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Climate Change is Real! But is Global Warming a Blessing or a Curse?

By Peter Bramble

Recently most of the global leaders met in Glasgow to discuss climate change. The consensus is that climate change is real, it is man-made, and it promises to destroy all life on earth if the nations of the world do not take the necessary action to avert the coming disaster very soon.

This belief is so ingrained in the thinking of the elites of the world that no one dares question the science behind global warming. For although they changed the name from global warming to climate change some time back, all the talk is around efforts to make sure that the world temperature does not increase more than two degrees Celsius over the next 100 years.

The proposals offered to curb the growth of carbon in the atmosphere are very drastic and extremely harmful to poor people, and many black people fall into this category. The use of oil, coal and gas must be curtailed, they say. And the curtailing is happening so fast that it is seriously harming Americans.

Before the country can develop the new “green energy”—solar, wind and geo-thermal—sufficient to replace the current means of powering America, decisions are made by the government to curtail the use of cheap fossil fuels.

The harm resulting from the fix for global warming is causing great harm and pain, especially to the poor and minority communities which must now pay very high prices for the fuel for their

Continued on page 14

NASA Awards \$72 Million to New Morgan/UMBC Partnership to Further Earth and Atmospheric Science Research



The GESTAR II consortium, which is being led by UMBC in partnership with Morgan State University, will support 120 affiliated researchers, creating extensive opportunities for breakthroughs in Earth and atmospheric science research. The workshare for GESTAR II will primarily be handled by UMBC and Morgan, which will receive \$38 million and \$28 million respectively. This partnership marks the first major collaboration of the two Maryland-based research universities. Photo: (L-R) Willie E. May [Morgan], Daniel Laughlin [Morgan], David Wilson [Morgan], Margo Young [UMBC], Freeman Hrabowski [UMBC], Belay Demoz [UMBC] and Karl Steiner [UMBC]. (See article on page 9)

Courtesy Photo: Morgan State University

What you need to know about Medicare Open Enrollment at age 64 and beyond, Part I

By La-Villa Brooks

Medicare is a federal health insurance program that becomes available to you from the age of 65 or for individuals who have been receiving social security disability benefits for at least two years. There are some exceptions to receiving early Medicare benefits and these are mainly for individuals who have been diagnosed with ESRD (End-Stage Renal Disease) - permanent kidney failure; transplant or dialysis or have been diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis) – Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Open Enrollment for Medicare begins October 15 and ends December 7 each year. During this time for upcoming FY22 benefits, you will want to evaluate your healthcare needs and, compare plan options or for those already enrolled, select a new plan option. Additionally, you will select Part A, which is a free option and covers hospitalization and Part B which requires premium payments and covers medical services. If you are already receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) or Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) benefits, you will not have to apply during Open Enrollment and will automatically be enrolled into Parts A and B.

Once you apply or automatically being enrolled, you can elect to delay your benefits for a later time. Know the advantages and disadvantages in doing this. If you decide to wait until your full retirement age, you may receive benefits for a longer period of time thereby increasing your monthly benefit amount. A notably disadvantage to drawing these benefits before you reach full retirement age is that it will decrease your monthly benefit amount.

It is important to know that full



During Open Enrollment for Medicare you will want to evaluate your healthcare needs and compare plan options; and for those already enrolled, select a new plan option for the upcoming year.

Photo Credit: ClipArt.com

retirement is based on the year you were born. If you were born between:

- *1943-1954, your full retirement age is 66 and 2 months
- *1955, your full retirement age is 66 and 4 months
- *1956, your full retirement age is 66 and 6 months
- *1957, your full retirement age is 66 and 8 months
- *1958, your full retirement age is 66 and 10 months
- *1959, your full retirement age is 67
- *1960 and later, your full retirement age is 67

The immediate questions are, Do you qualify and when should you apply? In order to qualify for free Medicare Part A, you would have had to pay into Medicare taxes for 10 years. You must begin the application process within three months of your 65th birthday up until three months after the month you turn 65 regardless of whether you want

to start collecting on your benefits or not. If you don't enroll during the initial enrollment period, you will incur a penalty of 10 percent increase for the Part B premium for every year that you're eligible for coverage. In addition, the longer you wait, not only will your Part B (medical) be expensive but Part D (drug prescription) will become more costly; in some cases, it can be significantly more to factor into your long term budgeting.

Medicare Part D is the drug

prescription plan with alternatives to Medicare Advantage Plans or Medigap to help pay for out-of-pocket costs. If you go 63 days or more without creditable drug coverage, you will incur a late enrollment penalty. Creditable drug coverage is prescription drug coverage that meets Original Medicare standards. Original Medicare is Part A and or B with one or both of a Medicare Supplement Insurance Plan (Medigap) in which you must have Part A and B, and Part D with Part A and/or Part B.

Did You Know?

There is a COLA (cost of living adjustment) SSA benefit increase for FY22 of 5.9 percent. Social Security Administration will be mailing out notices throughout the month of December. Go to ssa.gov for more information.

You can take advantage of AARP membership as early as 18 years old. For more information, visit: aarp.org and click on membership.

La-Villa Brooks is the founder of Brooks Home and Healthcare Management with over 12 years experience in healthcare management. She currently has an MPA in Public Healthcare Administration and has worked as a project leader for local, state and federal agencies in case management. All inquiries can be emailed to LrtBrooks@gmail.com

Medicare has changed. Find out how it can affect you.

