
The Annapolis Times

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Popular German Christmas Village Highlights Holiday Season



The Christmas Village in Baltimore is modeled after markets in traditional German inner cities and has grown into one of the region's most unique and charming holiday attractions. It is expected to attract more than 200,000 visitors in 2015 with more than 50 international and local merchants and artists. The Baltimore market opened at West Shore Park in the Inner Harbor on Thanksgiving Day and will be open until December 27, 2015. (See article on page 10) Photo: Kory Aversa

Nine ways to protect your identity and money during the holidays

By Wade Barnes

1. Keep your Social Security number on lockdown. Don't be afraid to ask the question, "why is this necessary?" Especially during the holiday season, thieves may try to have success in stealing information from people who are moving too fast and that are blinded by their urgency to cross things off their shopping list. Always take the time to stop, question, and assess any situation where your Social Security number is required.

2. Guard your information online as much as you would in person. You wouldn't give your credit card number to any random person on the corner if they asked for it, would you? Then why be so quick to dish out those digits online? When doing your online shopping this holiday season, always evaluate the website to check for legitimacy. Ensure that the website is encrypted (look for the green lock logo and URL starting with https://) and be sure the merchant asks for the security code on the back of the card. If not, you may want to do some further research to confirm the legitimacy of the site.

3. Don't over share on social media. Unfortunately these days, something as simple as posting a picture of your holiday purchases can help a hacker in their efforts to steal your information. Always be aware that the information you're



Wade Barnes
Senior Vice President and
Director of Retail Banking
1st Mariner Bank
Courtesy Photo

posting on the internet can not only be seen by the friends and family you intended, but also strangers and hackers that can be trying to gain more information about you and your spending habits. Don't over share and especially don't share photos of any receipts or evidence of a transaction—no matter how good the deal was!

4. Stay on your guard when giving to charity. December is a great time to give money or gifts to your favorite charity or

nonprofit, but don't let your valiant effort to help those in need go to waste by giving to a bogus collector. Always be sure to do your research and validate the legitimacy of anyone you're planning to donate to. If you're donating money online, always navigate to the payment portal directly through the organization's official website, not a third-party.

5. Utilize the EMV technology you've been given. By now, you've probably noticed the new credit and debit cards you've gotten in the mail have an EMV/chip card in them. When you're out and about doing holiday shopping, always check to see if the merchant offers EMV compliant equipment. The cashier may not always ask, so take initiative yourself and only choose to "swipe" if you have no other option.

6. Stay aware of your surroundings. Thieves and fraudsters find the easiest targets in those who are unaware of their surroundings or not paying attention to their belongings. When you're out in a busy mall or at a crowded holiday event, keep your personal belongings close and accounted for. Unfortunately, no public location should be trusted when it comes to leaving your belongings unattended. Always be aware and on your guard!

7. Traveling to see family? Communicate with your bank. It's important to keep your bank informed when you are planning to go out of town. We recommend the customers let us know any time they are going out of state, and definitely any time they are planning to leave the country. This helps us monitor and secure your accounts and know that the transactions being made overseas, or across the country, are legitimate.

8. Use your online banking tools.

Always stay on top of how much money is coming in and how much is going out. It can be hard to keep track around the holidays when it seems like there are endless purchases being made, but today's online and mobile banking tools make it so easy to stay on top of your finances. Even on the go, there's no reason not to be able to catch fraud as soon as it happens. Using online banking and mobile apps can also help you stay on task with your holiday budget.

9. Check your credit score. Take advantage of the fact that you can get a free credit check from each one of the three credit bureaus—Equifax, Experian and TransUnion—once per year. That means you can check it three times a year, for free! I often recommend checking it at the beginning of the year, sometime in the middle, maybe over the summer, and then again around the holiday season when spending often ramps up again. If you are familiar with what your credit score should look like, you'll be able to notice any drastic changes. Big shifts in your score may be caused by intruders in your accounts and stopping the damage before it's too late is crucial.

As Senior Vice President and Director of Retail Banking, Wade Barnes oversees 1st Mariner Bank's retail division and operations across the bank's 16 Baltimore-area locations and call contact center. Born and raised in Baltimore, Wade lives in Loch Raven Village, where he is active member of his community association. Wade also volunteers his time and expertise in Baltimore area schools, helping students gain financial literacy skills.

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

This Holiday Season, Military Families Need Support

By Rick Hunt

Most troops have returned home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Fewer than 10,000 U.S. soldiers remain in Afghanistan, down from a peak of more than 100,000 in June 2011. Only about 3,000 remain in Iraq, down from more than 166,000 in October 2007.

Life isn't necessarily back to normal for service members and their families. While we have fewer troops on the ground, we're still covering the skies and the seas. Our naval presence is as high as it's been for decades. Turmoil in the Middle East, Europe and the Asia-Pacific has our military in a state of constant readiness.

All that adds up to this: Times are not getting easier for the men and women of the military and their families. They need our support today as much as ever and as we enjoy the holiday season, we should remember this fact.

The demands on our servicemen and women remain high and I'm not just talking about those who are forward deployed. Anyone who has served at home knows that stateside duty is demanding in its own right.

When you're overseas, you're expected to miss birthday parties, graduations and anniversaries. Your family understands why you're not there but when you're back home, your family expects you to be around, even though much of your time is still not your own. The schedule is strenuous, the hours are long and you're often focused on preparing for the next deployment.

You get a few hours to rest, then it's back to work. Your family still needs you—and you need them—but your obligation to the service is ironclad.

Civilians have taken to calling this work-life balance. Military families have long known it simply as the way life is.

I bring this up because while we rightly praise the service and sacrifices that millions of servicemen and women have made for our nation, we rarely give enough credit to the families. They're the ones who help service members stay resolute.

Veterans and their families deserve our support and resources. It's too easy to ignore the many sacrifices that these families make each day.

Fortunately, policymakers—including military veterans, by no coincidence—have come through on this front.

Child development centers help young military families make ends meet. Base housing eases the stress of frequent moves. First-rate medical care helps keep service members and families healthy. And access to counseling—whether before deployment or after—helps families work through their demanding lifestyle.

Even seemingly little things matter, like the cheaper groceries at on-base commissaries.

Continued government support helps, but it isn't enough. Private-sector programs for veterans and their families help fill the gap.

