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Howard County Executive Calvin Ball Receives Good Scout Award from Boy Scouts of America

Ellicott City, MD –

Howard County Executive Calvin Ball was presented the Good Scout Award from the National Pike District of Boy Scouts of America on February 9, 2021. The Good Scout Award is presented to those who exemplify, in their daily lives, the values and ideals of the Boy Scouts of America, which are expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

“Scouting bring opportunities to children that last a lifetime, and a work ethic that reverberates throughout generations,” said Ball. “To receive this honor in this time, is not only momentous to me because of the hard work our team has been doing, but as a former scout, my first leadership opportunity was to be a den chief, and now 30 years later to receive this award is something I will always cherish. Howard County is lucky to have such a dedicated and impactful group looking out for our community, who quite simply make Howard County better for all.”

In 2020, over 3,000 scouts participated in Scouting programs in Howard County, with 101 young people earning Eagle Scout and totaling more than 16,000 hours of community service. This year, the Boys Scouts of America celebrated the inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts. The Baltimore Area Council is one of the leading Council’s in the nation with 14 young

County Executive Calvin Ball received the Good Scout Award from the National Pike District of Boy Scouts of America on February 9, 2021. Courtesy Photo

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Tindall's Home Training

By Alanah Nichole Davis

When I was a girl I was a short, rotund and clumsy seven-year-old preparing to enter the second grade, I migrated with my family from a housing project in The Bronx, New York to what was a pretty quiet neighborhood in Randallstown, Maryland on Cervine Lane.

After we first moved to Baltimore, I completed the second-grade year Deer Park Elementary and shortly thereafter we moved to a quaint two-bedroom apartment adjacent to both Liberty and Old Court Roads— two main thoroughfares in Baltimore County. Liberty Road despite its namesake runs 44 miles and is technically a highway. Old Court Road only runs 15 miles of which my family and I took up only 800 square feet where the zoned school was and still is Winfield Elementary School, home of the Woolly Mammoth.

Every day in order to get to school, I would cross Old Court Road to get to Carlson Lane where my alma mater, Winfield Elementary still stands today. By the time we moved, I was entering the third grade where I would meet someone whose lessons still live rent-free in my head today at just a few months shy of turning 30 years old. I know now with perfect clarity that one of the most graceful, resourceful, understanding and compassionate teachers I'd set forth to have in the trajectory of schooling ever is Ms. Tanya Tindall.

Either 22 or 23 years ago in either 1999 or 2000— if my calculations are correct— Ms. Tindall from the memory of an eight or nine-year-old was a statuesque, brown woman with shoulder-length black straight hair. Having gone back after growing a few



As the mother of an eight-year-old and six-year-old, Alanah Nichole Davis is still reminded of the musings of her third grade teacher, Ms. Tanya Tindall. In tough behavioral moments with her children, she often channels Ms. Tindall and declares to both herself and her children— “Act like you have some home training!”

Courtesy Photo

inches myself, I now know that she really wasn't exactly physically tall but her teachings were.

There isn't a year that goes by that I don't think about Ms. Tindall or her poised cadence, her flawless late '90s and early '00s hair wrap styles and the lessons she would deliver out of a small classroom on Carlson Lane.

Ms. Tindall's classic Black woman side-eye could often be seen peering through her then wire-framed glasses. At times, she didn't even have to part her lips for the class to know we were

completely out of line. Out of line was something I steered clear of both then and now. My classmates would tease me and call me a goody two shoes and they weren't wrong— I've always been an ostentatiously well-behaved person even at four feet tall.

The social implications of not misbehaving or cutting up with the rest of your class at times was the occasional uncomfortable alienation from peers, and in turn, at some lunch-times when Ms. Tindall would lesson plan, she

would invite me and other well behaved students to quietly sit and eat in the classroom with her instead of the cafeteria. Those lunch hours made being well behaved worth it, and besides I would surely have received an earful back at my 800 square feet apartment on Old Court Road from my mother and father when I got home, if I hadn't behaved at school.

Ms. Tindall's musings were many but the one will stick with me forever, “Act like you have some home training!” She would exclaim with her eyeglasses frames perched at the tip of her nose. She would say it as we walked the lightly raised silver straight lines throughout the hallways of Winfield, as she delivered lessons and sometimes randomly to keep us on our toes.

Now as a mother of an eight and six-year-old, I have Ms. Tindall's reminders of “home training” engrained in my moral compass forever. I sit and imagine the conversations she would have with the gaggle of other Black women who served as teachers at Winfield— Ms. Jacobs; Ms. Johnson; and Ms. Barnes. Together they were not our biological mothers, not our aunts or our little friends but our teachers. I'm grateful to the muscle of empathy I've built for educators like Ms. Tindall who always went the extra mile, now that school is being delivered virtually for my own children.

The 2020/21 school year hasn't always been easy with the pandemic and school being delivered at home. In tough behavioral moments, I channel Ms. Tindall and declare to both myself, and my children— “Act like you have some home training!” and it helps. Thank You, Ms. Tindall.

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

How Congress can really fix surprise billing

By Janet Trautwein

House and Senate leaders recently agreed on legislation to end surprise medical bills as part of the latest coronavirus relief package. Former President Trump signed it into law at the end of December.

Unfortunately, the solution they've settled on will do more harm than good. It relies on independent arbitrators to settle disputes over surprise bills. This approach will enrich providers and the private equity firms that own many of them at the expense of patients.