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Keeping Our Access to Healthcare

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

Over the past year and a half, New Jerseyans of all backgrounds have struggled to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and economic insecurity. Friends and family got sick, and tragically, some passed away from the COVID-19 virus. Data collected in June and July shows an estimated 1.5 million New Jerseyans are having difficulty covering the most basic household expenses like food, rent or mortgage, medical bills, car payments, or student loans. Worse yet, hundreds of thousands of our community members rely on unemployment benefits to support themselves and their families.

Like crises before, the most impacted in our state are Black Americans and Hispanics. Black and Hispanic residents in New Jersey have been the most vulnerable to COVID-19, serving as critical frontline and essential workers.

The healthcare system has long been inequitable—low-income individuals, people of color, and those without means, time, or money to travel to a physical facility, face significant challenges in getting the care they need. This situation worsened as the world shut down last year.

Early in the pandemic, Governor Murphy quickly signed Public Health Emergency orders, expanding access to telehealth services. This helped people with chronic conditions get the medical care they need. The COVID-19 pandemic proved that telehealth could provide relief to an overburdened health system. This had a large impact on medically underserved communities who were now able to access healthcare at a location that suited their needs without risking exposure to COVID-19.

But now it looks like the Governor might be on the path to taking this access to healthcare away. If he does, Governor Murphy will be the first state executive in the country to limit access to virtual care, despite saying he wants to increase access and promote equity.

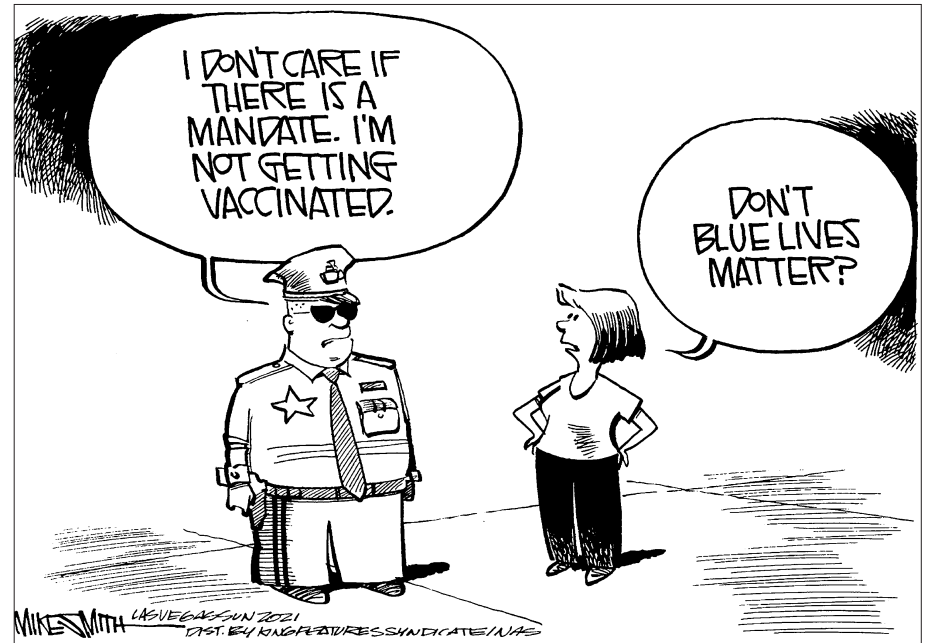
Even before the pandemic, it was clear that telehealth could have a positive impact on Black Americans and Hispanics. The ability to easily see a provider to manage chronic conditions or when something comes up, saves lives and saves money. Seeing a medical provider in-person can take an average of two hours away from other responsibilities and can be a large burden to hourly employees, and childcare providers, among others.

Keeping telehealth accessible can reduce frustrating interactions with the healthcare system and decrease the time patients need to spend away from work and their families.

Despite the proven power of telehealth to increase healthcare access in our community, Governor Murphy has refused to sign legislation into law that would make these services permanent in New Jersey. At a time of significant surges in COVID-19 cases and deaths, now is not the time to consider limiting this lifeline. Rather, this is the right time to learn from the past year and a half and permanently expand healthcare access to those who need it most.

To their credit, the New Jersey Senate and House recently acted so patients could keep seeing their providers in a way that works best for them. The bill, A4179/S2559, requires that doctors and nurses are paid fairly regardless of how they deliver care, just as they have done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It also ensures that patients can keep seeing providers with the types of telehealth visits that work best for them.

Without access to meaningful healthcare through telehealth, our communities will continue to be devastated by this pandemic. The time is now for Governor Murphy to act in the best interests of the community he claims to serve and sign this telehealth bill into law, ensuring access to healthcare remains protected for medically-underserved, and historically excluded populations.



Community Affairs

Finale of ABC's Equity First Speaker Series to feature Oprah Winfrey

Baltimore— For the fourth and final virtual session of Equity First | a speaker series, Associated Black Charities (ABC) is honored to announce they will host global media leader, philanthropist, producer, and actress Oprah Winfrey in a one-on-one interview led by ABC's President and CEO, Diane Bell-McKoy. The evening's conversation will explore Ms. Winfrey's experiences in Baltimore and her search for career equity, her approach to creating and maintaining authentic relationships, and her perspective on finding one's personal value within the imposed systems of our society. The virtual event will take place on Tuesday, November 30, 2021 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Over the course of her esteemed career, Oprah Winfrey has created an unparalleled connection with people around the world. As host of the top-

rated, award-winning "The Oprah Winfrey Show," she entertained, enlightened, and uplifted millions of viewers for twenty-five years. Winfrey's accomplishments as a global media leader, producer, actress, author and philanthropist have established her as one of the most influential and admired public figures in the world today.