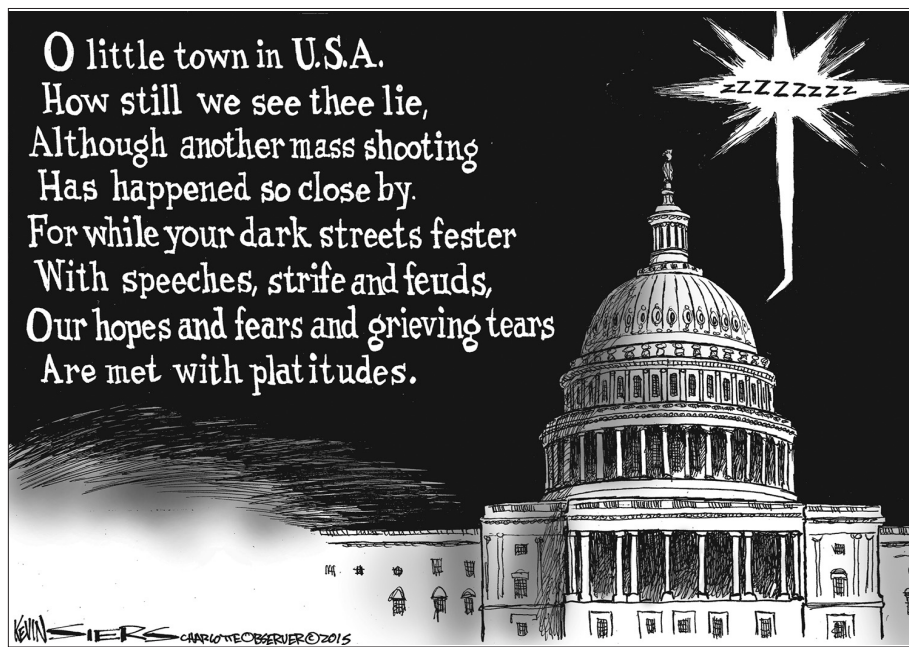
At my firm, Raytheon, we recently pledged \$10 million over five years to fund scholarships for veterans through Student Veterans of America, along with educational support for military families through Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

There is still more we can all do. We should collectively advocate across public and private sectors to increase support for our service members and veterans.

We must make clear to our servicemen and women that our commitment to them and their families is unwavering.

Retired U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Rick Hunt is vice president of the Raytheon U.S. Business Development organization.

O little town in U.S.A.
How still we see thee lie,
Although another mass shooting
Has happened so close by.
For while your dark streets fester
With speeches, strife and feuds,
Our hopes and fears and grieving tears
Are met with platitudes.



Community Affairs

Maryland State Retirement and Pension System Calls for Public Member, Investment Committee Nominations

Baltimore—The Board of Trustees of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System is calling for nominations for a public member to serve as an unpaid advisor to the retirement system's Investment Committee for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2016. The term of the incumbent public member is due to expire on June 30, 2016.

State law requires that three non-board members who have the following investment experience and other qualifications serve as advisors to the Retirement System's Investment Committee:

- Nominee is not a member, retiree or beneficiary under any of the several state retirements systems.

- Nominee has had experience in the management and control of large investments.

- Nominee has at least 10 years of substantial experience as any one or a combination of the following:

1. A portfolio manager acting in a fiduciary capacity.



MARYLAND
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2. An employee or principal of a trust institution, investment organization, or endowment fund acting either in a management-related or an investment-related capacity.

3. A chartered financial analyst in good standing.

4. A professional engaged in a public or private financial or investment field that is comparable to the fields listed in this item.

Nominations should be submitted in writing to the attention of R. Dean Kenderdine, Executive Director, Maryland State Retirement Agency, 120 East Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21202 or by e-mail: kenderd@sra.state.md.us by Tuesday, March 1, 2016.

Stop Wasting Your Tax Refund!

By James Clingman
NNPA News Wire Columnist

As we talk about what to do and not do with our dollars during the holiday season, retailers are eagerly awaiting and preparing for another way to get your money. After the “after Christmas” sales, furniture stores, electronics outlets, car dealers and anyone else with something to sell will be licking their lips about yet another high-spending season. It is a time of the year when consumers are quite vulnerable because many of us feel like we have “extra” money to spend. That extra money is called “tax refund.”

Other than folks who get the earned income credit, most people do not view tax refunds as their own money that the IRS has held for a year or more. Many treat it like found money, which makes it very easy for us to go out and spend it on “Tax Refund Sales.” Truth is, it’s already your money; you earned it and the IRS is just giving it back to you. Irrespective of that reality, each year consumers splurge and go on buying binges with their “windfall” refund.

This is not an effort to tell you how to spend your refund; that’s your decision. This is an effort to inform my readers about Compro Tax, a national black owned and operated tax preparation and financial services firm. As I have done virtually every year through this column and in the five books I have written, I continue to write about Compro Tax, especially around this time of the year because if we have to hire someone to prepare our taxes, at least let it be a black-owned company.

moving in for the tax season and disappearing after April 15.

Further, prospective Compro Tax affiliates are offered across-the-board assistance with start-up and continuous training in an effort to stay up to date on all tax policies and other financial issues and benefits of which customers can take advantage.

If you hire someone to prepare your tax return, even if you do not use Compro Tax, please hire a black owned company. It makes no sense for us to be so

porting black businesses we should support Compro Tax?

Franchise Help.com also wrote, “The vast, vast majority of tax preparers are small— 37 percent were run by a single person, while 53 percent were operated by less than ten. There were 128,393 total employees in the field last year. There were plenty of tax returns to go around.”

Unlike other tax firms, Compro Tax does not hire folks in clown suits to wave placards in front of their offices to attract customers; Compro Tax gets its business simply by providing outstanding customer service from industry experts.

Finally, for those who believe that advocating support of black businesses is separatist, divisive or unfair, as some black folks in Detroit voiced back in 2005 when Dr. Claud Anderson attempted to develop a black business enclave in that city, I offer one more quote from the article on Franchise-Help.com: “One approach some tax preparation businesses take to avoid the stark seasonality of the tax preparation business is to diversify and enter other related fields. Others, like Siempre Tax+ are focused on specific markets, like the ‘Hispanic’ population.” I rest my case.

To find the Compro Tax office nearest you or if you are interested in starting your own Compro Tax office, visit their website: www.comprotax.net or call 409-882 9893 or toll free 1-888 884 2829. And don’t spend all of your tax return in one place.

James Clingman is the nation’s most prolific writer on economic empowerment for black people. His latest book, “Black Dollars Matter! Teach your dollars how to make more sense,” is available at: www.Blackonomics.com.

“As I have done virtually every year through this column and in the five books I have written, I continue to write about Compro Tax, especially around this time of the year because if we have to hire someone to prepare our taxes, at least let it be a black-owned company.”

According to Franchise Help.com, “The tax preparation industry is big business – 38,287 firms operated in the field last year, generating 7.7 billion in annual revenue. Because it is required, tax preparation tends to be recession resistant.”

Compro Tax, started more than thirty years ago, with over 200 affiliates throughout the country, was founded by Jackie Mayfield, and is domiciled in Beaumont, Texas.

Mayfield and his partners, associates and staff are dedicated not only to being the best of the best in the tax industry but being great corporate citizens in the communities in which they reside. In addition, Compro Tax offices are open and active all year long rather than just

ensconced in demonstrations and protests around black dollars while not making every effort to spend some of those dollars with a black-owned tax firm and other black companies, not just because they are black but because they also provide excellent service.

Compro Tax is committed to improving communities and affords business opportunities to prospective entrepreneurs. As a glowing example of community involvement and “giving back,” Compro Tax built, owns and operates a convention/event center in Beaumont, Texas to serve the needs of residents with a top-notch, first-class meeting facility.

Eighty-two million tax returns are filed by paid preparers. Don’t you think that in light of our rhetoric about sup-

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Baltimore students honored as ‘Superhero Recyclers!’