A better solution would relieve patients of responsibility for surprise bills—and direct insurers to pay out-of-network providers rates commensurate with what other providers in the area charge for the same procedure.

Nearly 60 percent of Americans have received a surprise medical bill, according to a survey conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago. The bills can run anywhere from hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars.

The most outrageous ones are the product of emergencies, when a patient is incapacitated and unable to select an in-network hospital or doctor. Almost one in five emergency visits resulted in at least one out-of-network charge in 2017, according to an analysis of large employer plans from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

A separate analysis of data from one large insurer published in JAMA Internal Medicine found that two in five ER visits in 2016 yielded an out-of-network bill—10 percentage points more than in 2010. The average potential cost for patients nearly tripled, to \$628.

Surprise bills can even arise when patients visit an in-network facility or provider. Take the experience of one New York woman who went to her doctor to get a sore throat checked out. A few weeks later, the bill for her lab results came—more than \$28,000. Unbeknownst to the patient, her doctor had sent her samples to an out-of-network lab for processing.

Millions of people have stories like these. It's no wonder nearly 80 percent of Americans support legislation to stop surprise billing. Unfortunately, the arbitration-based approach passed by Congress will lead to higher costs for insurers and patients alike.

Arbitration is opaque. Providers can offer up high prices without fearing outside scrutiny. They also know that an arbitrator is likely to settle somewhere between an insurer's offer and a provider's. That gives them an incentive to price high. Indeed, under New York's system of arbitration for surprise bills, providers received payments that were at about the 80th percentile of typical costs in the state.

Because providers can make out better under arbitration, they have less incentive to join insurance networks. Patients lose. Not only do they have fewer in-network doctors to choose from—they face higher premiums to cover insurers' higher costs.

Congress should instead ban surprise bills in emergencies and situations where a patient is involuntarily treated by a non-network provider. Then, lawmakers should order insurers to reimburse out-of-network providers at the median of what insurers pay other providers in the area for the same work. In cases where it's impossible to determine that median rate, insurers could follow Medicare's payment schedule.

This "benchmarking" approach not only ensures providers are compensated fairly, it also nudges them to join insurance networks.

California implemented benchmarking in July 2017, to great effect. Since then, surprise billing has evaporated. Between 80 percent and 100 percent of hospitals report that there has been no out-of-network billing from their physicians.

People have been desperate for a solution to surprise medical bills. But the fix Congress has settled on is no fix at all. Let's hope lawmakers revisit this issue in 2021.

Janet Trautwein is CEO of the National Association of Health Underwriters (www.nahu.org).



Community Affairs

Alzheimer's Foundation of America offering college scholarship to high school seniors

New York— The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) is offering scholarships to college-bound high school seniors affected by Alzheimer's disease of up to \$5,000 as part of its annual Teens for Alzheimer's Awareness Scholarship Essay Contest. Entries can be submitted at www.alzfdn.org/scholarship and must be received by February 15, 2021.

AFA's scholarship essay contest invites high school seniors to write a 1,200 to 1,500-word essay that describes how Alzheimer's disease impacted themselves, their families or their communities, and what they have learned from their experiences. Caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer's, volunteering or working at a care setting, raising Alzheimer's awareness or conducting research about Alzheimer's and other dementia-related illnesses are all experiences that teens are invited to share. "Millions of teens across the country

have real, compelling stories about how they were affected, influenced or inspired by their experiences with Alzheimer's disease," said Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., AFA's President and CEO. "We encourage tomorrow's leaders in the fight against Alzheimer's to share their experiences today for the chance to earn a college scholarship and help raise Alzheimer's awareness throughout the country."

The grand prizewinner will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship. Prizes will also be awarded for first-runner-up (\$2,500), second-runner-up (\$1,500), and honorable mentions (between \$1,000 and \$400). Since the program's inception nearly \$300,000 in college scholarships have been awarded.

Additional information about the contest is available at www.alzfdn.org/scholarship. Entries must be submitted by February 15.

AFA has been able to provide these scholarship funds with the generous support of charitable donors. Individuals wishing to support this and other programs and services for families affected by Alzheimer's disease can do so by visiting www.alzfdn.org/donate or calling AFA at 866-232-8484.

Baltimore's Billie Holiday Foretells America's 'Strange and Bitter Crop' of Hate

By Regi Taylor

Honoring a prominent daughter of Baltimore during Black History Month would normally be cause for jubilation. However, the recent carnage on Capitol Hill resulting primarily from racist backlash against the second person of color in the White House in a dozen years, and the polarized, violent racial atmosphere permeating the country right now, makes Billie Holiday's legacy a somber occasion in 2021.

Eighty-two years ago, Ms. Holiday released "Strange Fruit," a highly controversial, graphic performance describing the horror of lynched, burned black bodies swaying from the boughs of Southern trees like a low hanging "strange and bitter crop" during an era when thousands of African Americans met this fate at the hands of racist white mobs.

The little-known backstory regarding Strange Fruit, and Billie Holiday's legacy is the reaction of official Washington to the song. Written by Abel

Meeropol, a Jewish-American songwriter from The Bronx, Ms. Holiday made the recording in 1939 and it instigated a virulent reaction from the Federal government.

