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Sharayna Christmas Founder of Necessary Tomorrow's standing in *we make do // wit wat we got* exhibition.

Photo Credit: Kyle Pompey

Necessary Tomorrow's opens exhibitions at Eubie Blake Cultural Center

By Alanah Nichole Davis

Necessary Tomorrow's is an initiative described by its founder, Sharayna Ashanti Christmas, as a curatorial experience with a mission of highlighting artists from Baltimore and beyond opened two new exhibitions at The Eubie Blake Cultural Center on Saturday, March 6, 2021 with a small physically distanced art viewing and reception.

"I don't want to dictate what viewers will get from *we make do // wit wat we got* and *Draped in Dark*, the titles of the shows themselves," said Christmas, when asked what she hopes folks will take away from her curated exhibition. "I want them to take the meat and leave the bones."

Necessary Tomorrow's was founded in 2017 by Christmas, a self-starter, social entrepreneur, creative and producer who for over the last 15 years has served in many capacities as a performer, creative director, facilitator and collaborator.

Since its inception, Necessary Tomorrow's has worked with 33 artists, sold work without commission, produced 12 shows, hosted seven studio visits, and created four new artist collaborations in a few meaningful years," Christmas said.

One of Christmas' first non-profit initiatives Muse 360 Arts finds its home at The Eubie Blake Cultural Center, which

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Access to Justice – A Legal Tip Column for Marylanders

By Aja' Mallory

The nonprofit Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS) connects Marylanders facing financial hardships with volunteer lawyers, tax professionals, and community partners to deliver free civil legal assistance because there should be justice for all, not just for those who can afford it. In this regular column, MVLS's leaders will answer your civil legal questions. The requirements are simple— we can only answer questions of a general nature focused on civil law— not criminal law— and we cannot provide legal advice through this column.

Question: “I am worried about eviction. What are the current rules regarding evictions and are there any protections in place to help me from a legal standpoint?”

Answer: While renting a house or apartment might relieve you of certain responsibilities like property taxes and major repairs, you may still be facing various problems maintaining your home. For this reason, it's important to know your rights as a tenant and where you can get legal and rental assistance.

Due to COVID-19, an increase of evictions is expected in the next several months. For a legal eviction to occur, the landlord must have a valid reason. In Maryland, grounds for eviction are failure to pay rent, tenant holding over, and breach of lease.

In a “Failure to Pay Rent” case, unless required in your lease, your landlord does not have to send you notice before filing a complaint with the court, which is the first step in the eviction process.

In a “Tenant Holding Over” action, the landlord sues to evict you claiming you have refused to move even though the



While renting a house or apartment might relieve you of certain responsibilities like property taxes and major repairs, you may still be facing various problems maintaining your home. Photo Credit: Joseph Sohm/Shutterstock.com

lease term has ended. Your landlord must give you notice in writing that they are not renewing your lease before the lease ends.

In a “Breach of Lease” action, your landlord sues to evict you claiming you have failed to follow conditions or terms of your lease. For example, your landlord may claim there is someone living in your home, who is not listed in the lease or there has been criminal activity in your home.

Before suing you for breach of lease, your landlord must give you written notice that you are in violation of the lease and ask you to move. In Maryland, eviction is only legal if the landlord goes to court and obtains a judgment and a sheriff is present at the time the tenant is removed from the apartment or house.

Illegal evictions include the landlord changing the locks, shutting off utilities, removing personal possessions, and/or

boarding windows and doors. Any of these actions or other actions taken by the landlord are illegal and you should seek legal assistance immediately.

Rental evictions are temporarily prohibited if the tenant has a verifiable and substantial loss of income related to COVID-19, pursuant to Governor Hogan's executive order. You would have to show the landlord a document or letter that you lost your job, or qualify for unemployment.

Additionally, if you make any payments, it is important to ask for receipts and keep records. It is also important to attend all court hearings; do not let the landlord tell you that you do not need to appear.