ABC's Equity First | a speaker series consists of interviews with key leaders, from Baltimore and across the nation, who recognize that sustainable change for people of color will only come when structural and institutional barriers are replaced with equitable policies, practices, and institutions. Invited speakers are those who have put equity first in their careers and their passions.

Further details about Equity First may be found on abc-md.org/speakerseries. Tickets for the special event with Ms. Winfrey are on sale now at \$75 each with all proceeds directly benefiting ABC's efforts to close the racial gap for the Black workers of Maryland.

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Black workers still last hired, first fired, and then some: Some solutions

By Dr. Ken Morgan

Black workers today come face to face with traumatic employment needs. They remain underpaid, face unsafe working conditions, and too many face unemployment. Valerie Wilson, director of the Economic Policy Institute's program on race, ethnicity, and the economy, added, "Black workers remain unhired, on average, unpromoted, and not hired according to what would signal their level of productivity calculated on their experience or their education."

They say when the economy catches a cold, Black folks catch pneumonia. Remember that blacks are the last hired in a thriving economy and the first fired or laid-off in an economy going south. Would you please apply all these facts to the statistics below?

Black men get paid an average wise \$0.71 for every dollar spent on white men, reports Economic Policy Institute. For Black women it's worse because women confront gender and racial issues. They get paid \$0.63 for every dollar spent on white men.

COVID-19 continues to affect Black and Latino workers adversely. Workers numbering in the hundreds of thousands continue to face lay-off notices. We know that pandemic benefits ran out as a moratorium on evictions ended September 6, 2021. The disparate racial impact of the coronavirus emanates in rooted historic low-wage and health disparities. Three primary groups of workers reside in the COVID-19 economy. They include those workers that lost their jobs, those that employers defined as essential workers, and those that continue working from the safety of their homes. You find fewer Black workers in the third group.

Government stats concerning unemployment remain undercounted. Still, the US Department of Labor in September 2021 said that 7.7 million workers were unemployed. Why? Persons in the single middle digit millions who want a job did not get one due to not reporting their job search escapes statistics.

Layered on top of determining joblessness, workers encounter mounting prices for necessities smothering any increases they create in wage growths. Average real wages began their decline at the beginning of the year. They declined to \$8.99. Inflation increased 5.4 percent recently. For example, gas prices increased 41 percent over the past year.

Employers counter the argument of workers' unemployment say that 10.1 million jobs remain available today. However, these jobs mean lower wages, speedups, and horrible work settings to start the negatives. The government creates its jobs programs, immigration, and minimum wage more based on big business profits.

Yes, we know President Biden's infrastructure plan for a \$3.5 human-needs project faced a bleak future at that amount. The infrastructure bill was cut more by Democrats even before Republicans' cuts decreased the pot. According to the White House, the bill creates temporary manufacturing jobs in four years. Plus, the infrastructure budget includes large amounts for the Pentagon.

"We thought that the American Jobs Plan was already a compromise position..." said Yvette Simpson, the senior official of Democracy for America. "And you have Republicans pulling out even more of it."

The House of Representatives controlled by Democrats saw \$18 billion comprising low-income students attending HBCUs and other minorities serving higher education institutions. The lower House now proposes \$2 billion as an example. The catch is that it works through to be awarded through a competitive grant program that places 100 HBCUs against hundreds of larger institutions that possess much more resources.

Black workers remain the ethnic group most unionized, according to the Center for Economic Policy and Research. However, the group found that union membership showed a significant drop over the years. Somewhat of an oxymoron exists. Blacks remain high in unemployment compared to whites in the labor force and over-represented in unions where wages are higher because collective bargaining exists.

Some 4.5 million persons looked for full employment jobs. However, they had to settle for part-time employment, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Jobs added to the workforce numbered 194,000 jobs in September, the Labor Department reported Friday

met with disappointment. The numbers were well below the 500,000 analysts projected. Remember the last hired, first fired adage for Blacks.

Dr. William Spriggs, Howard University professor, resisted an age-old economics tenet that wages primarily correlate in skill differences. The disparity continues to decrease; nevertheless, the wage gap remains the same. Full-time white workers earned around 20 percent more than Blacks in 2020.

Workers need a shorter workweek with no cut in take-home pay. Sharing the work provides one way to increase employment. The need exists for a government public works program that goes way beyond the current chaos-ridden compromised Infrastructure bill. Union-scale pay and cost-of-living adjustments are essential. Provide for continued unemployment benefits for all until you get hired. And do not leave out pensions.

To heck with the Democrats and Republicans. An independent Black political working party to articulate the needs of Black workers remains a needed vital tool. We talk about many forms of action, from demonstrations to political education. We need proactively to address inequality, sexism, housing, and health, health for starters. Help start a union. All exist connected to employment. Many of our gains historically have been the results of our direct activism efforts from slavery to today. Include electoral politics in the mix to maintain our democratic rights.

Dr. Morgan is a former Assistant Professor at Coppin State University, internationalist, and black rights, activist. Reach him at kmorgan2408@comcast.net.

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Relief from a past criminal record

By Heather Heiman, Esq

Question: A few years ago, I was involved with sex work and arrested. I'm trying to move forward in life, but my criminal record is holding me back. Is there anything I can do?

Yes, there are number of legal options to address criminal records in Maryland. However, the options that are available depend on several factors, including the outcome of any criminal case brought after the arrest and the type of crime. If a person was engaged in sex work around the time when they were arrested, additional relief may be available if the person can show their experiences meet the legal definition of human trafficking.

