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Resilient Author Reaches Career Milestones Despite Disability



Sheelia E. Bell, (middle), is an author residing in Colorado who has written 39 books and counting. She grew up in Memphis, Tennessee battling polio and scoliosis. Bell, a professional writer of 23 years, previously gave back to the community while promoting literacy. Along with a team of people who shared her vision to create a literacy festival in Tennessee, Bell's first Black Writers and Book Clubs (BWABC) Literacy festival was held in September 2012. Left to right, BWABC team members include the late Jacquelyn Currie; Cathy Jones; Regina Dobbins; Delores Freeman; and Tasha Parker.

Photo credit: Kevin Gray (See more on page 6)

Inaugural DCxMETAVerse Summit, Friday, October 7, 2022,

The DC Film Office partnered with Multicultural Media & Correspondents Association (MMCA) to host the Inaugural DCxMETAVerse Summit, Friday, October 7, 2022, at the True Reformer Building in Washington, D.C. The day long summit featured a series of panel discussions with leading practitioners and experts who explored the new economic evolution—the Metaverse. The goal of the DCxMetaverse is to provide the culture with a roadmap to enter the metaverse and to establish DC as the epi-center for innovation and inclusion in the metaverse. On Thursday, October 5, 2022, MMCA hosted its 7th Annual Multicultural Media Correspondents Dinner where they honored Media Icon Honorees Actress, Comedian and Activist Jenifer Lewis; Print/Digital Journalist Ellen Nakashima (Washington Post); Radio Journalist Sybil Wilkes (Former Co-Host, “The Tom Joyner Morning Show”); Television Broadcast Journalist Jose Diaz-Balart (Host “Jose Diaz-Balart Reports,” MSNBC). Comedian Aida Rodriguez served as event host.



(Left) Darren D. Dickerson, Founder & CEO DSD Publicity Consulting; Dr. Wilson Washington, President, Blue Eagles Solutions & Training LLC; Celebrity Influencer Cyrene Tankard, E-Commerce; Rapper and Producer Hd4President; Jaia Thomas, Sports and Entertainment Attorney and Founder, Diverse Representatives; David Morgan, President, Multicultural Media & Correspondents Association; and Dante Simpson, CEO of ESPAT TV. Photo Credit: The Baltimore Times

Ballot Boxes Installed and Ready for Use Statewide

ANNAPOLIS (Oct. 11, 2022) – The Maryland State Board of Elections (SBE) has confirmed that all 281 ballot drop boxes slated for use in the 2022 General Election have been installed and are currently available for use. A complete list of the ballot box locations is available [online](#) (in [Spanish](#)).

Voters who request mail-in ballots by the following deadlines may opt to cast their vote via ballot box or the U.S. Postal Service. The deadline to request a mail-in ballot by mail is **Nov. 1**. The deadline to request an email containing a unique link to a mail-in ballot is **Nov. 4, 2022**.

All ballot box locations will be available for use until **Nov. 8 at 8 p.m.** Voters who choose to utilize ballot drop boxes may submit their properly completed mail-in ballots at any official drop box in their county of residence.

Eligible Marylanders may register to vote in advance of the Nov. 8 election using SBE’s [online](#) application page or completing an application in-person at their [local board of elections office](#). The advance deadline to register to vote is **Oct. 18**.

Voters should also ensure their registration information is up to date by **Oct. 18**. Voters can review and update their registration information [online](#) or by visiting their [local board of elections office](#).

Early voting for the 2022 General Election will be held from **Thursday, Oct. 27 through Thursday, Nov. 3**. Early voting centers will be open each day during that window from **7am to 8pm**. SBE encourages voters to review the final list of early voting centers, which is posted [here](#) (in [Spanish](#)). Some of the early voting center locations

changed following July’s Primary Election.

The complete list of Election Day polling locations is posted toward the bottom of the [2022 Elections landing page](#) under “Polling Place and Precinct Reports.” The best option for individual voters to identify their polling place is to use the [Voter Look-Up website](#). Election Day polling places will be open **Nov. 8 from 7am to 8pm**.

Marylanders interested in serving as election judges can complete SBE’s [online interest form](#) to be considered for this important civic role. Residents can also contact their [local board of elections](#) for more information on serving as an election judge.

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Actress and Director LisaRaye McCoy Talks Breast Cancer and her BET Film, The Pink Fight

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

This year, the American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates that health professionals will diagnose more than 287,850 new cases of invasive breast cancer and 51,400 new cases of ductal carcinoma in situ/stage 0 breast cancer in women in the United States.

