Baltimore's emerging fitness scene

Continued from page 1

One of the participants commented, “I started with MET Fitness in June and I hate to miss a Tuesday ever since I started! The instructor is very encouraging and you can feel his passion throughout the class! Oh and don’t be afraid to come alone. I often do but everyone is so friendly and you will fit right in!”

In addition to weekly HIIT fitness classes and “Jump2Sweat” trampoline workouts, Talbert periodically posts “Morning MET Motivation” messages to encourage the MET Fitness community as they strive to meet their fitness goals.

The MET Fitness has a Facebook page, YouTube channel and can be followed on Instagram at @metmygoals.

More Watters Co., led by exercise physiologist Anthony Watters, is “a health and wellness lifestyle company that uses water, exercise, and culture to build and sustain healthier lifestyles, families, and communities.”

Since the organization was established in 2016 and has garnered multiple awards and has made a profound impact in the areas of exercise programming, nutrition consulting, community organizing, health-based program development, sport-specific performance training, and health and wellness education in the Baltimore community.

Building Bodies and Bodies (B3X) began with a group of gentlemen who ran into each other at Lake Montebello Park in the summer of 2019. They worked out with each other on a weekly basis and the group went from a handful, to dozens, to hundreds.

Marcus Hatten, a retired basketball player, and Tavon Smith, a certified personal trainer, went on to establish Building Bodies and Bonds, a fitness group aimed at tackling health disparities in Baltimore City, early this summer.

In only about three months, B3X has seen exponential growth, especially on its weekly Tuesday evening runs that begin at 400 E. Biddle Street. Essentially every morning, Smith and



Brian Henderson, founder of Baltimore Bikers has unified dozens of Black cyclists throughout the city. Photo Credit: Brian Henderson

Hatten, along with co-founders Anthony Williams and Quron Smith, lead various workouts at Lake Montebello involving individuals of all age groups and fitness levels.

“The name [Building Bodies and Bonds] is self-explanatory because when you are working out, you’re building your body, but while you’re building your body you’re also involved with people that you’re working out with,” said Hatten, a graduate of Mervo High School who went on to star at St. John’s University and a point guard for the NBA’s Denver Nuggets and Los Angeles Clippers.

Outside of the physical fitness component, B3X also promotes healthy

eating and nutritional wellness. Hatten owns and runs the Legendary Wellness Cafe, a juice bar that will soon operate out of a physical location.

B3X has not only created an environment for Baltimoreans to better themselves physically and mentally, but has unified community members from all throughout the city.

“People love it. They love what we got going on, they love our aura, they love our energy, they love how people are being attracted to us... they can tell we’re passionate, they can tell we’re organic,” Hatten continued.

B3X is present on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and is in the process of developing a website and finding a

physical location (gym or studio) to conduct daily workouts. The organization can be contacted at buildingbodiesandbonds@gmail.com.

Tavon Smith, another co-founder, has a role of planning B3X’s daily workouts. The personal trainer has a unique story of resilience as he overcame numerous obstacles on his way to becoming a fitness enthusiast.

A native of East Baltimore, Smith spent 15 years in and out of the criminal justice system and turned his life around to become a valuable asset in his community. He, along with his three colleagues, have given a great deal of energy and time to ensure their participants are empowered through fitness and wellness.

“Outside of the park and outside of working out, I just want that whole family feel when it comes to our community,” Hatten said. “I’m just trying to do my part in my community to make sure that everybody’s good and everybody’s growing in a positive way.”

Baltimore Bikers, an organization that promotes health and wellness in the Black community through cycling, was founded in May by pharmaceutical consultant Brian Henderson.

In only a few months of existence, the organization has seen exponential growth, attracting cyclists from throughout Baltimore City and surrounding areas. Baltimore Bikers has also fostered support and recognition from other notable biking groups in the area.

“Shortly after starting the group, you know with the popularity of it, me as the founder—I realized it was bigger than just people sharing rides,” Henderson said. “I realized at that moment, we needed to be more focused and hone in on health and wellness as African Americans.”

