The Annapolis Times

Vol. 30 No. 11 January 14 - 20, 2022

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

1/ST Racing, Maryland Jockey Club establish Art Competition with MICA in celebration of Preakness 147

Courtesy Photo

Baltimore— 1/ST and the Maryland Jockey Club have partnered with the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) to launch *The Art of Racing*, a unique art competition to honor the second jewel of the Triple Crown Series and its impact on Baltimore. Established more than four decades ago, the relationship between the Maryland Jockey Club and MICA takes a step forward with this community-wide call for entries of original, two-dimensional visual art that depicts the unique elements of Thoroughbred horse racing and the legendary Preakness Stakes.

From now until the submission deadline of March 1, 2022, artists may submit their entries to **www.preakness.com/the-art-of-racing,** after which all submissions will be available for public viewing. From March 2 through March 20, visitors to *The Art of Racing* website can cast their vote for their favorite work of art. The top 10 vote getters will then be entered into the finalist category, with the winning piece selected by an esteemed panel of judges representing the artistic, business, philanthropic and political communities that allow Park Heights to thrive as the home of Preakness 147.

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Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce Board Announce New Leadership

Baltimore— As the final meeting of 2021, the Board of Directors for the Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce voted Kimberly Castle Royster to serve as the new chairwoman for a two-year term.

Royster is owner and CFO of Kimberly Services LLC, a boutique accounting firm offering tax, accounting and CFO services. Since high school, she has spent her days as an entrepreneur. She is a graduate of the Baltimore City Community College and the University of Baltimore, where she earned an associate and bachelor's degree, respectively, in accounting.

With extensive experience in both the local and national business sectors, Royster's strength is organizing, restructuring, finding savings and creating smart tax strategies for small and large growing businesses. Her solutions reduce tax liabilities and increase profitability for individuals as well as business owners.

As a lifelong Baltimore resident, Kimberly is proud to serve her community.

"With Kimberly Royster as our new Chairwoman, I believe that Chamber members will have better networking opportunities, Board members will be more engaged and the Chamber will provide greater value to Baltimore's business community," said Emeritus Chair Will Holmes "Additionally, with her background in accounting and a strong business acumen, I am certain that she will provide invaluable practical information to our growing businesses and larger members and to our community partners. I am excited to see where Chairwoman Royster takes the Chamber and the positive impact her leadership will have on Baltimore City's economy. Let's all get behind her and support her."

On January 3, 2022, Lenora Henry began her service as the first female Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce.

Henry previously served in several leadership roles and spent more than 20 years developing and cultivating relationships with external stakeholders, city and state agencies, corporations and faith-based and neighborhood organizations. Most recently, as the former Director of Strategic Initiatives and Senior Development Officer for Corporate Relations at the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts, she was a leader in educating community residents on advocacy efforts and program resources.

Henry started her fundraising career traveling across the United States for the American Red Cross, covering national and local disasters. Since then, she has also worked for the House of Ruth Maryland, United Way of Central Maryland, Enterprise Community Partners, Catholic Charities and the Howard County General Hospital Foundation.

Kimberly Castle Royster
Chairwoman, Board of Directors
Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce

Lenora Henry
Executive Director
Baltimore City Chamber of Commerce

She has also been very involved in her community, serving on the boards of Shepherd's Clinic and her alma mater, Mercy High School. A graduate of the University of Baltimore, where she earned a master's degree in Public Administration with a concentration in nonprofit management, she received her undergraduate degree in business from Sojourner-Douglass College.

Henry is a lifelong Baltimore City resident and a proud aunt of two nieces.

"The Board of Directors is very blessed to have Lenora lead this organization to success. She is well connected to the Baltimore community and passionate about supporting local businesses and helping others achieve their goals," said Chairwoman Royster. "As Executive Director, she will be a strong advocate for Baltimore's business owners and employers in our city."

MLK Committee of Anne Arundel County Reschedules MLK Jr. Awards Dinner to March 11, 2022

Annapolis— The board of directors of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, Incorporated met on Thursday, January 6, 2022, and voted unanimously to reschedule the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner to Friday, March 11, 2022 at 6 p.m. at the BWI Westin Hotel. It was previously set for January 14, 2022.

This decision was made as a result of a dramatic increase in COVID-19 virus cases and its impact on Anne Arundel County and nation. Given these concerns the board made the decision to reschedule this event out of an abundance of caution and numerous concerns by those involved in the event.

Carl Snowden, Chair of the MLK Jr. Committee of Anne Arundel County said, "We thank you for your understanding and look forward to celebrating the birthday of Dr. King in March and recognizing our honorees at that time."

Further information is available at: www.mlkjrmd.org and at 443-871-5656.

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The Annapolis Times

(USPS 5840) is published every Friday by ***The Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore,*** 2530 N. Charles Street, Suite 201, Baltimore, MD 21218. Subscriptions by mail $60 per year. Standard bulk postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21233. Postmaster send address changes to: **The Baltimore Times** 2530 N. Charles Street, Suite201 Baltimore, MD 21218

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Guest Editorials/Letters

MLK family asks for no celebration until lawmakers pass voting rights legislation

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent
@StacyBrownMedia

Prayer breakfasts, marches, parades and an uptick in volunteer efforts to support the annual Day of Service have remained staples of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. However, the late civil rights icon's family has asked that observers strike a different tune in 2022.