Every arrest in Maryland— regardless of how it happened, or whether the arrest leads to formal charges or a conviction— is a matter of public record. If an individual has been arrested, the public can access certain records through the Maryland Judiciary's Case Search website, and employers, landlords, and agencies often request background checks from the Maryland's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), the FBI, and private agencies. Criminal records can have a life-long impact and may prevent a person from getting a job or securing an apartment, factor adversely in child custody proceedings, and negatively affect eligibility for loans or credit, among other consequences. While recent changes to Maryland law have removed certain records from Case Search, these records still legally exist and can be accessed through background checks and by government agencies.

In Maryland, a person can petition the courts for criminal record relief through expungement and shielding to reduce the collateral consequences of involvement in

the criminal legal system. For example, an employer may not require that a person disclose information about expunged or shielded criminal records on job applications or during interviews.

Expungement— Expungement is the removal of police and court records from a person's record. A person can petition the court to expunge certain criminal and incarcerable traffic offenses, while non-incarcerable traffic offenses are automatically expunged after three years. Determining if a record is eligible for expungement can be challenging given the differing requirements for types of case outcomes and offenses. If a criminal case ends in a dismissal, a finding of not guilty, or a nolle pross, the record is eligible to be expunged immediately, provided the petitioner signs a waiver of liability giving up their legal right to sue for damages associated with that case. If the petitioner does not wish to sign the waiver, they must wait three years to expunge the charge. Other outcomes, like a stet or probation before judgement, have a three-year waiting period (or completion of probation, whichever is longer) before they may be expunged. Convictions for certain types of crimes, including misdemeanors such as prostitution, drug possession, and trespass, may be eligible for expungement after a 10 (or more) year waiting period. To learn more about expungement, visit MDExpungement.com (<https://www.mdexpungement.com/>).

Shielding— Maryland also allows a person to shield convictions for certain crimes, which hides those records from public inspection. This is a very limited remedy that can only be requested once in a person's lifetime— more information about shielding can be found at MDCourts.gov in the self-help section (<https://mdcourts.gov/district/selfhelp/sec>



Every arrest in Maryland is a matter of public record. There are several legal options to address criminal records in Maryland, including: expungement, shielding and vacatur.

Photo Credit: Getty Images/iStock Photo

ondchanceactshieldingguide).

Vacatur— Vacatur is a remedy that wipes out a conviction in a criminal case and puts the person in the same legal position as if they had never been arrested in the first place. In Maryland, this remedy is available if a person can show their experiences meet the legal definition of human trafficking – i.e. that they engaged in sex work (or another type of labor) due to force, fraud or coercion, and that there is a link between their experience being trafficked and their criminal convictions. Human trafficking can look like someone pressuring a person to engage in sex work by using physical force, threats, lies, or by taking advantage of a person's need for food, shelter, drugs, or other survival needs. Trafficking can have a devastating, life-long impact on survivors, the trauma of which is commonly compounded by numerous interactions with the criminal legal system where the survivor is treated as a criminal rather than a victim. Vacatur is one way to right these wrongs, let survivors take back and tell their stories, and remove barriers to future safety and

security. More information about this remedy can be found at MVLslaw.org/HT (www.mvlslaw.org/ht).

Regardless of the type of remedy, it is always helpful to consult with an attorney who can fully review a person's record, explain options for criminal record relief, and answer questions about eligibility for vacatur. Free legal assistance with criminal record relief and other civil legal issues can be accessed through Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service MVLslaw.org (www.mvlslaw.org) and the Human Trafficking Prevention Project, a partnership between MVLS and University of Baltimore School of Law.

Heather Heiman, Esq., manages the Human Trafficking Prevention Project at Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service, and focuses her practice on criminal record relief for survivors of trafficking, individuals trading sex for any reason, and those placed at increased risk of future exploitation due to past trauma or violence, substance use, housing instability, or other inequities.

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Baltimore— Local McDonald's restaurants in Maryland are inviting approximately 2,700 job seekers to find their perfect job combo this fall by applying to a local McDonald's restaurant.

Whether it's a part-time job to help save up for a major purchase, a full-time position with the flexibility to work around family commitments or a first-time job with the goal of gaining valuable work experience, McDonald's has a position to meet any candidate's needs and the foundation to help drive long-term success, whether that's with McDonald's or elsewhere.

McDonald's restaurants serve up brighter futures for restaurant workers every day. A recent study conducted in partnership with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) found that those who had a first job at McDonald's were more likely to report feeling a sense of financial security and more likely to have a feeling of job satisfaction today.

Additionally, the survey also found that the skills taught at a job with McDonald's, like responsibility, teamwork and responsiveness are critical to future employment success. Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents whose first job was at McDonald's said they learned how to work as part of a team, compared to 74 percent of Americans overall. Fifty-seven percent said they were taught how to provide customer service very well, compared to less than half of Americans overall.



Now, throughout Maryland, McDonald's locations are offering enhanced benefits including competitive pay, flexible scheduling, free meals, an employee discount program and "Archways to Opportunity" programming. Photo Credit: ClipArt.com

"People are at the heart of our business, and the skills our crew members learn in our restaurants like responsibility, teamwork and responsiveness, along with education, can open the door to a brighter future," said Kris Grumiaux, McDonald's Owner/Operator and People Lead for McDonald's franchisees in Washington, D.C., Maryland/Eastern Shore and Northern Virginia. "As local employers, we're

committed to empowering our employees and the communities we serve."

From advancement opportunities with a side of serving the community to flexible scheduling with a side of extra money for the holidays, people who work at McDonald's have access to a host of benefits to suit their needs.

