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# The Annapolis Times

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## Bowie State celebrates 150 years of excellence



*On January 9, 1865, the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People opened one of Baltimore City's first free schools for blacks in the African Baptist Church in Crane's Building on the corner of Calvert and Saratoga Streets. Bowie State University (BSU) evolved from that early school teaching the elements of education into a comprehensive, diverse university preparing students for a changing world. The university officially launched a year-long celebration of the 150th anniversary of its founding at Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture in January. Above: BSU's first graduating four-year class from 1941. (See article on page 14)*

*Photo: Courtesy Bowie State University*

# Maryland Senator helps celebrate Harriet Tubman Historic Park

By Stacy M. Brown

Democratic Maryland Senator Ben Cardin says he embraces the old biblical saying of “Out of the mouth of babes.”

In fact, his then nine-year-old granddaughter inspired him to join in efforts to help establish the new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park in Cambridge, Maryland.

“What got me engaged in this project was my granddaughter had been assigned to do a Black History Month project for her school and she chose Harriet Tubman,” Cardin said. “My granddaughter did a lot of homework on Harriet Tubman and it got me to thinking about this.”

Another Maryland Democratic Senator, Barbara Mikulski, had already begun work to establish the Tubman Park and she introduced legislation in 2008.

Eventually, Mikulski and others including New York Democratic Senator Charles Schumer secured more than \$900,000 in federal funds for infrastructure.

Cardin later helped spearhead efforts that eventually led to the state receiving \$11 million in grants from various federal agencies toward the establishment of the park.

“I recognized that this was a real opportunity to make a statement,” Cardin said. “I also found out that there is no other national park dedicated to a woman.”

On February 7, 2015, Senator Cardin joined several lawmakers and other officials, including Cambridge Mayor Victoria Jackson-Stanley and officials from the National Park Service, in the celebration of the new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park.

Descendants of Harriet Tubman were also present at the dedication, including family spokeswoman Patricia Ross Hawkins, who touted the courage and the inspiration that her family has drawn from the life of Tubman, who was born in Dorchester County, where she spent nearly 30 years as a slave.

Born in Dorchester in March 1822, Tubman escaped slavery in 1849 but returned to the area numerous times over the course of 10 years to lead others to freedom.



**U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Cambridge Mayor Victoria Jackson Stanley (sitting) help celebrate the new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park on February 7, 2015. Courtesy Photo/stardem.com**

The famous former slave led many through the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and refuges protected by those who were against slavery.

The network helped slaves find their way to freedom in Canada and the Northern states before slavery was abolished.

“This is a great day for the Eastern Shore and our country, as we have the occasion to honor an iconic figure in our nation’s history and do so in a deeply beautiful and symbolic place to visit,” Cardin said of the park’s dedication. “There are few greater examples of bravery; valor and sacrifice about which to teach our future generations, so it is fitting that Harriet Tubman will become the first individual woman to have a national historical park named in her honor.”

Already spread across three counties, the Tubman Park has been afforded the ability to acquire seven other noncontiguous properties that were historically significant in Tubman’s life, according to Cardin.

The park will consist of 2,775 acres in Dorchester County, 2,200 in Caroline County and 775 in Talbot County.

The parcel in Dorchester County con

tains the home site of Jacob Jackson, a free African-American man who communicated with Tubman’s family members and allowed his house to be used as one of the first safe houses on the Underground Railroad leading out of the Eastern Shore.

Along with the park system in Maryland, a park has been established in Auburn, New York, the town where Tubman died in 1913, that includes Tubman’s house, a home for the elderly that has been named for her, a nearby church and Fort Hill Cemetery, where she is buried.

“What’s great too is that the president had already declared this a national



**Harriet Tubman  
Courtesy Photo/Library of Congress**

monument and it has the historic park designation,” Cardin said.

“For Tubman, the Eastern Shore is home and her remarkable story of liberation speaks of skills born of hardship, her love of family, her strength of spirit, all of which have their roots here,” said Michael Caldwell, Regional Director of the National Park Service.

“The establishment of the National Historical Park raises Tubman’s story to the level of recognition befitting one of our nation’s heroes; a woman who was internationally renowned,” Caldwell said. “The National Park Service is eager to continue our work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Maryland, local officials and partners to make Tubman’s extraordinary story better known and understood throughout the nation.”