For legal assistance with landlord-tenant matters, contact the Maryland Courts Self-Help Center at 410-260-1392, which is open Monday-Friday

from 8:30am to 8pm. The Maryland Courts Self-Help Center provides free limited legal services for people who are not represented by an attorney.

Rental Assistance: If you need help paying your rent, the state is in the process of launching its Emergency Rental Assistance Program. The funding can be used for rent, utilities, home energy costs, arrears, and other housing expenses resulting from the pandemic. Marylanders should monitor local and state government housing agency websites for updates, or call 2-1-1 for more information and to learn about other funds available to assist with utilities.

Counties and Baltimore City created their own rental assistance programs as well. Contact them directly with questions. Funding for these programs is limited, and may not be available when you apply. Some counties have a wait list and others reopen as more funding becomes available.

Baltimore City—Rental Assistance: <https://dhcd.baltimorecity.gov/baltimore-covid-19-emergency-rental-assistance-program>

Note: Currently closed

Baltimore County—Rental Assistance: <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/socialservices/financialassistance/evictionpreventionprogram.html>

Aja' Mallory is a staff attorney at the Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. Her practice focuses on housing and consumer issues for Marylanders experiencing financial hardships.

Do you have a question you would like to see addressed in this column? Email ask@mvlslaw.org to submit your question to MVLS's legal tip column.

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Guest Editorials/Letters

Trying to rewrite the January 6 coup attempt

By Bill Fletcher, Jr
NNPA Newswire Contributor

There is something amazing going on in Republican Party circles. If I did not know better, I would assume that I was watching a television comedy. Segments of the Republican Party are attempting to tell us that the January 6 coup attempt did not actually happen. Instead, they argue— what we saw on television was allegedly, orchestrated by Antifa and the Black Lives Matter movement.

There are certain noteworthy things about this argument— the most important being that it is not based on any facts. None. The second is that this line of argument started as soon as the coup attempt had ended. Right-wingers claimed that it was a so-called false flag operation that was conducted by the political Left in order to delegitimize the political Right. There are many problems with this line of thinking, not the least being that many of the alleged perpetrators of the 1/6 coup attempt were avowed right-wingers who conducted this operation in the full view of video.

So, what is going on? Simply put, the pro-fascist elements in the Republican Party are attempting to convince a critical mass of the public that what they saw... they did not really see. This is not even equivalent to a magician's trick with the sleight of hand. They are going one step further and asserting that what all of us saw on television or the web, for which many people have been arrested and charged, did not happen or, if it did, it was really conducted by the political Left.

It is important to note that both Antifa and the Black Lives Matter movement are networks, at best. There is no one organization called "Antifa," for instance, and there are many organizations that operate under the banner of Black Lives Matter. Therefore, the right-wing assertions of an Antifa and BLM conspiracy would not make sense in the best of all possible worlds. But more importantly, there is no evidence to back up such assertions!

The pro-fascist element within the Republican Party is attempting several things at the same time. First, to lay the basis for further repression of anti-fascist and anti-racist forces. This is part of the motivation behind an increase in anti-terrorism legislation in various states when the government already has the authority to prosecute terrorists.