Crew members can also earn a high school diploma, take ESL classes, get tuition assistance and receive free guidance from advisors through Archways to Opportunity, McDonald's signature education and career advising program at participating restaurants. For more than five years, "Archways to Opportunity" has provided opportunity and mobility for McDonald's diverse crewmember community. More than 50 percent of workers enrolled in the program are individuals who identify as people of color and almost two-thirds of participants are women.

Now, throughout Maryland, McDonald's locations are offering enhanced benefits including competitive pay, flexible scheduling, free meals, an employee discount program and Archways to Opportunity programming. At McDonald's, no matter where you are in life, you can find a meaningful career with a side of whatever it is that makes you happy.

To learn more, visit: visit.McDonalds.com/careers and apply to a restaurant near them, or text 'apply' to 38000 to start an application via text.

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Amtrak's New Graphic Photo Walls Encourage Travelers to "Get Social"

Mobile murals to be featured at Amtrak stations across the U.S. in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Railroad

Washington, D.C.— As part of Amtrak's year long 50th Anniversary celebration, a series of colorful graphic photo canvases will soon be appearing in stations around the country. Amtrak customers are encouraged to post photos on social media of themselves in front of these 10 by 8 foot "walls" with #Amtrak50 to share their enthusiasm for train travel with their family, friends and followers.

The designs were created through a collaboration with Amtrak and Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). Eleven designers submitted art for consideration as part of a competition that was judged by Amtrak staff. In the end, the works of two MICA students and a recent MICA graduate, along with that of a current Amtrak intern, were selected as the winning images that appear on the canvasses.

"We encouraged these young designers to create something colorful, memorable and exciting to help us celebrate our 50 years," said Doug Duvall, Amtrak's assistant vice president of corporate communications. "They did not disappoint us. They created graphic photo walls that reflect the dynamic evolution of our brand and the regions we serve. We are grateful to MICA and its staff for partnering with us on this project."

The winning designers are:

Victoria Grzesiak of Glen Ellyn, Ill., an Amtrak intern who is a fourth-year student studying economics and design at the University of Pennsylvania.

Allison Hao of Fremont, Calif., a fourth-year MICA student majoring in graphic design.

Ye Rin Kim of Tongyoung, South Korea, a fourth-year MICA student majoring in graphic design.

Demond Young of Toledo, Ohio, a recent MICA graphic design alum.

In appreciation for their efforts, the students were awarded \$500 Amtrak gift cards for their efforts.

The public is encouraged to look for these graphic photo walls as they begin rotating through more than a dozen stations across Amtrak's national network beginning in September.



Demond Young with winning mural



Allison Hao with winning mural



Victoria Grzesiak with winning mural



Ye Rin Kim with winning mural



Courtesy Photos/Amtrack

NASA Awards \$72 Million to New Morgan/UMBC Partnership to Further Earth and Atmospheric Science Research



(L-r): David K. Wilson, President of Morgan State University and Freeman A. Hrabowski, President of UMBC
Courtesy Photo/Morgan State University

Baltimore— NASA announced a major award of \$72 million over three years to a consortium of higher education institutions and other organizations for the new Goddard Earth Sciences Technology and Research (GESTAR) II center. The GESTAR II consortium, which is being led by UMBC in partnership with Morgan State University, will support 120 affiliated researchers, creating extensive opportunities for breakthroughs in Earth and atmospheric science research. The workshare for GESTAR II will primarily be handled by UMBC and Morgan, which will receive \$38 million and \$28 million respectively. This partnership marks the first major collaboration of the two Maryland-based research universities. Participants will carry out observational, experimental and theoretical research in support of strategic mission objectives of NASA Earth Science. The large scale of this work will also enable students at all levels to contribute to the research.

“The collaboration between Morgan and UMBC serves as a model for how

two high-research universities, operating in a highly competitive space, can join in common purpose, pooling intellectual capital, resources and expertise for the greater advancement of science and technology,” said David K. Wilson, president of Morgan State University. “We appreciate the opportunity to continue the important work we began with the GESTAR program and partner with an institution that shares our commitment to STEM research. A partnership of this consequence not only benefits both universities but delivers marked return on investment benefiting our state and nation.”

“I am deeply grateful to everyone, especially our colleagues at Morgan State, who helped make this new partnership a reality,” said Freeman Hrabowski, president of UMBC. “I am looking forward to seeing what breakthroughs in Earth science will come from the collaborative work of the scientists, engineers and students who participate in GESTAR II.”

Like UMBC’s Joint Center for Earth Systems Technology (JCET) and the original GESTAR, in which Morgan was

a major partner, GESTAR II will create opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to conduct research with and be mentored by NASA scientists and engineers. In addition, GESTAR II will partner with Goddard’s Earth Sciences Division to advance Earth science and Goddard’s leadership, by providing a competitive environment to hire and retain high-quality scientists who are on track to be leaders at NASA, in academia and in industry.

Bringing together students and researchers from UMBC, Morgan, NASA and other institutions, creates the opportunity for innovation in Earth science. It also creates a career pipeline for students from a wide range of backgrounds who are prepared to pursue employment at NASA and elsewhere using the skills they’ve gained by learning from and with NASA team members.

“Morgan brings more than a decade of experience working with NASA, and we look forward to partnering with UMBC and other collaborators in GESTAR II to produce cutting-edge, world-class Earth

science in support of our national space program,” said Willie E. May, Ph.D., vice president for Research and Economic Development at Morgan State University. “We are also very excited about what this partnership will mean for our students— more exposure, new educational pursuits and access to long-term employment opportunities.”