By Ruth Young Tyler

Over five thousand plastic bottles were collected by students at Calvin Rodwell Elementary School

“Do I have any superheroes here today?” asked Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake as she stood in front of 250 first, second and fifth grade students at Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary School in Baltimore City on Tuesday, December 8, 2015. The answer was a resounding “yes” from the students dressed in khaki pants and green Marvel Universe LIVE! Superhero t-shirts.

Students at the elementary school collected more than 5,000 recycled plastic bottles within a two-week period in a competition for more than 100 Baltimore County and Baltimore City schools to determine which school reigned as “Recycling Superheroes.”

For their effort, the young recyclers received free tickets to the Marvel Universe Live! show at the Royal Farms Arena and bragging rights for being a top collecting school. The students’ recycling and collection efforts translated into a \$80,000 benefit to the City of Baltimore and the community in which they live.

Marvel Universe Live!, an action-packed, entertainment experience, teamed up with Repreve® their official recycling partner, to help educate families about the importance of recycling at the shows, in their homes and throughout school districts nationwide.

Every student received a co-branded Repreve® and Marvel t-shirt and knapsack to help celebrate the success of the recycling program.



(Left) Students from Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary School received a visit from Marvel superheroes Captain America and the Black Widow on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 for their efforts in collecting more than 5,000 recycled plastic bottles within a two-week period in a competition for more than 100 Baltimore County and Baltimore City schools to determine which school reigned as “Recycling Superheroes.” (Right) Samuel A. Rather II, principal of Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary School applauded the commitment of the eight student leaders and teacher coordinator, Krystal Kessler who organized the program, as well as students who participated in the competition.

Photo Credit: Mark Dennis, Office of the Mayor

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake told the students how much she appreciated their commitment to creating a cleaner environment. She reminded the students that we don’t get a ‘do-over’ and we only get one planet.

“Participating in programs like this creates a sense of responsibility, even at a young age,” said Samuel A. Rather II, principal of Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary School upon receiving a certificate of commendation for the school’s collection efforts.

Marvel characters Captain America

and the Black Widow made an appearance to meet and greet the children. Marvel representatives engaged the students in basic calisthenics and a game of “Simon Says” to promote exercise and the importance of having a strong body— just like a superhero.

Marvel representative Andrew Mihalko who is part of the 52-member cast said all performers must be in top physical condition to endure the short bursts of energy required of being a superhero.

“Encouraging healthy habits is the foundation for fostering a healthy lifestyle.

This program— by demonstrating the importance of preserving the environment— is an exciting way to teach children how to make thoughtful decisions that will follow them the rest of their lives,” said Mayor Rawlings-Blake.

Principal Rather applauded the commitment of the eight student leaders and teacher coordinator, Krystal Kessler who organized the program.

“If the students can be recognized for doing something positive, and helping their community, then naturally I will applaud their efforts,” said Rather.

If you want grown-ups to recycle, just tell their kids the importance of recycling, and they’ll be all over it. —Bill Nye



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Ravens Steve Smith Sr. hosts youth shopping spree

By Turrón Davenport

The Baltimore Ravens and their fans are going through a tough season. Things are not going the way anyone thought they would. The team is on the way to their first losing season in eight years under head coach John Harbaugh.

One of the lowest points of the season was when wide receiver Steve Smith Sr. went down with a torn Achilles injury that cost him the rest of the season. However, the injury didn't stop the veteran wide receiver from making his way back to Baltimore to host the 11th annual youth shopping spree at Target in Owings Mills. It was Smith's second time hosting the event.

The experience benefited both Smith Sr. and the kids. He was the beneficiary of a similar initiative when he was a youngster growing up in Los Angeles. That experience makes him feel that it was his duty to give back to the community in a similar way. It warms his heart to be able to put smiles on the faces of the kids during the holiday season.

"I found out when I was older that I was an Angel Tree kid, so I make sure that around these holidays we intentionally go and give back," Smith said.

The event was a treat to the 60 kids from the Baltimore area. They had a pizza party and took part in a \$200 shopping spree. Members of the Ravens including Justin Forsett; Lawrence Guy; Kendrick Lewis; Justin Tucker; and Marshall Yanda helped the kids keep track of their budget as they walked the aisles at Target.

Some of the kids went over their limit, but in true Ravens fashion, some of the players helped to cover the tab for their kids who went over their gift card amount. The kids also got a gift bag that included Ravens



Ravens wide receiver Steve Smith Sr. with two of the 60 Baltimore area children that Ravens players took on a shopping spree at Target in Owings Mills, Maryland.
Courtesy Photo/stevesmithfamilyfdn.org

memorabilia. OYO Sports provided each of the kids with exclusive Ravens figurines and end zone sets.

Smith Sr. made sure that the kids didn't only think of themselves when using the gift card, he encouraged them to take advantage of the opportunity to buy something for a family member as well.

"It's an opportunity for them to be selfless and not just think about all the stuff they can get [for themselves]," Smith said. "We wanted to give them an opportunity to shop and encourage them to think of what they could do for someone else. We had one kid who wanted to get a watch for his grandmother."

The Achilles injury was not going to be a reason to keep Smith Sr. from hosting

the shopping spree. Earlier in the week, he flew to Baltimore from his home in Charlotte where he was recovering. He was able to make his way around the store with the assistance of a scooter.

Justin Forsett was also present and helped out despite having his arm in a cast. Last year, Jimmy Smith was recovering from foot surgery, but he was at the event on a riding cart as he took the kids on a shopping spree. It is clear that giving back to the community is of utmost importance to the Ravens.

This year, Steve Smith Sr. is the Ravens nominee for the "Walter Payton Man of the Year" award.

It was clear to see that Smith Sr. was genuinely happy to take part in this event. He has also conducted a variety of other community events in the Baltimore area through his foundation, the Steve Smith Foundation, which is based in Charlotte, North Carolina. His community spirit along with his blue-collar playing style has endeared him to Ravens fans as one of their all-time favorites.

Watch Night Service

The S.E.E.D. Church located at 400 East 31st Street in Baltimore will hosts a Watch Night Service starting at 10 p.m. on December 31, 2015—New Year's Eve. Worship service begins at 10 a.m. every Sunday plus an additional early worship service at 8 a.m. the second Sunday of every month. Join us on January 16, 2016 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. for a life-changing workshop, "Change Your Thinking to Change Your Life." Fee: \$30 per person; a light lunch will be served.

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Popular German Christmas Village Highlights Holiday Season

By Stacy M. Brown

German Christmas Markets are fast becoming the place to be for holiday shoppers and for the third consecutive year, the craft and food market in Baltimore is no exception.

“German Christmas Markets are a long tradition in German inner cities. Holiday gifts are offered and hot food is served to please shoppers,” said Nancy Schmalz, the coordinator of the Christmas Village in Baltimore.

“There are a lot of Christmas Market traditions. German people love going out to their Christmas market to sip mulled wine after work with their colleagues. For a lot of families it’s a tradition to come out for frosted nuts, crepes and bratwursts,” Schmalz said. “It’s a place to enjoy the holidays in a winter setup versus in all-year malls. The unique small shops versus retail chains make an exciting experience and are a great place for high-quality and unique gifts.”