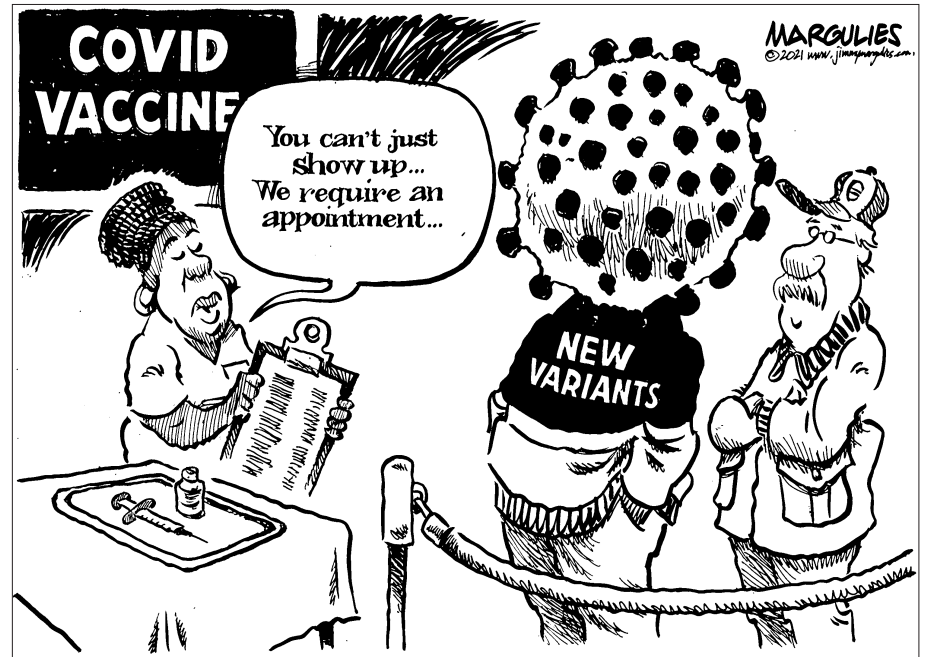
Second, the pro-fascist element in the Republican Party is trying to obscure both the reality of January 6 and also the antics of Donald Trump. They are simply trying to deny that there was a coup attempt where people were injured and/or lost their lives.

There is a famous term for what the pro-fascist element is doing. It comes from an iconic film. The term is "gas lighting," i.e., to lead people to believe that what they are actually experiencing or seeing is not really happening.

We cannot afford to ignore this. Precisely for these reasons, the fascists and their collaborators need to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, thereby demonstrating the danger that they pose to any democratic political system. This is no comedy.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a past president of TransAfrica Forum and a longtime trade unionist and writer.

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Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

Re: Hug Your Trees

My wife and I are habitual tree huggers. We tend to all 24 of the trees on our property as often as possible, and they are wonderful trees. Back in 1978, our lot was devoid of all vegetation so we started planting trees soon after our house was constructed. We planted all of the trees in the first 10 years, including maples, birch, crab trees, willows and pines.

Unfortunately, many people today are not tree huggers. They cut down trees to make room for additions, pools, play areas and the availability of sunshine. The chain saws are very active and the

thunder of fallen trees is quite earth shattering.

What bothers us the most is the lack of concern for the environment. Trees cleanse the air by absorbing pollutants generated by the burning of fossil fuels. In particular, trees absorb Carbon emissions and emit Oxygen. The more trees that come down the more Carbon in the air, and the greater the pollution and health risk to the population.

We would love to see more tree hugging by people. Please save your trees and yourselves, and plant more trees.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry NH

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Why cybercriminals are so charmed by Charm City

*By Courtney S. Bromley
IBM General Manager
Government and Education Industry
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It's been a trying year for U.S. cities, but for Baltimore these problems didn't just involve the pandemic, a more modern issue continues to plague the city—ransomware.

Ransomware, a cyberattack that involves criminals encrypting files and rendering them unusable until a victim has paid a ransom, has traditionally targeted the enterprise. However, in recent years the public sector has caught the eye of cybercriminals looking for easy paydays. In 2019, more than 100 local governments were hit with ransomware.

The City of Baltimore found itself on the receiving end of this trend in March 2018 when its dispatch systems were taken over for nearly 20 hours during a ransomware attack, and again 15 months later when it was hit by a strain dubbed,

“Robbinhood,” costing the city nearly \$20 million in recovery costs. However, in 2020 a new pursuit emerged that sought to take advantage of changes brought on by the pandemic— schools.

In 2020, ransomware hit more than 1,600 schools, and unfortunately Baltimore again found itself at the center of this trend. In November 2020 Baltimore County Public School System, a district that boasts over 170 schools, was shut down after an attack interrupted online classes for more than 100,000 students. This happened just a month before the FBI officially deemed ransomware in schools a problem, stating that nearly 60 percent of reported incidents in the fall involved K-12 schools.