King's family has requested no celebration unless federal lawmakers pass voting rights legislation, a task that appears out of reach as President Joe Biden and several Democrats have faced stiff Republican opposition.

Democrats have also been hampered by members of their own party, notably West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin, whose vote is crucial in an evenly split chamber.

"President Biden and Congress used their political muscle to deliver a vital infrastructure deal, and now we are calling on them to do the same to restore the very voting rights protections my father and countless other civil rights leaders bled to secure," Martin Luther King III, the oldest son and oldest living child of King Jr. and Coretta Scott King said in a statement. "We will not accept empty promises in pursuit of my father's dream for a more equal and just America,"

King III, his wife Arndrea Waters King, and their daughter Yolanda King say they plan to mobilize activists on MLK weekend— January 14-16— to demand a voting rights bill.

In numerous Republican-led states like Texas, Florida and Georgia, lawmakers have passed or are attempting to pass tight voter suppression laws that would disenfranchise many voters of color and the elderly.

Earlier this month, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), promised that the U.S. Senate would vote by Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 17) on whether the chamber would adopt new rules to circumvent the draconian filibuster to enable the passage of voting rights and social justice bills.

"We must ask ourselves: if the right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, then how can we in good conscience allow for a situation in which the Republican Party can debate and pass voter suppression laws at the State level with only a simple majority vote, but not allow the United States Senate to do the same? We must adapt," Senator Schumer demanded. "The Senate must evolve like it has many times before. The Senate was designed to evolve and has evolved many times in our history.

"The fight for the ballot is as old as the Republic. Over the coming weeks, the Senate will once again consider how to perfect this union and confront the historic challenges facing our democracy. We hope our Republican colleagues change course and work with us. But if they do not, the Senate will debate and consider changes to Senate rules on or before January 17, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, to protect the foundation of our democracy: free and fair elections."

Meanwhile, King III insisted that President Biden and members of Congress use the same energy and force they mustered in 2021 to pass the $1.2 trillion infrastructure bill.

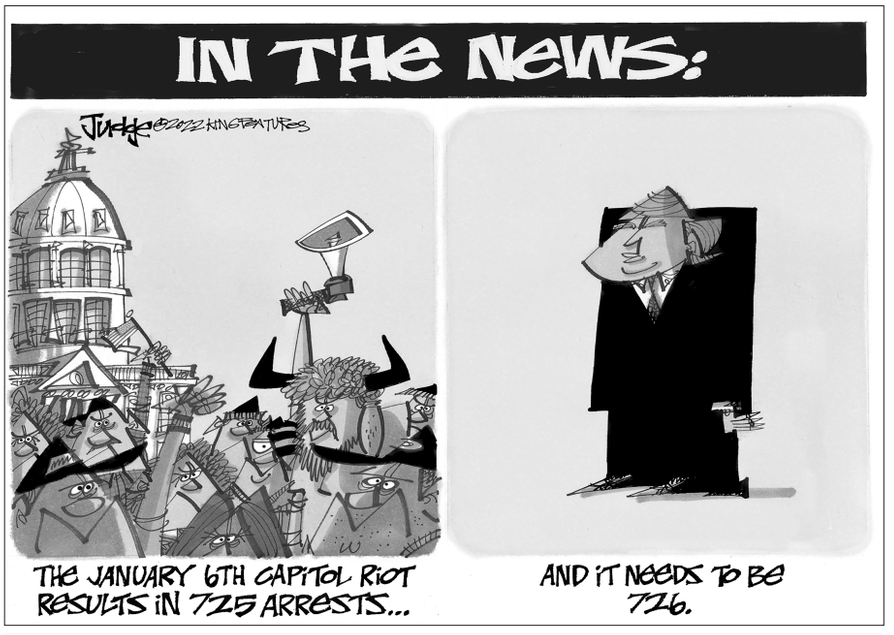
"You delivered for bridges, now deliver for voting rights," King III asserted.

Reportedly, the King family plans to join local groups in a rally in Phoenix on January 15, the date of King's birthday,

"[We wish] to restore and expand voting rights to honor Dr. King's legacy," the family wrote in a statement. Further, the family and others plan to march across the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge in Washington, D.C.

They also plan to hold a rally and march across a bridge in Phoenix, reportedly to draw a comparison to the 1965 march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, for voting rights for African Americans.

"The Senate must pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and ensure the Jim Crow filibuster doesn't stand in the way," the King family stated.



Letters to the Editor:

Editor:

It's time for Marylanders to know the truth— our drinking water is in jeopardy. According to the Geological Society of America, underground aquifers provide clean drinking water to over 1.4 million Marylanders.

Recently however, these aquifers have begun to deplete due to overuse, which has led to saltwater intrusion. This phenomenon occurs when the freshwater level is so low underground that seawater flows in to refill it. As a result, brackish aquifers are created, which do not provide drinkable water; this poses a major threat to many Marylanders' water accessibility.

As a Catholic, this threat greatly concerns me since potable water is essential to both humans and the environment as a whole. As Pope Francis writes in his encyclical "Laudato Si," "...it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems."