While there has been an overall 43 percent decline in breast cancer deaths over the last three decades – thanks to gains in awareness, early diagnosis, and treatment – there remains a persistent mortality gap between Black women and white women.

Succinctly, African American women have a 31% breast cancer mortality rate.

Earlier this year, BET HER announced four original 20-minute

dramas to premiere during Minority Mental Health Month (July) and Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The short films celebrate the stories of Black women, which are all written, directed, and produced by Black women while bringing awareness to issues directly affecting the Black community.

Actresses Meagan Good, Naturi Naughton, Tichina Arnold, and LisaRaye McCoy serve as specially invited directors.

For McCoy, who slayed in films like “The Player’s Club,” “The Wood,” and “Twice Bitten,” her behind-the-camera directorial skills shined on Oct. 6 with the premiere of “The Pink Fight,” a captivating film about a female boxer diagnosed with breast cancer.

The film follows Tomeka – played by boxing champion Claressa Shields – as she and her wife fight for survival after a devastating breast cancer diagnosis.

“Breast cancer has attacked my family. Some have survived, and some have not,” McCoy said during an appearance on the National Newspaper Publishers Association’s live morning show, Let It Be Known.

“I was an ambassador for Susan B. Komen and ran my first 5K race with them. I didn’t want to be one of those public figures who cut the ribbon and be off. There was a joy that I got when I crossed the finish line that I wouldn’t have gotten if I didn’t participate. You have to walk the walk.”

In “The Pink Fight,” McCoy did just so, helping to bring to the screen the rollercoaster of emotions that come with a breast cancer diagnosis.

“I am absolutely proud to have taken this opportunity,” McCoy said.

The renowned actress described herself as very strict behind the camera.

“My reputation is that I don’t take no stuff,” McCoy asserted. However,



Lisa Raye McCoy

tempering that assertion, McCoy noted that she’s a bit of a joker.

“When I began to realize that I had value from coming from in front of the screen as an actress, I know how it is to have to muster emotions that may not be there because you may not have experienced this in your life,” she said, describing the job of a director.

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Baltimore County Executive John A. Obzewski, Jr. and the County Council



Guest Editorials/Commentary

It's Time to Say 'Adios,' Nury Martinez

Former L.A. City Council President Nury Martinez made racist comments in a 2021 meeting, according to a recording that was reviewed by The Los Angeles Times. Martinez resigned from her council leadership post after audio was leaked of her making remarks about a two-year-old child's behavior that she reportedly observed at a Martin Luther King Day parade.

"Martinez and the other Latino leaders present during the taped conversation were seemingly unaware they were being recorded as Martinez said a white councilmember handled his young Black son as though he were an "accessory" and described Councilman Mike Bonin's son as "Parece changuito," or "like a monkey,"" according to the newspaper's report.

More disparaging remarks were made by a mother and community leader who chose to denigrate a child. Councilmember Mike Bonin choked back tears after speaking about the remarks that were made about his young, Black son. Bonin, who is a gay white man, was reminded about future racism that his child could one day face again.

Martinez's comments that she believed were private, reminds that Black and brown people do not share automatic comradery. They can be divided because of colorism, class, and the false notion of superiority. While some people claim that Black people are paranoid about discrimination, this recent incident is a prime example that racism is still alive. At the same time, Bonin's parenting of a Black child reminds that all white people are not racists. Some racists could also be Black; brown; yellow; or in between.

Martinez's apology calls her motive as a public servant into question.

"In a moment of intense frustration and anger, I let the situation get the best of me and I hold myself accountable for these comments. For that I am sorry," Martinez said in a statement sent to NBC4, according to the news station. "The context of this conversation was concern over the redistricting process and concern about the potential negative impact it might have on communities of color. My work speaks for itself. I've worked hard to lead this city through its most difficult time."

If her work speaks for itself, the sting of her comments told the true story of how she felt about a little Black boy and Black people. The leaked recording included more unsettling remarks that make forgiving Martinez by allowing her to remain a public servant in any capacity, hypocritical. What about the long-term impact of Bonin's son being vilified, and how can Martinez be trusted to fight for everyone in a melting pot if she felt that a toddler needed a "beatdown?"