So, why this sudden pivot to schools? Unlike businesses, schools are working with little security resources— a recent study from IBM shows more than half of K-12 administrators and educators in the U.S. have not even received basic cybersecurity training. And with schools known to store sensitive data, from social security numbers to medical history, attackers can easily gain leverage for payment.

These security weaknesses have only exacerbated with COVID-19— nearly 80 percent of educators say they're currently using online learning (some for the first time), which has opened up a vast new attack surface, one cybercriminals are eager to take advantage of.

With such a devastating string of attacks behind the City of Baltimore, it's easy to draw the conclusion that

attackers are seeing something that keeps them coming back for more— and it could be our school's large pockets. Maryland hosts some of the country's most funded districts (something we're very proud of)— Baltimore City, Baltimore County's neighboring district made up of over 160 other schools, ranks as one of the highest— spending over \$15,000 per-pupil.

One might think this would put the city at an advantage, but these funds are largely being used for things like administrative costs and other traditional expenses. A more modern approach to budgeting is needed that takes effective technology and cybersecurity into account. From a cybercriminal's perspective, they have their perfect target— Baltimore schools have the funds to foot a ransom bill, not to mention how easy it could be to target nearby schools that share the same systems and tools.

So, what can be done to help protect The Greatest City in the World, and its more than 300 public schools, from more ransomware woes?

While a dedicated cybersecurity budget is ideal, there are things that can be done now that will make a world of difference in the future. Our schools need to start acting as one and share resources and plans. Cybersecurity is a team sport and the more info you have, the better. One thing schools can share the cost in building is an incident response plan. We all know schools have great plans for all kinds of incidents like fires, storms and other acts of God. Now is the time to add cybersecurity to the list.

There is low hanging fruit to be had, including providing training on things as simple as good password hygiene. Clear guidelines for video conferencing, device usage, secure Wi-Fi connections, software updates and email protocols are essential to make sure your faculty and students are staying safe in and out of the classroom.

Working with local law enforcement to open lines of communication early is critical. Also, there are so many free resources for schools out there— IBM is currently accepting applications for a cybersecurity education grant.

Baltimore has a chance to stop being the victim here and turn the tables on attackers. It will take both public and private investment to make it reality. We owe it to our kids to protect their digital life as much as we do their physical safety.

Courtney S. Bromley, a proud citizen of Maryland, has been with IBM for more than 30 years serving federal, state and local government agencies. In her current role, she manages all the Federal Government (non-DOD/Intel) as well as the State and Local Government and Education markets across the U.S. as part of IBM's U.S. Federal and Public Sector Market. Her business units are responsible for IBM's cross brand execution with all the Federal, State and Local Agencies and Educational institutions including all IBM lines of business – hardware, software and services.

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Necessary Tomorrow's opens exhibitions at Eubie Blake Cultural Center



Visitors browsing *we make do // wit wat we got*

Photos: Kyle Pompey

Continued from page 1

has been a staple in the Baltimore creative and performing arts community for decades. The relationship between Christmas and the long-standing cultural center made the decision to hold her latest exhibitions there an easy one. Upon viewing, it's evident that both shows are a rich cultural gift to the arts community in Baltimore.

Necessary Tomorrow's holds a tradition of putting a spotlight on bold, fearless Black creatives in Baltimore like Nia June, a multidisciplinary artist focused on poetry and cinematography.

"I feel seen, supported, protected, and inspired. To be completely honest, I walked through the exhibition as we were setting up and cried—I've never seen myself, seen us like this before," said June, when asked about the show and her relationship to Christmas.

June also said Christmas has set an example—not just in the current exhibition but in all of her work—on how to truly be in community and how to bring Black women home with their art.