The market experienced great success in Philadelphia where it became known as one of the world’s 10 best holiday markets. The Baltimore market opened at West Shore Park in the Inner Harbor on Thanksgiving Day and will be open until December 27, 2015.

“We are proud of the Christmas Village and our vendors. We hope that the diversity of vendors from Baltimore and around the world resonates with shoppers,” Schmalz said.

“We are proud to have some of Baltimore’s best talent being showcased in the Village, but you can find foods and gifts from around the globe.”

The backdrops for the village provides for stunning views of the Inner Harbor and elaborate Christmas decorations both inside and outside of the tent. There are thousands of glowing lights lining the Christmas Village, reindeer looking out into the water, new Herrnhuter stars illuminating the huts, two giant Christmas trees, painted scenes, an advent wreath and calendar, and more.

“Our goal was to create an authentic German Christmas Market in Baltimore and we hope visitors can enjoy all the details big and small,” Schmalz said.



Photos: Kory Aversa

The experience is accompanied by an array of food from Germany and beyond, including the staples of German eating like Bratwurst with pretzels and sauerkraut, making the village an authentic representation of what goes on overseas.

“In addition to that, our new vendor Kurt’s Delikatessen offers German food specialties like mustards, dumplings or spaetzle. Another German highlight found at Christmas Village is a variety of hot mulled wine which can be enjoyed in our unique collectors’ mugs,” Schmalz said, adding that visitors also have an opportunity to walk through the Kaethe Wohlfahrt tent which sells German ornaments, Schwibbogen and traditional Christmas gifts from Germany.

While the Christmas Village in Philadelphia celebrates its eighth year, in 2014 more than 600,000 people visited and more than 700,000 are expected this year.

In Baltimore, the village has grown into one of the region’s most unique and charming holiday attractions. It is ex-



pected to attract more than 200,000 visitors in 2015 with more than 50 international and local merchants and artists.

“We are thrilled to be part of Baltimore’s Christmas traditions,” Schmalz said. “We look forward to hosting everyone this year.”

Regular hours for the village are Sunday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Village is closed on Christmas Day.

For more information, visit <http://www.baltimore-christmas.com>.

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Life in Baltimore: Holiday Recipes

By Brenda Bowe Johnson

The winter solstice is approaching with its early nightfall and chilly air and so are the holiday festivities. The lighting of the Washington Monument in downtown Baltimore, the Festival of Trees, the Baltimore Symphony Orches-

tra's Nutcracker, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer at the Lyric and numerous holiday concerts and shopping are all signs of the Christmas season. Additionally, it is the time of year to share and give to community organizations to enhance the lives of others.

In planning celebrations with family

and friends, you may want to add a few of the dishes from three excellent cooks who delight family and friends with their culinary talents year round.

Juliette Britton, a caterer for private affairs, prepares a side dish of glazed carrots, which is loved by her daughters. Every year, Esperance Sutton prepares a

family favorite, oyster dressing, however, her desserts are also scrumptious. She shares a recipe for an easy no-bake blueberry cheesecake. Juanita Tillery charms everyone visiting her home with delicious homemade vanilla ice cream and mouth watering peach cobbler.

Esperance's No-Baked Blueberry Cheesecake



Esperance Sutton

Once cream cheese is soft, add 1/3 cup sugar and blend (may use sugar a sugar substitute instead of sugar)

Add 1 pint sour cream and mix completely

Add one 8 oz container of whipped topping and continue to mix

Mix in 1 teaspoon vanilla

Divide mixture and pour into the 2 pie dishes with prepared graham cracker crust

Topping

Use frozen (thawed) or fresh blueberries (about 2 pints), heat in a saucepan, stir in 1/2 cup sugar

In a small dish, mix 2 tablespoons cornstarch with 4 tablespoons cold water

Add to the berry and sugar ,mix until smooth and mix begins to thicken

Set aside to cool

Spoon topping evenly over cheese-

Set one 8 ounce package of cream cheese out to soften

Prepare 2 graham cracker crust in a pie dish

Esperance's Oyster Dressing

Cube 10 cups bread (mixture of garlic & herb bread, white bread,cheese bread and wheat bread) Lay on a baking sheet and toast until crisp.

Once cooled, place in a large mixing bowl.

Add:

1/2 cup diced onion

1/2 cup diced celery

4 tablespoons poultry seasoning

2 teaspoons sage

1/2 teaspoon tarragon

1 tablespoon Italian seasoning

1 tablespoon celery seeds

2 teaspoons salt (or seasoning salt)

Add 2 sticks of butter (or 1 butter and 1 margarine) to the mix

Chop or cut up 32 ounces of fresh oysters, add to mix

Add 4-5 cups boiled water

Mix well and place in a greased baking dish. Bake at 350 until golden brown.

Soror Judy's Holiday Glazed Carrots



Juliette Britton

Continue to cook 10 minutes or until carrots are tender and liquid is reduced. Add apricot preserves and butter, cook uncovered until a glazed is formed. Garnish with parsley flakes and serve hot.



Ingredients

10 ounces baby carrots or sliced carrots

1/2 cup orange juice

1/2 cup water

1/2 teaspoon orange zest

1 teaspoon brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon crush red pepper

2 tablespoons apricot preserves

1 tablespoon butter

Parsley flakes

In a medium saucepan, add carrots,orange juice, and water. Bring to a boil for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and cook 10 minutes.

Add orange zest, brown sugar, salt and crushed red pepper.



Nita's Famous Peach Cobbler



Juanita Tillery

Preheat oven to 425. Coat a 13x9 glass baking dish with cooking spray.

Whisk the cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg and granulated sugar in a large mixing bowl. Then fold in peaches; pour the peaches into the baking dish and bake 15 minutes---- -- just until bubbling

While peaches cooking, toss together the flour, baking powder, salt, and 6 rounded tablespoons sugar

Cut the butter into the flour mixture using your hands, until the flour resembles coarse meal

Add milk to the flour mixture, stir just until a soft dough forms. Scoop the dough in 1/3 cup piles onto the hot fruit mixture. Sprinkle the dough with the remaining sugar. Bake until golden brown, approximately 25-35 minutes.

Serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

Ingredients

12 fresh peaches or 1 16 oz can peaches
3 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 cup butter
10 oz whole milk
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2-3 cups granulated sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon nutmeg



Homemade Vanilla Ice Cream

Ingredients for the Custard

8 large eggs
1 tablespoon of Corn Starch
1 teaspoon of salt
1 can of Borden's Dessert Cream

3 ounces of pure vanilla extract
4 cans of evaporated milk
4 cups of granulated sugar



- In a large bowl, hand whip the eggs. Then add the cornstarch, the vanilla extract and the salt and mix well. To this mixture, slowly fold in the sugar and blend well.

- In the ice cream freezer canister, pour in the evaporated milk, BUT save each can. Fold the mixed ingredients into the milk and stir until all ingredients are blended.

- Fill each of the 4 milk cans with cold water and pour the water into the canister. Stir a few times.

Materials Needed to Properly FREEZE Ice Cream

An electric Ice Cream Freezer & A box of regular Salt & 8 lb. bag of Ice

***NOTE: This recipe requires that you use an Electric Ice Cream Freezer for the mixture to freeze properly.

- Place the canister in the freezer bucket and secure it with the motor and latches.