Constituents in Los Angeles should not ignore the division that Martinez carved in Los Angeles. Instead of Martinez taking a "leave of absence" from her seat on the county council, she should pursue another profession. Let her permanent absence serve as her final apology. And to the anonymous person who recorded Martinez and others, you are the real MVP who exposed a political poser.



"I'D SAY THE ODDS ARE 60-50 THAT'S WRONG."

Letter to the Editor

Editor: November Election Issues

The upcoming mid-term election and possibly the general election in 2024 could revolve around three major issues——internal threats to our democracy, abortion and inflation.

Polls show almost 60% of the U.S. population is concerned with threats to our democracy posed by far right un-American extremists who continue to believe the false narrative put out by Trump that the 2020 election was stolen from him by election officials in states across the country. These allegations were proven false in over 60 court cases presided over by many Trump appointed judges, but this didn't stop Trump's stormtrooper followers from conducting an insurrection on January 6, 2021 when they stormed our seat of government.

The partisan U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Roe v. Wade abortion case allowing states to implement anti-abortion laws. About 70% of Americans believe women should be allowed to

choose to have abortions, and probably a higher percentage believe abortions should be permitted for incest, rape and medical conditions. This issue might be almost as important to Americans as the threats to our democracy.

Lastly, the high inflation created by the opening up of our economy after the pandemic, the dismal response by the Federal Reserve to act to control inflation, and the huge amount of spending by the Biden administration has had a significant impact on consumers. However, the economy had to come back once pandemic restrictions were removed.

Unfortunately, the Federal Reserve fell asleep and did not raise interest rates and stop bond purchases until inflation was rampant. The Federal Reserve must continue its restrictive monetary policy and the Biden administration should reign in large scale spending.

Donald Moskowitz
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Londonderry NH

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New Poll: Black Voters Overwhelmingly Support Student Debt Forgiveness

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior National
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@StacyBrownMedia

Despite lawsuits from Republicans and other opponents, President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness plan appears a hit with Black voters.

HIT Strategies, which bills itself as the only millennial and minority-owned public opinion research company, found that the approval ratings for both Biden and Congressional Democrats increased by 79% to 82%, respectively, after the loan forgiveness announcement. Researchers show 56% of Black voters believe Biden has made progress on issues affecting Black voters, an increase of 12 points since July.

Fielded via an online opt-in panel from September 15-19 (with a margin of error of +/-3.1%), the survey revealed that 86% of Black voters supported President Biden's loan forgiveness plan, including 60% who "strongly supported" the policy.



President Joe Biden
Photo Courtesy NNPA

"President Biden's loan forgiveness plan represents another promise fulfilled on one of the most critical economic priorities for Black voters," Terrance Woodbury, a founding partner at HIT

eligible for relief, including 566,500 Pell Grant recipients. In Maryland, 747,100 enjoy eligibility, including 419,400 Pell Grant recipients.

"HIT Strategies, which bills itself as the only millennial and minority-owned public opinion research company, found that the approval ratings for both Biden and Congressional Democrats increased by 79% to 82%, respectively, after the loan forgiveness announcement."

Strategies, said in a statement.

"Now, the President must message this plan directly to voters and continue to illustrate how his policies are improving the economic well-being of Black America," Woodbury stated. An estimated 165,900 borrowers from the District of Columbia are eligible for student debt relief under President Joe Biden's recent loan forgiveness plan, including 60,300 Pell Grant recipients. In Virginia, 965,100 borrowers are

State-by-state data released last month by the U.S. Department of Education estimated that more than 40 million borrowers nationwide could benefit from the student debt relief plan, and nearly 20 million might see their remaining balance discharged.

In August, Biden announced his plan to forgive borrowers up to \$10,000 in debt relief and up to \$20,000 for Pell Grant recipients.

"The Biden Administration's student debt relief plan will help borrowers and families recover from the pandemic and prepare to resume student loan payments in January 2023," administration officials stated.

They said about 90% of relief dollars would go to those earning less than \$75,000 per year – and no relief would go to any individual or household in the top 5% of incomes in the United States.

Officials said by targeting relief to borrowers with the highest economic need, the administration's actions are also likely to help narrow the racial wealth gap.

The White House noted that nearly 71% of Black undergraduate borrowers are Pell Grant recipients, and 65% of Latino undergraduate borrowers are Pell Grant recipients. Moreover, HIT Strategies said Biden's plan should help Democrats in the Nov. 8 midterm elections.

Researchers found that the number of Black voters who say they will vote in the midterm elections increased from 79% to 82% since last month.