Billie Holiday secretly became a public enemy, considered by the FBI as a dangerous subversive, and a campaign was launched to discredit and silence her by exploiting her reputation as a dabbler in drugs. Harry Anslinger, the first head of the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics, hounded Ms. Holiday for performing "Strange Fruit," taking advantage of his authority to harass her with threats of incarceration.

In actual memos written by Anslinger at the time, he defined the song as "musical anarchy and evidence of a recurrence of the primitive impulses that lurk in black people." He said, "It sounded like the jungles in the dead of night, unbelievably ancient indecent rites of the East Indies are resurrected" in this music by 'black' people. Anslinger was further quoted as saying the lives of jazzmen "reek of filth." His pursuit of Holiday practically became a personal vendetta considered to be a main cause of her spiraling into an addiction that would eventually claim her life.

Renowned director, Lee Daniels, of "The Butler" fame, has directed a soon-to-be-released Billie Holiday biopic entitled, Strange Fruit, debuting later this month on Hulu. It's an African American history must-see. In the meantime, it is a must-hear to experience Ms. Holiday's powerful, melancholy rendition of Strange Fruit at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Web007rzSOI&ab_channel=prokoman1.

Meanwhile, back in the District, the racist mob that stormed Capitol Hill last month to 'take back their country,' had a hit list that apparently included influential African American congressional leaders, and their traitorous, aiding and abetting white 'confederates,' ostensibly with support from Republican legislators who had previously provided them surreptitious reconnaissance scouting of the Capitol's interior layout under the guise of visitor tours.

It's probably not a coincidence that during the Capitol Hill melee on January 6, 2021, threatening text messages were being received by a family member of fourth-in-succession behind speaker Pelosi in the Congressional leadership hierarchy, New York Rep. Hakim Jeffries, an African American and the Democratic Caucus' Chairman.

The second in command of Capitol Hill Democrats, South Carolina's African American Majority Whip, Rep. James Clyburn, was scratching his head on January 6 wondering how the insurrectionists knew the location of his discreetly tucked away 3rd floor Capitol Hill office. Rep. Clyburn also has an office on the first floor that he seldom uses, in a location that is easily visible and bears his name which the mob ignored. Hmm.

The historic connection between Billie Holiday's Strange Fruit and the treasonous, Capitol Hill riot? For one, the functioning noose that insurrectionists took the time to construct on the Capitol grounds before they breached the building to hunt the "other" who were taking over their America, for the purpose of executing them.

Another parallel to the enraged white supremacist multitudes that defiled the Capitol in a murderous rage while attempting to thwart the government on the day when the peaceful transfer of presidential power was to take place, is that sans the location, this has happened before in the nation's history, immediately following the Civil War.

Eerily similar to Donald Trump in politics and temperament, Trump's declared hero, post-Civil War president, Andrew Jackson, bowing to pressure from rabidly racist Southern whites resentful of the North's victory and the rapid ascent of former slaves into positions influence, authority and wealth, reneged on the U.S. government's commitment to protect African Americans and pulled federal troops stationed in former Confederate states to enforce Reconstruction.

The result was the formation of the Ku Klux Klan, Jim Crow and a full century of African American lynching in America that according to the Smithsonian numbers 6500 between 1865 and the Civil Rights movement of 1960s. The racist seed America sowed after the Civil War is still bearing a strange fruit in the 21st century.

Regi Taylor is West Baltimore native. The married father of four is an artist, writer and media professional specializing in political history. Check out his meme gallery at <https://www.humortimes.com/cartoons/dc-crap/>.

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Just in time for Valentine's Day

Hotel Revival and Art of Balance Collaborate to Offer Luxurious

By Ursula V. Battle

Looking for a delicious, relaxing, fun-filled way to celebrate Valentine's Day weekend? Hotel Revival, a boutique in historic Mount Vernon and Art of Balance Wellness Spa, a luxury wellness and cosmetic service provider, have an indulgently sweet answer. The two have combined to offer "A Great Time for Two," wellness cocktails crafted by the Revival team for guests of the spa.

"At Revival, we pride ourselves on providing unique and quality experiences to guests while also supporting the businesses in our community, and we see a great opportunity to join forces with the ownership team of Art of Balance Wellness Spa to do just that," said Donte Johnson, general manager of Hotel Revival.

The special package, designed to provide a 24-hour lavish experience in Baltimore, includes VIP Car Service to The Art of Balance Wellness Spa in Federal Hill, a Parisian-influenced dinner and champagne toast for two prepared by award-winning Chef Ashish Alfred at Duck Duck Goose in Fells Point; along with an overnight stay at the art-infused boutique Hotel Revival, with transportation also being provided to those locations.

"We know it has been a challenging time for everybody," said Jason Bass, Director of Culture and Impact for Hotel Revival. "We did not want to let Valentine's Day go by and not let people have a way to celebrate the relationships we value even more. We also wanted to make it easy to find a way to celebrate these relationships right here in Baltimore. It's also a celebration of 2021, and springtime which is almost here."

According to Bass, "A Great Time for Two," is drawing significant interest and is being well-received. As part of the partnership, the hotel's bar team also crafted "The Balanced Cocktail," a signature beverage for guests to enjoy following all treatments and services at the spa.