Morgan is also creating a new minor in Earth and space science, and some of Morgan’s GESTAR II researchers will have the opportunity to teach in the program.

Morgan has been a major partner in the original GESTAR center at Goddard since 2011 and will bring that experience to GESTAR II. Nearly 40 Morgan researchers, with expertise in various Earth and space sciences, will be part of the GESTAR II center when it launches. Morgan’s GESTAR researchers have used NASA data to study the sea surface, snow cover on land, and the atmosphere, by modeling these complex systems and by other means.

How will embracing EV adoption be your new opportunity to prosper?

By Sheryl E. Ponds, Founder/CEO,
Dai Technologies Corporation
Special to The Baltimore Times

Did you know that President Biden's infrastructure bill aka Build Back Better Act passed in the US House of Representatives a little past midnight on Friday, November 5, 2021? You may have been asleep while Congress voted for \$1.2 trillion worth of funding allocations. No matter how much you slept last week, I implore you to stay woke and keep your eye on how your tax dollars—related to the electrification of transportation— will be spent.

There is a line item in the legislation says the Wall Street Journal “roughly \$7.5 billion toward building additional charging stations for electric vehicles.”ⁱ Let's connect the dots so that you'll know what this means for Marylanders, specifically Black Marylanders. EV charging stations will become more accessible to everyone. With \$63 Million worth of equitable EV charging, and Range Anxiety (“RA”) will get the kick in the teeth it deserves.ⁱⁱ The number of Electric Vehicles on the street will grow regardless of their category. As RA diminishes, electric cars will be normalized, and there will be more demand to expand the EV charger infrastructure.

The infrastructure bill is not the end-all-be-all. It's just the beginning, kindling, the fire starter. The legislation is the X-Factor my colleagues and I in the EV ecosystem have been waiting for. The bill sets the stage for the milestones predicted by top business analysts and futurists. For example, researchers from Ernst & Young forecast the EV ecosystem will generate \$72 Billion by 2030.ⁱⁱⁱ That's nearly 10 times (10x) more than the federal government's Build Back Better investment.

The figure includes the universe of US electric auto sales, the manufacturing and delivery of EV charging stations, and all the businesses, materials, and labor required to install EV charging equipment. The number also includes the effort it will take to ensure the EV's and battery chargers are operational when drivers need them. If you are not already involved in making cars, your involvement with infrastructure projects may be your ticket to a new business, a new career, and enhanced environmental sustainability outcomes.

Q: How can you get a piece of the EV infrastructure action?

A: It all depends on where your ambitions lie. Do you want to be a business owner, a career professional, and/or the predictable consumer?

I encourage you to formulate your own Build Back Better plan. I extrapolated a short list of twenty professional options you should consider exploring:

Careers

1. Certified Electric Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Technicians
2. Certified EV sales SME (subject matter expert)
3. Certified EV Charger Maintenance Technicians
4. CleanTech/Sustainability Advocates and Lobbyists
5. Community-based EV Charger Site Selection Experts
6. Customer Service and Help Desk SME
7. Electricians and Electrical Contractors
8. EV Fleet managers and administrators
9. Industry Analysts
10. Software engineers and developers

Side Hustles

11. Independent EV Charger Vendors
 12. Peer-to-Peer EV Rent-a-Car hosts
 13. Peer-to-Peer EV Charger Hosts
- ## Businesses
14. Battery Recyclers
 15. EV Automotive Supply retailers (think AutoZone, Pep Boys for EV's)
 16. EV Charger Infrastructure Developers*
 17. EV Charger and Ancillary Materials Suppliers
 18. New & Used Electric Vehicle Dealerships
 19. Workforce Development NGOs specializing in EV Adoption and CleanTech Careers
 20. Roadside Assistance for EV's

*DaiTechCorp's lane is Number 16. We're the first Black and Woman owned firm that specializes in the development of the EV charger infrastructure. DaiTechCorp is carving a few niches for itself. Since 2018, our focus has been supplying and installing EV chargers for commercial and residential applications. We also specialize in design assist consults to optimize EV charging programs for new construction projects.

Like any entrepreneur, I look forward to growing and expanding profitably in a select group of industry verticals. Being the first and only does not get me



psyched. Our communities are in desperate need of business leaders who specialize some aspect of the EV charger infrastructure. What gives me joy is positioning DaiTechCorp to successfully mentor and train aspiring Black entrepreneurs who have a desire to start-up CleanTech companies. Without these brave souls, without YOU participating in this industry our neighborhoods will only experience a small portion of the health, environmental, and economic benefits of zero-emissions cars.

Build Back Better infrastructure bill is just the kindling, the fire starter. I challenge YOU to do more than sit on the sidelines and wait for this industry to become mainstream. Now that you've scratched the surface about what's available, investigate and determine your end game. Let's frame OUR conversation about EV adoption. This movement is more than admiring and driving futuristic automobiles. Transportation electrification will be a new way of life with health and wealth benefits that Black Americans must direct to our communities. The barriers to entry will never be lower than they are now. Empower yourself— stoke the fire.

Sources:

ⁱ https://www.wsj.com/articles/house-moves-toward-votes-on-infrastructure-budget-bills-11636120392?mod=Searchresults_pos5&page=1

ⁱⁱ <https://hoyer.house.gov/content/hoyer-statement-house-passes-infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.ey.com/en_us/emobility/e-mobility-will-you-blaze-a-trail-or-be-left-behind

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Ravens Le'Veon Bell gets settled in with former rival

By Tyler Hamilton

Few NFL rivals possess the degree of dislike that the Baltimore Ravens and Pittsburgh Steelers have for each other.