This lack of a resource is particularly problematic not only because it deprives humans of the ability to satisfy their basic physical needs, but it also strips them of what Pope Francis defines as a "universal human right."

This is precisely why Marylanders need to urge federal representatives to become involved in this paramount issue.

Pope Francis goes on to say, "...access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights."

This issue however, should not just be a concern of Catholics. It should be the concern of all Americans.

Though the federal government has yet to engage in tackling this issue, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is far from blind to it; in fact, they have put in place Environmental Article 9-221, which gives them the authority to require improvements to water systems that do not provide an adequate water quality.

I challenge our federal representatives to work with the MDE to work toward aquifer restoration so that Marylanders can have greater access to one of their basic human rights— drinkable water.

Brooke Mosca
White Marsh, MD

A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand

January 6, Voting Rights and the Tyranny Threatening America

By Congressman James E. Clyburn, House Majority Whip (D-SC)

I listened intently this morning as our 46th President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris addressed the nation from Statuary Hall observing the first anniversary of last year's insurrection. I found myself reflecting upon the attack on Pearl Harbor that thrust us into a world war against a tyrannical foreign power.

Eighty years later, tyranny is threatening America again, this time from a domestic attack. A President and his enablers created a narrative and fomented a "Big Lie" that is continuing. He incited a violent mob to attack our seat of government and disrupt the certification of the results of a free and fair election, which he lost by over seven million votes.

President Franklin Roosevelt referred to the December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor attack as, "a day that will live in infamy." World War II lasted almost four years. January 6, 2021 launched a disgraceful and ignoble domestic conflict, and it remains to be seen how long it will last.

Over the past year, we have witnessed loyalists of the 45th President work to unravel the threads that hold the fabric of our representative democracy together. His followers, fueled by a constant diet of disinformation, have harassed and intimidated election officials across the country, causing many to resign their positions out of fear for themselves and their families.

"Over the past year, we have witnessed loyalists of the 45th President work to unravel the threads that hold the fabric of our representative democracy together. His followers, fueled by a constant diet of disinformation, have harassed and intimidated election officials across the country, causing many to resign their positions out of fear for themselves and their families."

Republican officials, fearful of being primaried by "45's" loyalists, embrace his "Big Lie" and enact legislation they feel will appease him. States with Republican governors and legislatures are passing laws and redistricting plans constructed to guarantee the election of more likeminded loyalists and shift government control away from anyone who doesn't adhere to his tyrannical whims. According to the nonpartisan Brennan Center for Justice, 19 states have enacted 34 election laws that restrict or suppress the vote. Some to make it easier for local officials to nullify election results they don't like.

The right to vote is the most fundamental thread of our democratic fabric. Without it, our democracy unravels. Currently, 50 Republicans in the United States Senate, aided and abetted by two Democrats, are blocking votes on two critical voting rights bills, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act.

The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act basically updates the formula, which, since the enactment of the 1965 Voters Rights Act, triggers a process of pre-clearance by the Justice Department or a federal court if a jurisdiction seeks to make any changes in its voting laws. In 2013, the pre-clearance formula was declared outdated by the United States Supreme Court and Congress was invited to update the formula.

The House responded by holding over a dozen hearings by two separate committees and passed subsequent legislation, which was sent to the Senate. Unfortunately, all Senate Republicans, except Senator Lisa Murkowski, are standing in the way of its passage. Two Democrats have been giving comfort to the Republicans on this issue and one of them, Senator Joe Manchin, has proposed the Freedom to Vote Act, seeking to attract bipartisan support for many provisions of the House-passed For the People Act.

The legislation includes provisions protecting election security, reforming campaign finance, ensuring fair redistricting, and preventing voter nullification. Despite Senator Manchin's mollification attempts, not a single Republican voted to allow the Freedom to Vote Act to come to the floor for a vote.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has vowed to bring both bills up for another vote by January 17—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. His efforts, however, seem destined to fail without a change to the Senate's filibuster rules that require 60 votes to cut off debate.

While bipartisanship is welcomed, and may be preferable, history informs us that the 15th Amendment giving Blacks the right to vote, passed on a party line vote. And who would argue that the 15th Amendment should not have been adopted because it did not have bipartisan support?

I am not a fan of the filibuster. But, if holding on to that tradition is important to most of the Senate, I maintain that exceptions on Constitutional issues like voting should apply. An exception is employed for fiscal issues to ensure the full faith and credit of the United States, are not jeopardized by a filibuster. The process is called "reconciliation," a term I believe is more aptly applied to the Constitution than the budget.

On the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt spoke these words, "No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion the American people in their righteous might will win." He continued, "I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us."

America was victorious. Our democracy and our friends and allies were saved from tyranny.

Today's challenge is no less perilous. To dismiss the seriousness of this moment is to condone the insidiousness of the "Big Lie." Our best protection is to ensure the fundamentals of our democracy hold. As our 16th President extolled during another challenging time, "a house divided, against itself cannot stand."

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Take Steps to Support Literacy: Eight ways to inspire children to read

(Family Features) Reading is a foundation for learning, yet a vast gap exists in access to books for low-income neighborhoods.