Further, the number of Black voters who believe their vote has the power to effect change on the issues that matter to them increased from 64% to 67% since last month.

"During the campaign, President Biden promised to provide student debt relief," administration officials said.

"The Biden Administration is following through on that promise and providing families breathing room as they prepare to start re-paying loans after the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic."

The Baltimore Times

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Baltimore Community Lending receives \$600,000 grant from Truist Foundation

Funding Will Help Support Minority and Women-Owned Small Businesses

By Ursula V. Battle

The mission of Baltimore Community Lending (BCL) is to support the revitalization and strengthening of underserved neighborhoods through innovative and flexible financial assistance designed to promote community development. As a community development financial institution, BCL makes loans to entrepreneurs and small business owners in the Baltimore metropolitan area who are unable to get financing from mainstream lending sources.

Truist Foundation recently announced a \$600,000 commitment to BCL, which will assist the expansion of the nonprofit's business coaching program and help streamline its loan-making system to maximize impact. This will be accomplished by providing funding and training to help minority entrepreneurs break through systemic barriers.

"BCL makes loans to small businesses that cannot meet the collateral or other qualifications for traditional credit," said Watchen Harris Bruce, president, and CEO of Baltimore Community Lending. "Instead, we mitigate risk by requiring all applicants to participate in a free small business training program. BCL believes that requiring business training, counseling and ongoing support is a more equitable way to mitigate risk and make more sense in helping to ensure long term success."

She continued, "But area business coaching providers lack the capacity to support BCL's clients, so BCL established an in-house business coaching program, hiring a full-time business coach (technical assistance officer) in December 2021. As our loan portfolio grows, and more and more potential borrowers hear about BCL, we need to expand our business



Greg Farno, Truist Maryland Regional President; Ellen Fitzsimmons, Truist Chief Legal Officer and Head of Public Affairs; Watchen Harris Bruce, President & CEO Baltimore Community Lending; and Lynette Bell, President of Truist Foundation. (Courtesy Photo)

coaching program. The Truist grant will support this expansion."

To help ensure the long-term success of its loan recipients, BCL offers a unique small business training program, which pairs each loan recipient with a financial coach who helps them develop a business plan; project cash flow; and provide financial guidance before, during and after receiving a loan. Harris Bruce estimates that at least 120 new small business borrowers and 80 existing small business borrowers will benefit from the grant over a three-year period.

"I was very excited because this grant will help us achieve our goals of expanding our business development and technical assistance services in Baltimore to small businesses," said Harris Bruce. "BCL believes that small business training, rather than requiring collateral, is not only a more equitable way to mitigate risk, it is more sensible as well. We expect our small business borrowers to be successful and we measure our own success accordingly."

She added, "BCL believes our efforts will strengthen and grow successful small business ownership in Baltimore's underserved communities and among its disenfranchised populations.

Harris Bruce said that BCL has been a fixture in the Baltimore community for many years.

"Baltimore Community Lending (BCL) has been supporting underserved Baltimore City neighborhoods since 1989 through innovative and flexible financial resources for real estate construction; community economic development; and small business loans and business coaching services," she said. "We address the capital gaps that prevent locally-driven projects and business ventures from moving ahead."

She added, "The Truist grant will help BCL move closer to its vision of reimagining Baltimore as a place of inclusive and equitable opportunity supported by a vibrant ecosystem of community partners. BCL's role is also to transform and change the narratives of underserved communities

by providing access to capital to entrepreneurs to start and expand their businesses."

The Truist Foundation is committed to Truist Financial Corporation's (NYSE: TFC) purpose to inspire and build better lives and communities. Established in 2020, the foundation makes strategic investments in nonprofit organizations to help ensure the communities it serves have more opportunities for a better quality of life. The Truist Foundation's grants and activities focus on building career pathways to economic mobility and strengthening small businesses.

"We wanted to partner with Baltimore Community Lending based on the work they do around having a supportive community to strengthen small businesses," said Lynette Bell, president of Truist Foundation. "We know that there are organizations that work on communities with solutions to address deeper, systemic inequities."

The \$600,000 grant is part of the \$120 million joint Truist and Truist Foundation commitment to strengthen and support small businesses nationwide, with a particular focus on Black-, Latine-, and women-owned businesses.

"After the murder of George Floyd, we really wanted to look at how do we continue to support and build ecosystems that have barriers and inequities that need to be disrupted," said Bell. "We know that Baltimore Community Lending shares that vision and value. We wanted to provide them with \$600,000 to support their efforts on eradicating that common inequity."