Ravens running back Le'Veon Bell was once on the other side of the rivalry as a star player for the Steelers. Ironically, now he finds himself with the enemy.

Although the two teams aren't likely to sit down and have dinner together, there is a mutual respect that exists between the two of them.

"Honestly, when I first left [the Steelers], the Ravens were one of the teams I was kind of looking at," Bell said on Tuesday, November 9, 2021. "Coach Harbaugh, I feel like he's one of the better coaches in this league. He doesn't get enough credit for a lot of things that he does and that he's done around this league.

"I knew what he was about just playing against him a lot. I already knew the type of coach he was and how he goes about his business. Once I got the opportunity to kind of, 'Oh, I could go play with Coach Harbaugh,' I got excited. I started getting juiced at the mouth, and I was just ready to go. I'm just glad that I'm here, and I'm ready to make some plays."

Bell signed with the Ravens in early September after Baltimore's running back group was decimated by injuries to JK Dobbins and Gus Edwards. He was originally a member of the practice squad before being signed to the active roster on October 19, 2021.

Things are a lot different from the days when Bell was a perennial All-Pro and Pro Bowl player with the Steelers. The last two seasons included stops with the New York Jets and Kansas City Chiefs, neither of which yielded any personal accolades for Bell.

Bell raved about how the team welcomed him with open arms. He loves the family atmosphere that exists in Baltimore. It made him feel comfortable and able to settle in as a member of the organization.



Former Pittsburgh Steeler Le'Veon Bell signed with the Ravens in early September after Baltimore's running back group was decimated by injuries to JK Dobbins and Gus Edwards
Photo Credit: AP Photo/Terrence Williams

Schematically, the Ravens are a fit as well.

"Obviously, this is an AFC North football team. They love running the ball here, and it's something that I love doing, obviously, being a running back. [It's] a great opportunity playing with Lamar [Jackson]—he's a special type of player. So, even being in the backfield with him is just a great opportunity for me."

So far this season Bell has carried the ball 28 times for 82 yards and two touchdowns. Bell's most recent game against the Minnesota Vikings is his best game so far after gaining 48 yards on 11 carries.

"Each and every week, he's been getting better, getting a feel for the game, hitting holes a little harder [and] just picking up first downs, like you said. He just has to keep going. Each and every week, keep getting better. [He has to] keep staying locked into what the play is and keep going from there. He's doing pretty good, though," Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson said.

"I think this could be a very special team. I feel like, so far, during this season, we haven't even played our best football, and we're sitting at 6-2. That's the beautiful thing about it," Bell said. "As we continue to get better over the course of the year, I think the sky is the limit for this team. We have a really special team, and we're ready to show that."

Maryland Youth Wins National Award for Heroic Service Activity

Boulder, CO— Michael Platt, age 16, of Bowie, Maryland, has been named a winner of the 2021 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. The Barron Prize annually honors 25 outstanding young leaders who have made a significant positive impact on people, their communities, and the environment. Fifteen top winners each receive \$10,000 to support their service work or higher education.

Michael created Michael's Desserts to use his love of baking to help others. For every sweet treat he sells, he donates one to someone in need. He also founded P.L.L.A.T.E.— Power, Love, Learning, and Access To Everyone— to address food insecurity.

Through P.L.L.A.T.E., Michael has distributed thousands of healthy non-perishable snacks to underserved kids. He ultimately hopes to expand the initiative into a pay-what-you-can grocery store. He also advocates for the need to address hunger, especially in children, and hosts bake sales and baking demonstrations as fundraisers for the national nonprofit No Kid Hungry. As a GivingTuesday Spark leader, he encourages donations to nonprofits that combat hunger and other needs on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving each year.

Diagnosed with epilepsy at age nine and advised to cut back his involvement in sports, Michael decided to pursue his passion for cooking and baking. He began his business as an 11-year-old and resolved to use it as



Michael Platt, age 16 created Michael's Desserts to use his love of baking to help others. For every sweet treat he sells, he donates one to someone in need. He also founded P.L.L.A.T.E. – Power, Love, Learning, and Access To Everyone – to address food insecurity.

Courtesy Photo/The Barron Prize

a way to help others. He started small, baking cupcakes and delivering them to kids at domestic violence shelters. He has grown his offerings to include Freedom Fighter Cupcakes, original creations designed each month to honor “the people who inspire us to be better, solve big problems, and change the world.”

His cupcakes have honored freedom fighters Dr. Martin Luther King, Maya Angelou and Malala Yousafzai, among others. Michael introduces his monthly cupcakes via video to his 12,000 Instagram followers, explaining each freedom fighter's contribution and how they've inspired him.

“My dad tells me to do what I love in service to others,” said Michael. “That's why I chose to use Michael's Desserts to help people— to support them with their basic needs so they can pursue what they love to do and make a difference with it.”

The Barron Prize was founded in 2001 by author T. A. Barron and was named for his mother, Gloria Barron. Since then, the Prize has honored more than 500 young people who reflect the great diversity of America. All of them demonstrate heroic qualities like courage, compassion, and perseverance as they work to help their communities or protect the planet.

“Nothing is more inspiring than stories about heroic people who have truly made a difference to the world,” says T. A. Barron. “And we need our heroes today more than ever. Not celebrities, but heroes— people whose character can inspire us all. That is the purpose of the Barron Prize: to shine the spotlight on these amazing young people so that their stories will inspire others.”