According to the Handbook of Literacy Research, in low-income neighborhoods, the ratio of books per child is just one age-appropriate book for every 300 children. Without books in the home, children lack the opportunity to practice reading skills and are exposed to fewer opportunities to build their vocabularies.

While these limitations can hinder personal performance, multiple studies correlate low literacy rates with social concerns like elevated dropout rates, reliance on welfare programs and criminal activity.

Literacy is a cause that affects the community as a whole. Learn how you can champion literacy in your community with these tips:

Give Books to Children— The joy of receiving and opening a gift is exciting in its own right, but a book is a gift that keeps giving. You can make a book gift extra special by choosing a topic or theme that has special meaning, such as a place you'd like to visit together or a beloved character you enjoy incorporating into your make-believe playtime with the child. As a bonus, if it's age appropriate, read the book together for the first time so it always carries a special memory.

Visit the Library— Libraries can be awe-inspiring places for kids. The wall-to-wall books represent thousands of possibilities. With so many options to choose from, you can introduce children to the delight of discovering different genres, enchanting topics and favorite authors who keep you coming back for more.

When children have their own library cards, they can practice the grown-up process of checking out and caring for books. What's more, honoring due dates helps teach responsibility. Marking that date on the calendar is a fun way to build anticipation toward the next visit.

Children thrive on routines and rituals, and incorporating books into special moments can be an especially effective way to establish positive connections with books and the joy of reading. **Photo Courtesy of Getty Images**

Support Organizations That Promote Literacy— Conducting your business with companies that share your commitment to literacy is a way to inspire reading on a larger scale. One example is The UPS Store, which created the Toys for Tots Literacy Program in partnership with the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation to provide disadvantaged children with direct access to books and educational resources that enhance their ability to read and communicate effectively. You can donate at participating locations or contribute online.

Create Reading-Inspired Traditions— Children thrive on routines and rituals, and incorporating books into special moments can be an especially effective way to establish positive connections with books and the joy of reading. At home, traditions might be as simple as bedtime stories or reading parties where the whole family dons pajamas early and gathers in a room to read together, whether quietly or out loud. You can also tie reading traditions to special celebrations, like reading a favorite story together before heading to bed on the eve of a birthday or holiday.

Participate in Events Supporting Literacy— Show your support by attending and participating in events that showcase the importance of reading. Examples might include book fairs and fundraisers for literacy programs in your community. You can also look into programs offered through your local library and community center. If you find a shortage of events in your area, consider creating one of your own, such as visiting a local senior living center and reading to residents or hosting a book swap or book club with your friends and neighbors.

Encourage Kids to Get Hands-On— Reading a book is one way to demonstrate literacy, but kids can also develop a love for reading and put their comprehension skills into practice by adapting their favorite stories for playtime. That might mean acting out a different ending for a favorite story or drawing a picture from a scene they remember best. You can also promote literacy by encouraging kids to write songs or their own short stories, which they can illustrate for a finished book to share with others.

Start a Neighborhood Library— Recognizing not all kids have access to books at home, you can help promote an interest in reading by creating a mini library within your neighborhood. Create a small structure that will protect books from the elements and spread the word that the contents are free for the taking. Encourage users to return books when they're done so another child can enjoy them and invite neighbors to donate their gently used books to help fill your library.

Model Good Reading Habits for Kids— Children learn from the examples set by trusted grown-ups. Sharing your love of reading with a child demonstrates you value learning and education. You can encourage children to mimic your interest in reading by sharing stories about the books you enjoyed most when you were their age and choosing to spend quiet time reading together in place of screen time.

For more tips and information about how you can support literacy, visit theupsstore.com/literacy.

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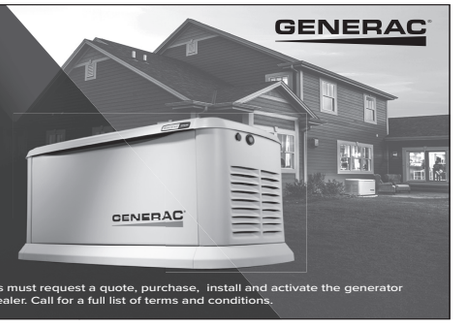

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Maya Angelou First Black Woman on U.S. Coin