Art of Balance Wellness Spa is a luxury medical and wellness spa located at



Dr. Nia Banks and Dr. Aderonke Omotade pose in front of their business, Art of Balance Wellness Spa, the only one of its kind in the Baltimore, Ellicott City and Columbia, Maryland region. Courtesy Photos

801 Key Highway at the Ritz Carlton Residences. Founded by two board-certified female physicians, Dr. Nia Banks, and Dr. Aderonke Omotade, the two opened the spa with the goal of providing guests with a first-class and holistic wellness experience.

"We were very excited about the opportunity when it was presented to us by our rep with PROFILES," said Dr. Banks, referring to PROFILES, a PR, marketing, communications, and events firm based in Baltimore. "I was familiar with Hotel Revival and its historic location in Mt. Vernon. We thought this opportunity would give us good exposure, and bring in hotel guests to the spa. The hotel is beautiful, and we are excited about the partnership."

She added, "The great thing about the package is that it's not only for romantic partners. You can come with your mom, sister, or friend. It's a great time for two. The beauty of the package is that it has been curated especially for Hotel Revival. It is a very customized and unique experience."

Dr. Banks is the Chief of Plastic Surgery at Doctors Community Hospital in Lanham, Maryland, a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, a



One of the guestrooms located in Hotel Revival, a Joie de Vivre hotel located in the heart of Baltimore's historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, and a part of "A Great Time for Two."

diplomate of the American Board of Plastic Surgery, a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

"People can expect a wonderful time," said Dr. Banks. "We want them to feel well-cared for, comfortable, valued, and worth treating themselves to this experience. We want them to see they are worth treating themselves to experiences like this not just on special occasions,

but should take care of themselves all the time. We are looking forward to having Hotel Revival guests here at Art of Balance to enjoy their spa experience."

"A Great Time for Two" packages start at \$650 and are available for stays now through December 30, 2021. For more information visit <https://www.jd-vhotels.com/hotels/maryland/baltimore/hotel-revival-baltimore/specials/a-great-time-for-two> or call 410-727-7101.

February is Cancer Prevention Month; thankfully there's some good news

By **Brandon Ross**
Men's Health Network

February is Cancer Prevention Month, and with that comes the need to express how important it is to visit your doctor and get screened for this disease should you feel ill or are in pain.

While most people associate cancer for all the hard realities that come with it: chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, transplants, etc., there's some hope that can be offered to those who are (understandably) nervous from getting screened, as well as survivors, from the disease.

Cancer death rates continue to decline, and according to the American Cancer Society (ACS) (<https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/facts-and-figures-2021.html>), the rate in death from this disease has dropped 31 percent from 1991-2018. Men's Health Network (MHN), a national non-profit based in Washington D.C., will continue to advocate for early cancer detection, as well as educating

men to learn and protect themselves from typical male cancers such as testicular and prostate cancer and how to protect their loved ones and families from cancer, according to Dr. Salvatore Giorgianni, Jr., a senior science advisor for MHN.

"The continuing decline in deaths due to cancers in the US is very important and encouraging," Dr. Giorgianni said. "These declines are for the most part due to two very important reasons— increases in early detection of cancer and investments from pharmaceutical and diagnostic companies in advanced treatments and more accurate testing technologies."

People will still unfortunately get this disease in 2021 and beyond. ACS researchers estimate 1.9 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer this year, and roughly 600,000 of them will die. However, progress continues to be seen in recent years, with cancer rates dropping an additional 2.4 percent from 2017 to 2018, which is the single biggest one-year drop in death



[Men's Health Network] urges all men to become more knowledgeable about cancer and then 'man-up' by doing all you can to take responsibility for the health of yourself and those you care about," said Dr. Salvatore Giorgianni, Jr., senior science advisor for the Men's Health Network. Photo Credit: ClipArt.com.

rates (<https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/facts-and-figures-2021.html>).

The year 2020 (and the start of 2021) provided enough uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and with that ACS does not and will not know the effect the COVID-19 pandemic will have on cancer diagnosis in general, but researchers say those with active cancer cases are more susceptible to being infected due to a weakened immune system.

MHN will continue to advocate for early cancer detection, as well as educating men to learn and protect themselves from typical male cancers such as testicular and prostate cancer and how to protect their loved ones and families from cancer, according to Dr. Giorgianni.

"Early detection, which means regular medical checkups, is THE key," Dr. Giorgianni said. "[Men's Health Network] urges all men to become more knowledgeable about cancer and then 'man-up' by doing all you can to take

responsibility for the health of yourself and those you care about."

The biggest takeaway hopefully taken from this is very simple, and that's to visit your doctor on a regular basis to encourage early detection. The worst thing we can all do is take our foot off the gas and neglect our own bodies.

As a survivor of Acute Myeloid Leukemia of 19 years and counting, let the author reiterate the importance of staying on top of your doctor's visits. This article would not have ever been written if early cancer detection were not a part of the equation.

Men's Health Network (MHN) is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to reach men, boys, and their families where they live, work, play, and pray with health awareness messages and tools, screening programs, educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and patient navigation. Learn more about MHN at www.menshealthnetwork.org.

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Calvin Ball Howard County Executive

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What young Black adults are saying about getting the COVID-19 vaccination

By Ngozi Alia

Young Black adults stand in a unique position—their race makes them disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 but their age makes them less likely to suffer severe symptoms if they contract the virus.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted to recommend Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use for people ages 18 and older in the U.S.,” as reported by CNN.

Kalyn Brown and Erin James are twenty-two-year-old Baltimore natives. Both have decided that when the vaccine becomes available to them, they will more than likely not take it.