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# Guest Editorials/Letters

## With the Budget, the President Calls the Shots

By Lee H. Hamilton

It may not be obvious from the news coverage, but a good bit of Congress's 2015 agenda just landed on Capitol Hill with a thud. I mean this literally. The federal budget that President Obama recently submitted runs to 2,000 pages.

This is the most important government document produced each year, so its heft is more than physical. The budget is how we decide what share of this country's economic resources we should devote to government—and how we should spend them. It's where we set out our national priorities, sorting out how to allocate money among defense, the environment, education, medical research, food safety, public works... You get the idea.

Which is why you saw the political maneuvering begin the moment it arrived. In a press conference after President Obama submitted his budget, House Speaker John Boehner dismissed it out of hand. "The president gave the American people a good laugh yesterday," he said. Every year, politicians play some variation on this theme. I've lost count of the times I've heard a budget declared "dead on arrival."

Yet here's what you need to remember: Congress changes only a small portion of the budget. Well over half is mandated spending—interest on the debt, entitlements, contractual obligations of the government. And even when it comes to the roughly 40 percent of the budget that is discretionary spending, Congress never rewrites it wholesale; in general, all but five or ten percent of the White House's spending blueprint will make it through intact. The President's budget, in other words, is never "dead on arrival."

This is not to say that what Congress does will be unimportant. The debate from here on out will be specifically about taxing and spending priorities—about how much money should go to defense, or homeland security, or social welfare—and more generally about who has the best ideas for addressing the country's needs.

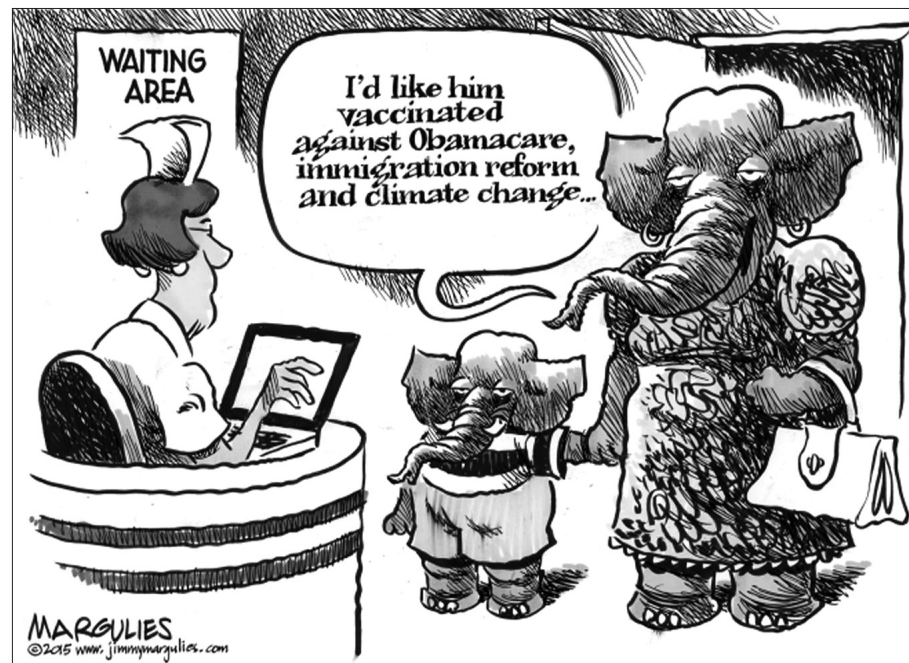
There will be times in upcoming months when it sounds as though our economy's health depends on what our lawmakers do. The budget, after all, is where the President and Congress can have an impact on the economy. I'm not persuaded, however, that it's as large as they'd have us believe. For one thing, the Federal Reserve, through its control over the money supply, has its hands on an immensely important economic lever. So do the big banks, major corporations and, most importantly, millions of consumers.