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent @StacyBrownMedia

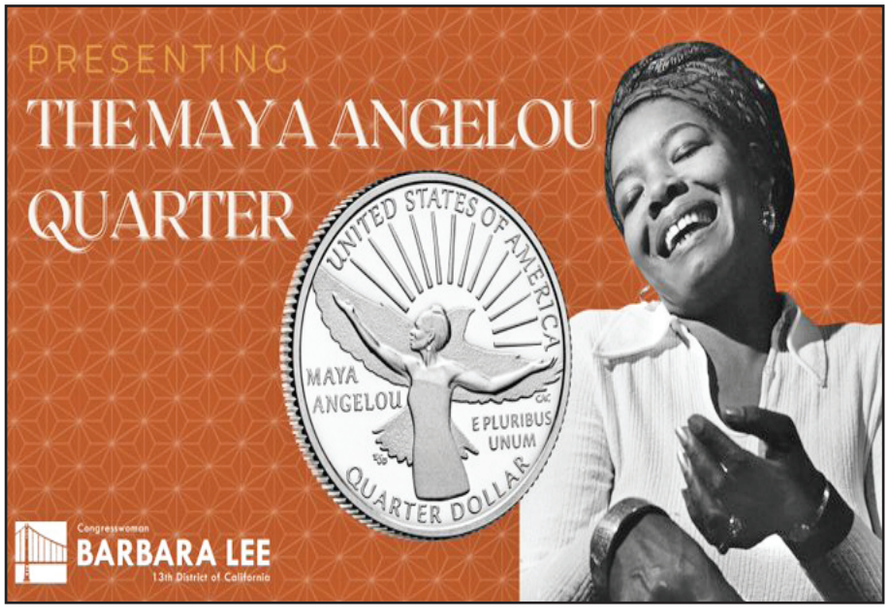
Famous author and noted civil rights leader Maya Angelou became the first African American woman featured on the 25-cent coin.

The U.S. Mint began shipping the quarters on January 10, 2022.

Reportedly, the Angelou coin is the first in a series designed to celebrate the accomplishments of American women.

"Each time we redesign our currency, we have the chance to say something about our country— what we value, and how we've progressed as a society," U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen said in a statement. "I'm very proud that these coins celebrate the contributions of some of America's most remarkable women, including Maya Angelou."

Angelou, whose works include such classics as "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," "And Still I Rise," and "The Heart of a Woman," died in 2014.



Famous author and noted civil rights leader Maya Angelou became the first African American woman featured on the 25-cent coin. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, from President Barack Obama in 2010. Angelou passed away in 2014. The Angelou coin is the first in a series designed to celebrate the accomplishments of American women. **Courtesy Photo**

She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, from President Barack Obama.

The new commemorative coin features Angelou with her arms uplifted a bird in flight and a rising sun behind her.

"They are images inspired by her poetry and symbolic of the way she lived," according to statement from officials at the U.S. Mint.

To the right are the words "e pluribus Unum," Latin for "out of many, one," a phrase also on the national seal. The flip side features a portrait of George Washington.

"Excited to announce that Maya Angelou becomes the first Black woman to appear on a U.S. quarter," California Democratic Rep. Barbara Lee wrote on Twitter. "The phenomenal women who shaped American history have gone unrecognized for too long—especially women of color.

"Proud to have led this bill to honor their legacies."

"The time is always right to do what's right."

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Thanks to the thousands of Baltimore Times Readers and Subscribers that made the Give Black 4 the Holidays Initiative such a success. Your support of the 100 Black Businesses in Baltimore during the recent Holiday Season helped to "keep the cashflow flowing, the cash registers ringing, and most importantly, the workers working.

Please watch for our future efforts to leverage the community's economic power to benefit these and other Black Businesses and those they serve.

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The Art of Karen Y Buster
The Art of Poncho
The Black Genius Art Show
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The Forum Cateters
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Yaa Chic
YBI African Apparel & Fashion, Inc.
YOLO Health and Wellness, - LLC
Zoya Handcrafted Jewelry - Company

1/ST Racing, Maryland Jockey Club establish Art Competition with MICA in celebration of Preakness 147

Continued from page 1

The winning artist of the inaugural competition will receive a $4,000 stipend and two tickets to Preakness 147 on May 21, 2022. In addition, their work will be reproduced on Preakness 147 merchandise with the Park Heights Renaissance as the beneficiary of all sales proceeds, which will be used to support the activities of the non-profit organization as it pursues affordable housing for families and provides employment opportunities for members of the Park Heights community.

The Art of Racing is part of the ongoing partnership between 1/ST and the Park Heights Renaissance that included honoring the late community advocate George E. Mitchell through the George E. Mitchell Black-Eyed Susan Stakes and the George E. Mitchell Park Heights Community Fellowship Grant. *The Art of Racing* builds upon the legacy of these initiatives by recognizing and honoring individuals who, much like Mitchell himself, demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to the Park Heights community.

"The visual elements behind the Preakness Stakes captivate the imagination both on race day and year-round," said David Wilson, Chief Marketing Officer, 1/ST. "*The Art of Racing* commemorates and celebrates one of the most iconic sporting events in Maryland, and nationwide. It also represents the opportunity for a modern visual interpretation of the Preakness Stakes as we redefine the sport to connect with a new generation of fans."

"The Preakness is one of the most esteemed public events for Maryland and this inaugural competition celebrates its importance in a unique way," said Dr. Leslie King-Hammond, the founding director of the Center for Race and Culture at MICA and a member of the judging panel for *The Art of Racing*.

There is an illustrious history between MICA and the Preakness Stakes that began in the 1970s when then-MICA professor Raoul Middleman led his classes in painting murals of Pimlico Race Course. The seven murals Middleman created with his students, which live in perpetuity behind the course's grandstand, provide an intimate look at a tradition defined by history and character.

"Raoul Middleman enriched the lives of his students by giving them the hands-on opportunity to experience commercial art making," said Dr. Tiffany Holmes, MICA's Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. "*The Art of Racing* builds upon Professor Middleman's legacy by commissioning artists from MICA and across Maryland to provide their interpretations of Maryland's time-honored tradition of Thoroughbred racing."