Kalyn makes it clear that she is “anti-coronavirus vaccine.” She explains what she understands about the COVID-19 vaccine, “it’s kind of like a flu shot. Where they give all of the components of the virus so that you can build immunity to it.”

Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, an African American woman research scientist and pioneer in the Moderna COVID-19 vaccination, explained how the COVID-19 vaccine works in an interview conducted by CBS News earlier this year. According to Dr. Corbett, the “vaccine teaches the body how to fend off a virus because it teaches the body how to look for the virus by basically just showing the body the spike protein of the virus. The body then says, ‘oh, we’ve seen this protein before, let’s go fight against it.’”

Kalyn’s personal decision to not take the COVID-19 vaccination mirrors her decision to not get the flu vaccination after going three years without one. For the COVID-19 vaccination, Kalyn said, “I don’t think it makes sense for us to take the vaccine, especially when everyone’s [body] may react differently to it.”

Unlike Kalyn, Christina Mashishi’s decision to take the COVID-19 vaccination lies in her inability to determine how her body will react to the virus and not the vaccine. The 22-year-old Bowie native said, “I don’t know how my body’s going to react to [COVID-19]. I [have] never gotten [COVID-19] before by God’s grace, but I just don’t want to



*Erin James,
current college student*



*Christina Mashishi,
recent college graduate*



*Jasmine Addae,
current college student*

take my chances.” She also mentioned that she does not want to take any chances regarding experiencing any severe symptoms of the virus.

According to the Center for Disease and Control (CDC), “COVID-19 vaccination is safer to help build protection. COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you.”

Erin James uses the words “odd,” “fresh,” and “incomplete” to describe her understanding of the COVID-19 vaccination. She shares that “she really doesn’t know too much about the vaccine. “I just know that they literally conjured it up in 2.5 seconds to serve to the public and it has adverse effects.”

The potential adverse effects, ingredients of the vaccine, and the urgent push for vaccination have influenced Erin’s decision not to take the vaccine.

It’s not uncommon for scientists to take five years or more to create a new vaccine. However, in the case of the COVID-19 vaccination, previous knowledge of other coronaviruses; large funding for COVID-19 research; mRNA technology; and global teamwork are all key factors that sped up the development of the COVID-19 vaccine.

In the CBS interview, Dr. Corbett

mentioned that scientists applied six years’ worth of knowledge to the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

Available links for information about the ingredients in the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines can be found on the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019->

[ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html)). “The two COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States do not contain eggs, preservatives or latex,” according to the CDC.

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Continued from page 8

Twenty-one and 24-year-old Baltimore natives Jasmine Addae and Willard Brewington have decided they will take the COVID-19 vaccination once it's available to them.

Jasmine describes her understanding of the COVID-19 vaccine as limited. She says she just knows that there are two doses of the vaccines and two types of vaccines from two different companies. "From my understanding, some people experience mild symptoms," Jasmine said.

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require two shots. According to the CDC, it's not uncommon to experience symptoms such as "fever, chills, tiredness and headaches." Pain and swelling can also occur at the injection site. The CDC also notes, "serious problems from vaccination can happen, but they are rare."

Jasmine and Willard's decision to receive a COVID-19 vaccination is linked to the desire to return to society before the COVID-19 virus.

Jasmine shares that "a lot of people have died because of COVID-19. The way society has functioned, we have to

adapt to a new normal. I'm kind of tired of that." Jasmine also notes that she understands that wearing a mask and social distancing are important, but a significant number of individuals are not wearing masks and social distancing.

Willard expressed that the confidence of other scientists and medical professionals like Dr. Anthony Fauci makes him trust the vaccine. "The 95 percent effectiveness combined with my own desire for society to get back to normal makes me want to take it. Also, people already take a flu shot, and I believe the COVID-19 vaccine isn't really that different from that," he said.

When asked if there is anything that could be done to change their minds about taking a COVID-19 vaccination, Kalyn and Erin both replied, "not really." Erin noted that she would have to make herself more knowledgeable regarding the makeup of the vaccine.

Christina, Jasmine and Willard acknowledged that they understand why young African American adults might display skepticism on receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. However, they all urge young, Black adults to do their research.



Kalyn Brown, recent college graduate



Willard Brewington: local actor and college graduate with a bachelor's degree in Theater and minor in Mass Communications

Christina shared that she too was skeptical at first but she did her research and has decided that the best option for her is to get the vaccine. She encourages everyone to do their own research on credited websites, listen to the professionals, ask questions and more importantly pay attention to what is being said and done in other countries.

Jasmine says that young, Black adults should think about the positives about

getting the vaccine. Think about how the vaccine could really stop the spread of the virus. It's been over a year now since it started and it's hurt a lot of different families. People have lost their jobs and businesses and now that we have sort of a solution in place, we need to do everything we can to stop the virus.

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The Annapolis Times, February 12 - February 18, 2021 (www.baltimoretimes-online.com)

Page 9

Comcast names Michael Parker top executive for Beltway Region

Baltimore— Michael Parker has been named Senior Vice President of Comcast's Beltway Region where he will serve as the head executive responsible for operations, overall customer experience and financial performance for approximately 2.5 million customers in Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and parts of Delaware, North Carolina and West Virginia.