For more information, contact Jaclyn Whitley at BCL by calling 410-329-073, or send her an email via Jacklyn.Whitley@BCLending.org. You can also visit <https://bclending.org>.

Resilient Author Reaches Career Milestones Despite Disability

By Andrea Blackstone

Shelia E. Bell, a resident of Colorado, displays a combination of intelligence and a winning attitude in the face of adversity. National Book Month—a month-long celebration drawing attention to the value of reading, writing and literature—is held each October. Matters of the pen are Bell’s specialties. The editor and professional writer has penned 39 books and counting. Bell primarily writes women’s fiction but has created young adult and nonfiction works as well.

The national bestselling author’s career has included sharing self-publishing and traditionally published books with the world. However, Bell’s personal story has another layer. She recalls growing up in Memphis, Tennessee battling polio and scoliosis.

“I contracted polio at the age of two after having undergone open heart surgery six months prior. To this day, I cannot specifically say how I contracted it. Doctors seem to think it could have come from me drinking



Shelia E. Bell at the age of six.
(Photo courtesy of Shelia E. Bell)

contaminated, unpasteurized milk. That has not been proven,” Bell said. “Having polio has taught me how to persevere. It has instilled in me a sense of courage. It has given me life lessons on how to be bold, to stop at nothing, to keep on keeping on.”

According to The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, a public-private partnership that is led by national governments with six partners that includes the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), polio (poliomyelitis) is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. It invades the nervous system and may cause irreversible paralysis in mere hours. Information provided by The Global Polio Eradication Initiative also pointed out that polio can strike at any age, but it primarily affects children under five years old.

The topic of polio recently resurfaced in the United States. New York State’s Department of Health reported that by September 23, 2022, sequencing analysis provided by the CDC “confirmed the presence of poliovirus in a total of 69 positive samples of concern” in wastewater.

The incidence of polio was regarded differently when Bell was being reared in the South during the days of segregation. She witnessed how differently she and her mother were treated when she was taken to clinics and doctors. Part of Bell’s experience included having to enter separate spaces and rooms because of her race. Bell’s confidence grew despite it all.

“In school, I thought and believed I could do anything the other kids could do. I was bullied, teased, poked at, made fun of, but through it all I kept forging ahead,” Bell said.

The professional writer of 23 years mentioned that she sometimes gets



Shelia E. Bell is an author who writes “perfect stories about imperfect people like you and me.”
(Photo courtesy of Shelia E. Bell)

tired of putting on her leg braces and walking with crutches, but she knows that along with her power chair, these tools assist her to be independent while working on achieving new goals.

“I dream of seeing my books turned into TV shows. I have dreams to be on the New York Times best sellers list. I have dreams of seeing my books in audio,” Bell said.

Life’s twists have not hindered Bell from being a trailblazer. After observing how illiteracy can negatively affect a community, she came up with the idea of having a one-time festival that would promote and support literacy one community at

a time.

“Being a writer, I felt it was almost useless and senseless for me to write all these fascinating stories if people were unable to read them due to the rising illiteracy rate and the fact the need for reading was not being enforced as it should,” Bell said.

Along with a team of seven people who shared her vision for promoting literacy, the first Black Writers and Book Clubs (BWABC) Literacy festival was held in September 2012.

“The festival continued for the next five years in Memphis, Tennessee. During this time, we also became a nonprofit. We went into schools to read to children and share the importance of being able to read with comprehension,” Bell said.

Hundreds of successful African American authors traveled to Memphis from across the country annually through BWABC. Bell currently stays busy honoring her love of writing. Self-publishing affords her a less stressful career, yet Bell enjoys being traditionally published, too.

“Receiving a five-figure book deal was an amazing accomplishment. I felt at the time that it verified me and made me a legitimate ‘real author.’ It also made me realize I could accomplish whatever I put my mind to,” Bell said.

The writer offered thoughts about how she would like people to remember children and adults with disabilities.

“What I want people to remember is we are each unique,” Bell said. “Treat everyone with respect and dignity.”

Visit www.sheliawritesbooks.com for more information about Bell.

Rambling Rose

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Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello Everyone,

I hope that everything is going well on your end. It is just so much going on this month; I really do not know where to start. First, we are going to mention an upcoming show that will be held at the American Legion #122, located at 3324 Painters Mill Rd. in Owings Mills, Maryland. Sharon Alfred-Cuffie will be there with her band called The Nu Band featuring Obasi. Also, the New World Outreach Jazz Orchestra will be there on Saturday, October 15, 2022, from 8 p.m. until midnight.