- Alternate the following actions until you reach the line of the canister:

- Place about a 4-inch layer of ice, 1/2 cup of salt, 1/2 cup of water.

- Pull in the cord. The freezer will stop automatically when the Ice Cream has frozen properly.

- Remove the canister and place it in the refrigerator freezer and let stand for 1 hour!

- Serve over the warm peach cobbler and enjoy!



Rambling Rose

Happy Holidays
to You and Yours!



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello, my dear friends and happy holidays to you and yours from me and mine. Next week is Christmas week and I hope Santa Claus brings you all the good things in life to you and your family. This is my favorite time of the year, Thanksgiving Day of course, because I was born on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. There are so many festive things to do and so many festive places to go such as the Baltimore Farmers' Market & Bazaar. They always offer extended hours for the holiday season which started a couple of weeks ago and will go through December 20, 2015 on Sundays. I love hanging out at this place on Sundays. It is located on Saratoga Street between Holliday and Gay Streets, underneath the Jones Falls Expressway. It is just a perfect place to shop for festive meals, unique gifts and holiday decorations. Market-goers can find a variety of seasonal items for their Thanksgiving or holiday meals such as: turkeys, brisket, hams, oysters, fresh and smoked fish, cheeses, pies, cider, apples, sweet potatoes, nuts and more. Are you getting hungry yet? In addition to ingredients for holiday cooking, those looking to purchase the perfect gift can browse the bazaar for unique craft items such as jewelry, soaps and lotions, holiday ornaments, vintage clothing, mugs and original works of art, handcrafted baskets, leather goods, wreathes, Christmas trees and listen to good music while you shop. Girlfriend! Let me tell you, it is so relaxing. Check it out!

For my jazz lovers, "Charm City Jazz" will host an event featuring Eddie Baccus Jr., backed by Fahrenheit, honoring the music of Grover Washington Jr. on Saturday, December 19 at 8 p.m. at the Radisson, 2004 Greenspring Drive in Timonium, Maryland. There will be a cash bar and food available for purchase. For ticket information call 443-858-9781.

Join the Reginald F. Lewis Museum for the Annual Community Kwanzaa Celebration on Sunday, December 27 at 1 p.m. Enjoy a showcase of contemporary African fashion, an African musical performances and Sankofa Dance Theater. View the candlelight Kwanzaa Ceremony and you can partake in craft activities and storytelling by Maria Broom and Jali D. While you are there, you can also visit the African Marketplace for Afrocentric art and purchase mementos. This event will be held at the Museum, 830 E. Pratt Street. For more information, call 443-745-3502.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! There will be a festive New Year's Eve Show hosted by Don Jones and Lolo,

formerly of Magic 95.9 on Thursday, December 31 from 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. at the Grandstand Ballroom at Pimlico. The show includes the groups: Blue Magic, First Class, Spindles, the Delfonics and Boo'Ne & Z (I am not sure who this is, I never heard of them), but they must be good if these two guys are showcasing them. Your ticket includes catered food, vendors, champagne, premier seating, free parking, noisemakers & hats

and cash bars. For more information, call 443-525-2715 or go to: www.ticketleap.com.

By the way, yours truly, "Rambling Rose" and my husband "Shorty" are planning a long overdue and well-earned vacation for the Christmas/New Year's Holiday. As you know, we do not fly, so we are driving across country to Las Vegas and California. We are leaving on the 19th of December and returning January 7th. But I promise, I will keep you informed what is going on in Baltimore while I am gone and will tell you all about our trip when I return.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY KWANZAA to all my readers and friends, may God continue to bless you in many ways. Remember, you can email me at rosapryor@aol.com or call me at 410-833-9474 and for those of you who are not on social media, you can mail your pictures, flyers, press releases and invitations to my office at 214 Conewood Avenue, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136.

UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL. I'M USICALLY YOURS.



Eugene "Gene" Brister, brother of Cleve Brister and the father of Ebone Ashby and husband to Laverne Brister passed away last month. He worked primarily as a longshoreman but his passion was catering and the restaurant business including the Governor's Club. Condolences to Cleve Brister and the family.



Evelyn McCallum recently celebrated her 95th birthday at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Pikesville, Maryland with family and friends. McCallum is a deaconess and member of the Concord Baptist Church. She is a retired employee of the Baltimore Public Schools. She is also a June 1940 graduate of Frederick Douglass High School. May God continue to bless you with health and strength!



"Little Melvin" Williams passed away on Thursday, December 3, 2015. He was also known as, "Slim" or "Black" because of his build as well as the fact that he always wore black. He was known in the drug world from the old Pennsylvania Avenue days but in later years became a serious advocate for young people using his indoor flea market on West North Avenue holding training sessions to help them grow into positive young men and women. He was much loved and respected by people from all walks of life. Wylie Funeral Home, 701 N. Mount Street made the arrangements. Rest in peace my dear friend.

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Hot SALE
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MVP
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WOW!
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Clementines
WOW Price Every Day



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Hot SALE
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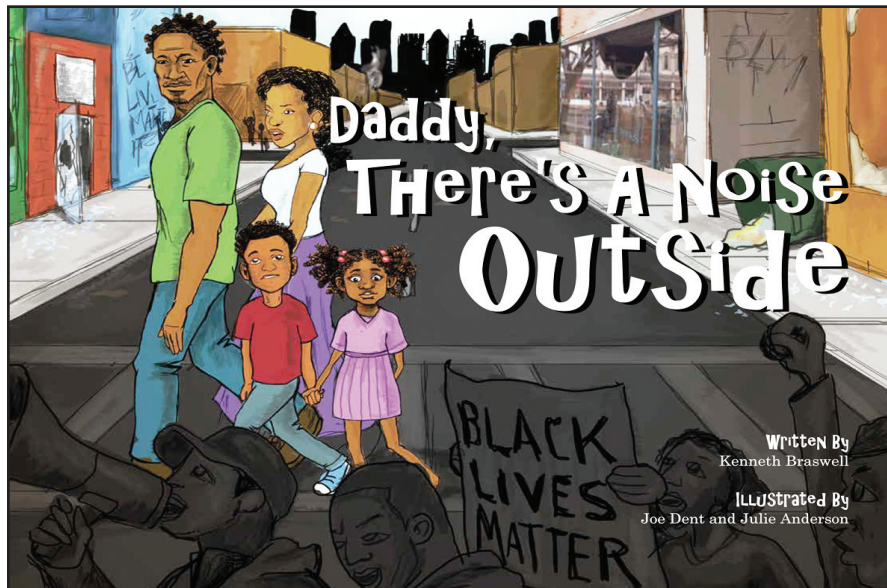
Not so great for Disaster Relief

When disaster strikes, compassionate people want to help. While donations of clothing, food, bottled water or toys may feel more personal than a monetary donation, the truth is that even a small financial contribution can do more good for more people, with greater speed and sensitivity. Cash donations provide medical and other life-saving services now, and rebuild infrastructure later. Even little donations can generate big, lasting impacts for good.