Still, Congress faces important questions. The deficit, which in past years was the focus of furious debate, holds less attention this year because we've made so much progress in reducing it. A few years ago, it amounted to almost 10 percent of GDP; in 2014, it was 2.7 percent. On the other hand, the federal debt—what we owe to creditors who financed our accumulated annual deficits—is higher than it's been for generations, and we're not dealing with the hard choices necessary to get it under control. In particular, this means finding ways to control entitlement spending in an aging society. We do not need to panic about our finances, but we can't afford to be complacent either.

There will be voices in Congress over the next few months urging that we curb spending sharply. In a recovering economy that is still beset with income stagnation, I'd argue that slamming hard on the brakes would be a mistake. Instead, we need to shift our spending toward investment, focusing on areas that generate or underpin economic growth: infrastructure, research and development education.

Congress used to reign supreme in budget making. George Washington didn't even think it was his job to send a budget to Congress, and the president wasn't legally required to submit one until the budget act of 1921 codified the practice. Now, of course, the President has become the chief budget-maker, and the Congress reacts to—and largely accepts—his proposals. The maneuvering on Capitol Hill over the next few months will, indeed, nudge the country in one direction or another. But our basic course was already set by the time those 2,000 pages hit lawmakers' desks.

*Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.*



## Letters to the Editor

**Editor:**

**Re: Vehicles for Change**

The recent national headline highlighting a Detroit man's 21-mile on-foot commute from his urban home to a factory job in the suburbs dramatically highlights the importance of transportation for low-income individuals in our nation's metropolitan communities, especially as it relates to access to employment.

James Robertson's humbleness, dedication and work ethic are extremely admirable, but his story is just one of many, as the pervasive issue plagues thousands in Baltimore alone, with more than 80,000 households lacking a car. Oftentimes, transit systems in metropolitan areas are slow, inconvenient and lack sufficient metro-wide coverage, and Baltimore is no exception. Only 25 percent of low and middle-skill level jobs in the Baltimore area are even accessible via public transit.

Individuals like James are the very reason why Vehicles for Change (VFC) was founded 16 years ago. VFC's mission is to empower low-income families with financial challenges to achieve economic and personal independence through car ownership and technical training. While VFC is not the singular

solution to our nation's transportation's issues, we strive to provide opportunities to as many people possible through our car award program. And, since our beginnings, we have awarded nearly 5,000 vehicles, improving the lives of more than 16,500 individuals in the Baltimore and capital metro area.

For those who heard James' story and wondered, "How can I help?" look no further for your answer. While he was fortunate enough to receive a new vehicle in-kind from a Ford dealership and hundreds of thousands of dollars in public donations, thousands of individuals just like him in our very own backyard continue to struggle every day.

VFC needs public car donations to continue providing low-income families with affordable car ownership and access to employment. VFC accepts all donations, no matter what condition the vehicle is in, and offers the maximum possible tax deduction allowed by IRS regulations. Donate your car today and support economic mobility.

**Marty Schwartz**

President, Vehicles for Change Inc.  
Halethorpe, MD

## *From Malcolm X to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz*

*By Marc H. Morial*  
*NNPA Columnist*

There is perhaps no American civil rights leader who generated as many divergent opinions as Malcolm X. As we near the 50th anniversary of his assassination of February 21, 1965, our nation will inevitably scrutinize his life, his work and his lasting impact on our country and our continuous struggle to address racial inequality and its heinous consequences.

Depending on one's perspective or politics, Malcolm X was a hater filled with a blind, race-based rage or an inspiring figure pulling himself up from a life of crime to become a leading human rights figure. I would put forth the view that Malcolm X was much more than any one-dimensional interpretation of his life or its seminal moments and that he was a man who literally and figuratively journeyed far in his short 39 years—reinventing himself countless times along the way.

Born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925 to a Grenadian mother and African

American father—also a well-known activist—Malcolm became accustomed to the cruelties of racism at an early age, losing his father in a suspected attack by white supremacists. His early life was a blur of broken homes, petty crime and incarceration. Introduced to the teachings of the Nation of Islam during his time in jail, Malcolm X traded prison for a pursuit of racial justice and equality for blacks in America.

right to almost unfettered access to firearms.

In his famous “The Ballot or the Bullet” speech, Malcolm X said, “I must say this concerning the great controversy over rifles and shotguns. The only thing that I’ve ever said is that in areas where the government has proven itself either unwilling or unable to defend the lives and the property of Negroes, it’s time for Negroes to defend themselves. Article

was always the immediate option.