Okay, moving right along, you will have to choose where you would prefer to go because another event is also happening on Saturday, October 15. The Baltimore Soul Jam event will take place at the Modell Performing Arts Center at the Lyric, located at 140 W. Mount Royal Ave. Russell Thomkins & The Stylistics; Dennis Edwards' Temptation Review; Wil Hart of the original Delfonics; the Enchantment; and Ray, Goodman & Brown will be featured there.

I am not giving you a break yet! My musical son, Cyrus Chestnut & Affirmation with Tim Green Obasi Akoto, and Eric Kennedy, will be appearing the weekend of Friday-Sunday, October 14-16, 2022, at Keystone Korner Baltimore, located at 1350 Lancaster St.

Honey child, don't you let anyone tell you that Rambling Rose didn't give you plenty of places to choose from if you want to hang out! I got you, girlfriend, so check this event out. Irene Jalenti will take you on a journey through jazz and Latin American

music on Saturday, October 15, 2022, for two sets: 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. at Blues Alley in Washington, D.C.

The Baltimore City Health Department Aging & CARE Services and Zeta Center For Healthy and Active Aging are sponsoring the farmers market on Thursday, October 20, 2022, at 4501 Reisterstown Road from 9 a.m.- noon.

Mark your calendar for the Allendale Community Association, Inc. & Children of Promise, Inc.'s presentation of their 4th Annual Fall Harvest Party on Friday, October 28, 2022, from 5-8 p.m. Wear your favorite costume to show off your favorite superhero. The superheroes' theme event will take place at the Marv E. Rodman Rec. Center, located at 3600 W. Mulberry Street. There will be trick-or-treating; refreshments; a costume contest; arts and crafts; music and dancers; a Thanksgiving food drive (bring non-perishable foods); board games; and a book giveaway. This free event is open to the public. Anita Cathcart, you, and your staff are doing a fantastic job.

Congratulations to Edmondson High School Class of 1965. They will be celebrating their 57th reunion with a luncheon on Saturday, October 29, 2022, from 1-5 p.m. at the Hilton Baltimore BWI Airport, located at 1739 W. Nursery Road, in Linthicum Heights, Maryland. For more information, call 410-804-1153 or 443-769-3081.

Alright my friends, I got to go now. But remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474, or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



The Nu Band featuring Sharon Alford and the New World Outreach Jazz Outreach Jazz Orchestra will perform at the American Legion #122, located at 4424 Painters Mill Rd. in Owings Mills, Maryland on Saturday, October 15, 2022, from 8 p.m. until midnight. It is a semi-formal or after 5 attire event. For more information, call 410-963-9092.



Jackie Fowlkes, D.J. Mel's mother, Gene Chandler, and Rambling Rose at the 40th Anniversary Celebration for D.J. Mel was held at the Delta Community Center last week.



Cyrus Chestnut & Affirmation with Tim Green, Obasi Akoto, and Eric Kennedy will be performing live at the Keystone Korner Baltimore jazz restaurant, located at 1350 Lancaster St. on Friday-Sunday, October 14-16, 2022. Photo credit: Al Sharp Jazz



The Crew holds their Friday Nite Oldies every third Friday at the Caton Castle on Baltimore and Hilton Street, from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. For more information, call 410-342-0504.

Ravens Newcomer Jason Pierre-Paul Already Making Impact



Jason Pierre-Paul (center), Jason Stephens (left), and Josh Bynes (right). Photo credit: Shawn Hubbard/Baltimore Ravens

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens were in need of immediate help along the defensive front since starters Tyus Bowser and David Ojabo are still sidelined. So, they signed free agent defensive end Jason Pierre-Paul to a one-year contract with a base salary of just \$1.35 million.

With incentives, Pierre-Paul could earn over \$5 million this season with sack and playing time incentives. Pierre-Paul had not played in a game since week 15 last year with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, yet he came up big for the Ravens in their 19-17 win over the Cincinnati Bengals. Pierre-Paul finished with a sack, a tackle for a loss, and a pass deflection.