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Author pens children's book about civil unrest



Atlanta— Executive Director of Fathers Incorporated; Kenneth Braswell is no stranger to finding ways to help his community address sensitive subjects. His professional career is currently centered on running the 11-year-old not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the community and family infrastructure by encouraging and enabling the positive involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

Fast-forward thousands of articles, three books and two documentaries later, Braswell has turned his attention to children's literature. His newest venture "Daddy, There's a Noise Outside," takes the complex issue of protesting and breaks the conversation down so that a first grader can understand.

"The idea came when my six-year-old son asked my wife why was I in Baltimore on the day that the indictments were issued [for] the six police in the Freddie Gray case," said Braswell. "To which she said to him, 'wait till your father comes home, and ask him.'"

That explanation materialized into a 24-page children's book focused on helping first, second and third graders understand the nuances of protest.

The story begins when two children are awakened by noises in the middle of the night outside the window of their inner-city neighborhood. Both their Dad and Mom spend the next morning explaining to them what was taking place in their community.

A recent article by Daniel José Older of The Guardian speaks of the low percentages of children's books written depicting African American characters. The article entitled, "Do black children's lives matter if nobody writes about them," states that in 2014, only five percent of the 3,500 children's books published were about black characters.

"There is a huge opportunity for black authors to use children's literature to [educate] them on current societal issues," said Braswell.

The book is illustrated by Atlanta resident Joe Dent and New York artist Julie Anderson.

The full release launch of the book will kick-off at a book signing on MLK Day— January 18, 2016 — 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in Atlanta at The Center for Working Families.

The book is available for pre-sale at <http://www.fathersincorporated.com/dtano.html>.

*Send your community calendar events
to: kreevie@btimes.com*

Local musician releases timeless Christmas CD

By Andrea Blackstone

Listening to holiday music is a perfect way to reawaken Christmas spirit. Ronald (Ron) Ward, Jr. is helping to accomplish this task through his holiday CD entitled, "This Christmas." Just before Thanksgiving this year, the full-time musician from Anne Arundel County released his second album in one year. "This Christmas" follows the well-received album, "It's Just Music."

Ward produced, mixed and mastered tracks included in "This Christmas." Other area singers and musicians contributed to the project, which features 10 timeless holiday songs. Renditions of traditional Christmas songs range from "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and "This Christmas" to religious carols, such as "O Come All Ye Faithful," "O Holy Night," and "Silent Night." This project offers original arrangement, jazz sounds, a dash of gospel, quality instrumentation and a little something extra that will leave music lovers remembering the joy of Christmas. Ward puts his own touch on much-loved holiday songs, while highlighting beautiful music that showcases the talents of many.

"I would describe it ["This Christmas"] as Ron Ward, Jr.'s way doing some of the classic Christmas carols," Ward said.

Ward reflected on his youth, explaining his family's childhood Christmas tradition of decorating their house, putting up the Christmas tree, drinking egg nog, eating cookies and always listening to



Christmas music.

"So I wanted to create this atmosphere every year. This is one of those CDs for people who love Christmas and Christmas music. This would always be in their rotations for years to come," Ward said.

"This Christmas" offers an escape from the heaviness of the world and unsettling daily news on television. As a music minister at Asbury Town Neck United Methodist Church in Severna Park, Marland, Ward is musically equipped to redirect the attention of listeners to pleasant reflection and positive energy.

"Christmas is the time to rejoice for the birth of Jesus Christ, so I just wanted to do something to uplift [the] spirits for those [who] love Christmas music," Ward said. "This is just a little bridge before I do, 'It's Just Music (Vol.) 2.'"

If enjoy listening to soothing music in the car or are still looking for stocking stuffers, "This Christmas" offers a lovely holiday groove that you should consider adding to your shopping list.

Apple iPhone users can purchase "This Christmas" from iTunes. Android phone owners can locate it in the Google Play Store. Hard copies are available from the online music store, CD Baby.

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Thurgood Marshall College Fund raises over \$4.8 million at annual gala

By Andrea Blackstone

Coppin State University student receives unexpected help at gala

Prospective and current students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBUs) in search of financial aid may want to take a look at the new scholarship opportunities from The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF).

Beginning in February 2016, the District of Columbia based nonprofit organization will offer programs, scholarships and networking opportunities to students at 47 publicly supported HBCUs.

Over \$4.8 million was raised at The Thurgood Marshall College Fund's 27th Annual Awards Gala on November 16, 2015 at the Washington Hilton. Proceeds from the event enable TMCF to continue its work as a critical link between students getting the most from their education and the opportunity to become a part of a new generation of global leaders.

At the gala, five of the country's foremost visionaries who have used their status to exhibit courage, support education and positively impact the lives of students attending HBCUs were honored.

The people honored were: Thomas A. Cole, partner and former chair of the Executive Committee of Sidley Austin LLP; John O. Brennan, director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Samuel R. Allen, chairman and chief executive officer of Deere & Company; Dr. David Hall, president of the University of the Virgin Islands; and Daymond John, founder of FUBU and cast member of ABC's "Shark Tank."

"What we try to cover in our scholarship to a student is the average cost of tuition and fees, so we want to take tuition and fees off your plate so that you can use something like your Pell Grant, work study or whatever to cover your room and board, but our goal is not to get you half way to college. We want to get you through college," said Johnny C. Taylor Jr., president/CEO of TMCF.

The average in-state tuition and fees to attend TMCF member schools in Maryland—Morgan State University; Coppin State University; and Bowie State Uni-



Coppin State University student, Mary Bacon was one of two student speakers at The Thurgood Marshall College Fund's 27th Annual Awards Gala on November 16, 2015 at the Washington Hilton. The CSU junior is a social work major and a Wells Fargo Scholarship recipient through The Thurgood Marshall College Fund.

Courtesy Photo/TMCF

versity (BSU)—is estimated at \$7,400 per academic year.

TMCF's impact is evident from high-achieving students like 21-year-old Mary Bacon, a junior at Coppin who transferred from Alabama State University (ASU). Bacon is a social work major who was recently awarded a Wells Fargo Scholarship through TMCF.

"I really want to help people live out their purpose," Bacon said, explaining why she wanted to attend college in an urban setting. "I want to be able to walk anywhere and know that I can get some type of social work experience, just to be well-rounded and competent. I felt like the best place for me to fulfill that was at Coppin State."

Bacon was one of nearly 400 students selected to participate in TMCF's Leadership Institute, another successful program in which today's students are trained to become leaders of the future. Additionally, Bacon was one of two students selected to speak at the gala.

Bacon's family is unable to help with her tuition or living expenses. During the gala, she brought attention to college student homelessness. Since last summer, Bacon told the audience that she slept in her car in Druid Hill Park, parking lots and other temporary locations and has been able to maintain a 3.4 GPA.

"It was a different place where I slept

every night. I didn't know where I was going to be," Bacon said. "I've lived in emergency shelters [and] transitional homes. One of the transitional homes I was living in was for (people who are) ages 18-21."

After hearing Bacon's story, TMCF donors and sponsors attending the gala collected enough money so she would not have to live in her car anymore. She recently signed a lease for a new apartment.

"It feels really, really, really awesome just to know that people are investing in me as much as they have in my life," Bacon said. "I know that I would not be where I am without it."