Ten days after that speech, Malcolm X left the United States on April 13, 1964 for a life-altering trip through the Middle East and Africa, including a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, the holiest city in Islam. It was during his experience of the pilgrimage that his next transformation would occur. In letters from his trip, he described scenes of unimagined interracial harmony among “tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans.” As he began to see that unity and brotherhood were not impossible realities between “the white and the non-white,” his fight for equality never changed. It only became more inclusive.

In a letter to then Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) President James Farmer, Malcolm, now El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, wrote, “I am still traveling, trying to broaden my mind, for I’ve seen too much of the damage narrow-mindedness can make of things, and when I return home to America, I will devote what energies I have to repairing the damage.”

Unfortunately, Malcolm X’s newfound approach to the pursuit of racial equality was cut short less than a year later under a fatal hail of bullets in Harlem’s Audubon Ballroom. But rather than end his journey to mend our wounded nation, we can each walk a few steps in his remaining miles to ensure equality and justice for all.

*Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.*

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***“You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me.***

***Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it.”***

***— Malcolm X, Letter from Mecca, April 1964***

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While his initial approach may not have always been championed by or aligned with other civil rights leaders of the time, Malcolm X’s later life transition and his embrace of multiculturalism is an important story to be acknowledged and retold. However, supporters and critics alike often attempt to isolate the “by any means necessary” civil rights leader to one part of his journey. For example, and ironically, many gun advocates invoke Malcolm X’s own words as they seek to reinforce their arguments and support for their professed

number two of the constitutional amendments provides you and me the right to own a rifle or a shotgun.”

However, Malcolm X’s call to bear arms was no call to forego background checks. It was no call to sell guns anonymously on the Internet. It was no call to supply ordinary citizens with military-style weaponry. It was, and remains, a clear-cut indictment of race-based, systemic inequality and violence. He added, “If the white man doesn’t want the black man buying rifles and shotguns, then let the government do its job.” The ballot

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**Mailing Address  
The Baltimore Times  
2513 N. Charles Street  
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**Phone: 410-366-3900- Fax 410-243-1627  
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# Frank Conaway Sr. Remembered

## Clerk of City Circuit Court Died on Sunday, February 15, 2015

By Stacy M. Brown

***His presence and personality helped to make him a pillar of strength in the Baltimore community for decades.***

Frank M. Conaway Sr., the long-time clerk of the Baltimore City Circuit Court, is being remembered by many who knew him and those whom his work positively affected. He died on Sunday, February 15, 2015 at age 81.

"He loved the people, the process and the political arena," said his son, Frank M. Conaway Jr., who represents the 40th District in the Maryland House of Delegates. Conaway Jr. said his father believed in working hard and making a decent living for himself and his family.

Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake called Conaway Sr. a truly dedicated public servant who redefined what was possible for generations of local African-Americans.

"Baltimore has lost a true leader and unbridled voice of the people in Frank Conaway, and I am deeply saddened to learn of his passing," said Democratic Rep. Elijah Cummings (MD-07). "Frank was a friend and mentor to me for more than 35 years. As a tireless advocate for the Baltimore community, he dedicated his life to public service and loved every moment of it. His desire to help those around him and lift others up was present in all of his work."

Born in Baltimore on March 16, 1933, Conaway attended the city's public schools and served in the U.S. Army. He graduated from Morgan State University in 1960 and became an insurance executive.

He first held public office in 1971 when he won election as a member of the House of Delegates representing the city's District 4. Conaway later served on the state's Comprehensive Health Planning Commission. Eventually, Conaway became Clerk of City Circuit Court where he thrived.

"Frank Conaway, Sr. exhibited a rare strain of political courage that exhibited itself through independence and conviction," said Elder Cortly "C.D." Wither- spoon Sr., the chief servant of the City Revival Ministries and president of the Baltimore Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. "He didn't seek approval, or validation. His truth primary was his guide, and his moral compass. He represented a generation of black elected officials who broke into the segregated good old boys club, and integrated it. His unique brand of leadership inspired generations of public figures, political, and activist alike. But above all, he did it Frank's way."

Conaway also displayed no fear of being too outspoken, particularly when he thought it to be in the best interest of Baltimore residents.