June is joined by other young women like 24-year-old Diamon Fisher who is an up-and-coming curator whose work is also featured and inspired by Black experiences and endurances throughout history. June and Fisher were called on by Christmas for the show alongside herself and three other talented creatives including an illustrator, Megan Lewis

who has been charged with creating larger-than-life illustrations, murals, and campaigns for HBO, the US Open, and more. Bilphena Yahwon a Baltimore-based writer, abolitionist and restorative practices practitioner born in Liberia, and Sha-Shonna Rogers a 19-year-old multidisciplinary artist and freshman at Morgan State University from West Baltimore all join the new exhibition with their coveted works.

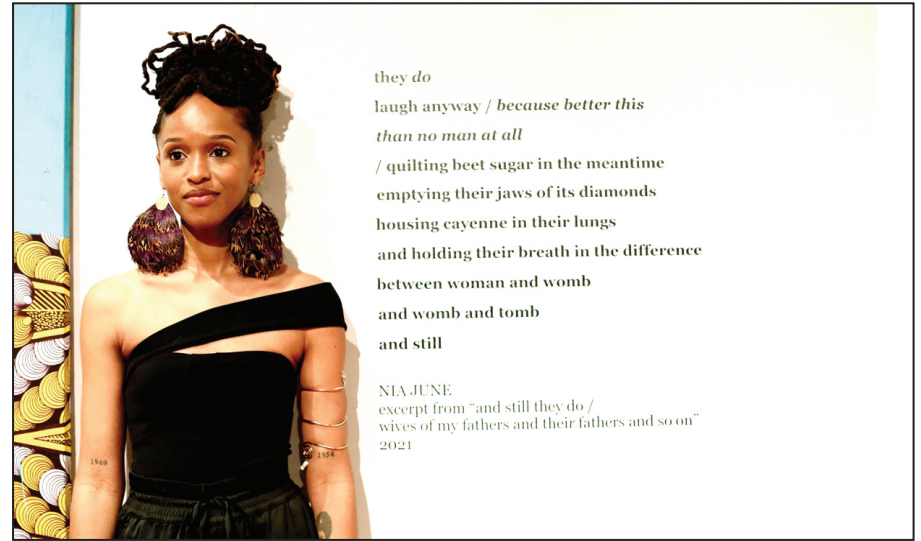
While the roster of artists for *we make do // wit wat we got* is all women, Christmas was sure to include the masculine energy in The Eubie Blake gallery space by providing the platform and opportunity for Kirby Griffin a self-taught cinematographer from the West Baltimore for his debut solo exhibition entitled *Draped in Dark*.

"Whilst in the gallery you can see how I might employ my keen eye and methodical use of chiaroscuro to capture the depths of Black personhood and humanity," said Griffin, the Baltimore bred director and photographer.

Chiaroscuro, in art, is the use of strong contrasts between light and dark, usually bold contrasts affecting a whole composition.

"Kirby's *Draped in Dark* represents the fluidity, movement and brilliance in Black skin," Christmas said.

Gallery hours and more information about the exhibition are available @instagram.com/necessarytomorrows/.



they do
laugh anyway / because better this
than no man at all
/ quilting beet sugar in the meantime
emptying their jaws of its diamonds
housing cayenne in their lungs
and holding their breath in the difference
between woman and womb
and womb and tomb
and still

NIA JUNE
excerpt from "and still they do /
wives of my fathers and their fathers and so on"
2021

Nia June in front of an excerpt of her poem in *we make do // wit wat we got*



Founder of Necessary Tomorrow's Sharayna Christmas standing in *Draped In Dark* w/ Photographer Kirby Griffin.

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Howard County Fire & Rescue Services promotes first Black woman, Cerisa Speight to Chief Officer

Ellicott City, Md.— On Friday, March 5, 2021, Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (HCDFRS) held a pinning ceremony for Battalion Chief/Paramedic Cerisa Speight, becoming Howard County’s first Black woman chief officer. Howard County Executive Calvin Ball attended the ceremony to recognize Battalion Chief/Paramedic Speight for her dedication to the department.

“For more than a decade, Battalion Chief/Paramedic Speight has been a stand-out in our Department of Fire and Rescue Services,” said Ball. “Her recent rise to Battalion Chief is a testament to her incredible work and leadership in the department, and we’re hopeful that her success will continue to inspire many more to follow in her footsteps.”