Taylor says in 2016, TMCF wants to focus on building an endowment for TMCF college students like Bacon.

For more information about TMCF, visit: www.tmc.org.

Five Golden Rules for Holiday Shopping

If you bought the gifts in the holiday classic, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," it would cost a record \$34,130.99, according to the 32nd annual PNC Christmas Price Index. Few have a budget for all those birds and performers, but 'tis the season to get carried away. PNC's Joseph M. Jennings, Jr., CFA, senior vice president and investment director, Wealth Management offers these Five Golden Rules so you don't overstuff the stockings or your budget:

1. Be choosy: Identify your special partridge and pare down your list to those you're actually close to. Don't guilt-buy for those far-away relatives who will re-gift your tacky present anyway. If you can't resist, create a funny e-card for free.

2. Create a budget: Don't be one of the geese who lays a spending egg. Once you know who you're buying for, decide how much you will spend per person. If \$15 is all you can afford per person, then spend \$15 – not \$17 or \$20. If that seems a bit Scrooge-like, tell your friends/family to set the same limits for you. Take advantage of online budgeting tools to set limits with text or email alerts to warn you.

3. Find the bargains: Be surfing

while the swans are a swimming. Look for coupons and Groupons. When it comes to online shopping, there's a cost for convenience. PNC calculates the online cost of the "The Twelve Days of Christmas" gifts is \$43,626.73, which is 45 percent over the in-person approach. But you can save by watching for free shipping offers and no-hassle returns plus there's Cyber Monday deals and Free Shipping Day on December 18, 2015.

4. Get crafty: Handy drummers are drumming up their own gifts. Whip up a few dozen batches of your special cookies, cake pops or brownies, package in pretty baskets with a bow and call it a day. Who on your list wouldn't love a homemade treat over a store-bought gift?

5. Pay smartly: Like the maids, milk the most out of your money. Pre-paid cards mean you only spend a set amount and are perfect for kids to learn how to buy for others and stay on budget. Cash in on your credit card reward points to buy gifts. When using credit, make sure you have a plan to pay off your balance. For online payments, look for security or privacy seals first before submitting information. The payment page should have a lock icon and the address should start with "https."

Re-entering residents offered free suits and more at 'Sharp Dressed Man' boutique

By Stacy M. Brown

Chance meetings can sometimes lead to momentous occasions and even life-changing events. That's exactly what happened when clothing designer and Baltimore Fashion Alliance founder Christopher Schafer met Living Classrooms Foundation Director of Services Howard Wicker a few years ago.

One of Wicker's tasks was to help people recently released from prison.

So, in 2012, Schafer and the Living Classrooms Foundation— whose mission is to strengthen communities and inspire young people to achieve their potential through hands-on job training— started a partnership to support men re-entering the workforce.

Even though it has just been three years, the partnership was in the making for some time.

"One time I was delivering a new custom suit to a client of mine and he gave me a couple bags of gently worn business attire to recycle," Schafer said. "As I looked around for a place to donate the garments, I realized that there was a need to help men to dress for success. I helped form the Baltimore Fashion Alliance with Ella Pritsker and Stephanie Bradshaw; we became a 501(c) (3) organization with the help of Attorney Kimberly Neal. The Living Classrooms Foundation donated space in their facility at Park & Madison and together we built the Sharp Dressed Man boutique."

Working on the premise that often a nice suit and appropriate business attire is the last hurdle for low-income men as they prepare to make a change in their lives, Sharp Dressed Man is hosting an Open House on Wednesday, December 23, 2015 from noon to 5 p.m. at Sharp Dressed Man's new location at 235 Park Avenue in Baltimore.

"We estimate to having dressed over 1,000 men since starting this program. We plan on dressing 1,000 men in 2016 now that we have our own boutique with more space," Schafer said.

The Open House will feature a holiday professional clothing giveaway to help the less fortunate dress for success, according to Schafer.



It is estimated the Sharp Dressed Man Boutique has dressed over 1,000 men since the program began and plans to dress another 1,000 men in 2016 with more space in its new location. Sharp Dressed Man is hosting an Open House on Wednesday, December 23, 2015 from noon to 5 p.m. at Sharp Dressed Man's new location at 235 Park Avenue in Baltimore. For more information about Sharp Dressed Man and the Open House, visit: www.sharpdressedman.org. Courtesy Photo

Each day and up until December 23, the boutique is collecting and seeking donations of gently worn suits, blazers, trousers, shirts, ties, belts and shoes that

dress 100 men," he said. "Our role is to dress the men when complimentary non-profit organizations refer the men to us. Those organizations work on the job

re-entering resident who was helped by Living Classrooms and Schafer's Sharp Dressed Man boutique.

In 2013, Jonathan Crutchfield was released from prison and received his first suit through Sharp Dressed Man, which received a 2013 Mayor's Business Recognition Award.

Crutchfield's attire consisted of a black Prada suit, a dress shirt, cuff links, Ralph Lauren necktie, shoes and a suit bag.

Crutchfield, who served nearly six years on robbery, theft, drug and gun charges, said once well-dressed no one could discern that he'd been in jail.

"It's cool to see this," Schafer said.

Sharp Dressed Man is completely funded by donations. Clothes are donated from citizens and are given away to those in need free of charge.

"Our only overhead is rent and utilities," Schafer said. "Thanks to financial donations from Yelp, Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, the Abell Foundation and Dormeuil Cloth, we have been able to open the boutique and really get this program off the ground."

For more information about Sharp Dressed Man and the Open House, visit: www.sharpdressedman.org.



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can be dropped off at Christopher Schafer Clothing or Carbiz.

The giveaway has already garnered the support of Millionaire Manners Academy, Male Enterprise Network and Capital Connoisseur.

"On December 23, we are hoping to

readiness piece. We do find that when the men find a proper fitting suit that their demeanor and confidence shine."

"It's quite a metamorphosis that occurs when a man sees himself in the mirror all polished up and looking sharp."

A recent news report chronicled a

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Create Holiday Gifts That Keep on Giving

By Melinda Myers

Make this holiday season one filled with creating memories and gifts that keep giving throughout the year.

Terrariums have made a comeback and make wonderful do-it-yourself projects and gifts for beginning and experienced gardeners. They enable gardeners to continue to grow no matter the weather outdoors and can be updated and used as decorations throughout the year with some simple updating for holidays and other special occasions. Just add a few ceramic items like a Christmas tree ornament, ceramic bunny or other adornment or two that represent the season. Don't know where to start? No problem. You can create your own from an old glass jar or vase or purchase an elegant terrarium with copper bottom guaranteed to create the perfect stage for your tabletop garden. Or purchase a terrarium kit that includes the plants, container and all you need.

For the artist, young or old, and avid birder, consider a green birdhouse. These biodegradable birdhouses are made from 100% recycled paper and designed to last through one nesting season. You will have fun decorating it with stickers, markers or paint, making this a gift you and the birds will enjoy. Plus, once the season is over, there's no need for cleaning. It can simply be added to the compost pile.

Not feeling artistic? No worries. Give a decorative treat for the birds. Those with live Christmas trees can extend their enjoyment by decorating the tree with colorful birdseed ornaments once it is moved outdoors. Make your own ornaments from suet, peanut butter and birdseed or purchase ready-made ones.