In an opinion-editorial column he wrote after his failed 2011 mayoral bid, Conaway said his campaign was as simple as it gets; it was about: jobs, jobs, jobs.

"In an economic climate that has millions of Marylanders struggling to pay their bills, it makes no sense that Congress would forgo one of the most imperative policies that has offered at least some form of relief to the citizens they are elected to represent," he wrote. "Allowing the much needed long-term unemployment benefits of millions of Americans to expire has to be the most disastrous misstep taken by the members of the 112th Congress in 2013."

In another post just two months ago, Conaway cautioned about politicizing the recent police incidents and lack of grand jury indictments in Missouri and in New York.

"The recent influx of citizen unrest due to a rash of officer-related homicides, has left the American citizenry skeptical of the greater good police departments bring to communities nationwide, especially that of traditionally violent neighborhoods that tend to have a majority of minority residents," Conaway said. "And while these atro-

cious acts of injustice have left our leaders clueless as to how to effectively move forward the very constituencies they are elected to represent, it leaves an obvious void of ineffective leadership that has largely silenced the intellectual voices of opposition that continues to grow with each case of injustice."

Conaway noted that, as an 81-year old public servant who has spent more than half of his life serving the interests of one constituency or another, he's found that constructive criticism coupled with innovative intuitiveness leads to a more productive society.

"In Baltimore, we seem to have gotten away from the very programs and policies that had led to our city being referred to as Charm City, instead of the home of 'The Wire,'" he said.

His bluntness was appreciated by many who called him a peer, friend or family member.

"Nobody had the presence and personality of Frank Conaway, a businessman and fixture in city politics," Gov. Larry Hogan said. "Frank loved people, and the people loved him, too."



**Frank Conaway Sr.**  
1933-2015  
File Photo

Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford said he had lunch with Mr. Conaway last week.

"He was a pillar of the African-American community and an advocate for all people," Rutherford said. "I will miss him very much."

Conaway is survived by his wife and three children.

### Funeral Arrangements

The Conaway family has coordinated the following homegoing services for Frank M. Conaway Sr., Clerk of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City (1998 – 2015)

His Viewing will be held this Friday, February 20th from 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. at Vaughn Green Funeral Home located at: 5151 Baltimore National Pike (Route 40) Baltimore, Maryland 21219

His Wake will be held on Monday, February 23rd from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. with the funeral service to follow immediately at 11 a.m. at: Morgan State University – Murphy Fine Arts Center located at: 2201 Argonne Drive Baltimore, Maryland 21218

His Repast will be held immediately following the Funeral Service on Monday, February 23rd at: The Forum Caterers located at: 4210 Primrose Avenue Baltimore, Maryland 21215

His body is being handled by Vaughn Greene Funeral Services. Anyone wishing to leave flowers, cards or gifts, or to sign onto the guest book can go to the website: <http://www.vaughnngreene.com/> and look up Frank M. Conaway Sr.

Dr. Reverend A.C.D. Vaughn will preside over the funeral services, and all other information regarding family contact, information or media inquiries regarding Mr. Conaway and his passing/affairs can be forwarded to: [hassangior-dano@gmail.com](mailto:hassangior-dano@gmail.com) and they will be sent directly to Mrs. Belinda Conaway for consideration.



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# Justin Forsett deserves to remain a Raven

By Turron Davenport

To say that this past year has been a whirlwind for Baltimore Ravens running back Justin Forsett would be an understatement. He has gone from journeyman to NFL league leader in yards per carry. Forsett had the most productive season of his career last year. He is proof that sometimes all a player needs is a chance.

The Ravens will have to make a decision on what they are going to do with Forsett. He is set to become a free agent.

Justin Forsett has made it clear that he would like to remain with the Ravens. He says that he wants to get out of the "friends zone" and get into a long term commitment with the team.

Former offensive coordinator Gary Kubiak has gone on to become the head coach of the Denver Broncos. Marc Trestman is now the coordinator and has said that he will utilize similar concepts in the running game. The Ravens are still an ideal match for Forsett.

This was admittedly the last stop for Forsett who said, "I had one more shot. This could have been my last shot at being able to show what I can do."

He took full advantage of the opportunity and posted 1,266 yards rushing. That was easily his highest rushing total in his career.