Battalion Chief/Paramedic Speight has served with Howard County since 2009. As a rising star within the department, she furthered her education and training to become a member of the Special Operations Team, a Battalion Chief Aide, and an On-Call Public Information Officer before being promoted to Lieutenant. She again rose up the ranks and was promoted to Captain while achieving her bachelor’s degree in business administration and is currently working on her MBA.

Speight has completed the Northern Virginia Fire and Rescue Leadership Development Institute and is currently in the Carl Holmes Executive Development Institute. She has traveled to New Zealand as a presenter at the Women and Firefighting Australasia (WAFA)

conference speaking on fire leadership and career development as well as the International Association of Women in Fire & Emergency Service (iWomen) conference. Battalion Chief/Paramedic Speight serves as president of the HCDFRS St. Florian’s Brigade, an affinity group for women in the fire service and is a member of the HCDFRS Phoenix Sentinels, an affinity group for Black firefighters. Speight serves on multiple fire and EMS committees within the department and is a new member of the Maryland Incident Management Team.

“It has been a privilege to watch Battalion Chief/Paramedic Speight grow within our department,” said Fire Chief William Anuszewski. “Her commitment to both Howard County and the department exemplifies honor and service, a true model for others to follow. There are no glass ceilings that can contain her future.”

The Ball Administration is committed to advancing qualified leaders throughout Howard County. In December 2018, County Executive Ball appointed Chief Christine Uhlhorn as the first female Fire Chief and in January 2019 appointed Chief Lisa Myers as the first female and first Black Police Chief in Howard County.

“We are extremely proud of Battalion Chief/Paramedic Speight and expect great things from her in the future,” said vice president of St. Florian’s Brigade, Lieutenant Ashely Weber. “To reach this level of leadership with so much of her career in front of her, she now has time on her side to continue to promote



Battalion Chief/Paramedic Cerisa Speight, Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services is flanked by William Anuszewski, Fire/EMS Chief at Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services and Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. Courtesy Photos



(Left to right): Lieutenant Khalilah Yancey, Baltimore City Fire Department (Md.); Battalion Chief Lisa Forrest, Philadelphia Fire Department (Pa); County Executive Calvin Ball, Howard County (Md); Battalion Chief/Paramedic Cerisa Speight, Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Md); Deputy Chief Tiffanye Wesley, Arlington County Fire Department (Va.); and Firefighter Stacey Carter, Philadelphia Fire Department (Pa.).

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Rambling Rose

Help Celebrate Baltimore Blues Society 35th Anniversary



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello everyone, I am hoping everyone in the sound of my words are well and healthy and if not, hang in there, God will make a way. I know it has been a year since this mess of COVID-19 started, but hang in there. I believe the light is at the end of the tunnel. We must believe that. Please just continue to wear your mask, stay socially distanced and get your vaccine shots.

I am so excited by one of my favorite organizations—the Baltimore Blues Society. They are celebrating 35 years this year, starting this month. I am truly a blues lover. Die-hard blues fans in the Baltimore region decided to join together and create one of the early Blues Societies in the country in 1986.

We have seen so many blues legends live and in person right here in Baltimore because of the Baltimore Blues Society and the one and only Bradley Alston helped to create it for us. You can help them celebrate by sending in your remembrances to bbs35th@gmail.com.

Another Baltimore Legend has passed

If you are from Baltimore, then I know you have heard of Flair Studio. It was a modeling studio founded by a sweet lady known as Willia Bland almost 60 years ago. It was at Mondawmin Mall. Believe it or not, I did some modeling for Willia Bland in the mid 1970s when I had a shape like a coke-cola bottle. (Go ahead and smile).