"I have had the privilege of working with Michael as our senior executive in several markets across the northeast and Midwest over the last decade. I am equally excited for him as he assumes responsibility for our Beltway region, the largest operating region in the Northeast division," said Kevin Casey, President of Comcast's Northeast Division, which includes 14 northeastern states from Maine through Virginia and the District of Columbia.

"Michael is a seasoned and proven leader with a wealth of knowledge and a passion for creating the best workplace for employees and a consistently superior customer experience."

Parker joined Comcast in 2001 and has spent the last 20 years in progressively larger leadership positions. Most recently, he was Senior Vice President of Comcast's Keystone Region serving customers in Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Prior, he was Senior Vice President of Comcast's Western New England Region, which included operations in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Under his leadership, the Region was recognized with numerous "Best Places to Work" awards from area media outlets. His previous Comcast roles have included senior positions for the company's Greater Chicago Region, and in systems serving Baltimore, Connecticut, Detroit and New York.

"I'm excited to return to the Beltway region and continue our commitment to deliver great experiences for employees and customers alike," Parker added.

Parker, who began his professional career as Illinois Assistant Attorney General, is a graduate of the National



Michael Parker, Senior Vice President of Comcast's Beltway Region.

Courtesy Photo

Association for Multi-ethnicity in Communication's Executive Leadership Development Program, the Cable and Telecommunications Association for Marketing's Executive Management Program, the Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineer's Tuck Executive Leadership Program, and Comcast's Executive Leadership Forum. He has been recognized numerous times over the past 10 years as one of *CableFax: The Magazine's* "Most Influential Minorities" and was named to the "Top 50 Under 50" list of *Black MBA Magazine*.

Parker, a Chicago native, holds an MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University and earned degrees from the University of Miami School of Law and Lake Forest College. He is a graduate of the Officer Candidates School in Quantico, Virginia, and attained the rank of First Lieutenant during his service with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

Howard County Executive Calvin Ball Receives Good Scout Award from Boy Scouts of America



County Executive Calvin Ball, who received the Good Scout Award is presented with the traditional Boy Scout neckerchief by Scout Executive & CEO at Baltimore Area Council - Boy Scouts of America on February 9, 2021. Courtesy Photo

Continued from page 1

women a part of the inaugural class, and six being from Howard County.

"Scouting's success for over a century has been because of our partnerships with local business and community organizations," said Kenn Miller, Scout Executive and CEO for the Baltimore Area Council of Boy Scouts of America. "We are truly blessed to have the support of community leaders. Congratulations to Calvin on being recognized with the Howard County Good Scout Award and thank

you for your support of Scouting in Howard County."

"Calvin, for your dedication and service to the community, for your efforts to help all youth everywhere, for the respect held for you by the citizens of Howard County, and on behalf of all your friends and colleagues, the Boy Scouts of America takes great pride in declaring you the 2020 Howard County Good Scout," said Steve Breeden, 2019 Howard County Good Scout awardee.



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BSO making ‘more Black History’ in classical music

By Stacy M. Brown

In observing Black History Month, National Newspaper Publishers Association President and CEO, Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., has always maintained a poetic-like theory.

“The best way to observe Black History Month is to make more Black history,” said Dr. Chavis, one of America’s prominent civil rights icons.

A recent New York Times article noted another place where Black history can—and should—be made.

The newspaper noted that orchestras are among the least racially diverse cultural institutions in the United States and Black musicians accounted for 1.8 percent of the country’s orchestra players in 2014. There is not much data since then.

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) is among the institutions trying to change the situation.

“The BSO has presented composers and performers of color over the years, and with her 2007 appointment as the first woman music director of a major American orchestra, Music Director Marin Alsop has been a leading advocate for equity in and through the arts, BSO President and CEO Peter Kjome wrote in an email.

“In particular [for] women and BIPOC composers and conductors— including founding the BSO’s OrchKids program in Baltimore more than a decade ago.

“These commitments and programs serve as a good foundation upon which to build. However, vital work lies ahead, and we remain committed to listening, learning, and acting,” Kjome offered.

He added that the BSO is actively engaged in meaningful work to help build its capacity to foster increased diversity, equity, and inclusion, focusing on racial justice.

“We cannot do this alone and have begun to engage leaders who can help us pursue this critical work authentically and thoughtfully. We have held facilitated DEI-focused sessions for BSO stakeholders, including Board of Directors, musicians, and management, with more strategic facilitation to



In 2019, The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra presented the New Orleans-based Preservation Hall Jazz Band as part of its “SuperPops” series at the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore. Courtesy Photo/BSO

come,” Kjome continued. “We have also begun to increase the percentage of people of color serving on the BSO Board of Directors, among other considerations of fostering diversity.”

According to the New York Times, a crucial component is expanding the pool of musicians of color by nurturing young artists.

For example, in Detroit, the Sphinx Organization mentors emerging artists and runs networking programs, the newspaper reported.

Sphinx’s president recommends organizations dedicate 15 percent of their budget to diversity initiatives for at least ten years.

Another issue is diversifying the ranks of composers.

“If you don’t capture these things in real-time to promote them, they will just happen and go away,” an executive at the Chicago Sinfonietta told the New York Times.

Then there is the audience, which has also skewed white.

“To attract new fans, events need to

become more accessible,” Toyin Spellman-Diaz, a member of the wind quintet Imani Winds, told The Times.

“Is there easy transportation to the hall? Is there childcare? Is there food that everyone can afford?” she said. “You have to design events as opposed to concerts.”