This upcoming Sunday, Sept. 13, Baltimore Bikers will host a family fun ride from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Lake Montebello. More information can be found by visiting this link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CE2de_tpU9i/

Rambling Rose

Baltimore's own icon Lewis S. Diggs celebrates 89th birthday



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello everyone, hoping you and your family are healthy and safe. Yes, we are still in this mess without any idea when it's going to end. Remember whatever phase Baltimore City and Baltimore County are in, please make sure you take care and protect yourself. Family and friends— keep wearing your masks. This mess COVID-19 is not over until the “Fat Lady Sings!” Take my word for it—the “Fat Lady” will not be singing for a long time.

Now, I want to talk about Louis Diggs, a man who is legendary in our town is celebrating his 89th birthday and still going strong.

Louis S. Diggs was born in Baltimore in 1932 on Dewey Avenue in Hoes Heights. He spent most of his young life on Stricker Street in the Sandtown area.

Diggs attended Douglas High School, quitting school in 1950 to join the All-Black Maryland National Guard when they were federalized to support the Korean War. He served until 1952. He retired from the military in 1970 with more than twenty years of service.

He is the author of thirteen books including “Blacks in Baltimore,” “The Buffalo Soldiers,” “Surviving in American” among others. He is the honorary board member of the Historical Society of Baltimore County.

Louis S. Diggs is not only a writer and historian specializing in the African-American history of Baltimore County, Maryland, but also as a chronicler of the county's African-American legacy, his work illuminates the historic past of its Black communities. In addition to social history, Diggs followed up his military career with nineteen years in the District of Columbia public school system from which he retired in 1989.

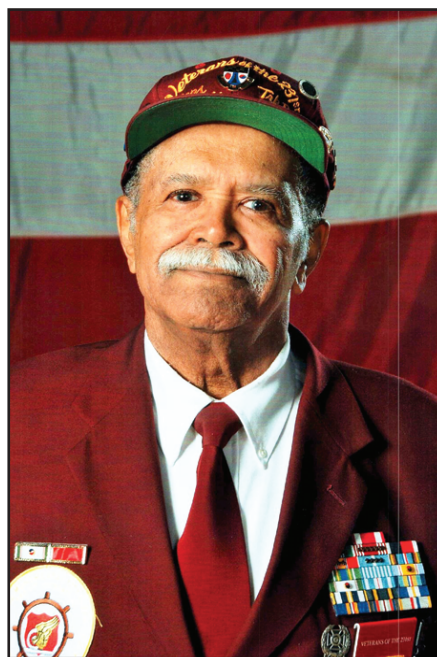
The Black Authors Book Expo takes place on Saturday, September 19, 2020 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Baltimore War Memorial Building located at 101 N. Gay Street. The family friendly event offers an opportunity to meet and purchase items from your favorite self-published Black authors. Both adult and youth authors will showcase various genres, so it's guaranteed there will be something for the entire family. In previous years, authors have been as young as six years of age, so feel free to take the kids, they may be inspired to express themselves through writing. The event is free and open to the public. Wearing a facemask is mandatory. Have fun and enjoy.

Well, my dear friend it is about that time, I have to go but remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com.

P.S. I am working on my third book about Baltimore Black History, so if you wish for you and your family's pictures and stories to be included in this one, feel free to contact me. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.

Note:

Received a note from Sen. Larry Young, talk show host on WOLB 1010 AM Radio that Dr. Marvin “Doc” Cheatham was admitted into the hospital for what could be 6-8 weeks for serious health challenges. He is in need of your prayers.



Lewis S. Diggs is celebrating his 89th birthday this week, Baltimore says, “Happy Birthday and may you have many, many, many more.”



Larry Young, talk show host on WOLB 1010 A.M. was informed by the Talker's Magazine that for the 10th year he is listed in the magazine as the Top 100 Talk Show Host listed in the magazine that he is ranked #41. Congratulations my friend, this is well deserved!



Congressmen Kweisi Mfume will be the Keynote Speaker for the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Day celebrating the life and legacy of the founder of Prince Hall Freemasonry on Sunday, September 13, 2020 a 3 p.m. Virtual Broadcast. It is open to the public on or YouTube: or call 410-669-4966.



Still going strong and doing yard work at age 81, Baltimore Colts legend and NFL Hall of Famers, Lenny Moore #24 with his friend and next-door neighbor, Reggie Wilson his next-door neighbor. God bless them both.