For more information on *The Art of Racing*, visit **www.preakness.com/the-art-of-racing** or follow @PreaknessStakes and #Preakness on social media.

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Dwyer Workforce Development

Administering a viable 'solution' for systemic poverty

By Ursula V. Battle

Systemic poverty, the healthcare worker crisis, and providing the best care possible to our seniors, are among the challenges we currently face. However, Dwyer Workforce Development believes it has a viable 'nursing solution' to address all three.

Through workforce development CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) and GNA (Geriatric Nursing Assistant) job training, job placement, nursing school scholarships, wraparound services and more, Dwyer Workforce Development is empowering unemployed and underemployed members of the community to pursue life-changing careers in the senior healthcare industry.

Dwyer Workforce Development, was founded in 2021, by Jack Dwyer and his wife Nancy along with their daughters Emily and Kelsey, as part of their commitment to give back to the industries and communities that have shaped their lives.

Barb Clapp serves as its CEO.

Dwyer is the owner and founder of Capital Funding Group and CFB Bank, which are headquartered in Baltimore. The companies provide banking and finance solutions to the business community and the national healthcare market.

"My family and I are really passionate about helping poor neighborhoods," said Dwyer. "We want to give them a career path and job opportunities that we've been lucky to have the benefit of ourselves. The career path that I know is the [healthcare] industry that I'm in, which has been suffering for years with workforce problems. The pandemic only exasperated the nursing home, assisted living industry and other healthcare sectors. Hospitals also had a severe crisis, hiring employees. Our passion is to hopefully eliminate poverty."

"We want to provide people with opportunities and a career in the industry that I've been dealing with for over 45 years," said Dwyer. "The goal is to train people to become CNAs. The job doesn't have to be with my company. It can be with any company that is paying a decent wage. Ultimately, if they accomplish that, Dwyer Workforce Development is going to pay for their college education to become an RN."

Dwyer Workforce Development, was founded in 2021, by Jack Dwyer (left) and his wife Nancy along with their daughters Emily and Kelsey, as part of their commitment to give back to the industries and communities that have shaped their lives. (Right) Dwyer Workforce Development CEO, Barb Clapp. The goal of the healthcare training organization is to empower unemployed and underemployed members of the community to pursue life-changing careers in the senior healthcare industry. **Courtesy Photos/Dwyer Workforce Development**

The healthcare training non-profit is located at 1422 Clarkview Road in Baltimore.

"Many RNs in my industry go on to become Regional Vice Presidents, and in some instances the President," said Dwyer. "There's a career path that can start on the CNA level and hopefully why not the President of the company? You can make a fantastic living being a RN, and we can provide a career path."

Dwyer Workforce Development has scholars enrolled in its training program in Greater Baltimore and anticipates 50 Scholars will be fully trained and active in the healthcare workforce by early Spring 2022. The Dwyer Workforce Development program begins with a nine-week CNA job training and certification program. Graduates of the CNA program are invited to participate in the 13-week GNA job training and certification program or immediately enter their job placement services.

After job placement, Dwyer tracks their graduates to support their job retention and help them develop their healthcare career goal plans over several years. Graduates who reach measurable milestones in their goal plans are awarded scholarships to attend nursing school and earn their RN (Registered Nurse) license.

"It's zero cost to participate," said Dwyer. "We started the program here in Baltimore, and we want to really significantly grow it in Maryland. We're in Maryland, so first and foremost that's where we want to focus on."

The philanthropist says he is working on the acquisition of several nursing homes, which will also help to support the mission of Dwyer Workforce Development.

Clapp joined Dwyer Workforce Development as CEO in 2021. A successful entrepreneur, she was the founder and CEO of Clapp Communications, an international communications company. The business leader has received numerous honors including The Daily Record's 'Most Influential Maryland' and 'Most Admired CEO' awards.

Clapp said she grew up in challenging situations and has always been committed to giving a voice to the voiceless, providing hope, tools, and solutions to help people "get out" of their situations and achieve success. Clapp sold her communications firm, in 2020 so she could commit her time to the nonprofit industry— and now, Dwyer Workforce Development.

"We're trying to get people out of systemic poverty," said Clapp, also noting the organization's efforts in assisting women. "We want to give people who were born into different circumstances an opportunity."

Dwyer and Clapp said future plans include creating a cohesive ecosystem where all needs are met for Scholars. The two say this includes housing, access to childcare, food, and care for elderly family members to help Scholars focus on their training and building a positive and rewarding life.

For more information about Dwyer Workforce Development call 410-513-8740 or visit: www.dwyerworkforcedev.org.

***"Philanthropy is not about giving money but about solving problems. While well meaning, the idea of writing a check and calling it 'philanthropy' is extremely short-sighted and unfortunately, extremely pervasive." —Naveen Ja*in**

After being shot, program founder helping city youth

By Ursula V. Battle

This is Part I of a two-part story about Project Pneuma

(Left) Damion J. Cooper, who was shot on the streets of Baltimore, is the founder of Project Pneuma, a holistic mentoring program that teaches youth about the power of forgiveness, discipline and self-control. Cooper uses his riveting story to reach eighth grade students and help put them on the right track. The program seeks to give young men tools to curb impulse actions from trauma, due to adverse childhood experiences. Since its inception, Project Pneuma has partnered with 23 schools and has served over 1,000 local boys. (Right) Project Pneuma program participants and staff, including founder Damion J. Cooper (back row center). **Courtesy Photos/Project Pneuma**

Damion J. Cooper vividly recalls October 13, 1992— the day he was shot in Baltimore. A moment in time that forever changed his life.