The late Willia Bland's daughter, Andrea Travis grew up in the business and became vice-president and director of Flair's Modeling Program. The studio helped so many underprivileged children. Andrea continued her mother's legacy by helping to direct and train local children, teens, and adults in ballet, African American dancing, hip hop, tap

and even ballet, and of course how to model. It was like a finishing school which taught young ladies charm. Flair Studio prepared its students to attend the Baltimore School of the Arts. Travis was also a motivational speaker and was contracted to speak at many institutions for afterschool programs and group homes for girls. Being the first African-American modeling agency in Baltimore, other than of course, Baltimore's famous, Travis Winky. Andrea Bland-Travis was born January 3, 1949 and passed away in February 20, 2021. A public viewing was held on March 1 at the Sanctuary on Madison, 202 E. Madison Street in Baltimore. My condolences goes out to the family and to her uncle the popular Baltimore photographer, Anderson Ward.

Now, let's talk about my good friend and possibly yours too—the one and only, Carlos Hutchins. Carlos has rejoined the Network Broadcast Managing Partner of The Hutchins Funding Group. Specializing in merchant credit card processing, ATM machines, and business financing, just to name a few. He has partnered with the Tight Knit Radio Network on Saturday, March 13, 2021 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on WOLB-1010 AM. Good for you Hutchins, good for you!

Well my dear friends, I have to go now but before I do, I want to ask if you or someone you know is in contact with a cleaning lady. Something I desperately need. If so, please call me or have them to call me at 410-833-9474. Thank you.

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



Baltimore Blues Society celebrates 35 years this month. It was in 1986 that die-hard blues fans in the Baltimore Region decided to join together and create one of the early blues societies in the country. Help them celebrate.



Carlos Hutchins has rejoined the Network Broadcast Managing Partner of the Hutchins Founding Group. Join him for their initial broadcast on Saturday, March 13, 2021 as he partners with the Tight Knit Radio Network from 1-2 p.m. on WOLB-1010AM. Congrats my friend!



Andrea Bland-Travis was born January 3, 1949 and passed away on February 20, 2021. Her public viewing was held on Monday, March 1 at the "Sanctuary On Madison" on East Madison Street. She was such a special person. Rest in Peace my dear friend.

Ravens decline franchise tag use, so what's next?

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens declined to use the franchise tag despite having multiple players who on the surface appear worthy of it. Tuesday's 4 p.m. deadline passed without a peep from the front office. Outside linebacker Matthew Judon and defensive end Yannick Ngakoue were the two most likely candidates for the franchise tag.

Both players had the tag placed on them in the past. The Ravens tagged Judon last season, which locked the team in for a \$16.808 million cost last season. Ngakoue was tagged by the Jacksonville Jaguars, which warranted a \$17.8 million salary. The Jaguars subsequently traded to the Minnesota Vikings for a 2021 second-round pick and 2022 conditional fifth-round pick.

The Ravens sent a 2021 third-round pick and a 2022 conditional fifth-round pick to the Vikings for Ngakoue in October. Giving up draft capital for Ngakoue would make it seem like the Ravens had intentions of keeping him around for the foreseeable future.

Ravens head coach John Harbaugh seemed to indicate that the team would like to have Ngakoue back next season when asked about him in January.

I love the guy, and he wants to contribute. So, going forward, if he

[Yannick Ngakoue] chooses, and we work it out and he's here, it'll be a little different, because he'll be here from the beginning, and he'll be starting, and he'll get a lot more snaps than he got this year," Harbaugh said. "He's a great guy, he's a very talented guy, he plays hard as heck. He bought in 100 percent to what we're doing, as far as the different techniques we use, like setting the edge and things like that, and I love him. He's a great pass rusher, too, and [a] high-motor guy. So, I have nothing but love and respect for 'Yan' and the type of player and person that he is."

Judging from Harbaugh's comments, it's pretty likely that Baltimore will find a way to bring Ngakoue back. However, the biggest problem at this point is, not knowing what the salary cap will be, even though the start of free agency is only a few days away.