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Emergency physicians urge everyone to recognize warning signs of suicide and know how to help

Washington, D.C.— In recognition of National Suicide Prevention Week, the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) urges everyone to do their part to support those who may be struggling with depression or other mental health challenges by recognizing the warning signs of suicide, knowing how to help, and becoming more familiar with resources available in each community.

“Spotting suicidal thoughts or behaviors could help avoid a tragedy,” said William Jaquis, MD, FACEP, president of ACEP. “Each of us will process this pandemic in our own way, but people may be more likely to experience difficult feelings during a crisis. You can be sure that if and when you need us, an emergency physician will be there for you.”

Call 911 or visit the closest emergency department in the event of a medical emergency or if there is an immediate health or safety threat. Contact a mental health professional if you, or someone you know, exhibits one or more of these warning signs:

- *Hopelessness
- *Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- *Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- *Increased alcohol or drug use
- *Withdrawal from friends, family, or society
- *Anxiety, agitation, trouble sleeping or sleeping all the time
- *Dramatic mood changes

Consider contacting a health professional if stress impedes your daily activities for several days in a row. Talk to the person to understand what they are thinking and feeling. Research shows that discussing suicide may reduce suicidal thoughts. Help a person



at-risk by connecting them with trusted friends or family, or a mental health professional.

If emergency care is required for a suicide attempt, a physician-led care team will keep the patient safe until they are ready to go home. Prior to discharge, resources for longer-term care will be outlined as appropriate and a list of nearby experts and places to go for help will be provided as available. The care team will work with the patient to create a written safety plan that includes their unique warning signs, coping strategies, and resources for help.

It is critical that patients try to maintain a safe environment for themselves at home. More than half (52 percent) of suicides involve a gun, according to research available through AFFIRM, an emergency-physician-led organization dedicated to firearm injury prevention research. Misuse of medication also poses significant risks. Ask a doctor

about how to safely dispose of unused, expired or unwanted medicines. Consider taking steps to identify the best strategies for safe storage of medication, firearms or other potential home hazards. One helpful tool that

encourages safe storage based on personal choices is Lock2Live, an education website developed by emergency physicians.

“Suicide is complicated, and emergency physicians are vital partners in the collaborative effort necessary to prevent these incidents from occurring. If you ever feel like you may hurt yourself or others or you have thoughts about taking your own life, please seek help right away,” said Dr. Jaquis.

If you or somebody you know experiences suicidal thoughts or behaviors, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service is available to anyone and all calls are confidential.

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) is the national medical society representing emergency medicine. For more information, visit www.acep.org and www.emergencyphysicians.org.

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Reginald F. Lewis Museum Reopens

Freedom Bound: Runaways of the Chesapeake and Robert Houston: The 1968 Poor People's Campaign in Photographs will be on view

Baltimore— The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture re-opened to the public on Thursday, September 10, 2020 with the new exhibition, *Freedom Bound: Runaways of the Chesapeake*.

For the safety of visitors and to protect against the spread of COVID-19, all Lewis Museum staff and visitors are required to wear face-masks while in the museum. The museum has also adjusted our hours of operation and installed signage will direct visitor traffic flow. To read the full visitor guidelines, go to https://lewismuseum.org/visitorsguide/?mc_cid=1a298de9e4&mc_eid=03b9d606e1.

“As we navigate the uncharted waters of a worldwide pandemic, we are taking every precaution to



The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture re-opened to the public on Thursday, September 10, 2020. *Freedom Bound: Runaways of the Chesapeake and Robert Houston: The 1968 Poor People's Campaign in Photographs* are the exhibitions on display. Photo: Courtesy of the Reginald Lewis Museum

provide a safe environment for our staff and visitors,” explained Lewis Museum Executive Director, Wanda Draper. “We have the advantage of 82,000 square feet which makes social distancing

possible while enjoying our exhibitions throughout the building.”

Upon opening, the exhibitions on display will be *Freedom Bound: Runaways of the Chesapeake* and *Robert Houston: The 1968 Poor People's Campaign in Photographs*.

Freedom Bound: Runaways of the Chesapeake tells a story of resistance to bondage and servitude in the Chesapeake Region from the Colonial Period to the American Civil War (1728-1864). In this exhibition, visitors will learn the personal stories of nine people stripped of their human

rights and treated as property. Each of these individuals resisted these abuses and asserted some degree of control over their own lives by running away. *Freedom Bound* will be on view until March 28, 2021.