For more information about the Barron Prize, visit: www.barronprize.org



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Historic Annapolis opens new exhibit about Maryland's signers of the Declaration of Independence

Annapolis—Historic Annapolis, is pleased to announce the opening of a new exhibition, “We Hold These Truths: Maryland’s Signers and the Declaration of Independence” at the William Paca House and Garden.

This exhibition closely examines the Declaration of Independence and explores the lives of the Maryland men who pledged themselves to its purpose and ideals: William Paca, Samuel Chase, Charles Carroll of Carrollton and Thomas Stone.

Each of these men lived in Annapolis at one time or another, and Annapolis is the only city in the nation that still has surviving houses of all of its state’s signers.

In the new exhibition, visitors will have the opportunity to view historic objects associated with each signer and learn the surprising “truths” about the personal and political lives of these four patriots. “This exhibit will reveal ‘truths’ of all sorts about the Declaration of Independence and the Maryland men who signed it,” said Glenn Campbell, Senior Historian for Historic Annapolis,

and content developer for this exhibition. “Both the ‘self-evident’ truths that are part of the traditional telling of the tale, as well as some truths that are often glossed over or ignored.”

“As our nation moves toward the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration, it’s important for us to understand that the men who put their signatures to this document were not perfect,” said Robert Clark, President and CEO of Historic Annapolis. “And, to learn about their flaws as well as their successes, and to understand the reasons for their commitment to this cause of independence.”

Visit We Hold These Truths at the William Paca House and Garden, 186 Prince George Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. The exhibition is included with admission, which starts at \$5 per person. For hours and to purchase tickets in advance, visit: annapolis.org.

The exhibit is funded by the General Society of Colonial Wars and the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Maryland.



“We Hold These Truths: Maryland’s Signers and the Declaration of Independence” is the second of three Historic Annapolis exhibitions in Annapolis this fall. The exhibit will be on display at the William Paca House and Garden (pictured) located at 186 Prince George Street in Annapolis

Courtesy Photo/Historic Annapolis

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Climate Change is Real! But is Global Warming a Blessing or a Curse?

Continued from page 1

cars to take them to work and the fuel to keep them warm in winter. Perhaps the government should have first promoted the development of the replacement sources of power before killing the existing ones! There will be so much pain and hurt in minority communities while efforts are made to develop the new sources of energy, that one needs to ask whether the cure is worse than the disease.

So then, the first “curse” that comes from global warming is actually coming from the proposed ways of fixing it. This fix will hurt the poor much more than it hurts the wealthy who can easily afford the elevated cost of gas for their cars and heating oil and propane gas for cooking and heating homes.

Also, those who remain antagonistic to the drilling for oil because of their concerns regarding global warming seem to forget that oil is used for much more than fuel. Oil is a base material for many of the everyday products we use, from plastics to the petroleum jelly we use to soften our babies’ bottoms. Rather than rushing to stop the drilling and transportation of oil products before their replacements are in place, decision makers may need to pause and consider the harm to the economy and to the poorer people in the country that their decisions cause.

Is it not ironic that the people who elected the current government who is so committed to transiting from fossil fuels, are the very ones who will be most hurt by the aggressive moves by the government they enthusiastically elected? Blacks in Philadelphia, Detroit, Milwaukee and Atlanta provided the votes Joe Biden needed to get elected. And they are among the ones who will be most disadvantaged by the speed at which the administration they placed in power moves to put in place energy policies which hurt them most, in their pockets. It is as though the poor must carry the brunt of the burden to save the planet.

It appears therefore, that if there is any curse accompanying global warming, that curse is currently residing in the

fixes proposed, more so than the warming itself.

Now, is it possible that there are blessings that come with global warming? People from the Caribbean may actually believe that a warmer earth is much better than a colder earth. How could anyone say such a thing when all the scientists are claiming that global warming is detrimental to human life on the earth? Well, consider the following initial suggestions.

First, more people die each year from cold weather than from summer heat. That is a fact.

Second, more plants thrive in warm weather than in cold weather. Perennial leafy plants that thrive all year round in warm climates bring great advantages to the human race. These green leafy plants take carbon dioxide out of the air and return animal life sustaining oxygen to the atmosphere. And it is from the warmer parts of the earth that we get fruits like bananas; mangoes; breadfruit; avocados; oranges; coconuts, etc. to feed the world. In the parts of the earth where there is winter, crops mainly thrive during the spring and summer—warmer months, and during the winter, very little food is harvested.

This last observation can be supported by this one fact. In Viet Nam, a country which because of its length stretching from north to south, there are three different growing seasons for their main life-sustaining crop, rice. In the colder north of the country, only one harvest can be expected per year. But in the central region where it is a little warmer, two harvests are traditional and in the south, the delta where it is tropical, three harvests of rice are reaped.

Seems that warm weather is good for food production too!

Note that there is no attempt here to deny global warming. The question is whether it is a blessing or a curse. If it supports food production, enables rain forest formation which helps in changing the dreaded carbon dioxide into life-sustaining oxygen all year round, could this be the blessing it brings us?

Some would ask, “what about raging

storms and rising seas?” What about them? Humans have the ability to adapt to changes in nature brought on by earthquakes, volcanoes and storms. Maybe we should not reside in river deltas and in cities located below sea level. Maybe.

Then, what will happen to earth if a great big asteroid crashes into Africa and do to earth what scientists think

destroyed the dinosaurs centuries ago, before mankind evolved?

I told you that this column, the Blue Line, is designed to force people to think about issues that affect us in critical ways. I hope that this column does just that for serious thinkers.

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