There are some running backs that could help the Ravens in the draft but retaining Forsett would be the best option for the team. He has already started to plant his roots in the city. Forsett has taken part in numerous community service projects with the Ravens. He spent time at Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins



*Baltimore Ravens running back Justin Forsett runs for a touchdown in the third quarter of the 2015 AFC Divisional Playoffs game against the New England Patriots at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Massachusetts on January 10, 2015.*

Courtesy Photo/www.baltimoreravens.com

University hospital. That experience touched him.

"This is what it's all about. What I do on Sundays is one thing but I believe I was put on earth for something bigger than football." Forsett said. "Just to be able to give back, be a servant, help others and give them encouragement, to put a smile on somebody's face, it's a blessing to me. This kind of work was instilled in me. The principles based [on] the Bible, my father always taught us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. This is a part of it. To be able to help out the kids, be there for them, to take pictures with them, it's such a blessing."

Forsett had to make a hospital visit of

his own on Valentine's Day. He and his wife were going to go see Lauryn Hill

perform her latest music. Forsett was concerned that going to be forced to deliver his son in the car. Fortunately, they did make it to the hospital in time for their son, Zion.

The off-season will be an interesting one for Forsett and the Ravens. He could draw some interest from the Broncos now that Kubiak is there and they will run the same system that was in place. The Ravens could go in a different direction in the draft or they could sign another veteran running back if they chose to.

Bernard Pierce and second year player Lorenzo Taliaferro remain on the roster also. Forsett averaged 5.4 yards per carry while Pierce averaged 3.9 yards and Taliaferro averaged 4.3 yards. They all ran behind the same offensive line. As the saying goes, "If it's not broke, don't try to fix it."

The Ravens had the eighth ranked rushing offense in the NFL with Forsett as the feature back. There is no good reason why he shouldn't return next season.

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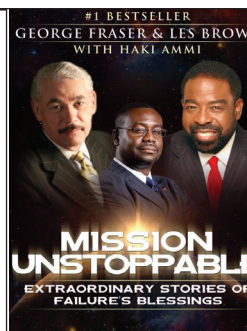
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# St. Agnes Hospital offers free heart health program

By Stacy M. Brown

Hattie Carter just didn't think she needed to make changes. The Baltimore resident says she could still fit nicely into her clothes, she felt healthy and besides, certain diet and exercise programs just didn't fit within her budget.

"But, then there was a church member who works at St. Agnes Hospital who began speaking to a group of us about getting healthier," Carter said. "She told us about a program that St. Agnes does and a group of us decided to do it."

That program, St. Agnes' Heart-to-Heart program, aims to encourage faith-based partners to effectively reduce cardiovascular disease risk factors in communities with severe healthcare disparities.

Officials say that through this evidence-based cardiovascular disease intervention program, Saint Agnes is reaching African American women who are at a high risk of the illness, providing screenings and assessments and establishing systems such as support networks, peer community health workers and resource development that will ultimately make Heart-to-Heart self-sustaining within the community.

"Success is being able to reach women in a way we otherwise wouldn't," said Dr. Shannon Winakur, medical director of the Women's Heart Center at St. Agnes Hospital. "We've kept it in the faith-based community and with that support, the group that formed at the churches are able to learn and participate together and reinforce all the principles we are given them."

The pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and its Healthcare Foundation created a program designed to support and award grant funding to organizations like St. Agnes that are performing innovative work in the field of cardiovascular health, officials said in a news release.

Winakur says awareness of the threat of heart disease to a woman's health remains low and statistics have revealed that one woman dies every minute in the United States because of cardiovascular disease.



*Hattie Carter implemented the lessons from the Heart-to-Heart program into her daily life and has since lost six inches of abdominal fat and 13 pounds, strengthened the muscles in her back and core which has decreased her back pain and has brought her blood pressure under control.*

Courtesy Photos

The Heart-to-Heart program, which is free for participants, has been designed to raise awareness of heart disease in women and provide the needed tools, support and education to guide women to healthier lives, according to Winakur.

"A lack of awareness and education of cardiovascular disease has especially been a problem in the African



**Dr. Shannon Winakur**  
Medical Director  
Women's Heart Center  
St. Agnes Hospital

American community and we think this will help," she said.