On display in the Lewis Now gallery is *Robert Houston: The 1968 Poor People's Campaign*, Baltimore-based photographer Robert Houston, 84, reveals the human condition in his photographs of Resurrection City, the encampment protesters constructed in 1968 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The Poor People's Campaign, as it was known,

brought 3,000 people from all over the country to a slice of land that would soon be drenched by rain and filled with wooden shanties. Visitors to this exhibition will see a selection of photographs by Houston as curated by photographer Devin Allen, a 2017 Gordon Parks Foundation Fellow.

The Lewis Museum will also continue to provide virtual community programs and online resources.

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum is Maryland's largest museum dedicated to the State's African American experience. A Smithsonian affiliate, the museum engages visitors through its permanent and special exhibitions, community events and family programming. The museum is celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2020.

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University of Maryland, Baltimore opening doors to homeownership

Baltimore— The University of Maryland, Baltimore’s (UMB) Live Near Your Work (LNYW) program is capitalizing on its success by expanding into two neighborhoods with historic significance: Druid Heights and Heritage Crossing.

The program, offers UMB employees assistance with down payments and closing costs on newly purchased homes in designated areas. UMB contributes \$16,000 per eligible participant as a commitment to its surrounding communities, while the city of Baltimore will offer a matching grant of up to \$2,500 for those who are eligible.

The two new neighborhoods, which are walkable and close to campus, meet the mission of the program, according to Emily Winkler, MS, benefits manager, Human Resources, and LNYW Program coordinator.

“We decided to expand based mainly on interest on campus. We wanted to offer more to our employees, so we created an application for neighborhoods to apply,” she said.

From early 2018 through June 2020, the program has helped 44 employees to purchase homes in the eligible neighborhoods in Southwest Baltimore, with three others in the pipeline, meaning nearly half of LNYW’s initial \$1.5 million subsidy has been expended.



The University of Maryland, Baltimore’s “Live Where You Work” program offers UMB employees assistance with down payments and closing costs on newly purchased homes in designated areas. Druid Heights and Heritage Crossing are newest neighborhoods added to the program. Courtesy Photo/UMB

The average purchase price has been \$193,000. The other seven neighborhoods are Barre Circle, Franklin Square, Hollins Market, Mount Clare, Pigtown/ Washington Village, Poppleton, and Union Square.

Demetrius Shambley, MS, senior facilities planner, Office of Real Estate, Planning, and Space Management, who also serves on the LNYW committee, purchased a rowhome last August in

Pigtown through the program.

“Homeownership was always something that was important to me,” said Shambley, who walks to work. “You couldn’t beat the grants that were being offered, so it just was the perfect opportunity.”

To be eligible, applicants must be a regular full- or part-time faculty, staff or postdoctoral fellow employee in good standing. Participants must contribute a minimum of \$1,000 toward the down payment, prove creditworthiness, and complete a homeownership, counseling program.

“Since the pandemic, I haven’t seen a

decrease in inquiries. If anything, I’m seeing more people because interest rates are low,” Winkler said.

Druid Heights, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, boasts large, three-story Victorian-style row homes that have up to five bedrooms, with new construction in the Baker’s View Development. The median home purchase price is \$29,000, according to Live Baltimore, with estimated mortgages of \$198. Almost 30 percent of residents in the community own their homes.

The neighborhood, which is roughly bordered by North Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Madison Avenue and Laurens Street, is walkable and close to Druid Hill Park. It is commuter-friendly with easy access to Metro stations and Pennsylvania Station.

Heritage Crossing is a mixed-income townhouse development that was completed in 2003. The family- and senior-friendly neighborhood boasts a historic gazebo as its community, gathering place. The suburban-like community is walkable with easy access to the UMB schools and downtown locations such as the Inner Harbor, Oriole Park at Camden Yards, and M&T Bank Stadium.

The neighborhood features 260 attached and semi-detached townhomes and apartments. The median home purchase price is \$144,500, according to Live Baltimore, with an estimated mortgage of \$986. Thirty-six percent of residents own their homes.

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Raymond Kirby (5/23/70) has petitioned the courts on a name change to Raymond Holmes. An affidavit in opposition of this change must be filed with the family courts before 10/1/20.

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