“Very impressed,” Ravens coach John Harbaugh said of Pierre-Paul. “He hadn’t played at all in training camp or in the season. I thought he looked good the first week, and now just a little bit better this week. To

get his hands on those balls, and to pressure the quarterback, strong against the run. He plays super hard. He’s a hard playing guy. You can tell he loves the game, so he’s a big plus for us. I’m very happy that we have him.”

The Ravens have created a culture that makes it easy for veteran players to assimilate into the locker room. Baltimore has a history of acquiring veteran players and getting immediate contributions from them.

It’s no different with Pierre-Paul. Even though he’s fairly new to the Ravens, Pierre-Paul has already gathered an understanding of how they do things. He’s also quickly figured out that Cincinnati is a rivalry game, so the win has extra value.

“It means a lot. It’s a rivalry game, a division game,” Pierre-Paul said. “So, this game counts for two wins. But most importantly, it is getting us in the right direction and giving us confidence. If we keep playing

together, we’ll be great.”

At 33 years of age, Pierre-Paul is no youngster by football standards. Nevertheless, he led the Ravens defensive line with 42 snaps (remember the playing time incentives) against the Bengals on Sunday. His 53 snaps led the Ravens two weeks ago in their heartbreaking 23-20 loss to the Buffalo Bills.

The 13-year veteran has made a good impression on Harbaugh. Given how much emotion Pierre-Paul plays with, it’s easy to see that his passion for football is still burning.

“This guy loves football, and he wants to be good. I just think he’s kind of rounding into shape right now too, so he’s only going to keep getting better,” Harbaugh said. “He seems like he’s doing a good job. I felt good about him. Still, there’s little things that he’s going to be upset about that he could have played a little bit better, but he really cares.”

continued from page 3

Director LisaRaye McCoy Talks Breast Cancer, Film

said, describing the job of a director.

“I will say that my lead actress, Clarissa Shields, is a powerhouse. She’s a professional boxer and the only male or female boxer to hold four major world championships.”

McCoy continued: “Clarissa wanted to get her feet wet as an actress, and she was a little nervous about the emotional part, but that’s the part she did best.”

McCoy said she hopes the film will inspire Black women and their support system not to take any potential health problems for granted.

“As strong as people want to portray Black women, we are still girls,”

McCoy insisted.

“We’re still daddy’s girls and momma’s babies. A lot of time we get afraid to go to the doctor and when you don’t have good insurance and you feel they’re not going to pay for this and you don’t have symptoms and then you say ‘I’m ok.’”

That’s where self-examination counts as crucial, McCoy stated.

“I was paranoid,” she declared.

“We are nervous and scared. We say things like if we don’t know about it, we don’t have to deal with it. But we can head it off. We can have a second chance at life if we get diagnosed before it’s too late.

“We have a good survival rate, and you can live a healthy life. You just can’t act like you don’t know anything about it. Dialogue is so important for us.”

That’s what the “Pink Fight” highlights, McCoy continued.

“Athletes think they are a pillar of health. They eat right, eat salads, and exercise,” she related. “That’s why you need that accountability partner, someone to say, ‘I think it’s worth us going to check this out.’”

“The operative word is ‘us.’ Someone to say they’ll go with you because there’s this rollercoaster of emotions, and you’re wondering if you’ll survive chemo and radiation. You can.”

Real Property Investment Partners ‘Flipping’ The Investment Script

This is Part 2 of a series on Real Property Investment Partners (RPIP) which is helping to revitalize communities by providing local underserved real estate entrepreneurs with funding.

By Ursula V. Battle

Lian Orraco recalled the reaction he received about coming to Baltimore.

“The way that I arrived in Maryland was originally, I arrived to work in Johns Hopkins’ Applied Physics Lab,” recalled Orraco. “At the time, I was living in Howard County. A lot of people told me something that you cannot tell me. They said, ‘Don’t go to Baltimore.’ So now I was curious.”

He continued, “I ended up loving Baltimore. I see a lot of potential, I see a lot of good people, and I see a lot of opportunity in the city. So, I started getting good tenants and fixing up places. Obviously, we are very focused on getting returns to the investors, but we’re also very focused on what we are doing socially. We aren’t here to ruin people’s lives. We really want to provide a safe and healthy place for people to live.”

Orraco is the co-founder and managing director of Nexo Group, a real estate development and investment management company with offices in Baltimore and Puerto Rico. Orraco, who is a native of Puerto Rico, founded the company along with architect Carlos Martinez.

“After we went to school, we decided to get together and really start working on real estate,” said Orraco. “We had some good deals and started scaling up. Part of the scaling up process has been our relationship with RPIP.”