"It's such a difficult thing, because we don't know what the salary cap is going to actually be yet—we still haven't been told," Ravens General Manager Eric DeCosta said on Tuesday. "There are a lot of moving parts and these things are very fluid. There are a lot of different ways we can go, and we still have time to make those decisions. So, we've definitely talked about a lot of different scenarios with our roster, free agency, players under contract,



The Ravens sent a 2021 third-round pick and a 2022 conditional fifth-round pick to the Vikings for Yannick Ngakoue (pictured) in October last year.

Photo Credit: Tommy Gilligan-USA Today Sports

impending free agents [and] players available on other teams. We look at all that stuff; we've been doing that really since November. When the time comes, we'll have a gameplan and we'll be ready to attack."

The Ravens have an assortment of tasks at hand. Baltimore has always had a defensive identity. The team will place an emphasis on improving the defense, which is already stocked with higher

priced players such as Marlon Humphrey and Marcus Peters.

The offense had a down year last season but led the NFL in rushing yards per game for the second consecutive year. It's important to offset that by strengthening the passing game.

The Ravens' chances to land a free agent wide receiver was bolstered when the Detroit Lions didn't place the franchise tag on Kenny Golladay and the Tennessee Titans declined to use the tag on Corey Davis.

Adding to the wide receiver group will bode well for the Ravens as they begin to engage in contract extension discussions with Lamar Jackson. They can always exercise the fifth-year option also. But the quarterback position is one the team would like to have solidified over the long term.

The Ravens will have approximately \$24 million in cap space according to Spotrac.com. If they use that money wisely, they can strengthen both the passing game and their defense. A long-term deal for Ngakoue and adding an upper-echelon free agent wide receiver would quickly take up all of their cap space and possibly force the Ravens to release some veteran players or restructure some deals.

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Anne Arundel County Public Library goes fine free for all customers

Annapolis— Officials from the Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) announced that all system materials are now fine free. Additionally, the library also waived \$361,425 in old fines for customers. More than 28,000 people received the surprise savings.

The announcement, made at an event outside the Brooklyn Park Library, featured County Executive Stuart Pittman who has pledged any necessary funding to supplement the library's loss in revenue. Fine revenue has continued to decrease year over year with only \$112,827 collected in FY 20 and about half that amount expected this year. The library went fine free for children's materials in January 2020.

"Fines are a barrier that disproportionately impact people without the means to pay," said Library CEO Skip Auld. "As a public institution, we have a responsibility to make our items available to as many people as possible. Removing these fines (while still requiring the items to be returned) will allow more people to enjoy our materials for education, enrichment and inspiration."

"While everyone must be held accountable for returning what they borrow, fines are an unnecessary form of punishment that falls disproportionately on lower income households," said County Executive Steurt Pittman. "We have a fantastic library system in this county and we want it to be accessible to everyone."

"At their core, public libraries are



Skip Auld, Library CEO at the podium speaking about AACPL going fine free; Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman and Mizetta Wilson from the Partnership for Children, Youth and families. More than \$361,000 in old fines were forgiven for 28,000 customers.

Courtesy Photo/Anne Arundel County Public Library

about leveling the playing field while fines create obstacles to access," said William Shorter, chair of the Library Board of Trustees. "As the library moves into its second century of service to the people of Anne Arundel County, the Board of Trustees is proud to support the elimination of fines for all customers and get back to its foundation of breaking down barriers."

In addition to the removal of fines on

most items, the library has instituted a new auto renewal system where most materials without holds are automatically renewed up to five times. Items waiting to be borrowed by other customers will not be automatically renewed. Materials borrowed from other public library systems in Maryland will be automatically renewed two times. Historic London Town and Gardens Museum passes, 7 day express materials and Interlibrary Loan items (OCLC orange band) will not be automatically renewed.

Items must be returned to the library in a timely fashion and replacement costs will be charged after 21 days past due. Damaged materials will also be assessed a replacement charge. Library accounts can be referred to collections and an additional fee will be assessed. Items borrowed from other library systems are still subject to late fees.

For more information on the new initiative, visit the library's website at www.aacpl.net/finesfaq.

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