The BSO said it had taken the challenge to completely reprogram the 2020-21 season in response to the pandemic with greater intentionality regarding voice and representation.

“We have developed and released BSO Sessions, bringing the stories of musicians, conductors, and collaborators to life through a documentary-style narrative paired with robust and inclusive programming— including the music and stories of Black and women composers, Kjome said.

Seventy-five percent of the first 12 Sessions episodes feature BIPOC or women composers’ representation, with two episodes devoted exclusively to BIPOC composers.

Each Sessions episode is available

on-demand through June.

“Recognizing a need for greater diversity within our own orchestra complement, we will build on the new framework made possible in the five-year agreement with our musicians to provide greater access, positions, and increased participation of musicians of color in the orchestra,” Kjome said.

“We have also renewed our collaboration with The Sphinx Organization and have joined the National Alliance for Audition Support – a national initiative to increase diversity in American orchestras with an emphasis on Black and Latinx musicians.

“Important next steps include working with our musicians to evaluate orchestral hiring procedures and collaborating to establish a new fellowship program, grounded in cohorts and with hiring tracks, to help ensure that we fill critical vacancies outlined in our agreement but also be intentional in this recruitment.”

Rambling Rose

Spice of Life: Valentines Day
& Black History Month



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Well, hello my dear friends. It is such a great honor this week to be able to write about something else other than who died. It is just wonderful to write about something you can smile at for a change. Before I begin, I want to thank everyone who sent cards, flowers, emails, condolences and notes, which I am still receiving for the passing of my daughter Karen Atkinson last month. I appreciate you and much love to each one of you.

Now for the fun things to do this weekend. The Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival is this weekend with a Virtual Experience featuring Warren Wolf; Sean Jones; Dick Smith; The 3 Divas Trio; Paul Carr; Christie Dashiell; Tedd Baker; Allison Crockett; Allyn Johnson; Josh Bayer Trio; The Eric Byrd Trio; Nasar Abadey and Supernova; and De-Andrey Howard and Collector's Edition. Wow, what a line-up! Individual tickets or a weekend passport is available at: www.midatlanticjazzfestival.org. Enjoy!

Maybelle and Co. along with Tee-Shirt Brian will present their Annual Feed the Homeless this year up under the Bridge; at Centre and Gilford intersection under the 1-83 Bridge on February 12 from 11 a.m. til 1 p.m. Donations needed are

blankets and men socks and hats. They also need volunteers. To donate, contact Ms. Maybelle at 443-226-8895. God Bless you my two adopted daughter and son.

New music alert! "Valentine's Day CD Release Concert presented by Charm City Jazz is saxophonist, Art Sherrod Jr. in a "Sexy Valentine's Jazz Affair on Sunday, February 14, 2021 at Magooby's JokeHouse & Sound Stage, 9603 Deereco Road in Timonium, Maryland. Showtime is 6 p.m. For more information, call 410-252-2727 or 443-858-9781. Menu items and beverages will be available. So looks like you will have an evening of great food, fun and live music at this one. But wear your mask!

Okay my friends, this is the best I could do this week but it's Valentine's Day Weekend so smile! I am going to leave now, while you are still smiling.

Remember if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com or you can write me at 214 Conewood Avenue, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136. **UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.**



Celebrating Black History Month I am showcasing and celebrating these guys for over 40 years of brotherhood and friendship, the Evergreen Good and Plenty Bunch. In photo are: front row, from left, is John "Johnny" Jones, Lester Johnson, Gilbert "Gip" Gibson and George "Buddy" Cole; Back row, from left, are James "Jimmy" Kerr, Daniel "Danny" Murphy, William "Bill" Proctor and George Lottier and Charles R. Owens who is also the photographer.



Baltimore's own, Warren Wolf, will be one of the headliners for the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival this weekend— Friday, Saturday and Sunday, February 12 - 14 Live Streaming from the Blue House Studios presented by the Spirit of the DMV. For more information, visit: or call 888-909-6330.



Charm City Jazz presents a "Sexy Valentine's Jazz Affair" featuring Art Sherrod Jr. on Sunday, February 14, 2021 at Magooby's Joke House & Sound Stage, 9603 Deereco Road in Timonium, Maryland. Social distance seating and masks are required. For more information, call 443-858-9781.



Keystone Korner Baltimore presents Jean Carn with Valentine Love on Saturday, February 13 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, February 14, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. The Keystone Korner is located 1350 Lancaster Street. For more information, call 410-946-6726 or email them at ?

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Tee Martin is great choice to coach Ravens wide receivers

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens hired Tee Martin to be their new wide receivers coach last week. Martin replaces David Culley who was hired to be the head coach of Houston Texans. Culley served as the assistant head coach, wide receivers coach and pass game coordinator for the Ravens in 2019 and 2020.

The change should be a positive for the Ravens with Martin bringing a fresh approach to the receiver position. Martin led the University of Tennessee to their only National title in 1998 and was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2000. He spent four seasons in the NFL as a backup quarterback with the Steelers and Oakland Raiders in addition to two seasons playing in the CFL.

The Ravens' group of receivers is headlined by 2019 first-round pick Marquise Brown but also includes speedsters Devin Duvernay, James Proche and Miles Boykin.

"Tee is a natural, charismatic leader, whose bright offensive mind will benefit our young group of wideouts," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "His history of coaching standout receivers on the collegiate level will translate well to the NFL."