Real Property Investment Partners (RPIP) was formed in 2020 with the goal of providing financing to local entrepreneurs who are looking to improve their neighborhoods throughout Baltimore City and its surrounding counties.

“Lian was entering the real



RPIP Founder Tibor Wilhelm and 3V Development Group's Vashtied Parrish and Vashtied Brown during an RPIP Borrower Appreciation Night event at M&T Bank Stadium.

estate market and he came to us for a loan,” recalled RPIP’s CEO, Tibor Wilhelm. “He was looking to take over a property that was in foreclosure from some operators who treated their tenants badly and mismanaged the property. With our financial help, he was able to turn over the 26-unit property and help revitalize the community.”

He added, “The mission and vision of RPIP is to assist local community members in real estate with the goal of furthering their investments and projects to help them succeed in an environment where it’s harder to get conventional financing. So many of our borrowers can’t go to their local bank to get a loan, because the banks aren’t interested in a row home in Baltimore City that doesn’t have a roof on it.”

With a focus on Fix-N-Flip and residential bridge loans, Wilhelm said RPIP allows investors to fund deals at competitive terms while allowing them to close the transaction in a fraction of the time.

“With our underwriting and internal team, we are able to assist

investors who have their boots on the ground,” said Wilhelm. “Our success is helping to assist real estate investors to build up communities by giving them the capabilities to do so through needed financial means and other support to be successful.”

In addition to Wilhelm, the youthful group also includes COO Joseph Cohen; Ari Schaffel, CTO (Chief Technology Officer); Abraham Nash, Senior Financial Analyst; and Lady Adan, Operational Support.

“There’s always a lot of this talk about people investing in Baltimore real estate being from outside neighborhoods and calling them slumlords,” said Wilhelm. “But what makes a lot of our borrowers special is that they really put their tenants first and they understand their tenants. They show up at the properties and the tenants are able to speak to them. That helps to negate the dysfunction we have seen in the past which involves the many layers that have existed between the owner of a property and the tenant. That’s a win-win for everybody.”

Baltimore-based 3V Development Group, which purchases properties in Baltimore with the goal of revitalizing neighborhoods one house at a time, is working on its second property thanks to a loan from RPIP.

“I’m really thankful for RPIP for giving us a chance on our first investment purchase,” said co-founder Vashtied Parrish. “We were initially turned down by another lender, but Tibor gave us a shot. Thanks to Tibor, we were able to purchase the property we wanted in the timeframe we needed. We were also able to renovate the property, sell the property, and raise the property value in the neighborhood.”

Vashtied Brown is also a co-

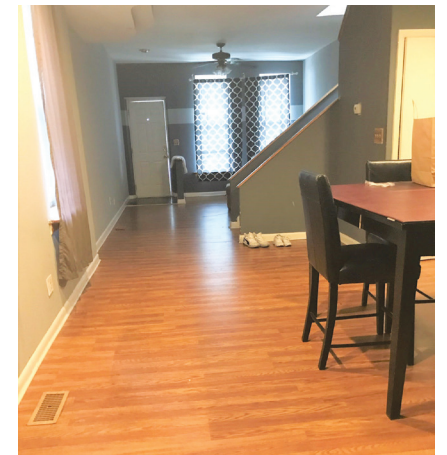
founder of 3V Development Group.

“We were also able to sell the property to a first-time homeowner,” said Brown. “Seeing the look on the new homeowner’s face was priceless.”

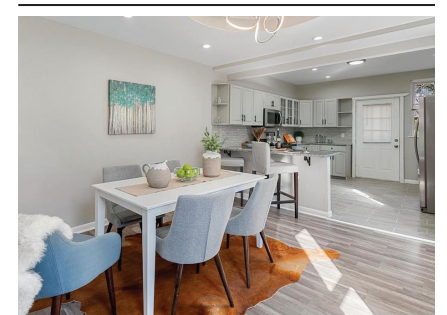
Carol Williams is among the company’s investors.

“The best part about our first investment was the smile on the young lady’s face when she was handed the keys to her first house,” said Williams. “She was so excited. I knew this was something I wanted to continue to do. Tibor and his group are providing an excellent platform for helping to turn around housing blight in Baltimore.”

For more information about RPIP, call (513) 582-4546 or visit <https://rpiplending.com>.



A before dining room photo of a RPIP financed property on Brighton Street.



An after photo of the Brighton Street dining room.

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