"I was in college back in early 90s, and on the wrestling team," said Cooper. "I was walking home from wrestling to my mother's house and didn't realize I was being followed by two men. I turned around and one of the guys shot me point blank range just inches from my heart. I cracked my sternum and suffered other injuries. After getting shot, I became a very angry young man. After decades of living my life, I didn't understand my emotions growing up in Baltimore City and just feeling pain. But I held it all in because it was a front of trying to 'man up.'

"Over the years, all those feelings intensified, because I couldn't understand the emotional pain, depression, and anxiety, I felt from being shot. I was always the good kid and the first in my family to get a full scholarship to college to wrestle. I lost it all the moment someone pulled the trigger and shot me."

The Baltimore native also shared the events of December 31, 1996— New Year's Eve.

"People start firing off their guns," he said. "I remember going to my mother and stepfather's house and stealing his gun. I was going to take my life that night, but was waiting until midnight. Lucky for me, two of my closest friends who had no idea what I was about to do, came to my house and asked me to go to church with them. I didn't want to go, but my friends weren't going to leave. It was something I did not want to do because I literally blamed God for me getting shot. I just felt like He took everything away from me.

"The word 'but' is used as a conjunction in The Bible and is my favorite word. "It tells us that if something bad happens, if you just hold on, a change will come."

The Coppin State University graduate explained he grudgingly went to church with his friends with the idea of quietly easing out during the service.

"They took me to a church that was three blocks away from the place where I got shot," recalled Cooper. "So, I had to go back to my source of trauma. I had known the pastor of the church for years. But he brought in a guest minister to preach that night, who simply said to everybody, 'I don't care who you are or how much money you have, we're all going to go through tough times.' It felt like he was talking directly to me. He also talked about weeping enduring for a night but joy coming in the morning."

While midnight for Cooper was to have marked when he would end his life, the moment would mark a new beginning. "The guest minister informed us that at midnight, we were going to kneel and pray. He also said that if we felt compelled to give our life to Christ, raise our hand, and someone would come get us. I've never been a real emotional person, but I remember hugging this man and crying so hard, I was messing up his robe. I also remember him telling me, 'Son, whatever you've gone through, let it go.' I forgave the man who shot me even though I had no idea who he was and why he did it. That is the backstory of why I am doing the work that I am doing."

Cooper is the founder of Project Pneuma, a holistic mentoring program that teaches youth about the power of forgiveness, discipline and self-control. Through the organization, Cooper uses his riveting story to reach eighth grade students, and help put them on to the right track. Project Pneuma seeks to give young men tools to curb impulse actions from trauma, due to adverse childhood experiences.

Cooper was in the inaugural cohort of the "BMe Public Voices Fellowship," which was designed to improve the public discourse and related leadership decisions on important issues by training and supporting groups of expert Black practitioners to become vocal, published and influential thought leaders.

"Project Pneuma started in 2014 from seed funding from BMe," said Cooper. "The organization liked the work I was doing in Baltimore with boys and men, and awarded me $10,000."

Since its inception, Project Pneuma has partnered with 23 schools and has served over 1,000 local boys. The core programming consists of social-emotional literacy, academic enrichment/tutoring, public speaking, physical fitness and more. Project Pneuma monitors the students' attendance and report cards, and aims to decrease suspensions.

More information about Project Pneuma can be found at www.projectpneuma.org.

In turning around his life, Cooper would also attend seminary school, where he would find himself being tested again. He would come face-to-face with his shooter.

Coming next week: Part II

Estate Planning: Not Just a Tool for the Rich

By John Kern

Question: I want to leave my house to my children when I pass, but I don't really own any other valuables besides my house. Do I still need to do estate planning?"

Answer: There is a prevalent notion that only those with substantial assets need to do estate planning. The word "estate" often elicits images of grand mansions seated atop sprawling plots of land owed and stewarded by the ultra-rich. Interestingly, the egregious nature of this image is often, obscured in lobbying efforts, by those who attempt to repeal the estate tax. The term "death tax" is often used to distract from the image of taxing wealthy individuals— a universally popular position— by referring instead to taking money from someone who has recently passed away.

The word estate in working-class circles is quite different. For those without an army of financial advisors watching over their fortunes, it is the family home, cared for and maintained throughout the generations, that is often the greatest, if not the only, asset. When asked about preparing an estate plan, it may be natural for homeowners to respond with a puzzled look, as they wonder what valuables they might pass on besides the home. But estate planning is not only used to ensure safe asset transfer, it is also important for helping families maintain their assets while they are living.

The wealthy may complain about the tax man coming after the spoils of their hard-earned, job-creating labor, but it is the working poor whose estates are under the greatest threat. In these neighborhoods, the bedrock of wealth creation has been eroded by structurally racist housing policies, making it all but impossible to keep up with the gains of the rich. In this context, estate planning may be seen as one part of a multi-layered strategy designed to protect homeowners from this continued inequity.