And no green thumb is needed for this DIY holiday beauty. Easy care waxed amaryllis bulbs (gardeners.com) are self contained and easy to grow. The bulb is sealed in gold or silver wax, making it both decorative and low maintenance. There's no watering or container needed. Just set it in a bright location and wait for the floral display to appear before your eyes. You'll be enjoying big blooms for several weeks.



An amaryllis in full bloom

**Photo Credit:
Gardener's Supply Company**

Stay on your diet as the holiday approaches with a sugar-free advent calendar. You can make your own from felt and fabric glue or start a family tradition by purchasing a handcrafted advent calendar like the wooden bird cottage advent calendar (gardeners.com) that celebrates nature and the holiday. Each day leading to Christmas you'll remove a bird from its cubby in the cottage. Peg it to the birdhouse and watch the flock grow. Your friends and family will know Christmas is coming each year when you break out the calendar. It's sure to provide years of memories and could soon become a family heirloom.

Make this the year for creating memorable gifts, trying something new or packaging DIY projects that are sure to provide seasons of fun and beauty.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books. For gardening videos and tips, visit her website: www.melindamyers.com.

Maryland Parent Involvement Awards Program Issues Call For Nominations

Statewide effort to honor parents, guardians remains unique in the nation

Baltimore— The Maryland State Department of Education issued a call for nominations for the ninth annual Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Awards (PIMA). The unique awards program honors parents and others with legal responsibility for a child whose exemplary contributions to public education have led to improvements for Maryland's public school children, teachers, schools, programs and/or policies.

Interim State Superintendent of Schools Jack R. Smith said that parents and guardians provide critical contributions to strengthen Maryland's public schools.

"Volunteers lie at the heart of any school's accomplishments. This awards program puts a spotlight on some amazing work by Maryland parents to strengthen student learning and the school community," Dr. Smith said. "When I visit a great school, I know parents and guardians have worked collaboratively to make it a success."

Andrew Niebler, last year's winner, provides an outstanding example of the work that is taking place throughout Maryland. A volunteer at Westland Middle School in Montgomery County, he launched the Westland Cares program designed to help students and their families gain stability by providing goods and services to those in need. It began as a holiday card-giving effort, but quickly expanded to include a food and household item pantry, holiday gift giving and wrapping program, scholarships for after-school activities, and more.

The Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Awards remain the nation's only statewide celebration of the critical work that parents provide our schools and classrooms. The awards program was developed to shine a spotlight on parents who have demonstrated significant involvement in the following areas: Communicating, Volunteering, Learning, Decision Making and Collaborating with Community. The program's theme, "Choose Your Seat. Get Involved.," illustrates the point that Maryland parents are involved in a wide range of activities to support their public schools and to encourage all parents to get involved whatever way they can.

The 2016 Maryland Parent Involvement Matters Award nominees must be parents or legal guardians of children attending Maryland public schools, and cannot be employees of MSDE or the Maryland public school system. Twenty-four semifinalists will be selected— one parent from each of the 23 Maryland counties and one from Baltimore City. Of the semifinalists, five finalists and one statewide winner will be named at an award celebration hosted by in the spring of 2016.

Nomination forms are currently available and can be downloaded at www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/pima. Nominations must be postmarked by Friday, January 29, 2016.

Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture Needs Volunteers

The museum is dedicated to serving the community by providing multifaceted support through meaningful interactions with history and material culture of Maryland African Americans. Volunteers are needed to assist at the Information Desk, as Docents, for Special Events, and more. There are ongoing opportunities on Saturdays and Sundays for assistance with greeting guests and patrons at the main entrance and to work with kid's activities during public hours. The minimum age for volunteers is 14. Volunteering is open to adults, seniors, college, and high school students. Service-learning credit hours can be earned by high school students. We are accepting applications for the following volunteer positions: Special Event Volunteer, Administrative Assistant, Curatorial Assistant, and Visitor Services. Volunteer orientations are held at 7:00 pm on the last Monday of each month. Contact Erica Holmes at 443-263-1800 or holmes@maamc.org; web site: www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org.

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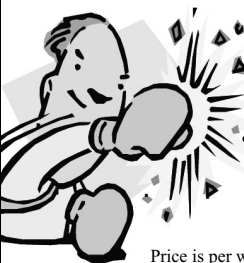
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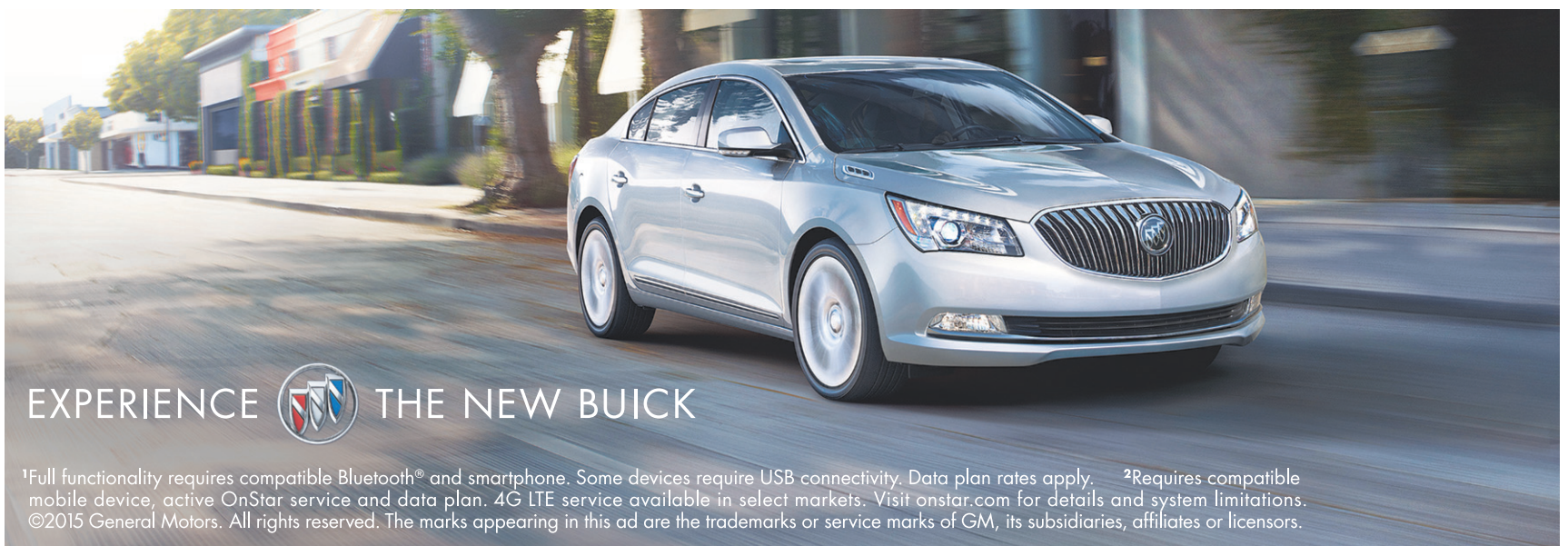
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