Martin was the University of Tennessee wide receivers coach and pass game



Tee Martin was hired by the Baltimore Ravens to be the team's new wide receivers coach last week. This will be Martin's first coaching job in the NFL after spending more than a decade in the college ranks. This should be a positive change for the Ravens with Martin bringing a fresh approach to the receiver position.

Photo Credit: Donald Page/Getty Images

coordinator over the last two seasons. While at Tennessee, he coached Josh Palmer, a wide receiver that stood out at the Senior Bowl and a likely NFL draft pick in April.

The new Ravens receivers' coach

began his coaching career in 2006 as the passing game coordinator for Morehouse College in Georgia. Martin went on to become the quarterbacks' coach for New Mexico in 2009 then, served as the wide receivers coach at

Kentucky the next year where he coached Texans wide receiver Randall Cobb.

Martin's longest tenure was with USC from 2012 - 2018 where he was wide receivers coach along with passing game coordinator and offensive coordinator. During his time at USC, Martin was the wide receivers coach for current NFL receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster; Nelson Agholor; and Robert Woods.

Smith-Schuster is a pending free agent and could be a target to bolster the Ravens' group of wideouts that is desperately in need of a consistent playmaker. There's a possibility that Smith-Schuster and Martin could be reunited in Baltimore.

Martin's son, Amari Rodgers was a standout player last season at Clemson and is considered one of the top prospects in this year's NFL draft class. Rodgers would give the Ravens a weapon in the slot to replace Willie Snead who will likely be moving on in free agency.

Adding Martin to the fold will undoubtedly be a plus for Baltimore's passing game, which is desperately in need of a jolt. It will be Martin's first coaching job in the NFL, and after spending over a decade in the college ranks, Martin is more than ready to take on the challenge.

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Five ways seniors can safeguard against cyber criminals stealing their identity

As the use of personal computers and cell phones has grown over the last two decades, identity theft has surged. One study found that over 14 million consumers were victims of identity fraud in 2018, and that their out-of-pocket costs totaled \$1.7 billion.

Seniors have been particularly vulnerable in recent years to online scams and telemarketing tricks. Unfortunately, another negative effect of COVID-19 has been scammers targeting seniors and the elderly by developing coronavirus hoaxes that prey on fears of the virus.

The growing problem of identity theft for all age groups makes it vital for consumers to develop a strategy to protect their devices, and those of their loved ones, although no system is perfect, says Chris Orestis (www.retirementgenius.com), a senior care advocate known as the “Retirement Genius” and president of LifeCare Xchange.

At a minimum, no one should give out their Social Security number to a stranger and should never click a link in an email from an unknown source. But cyberthieves have many ways to steal your identity, invade your computer, or raid your bank account and credit cards. What should you do to protect yourself from these scam artists and criminals?

“First, it’s important to understand that identity-theft protection services don’t actually stop identity theft,” Orestis says. “There is no fool-proof way to stop identity theft from happening; there are just too many different types of valuable information and avenues for cyberthieves to hack them.

“The Federal Trade Commission actually prohibits identity-theft services from using the word ‘prevention,’ and if a company is promoting that as part of their service they should not be trusted. But regardless of any service you might use, no one can be disengaged from protecting their own identity. It’s important to take care of your identity and credit health with smart and regular maintenance, just like you do with your physical health.”

Orestis offers a five-step plan to help protect your identity:



Register for fraud alerts— “You want these alerts on credit cards and bank accounts so you can be notified quickly of any suspicious activity on your accounts,” Orestis says. “With fraud alerts, data security companies and financial services will text, email or phone you if there is a suspected security breach, or if they detect spending on a card or account that doesn’t align with your spending habits or your location.”

Review accounts regularly— Vigilance of your identity protection means you should go over your monthly bank and credit card statements and review online account activity weekly. “Immediately notify your bank or credit companies if you detect fraudulent activity,” Orestis says. “Either freeze your account or cancel your card. If you believe there could be a problem with your credit, you can place a credit freeze by phone with each credit agency’s customer service line.”

Monitor your credit reports— Orestis says monitoring credit reports from Experian, Equifax and TransUnion is another way to find discrepancies that may indicate fraud.

Don’t leave a paper trail— “It’s a good idea to get rid of physical private

records and statements that include personal or financial data,” Orestis says. “Identity thieves get into mailboxes and trash. They can use receipts to piece together your personal data, so it’s smart to shred those and avoid any kind of paper trail.”

Create strong passwords— Orestis

suggests mixing upper and lower-case letters with numbers and symbols, and to avoid using the same password for every account. “Not having a strong password on your smartphone or computer is like leaving your house with the front door wide open,” Orestis says. “Identity thieves are counting on people to use the same or similar passwords for their electronic devices and financial accounts. Mix up your passwords, and change them whenever you suspect an account has been compromised.”

“Identity theft and cyber security are a very real threat in today’s internet-connected world,” Orestis says. “We all live online and are exposed to a lot of risk if we don’t do the right things to protect ourselves.”

Chris Orestis known as the “Retirement Genius,” is President of LifeCare Xchange and a nationally recognized healthcare expert and senior advocate. He has 25 years experience in the insurance and long-term care industries, and is credited with pioneering the Long-Term Care Life Settlement over a decade ago. For more information, visit: www.retirementgenius.com.

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