If residents in neighborhoods are going to have a chance of protecting themselves from the ever-evolving landscape of predatory housing practices, they must ensure their homes are properly titled in their names, giving them "legal" ownership of the home. In addition, they must carefully plan so that their heirs are in the same position after their passing. Without this legal designation of ownership, families and their estates are far more vulnerable to catastrophe. With clear title, homeowners can access several financial credits including the Homeowners and Homestead Property Tax Credits, water credits and/or home repair programs, all designed to help prevent the loss of the family home.

If residents are going to have a chance of protecting themselves from the ever-evolving landscape of predatory housing practices, they must ensure their homes are properly titled in their names, giving them "legal" ownership of the home.
Photo Credit: Rachel Martin-unsplash

Rising home prices and runaway development may mean higher property taxes for families already facing the demanding situation of having their homes over assessed and under appraised. The tax credits give them a fighting chance as they struggle to avoid displacement.

High water bills and environmental citations are notorious in low-income neighborhoods as many blocks are littered with homes where a lien amount is higher than the value of the now-vacant house. For the remaining homeowners, blight and disrepair drive down home prices, making it impossible to borrow against the house to do home-repairs.

But there's the rub: all these available programs require that the homeowner's name be listed on the deed to the property. Many family homes for low-income Baltimoreans have been passed down for multiple generations, without an estate being opened or new deed recorded. Without estate planning, the deed of the house remains in the name of the initial family member that may have passed 10-20 years ago or more. The estate becomes more complex and more difficult to unravel as each generation— with their own legal interest in the home— transitions through the property.

Working class families may not have an enormous amount of assets, but they *must* do their estate planning. Even with proper planning, no outcome is guaranteed. The wealth-extraction schemes show no signs of slowing. It is imperative for families to consider tools like wills; life estate deeds; financial, powers of attorney; and advance medical directives.

John Kern is the Advanced Planning Project Coordinator at Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (www.mvlslaw.org) where he conducts outreach on estate planning, financial stabilization and preserving wealth, particularly in communities of color.

Do you have a question you would l ike to see addressed in this column? Email ask@mvlslaw.org to submit your question to the Baltimore Times' legal tip column.

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Ravens Rashod Bateman reflects on rookie season

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens made it their business to add to the receiver pool this year. They signed veteran free agent Sammy Watkins. They selected wide receivers Tylan Wallace and Rashod Bateman in the NFL Draft. Tee Martin was added as the wide receiver coach.

Bateman was the 27th overall pick and yielded the most promise heading into the season. Unfortunately, he missed some time during training camp due to a nagging groin injury.

"I don't necessarily think it held me back, but I just think it was valuable time that I missed, as far as getting reps with Lamar [Jackson] and 'Snoop' [Tyler Huntley], and things like that, and just having those practice reps. But when I came back, I feel like I hit it running. So, now, I'm just looking forward to next year. Like I said, just looking forward to getting better," Bateman said.

Bateman was placed on injured reserve to start the season after undergoing groin surgery. The Ravens activated him on October 16 to the 53-man roster from injured reserve. In Week 14 Bateman recorded his first 100-yard game catching seven passes for 103 yards in a 22–24 loss against the Cleveland Browns.

The Baltimore Ravens selected wide receiver Rashod Bateman in the 2021 NFL Draft. He was the 27th overall pick. Bateman was placed on injured reserve at the start of the season after undergoing groin surgery. After he was restored to the 53-man roster, the rookie receiver finished with 46 receptions for 515 yards and a touchdown in 12 games.

Photo Credit: Shawn Hubbard/Baltimore Ravens Photos

The rookie receiver finished with 46 receptions for 515 yards and a touchdown in 12 games. For the most part, Bateman remained healthy once he was restored to the active roster and showed flashes of his potential to be a productive player in the future.

"I'm just glad I got out healthy. I feel like I'm going into the offseason strong so I can work on the things that I need to work on to come back next year and have a better chance of performing at a higher level," Bateman said. "My rookie season, it went OK in my opinion, coming back from injury and working my way back. I'm just thankful to be here, be a part of this organization, and I'm looking forward to the future."

Bateman vowed to improve in multiple ways during the offseason. But the biggest area of focus for him will be getting into his film study and to further develop his football IQ. He felt that the biggest difference from college to the NFL was that everyone has a similar talent level. Football IQ is the key to performing at a high level.

The other thing that Bateman will do is work to develop even better chemistry with his quarterback Lamar Jackson. Bateman said they will likely get together at some point for some throwing sessions. That will help build momentum rolling into next season.

The season didn't end the way the Ravens wanted it to. Their 16-13 overtime loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers in the season finale killed their playoff hopes. However, Bateman feels he is in a great spot.

"I couldn't be in a more blessed situation," Bateman said. "And this year has definitely taught me that being a part of this organization is an honor, and I carry that with pride, for sure. We were never out of it. Despite the cards that we got dealt this year, this team was never out of it until the end. It's something special to be a part of that. I know we're going to come out hungry for next year."

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