The program provides heart risk screenings and a four-month program of health education, fitness and healthy lifestyle classes. To ensure the program is convenient and easy to access, all screenings and classes are held at the participating church.

Testing is also performed for blood pressure,

cholesterol and blood sugar. There is also a weight and body mass index exam, one-on-one consultations with a nurse practitioner and an EKG may be done to establish a baseline of a participant's heart's activity.

Heart-to-Heart also provides access to programs that focus on fitness and health education, including walking, yoga, low-impact aerobics, healthy meal planning, managing stress, controlling eating triggers and there's a monthly support group led by a behavioral health expert.

"I thought I was healthy and then I realized that I had high blood sugar and the program helped me to realize that I was eating wrong, what I was eating and how I was cooking my food," said Carter, who participated in the program in 2013.

Carter says she implemented all of the lessons from the program into her daily life and has since lost six inches of abdominal fat, lost 13 pounds, strengthened the muscles in her back and core which has decreased her back pain and has brought her blood pressure under control.

She said she's also shopping differently and exercising more frequently.

"Now, my cholesterol is good and I no longer have to take medication. I'm maintaining well and they've given us alternative programs as well that has helped," Carter said.

The Heart-to-Heart program also helped Carter fight off depression, she said. It also helped her to realize that an individual is never too old to take care of themselves.

"I've gotten a lot stronger, I've recovered from a rotator cuff injury and I even sleep better," she said.

Winakur says St. Agnes has been fortunate in receiving support and a new grant from AstraZeneca to help with the community outreach.

"There's so much that needs to be changed as far as awareness to cardiovascular disease and women," Winakur said. "All women can be empowered and all can take steps that can change the course of this disease."

FROM THE BACK OF THE BUS TO THE HEAD OF THE TABLE.  
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# Brendan Lee receives 'Hometown Hero Award' at 46th NAACP Image Awards

By Andrea Blackstone

Brendan Lee is a Baltimore City resident with a passion for improving the well being of young people. He received a NAACP Hometown Hero Award on January 6, 2015 in Los Angeles, California. Of 28 Baltimoreans who were nominated, Lee received the most votes.

His fiancée, China McClanahan nominated the 27-year-old restorative practice facilitator, who works at City Springs School. He has a reputation for going above and beyond the call of duty to support students in Baltimore. Gospel singer Erica Campbell of Mary Mary presented Lee with the NAACP Hometown Hero Award, along with fellow winners from 15 other states.

"I want to change more of our kids and lost souls looking for guidance. I would take that over an award any day," Lee said humbly.

Lee trains teachers to build better relationships with their students. After suspension rates decreased at City Springs School, Lee was selected as key staff member of the year by the State of Maryland in 2010. He is also a motivational speaker and mentor. Lee has spoken at the White House on behalf of children with incarcerated parents. He also visits the roughest places, seeking to spark hope. Lee's ability to relate to challenges in adolescents dates back to his formative years, when he was growing up in the Park Heights area of Baltimore City.

"I lost my grandmother (Lula Bell Lee) and father (Robert Lee) to alcoholism," Lee said.

Lee was twelve years old when his father died. At the age of fifteen, Lee was a passenger in a car when the driver, who was also his best friend, was fatally shot after gambling.

"It was the first time I had to learn the hard way that it is important to be where you are supposed to be," Lee said, recalling the day he hooked school.

"When I was growing up, I was labeled a troubled kid. People said, 'This kid will be dead or in jail before he turns 21,' because of the path that I was on."

A year later, his girlfriend was struck



**Brendan Lee speaking at a church during a youth day program. The Baltimore resident is a motivational speaker and restorative practice facilitator. Lee received the NAACP Hometown Hero Award in recognition of his professional and community contributions at 46th NAACP Image Awards on January 6, 2015 in Los Angeles, California.**

Courtesy Photo

and killed by a drunk driver. Lee managed to graduate from Francis M. Wood Alternative High School. Afterwards, he became homeless after an arrest stem-

ming from a domestic disturbance with his stepfather. Lee lived out of a bag while visiting houses of friends.

"The turning point for me was when I

was shot when I was 22 years old. I almost lost my life due to gun violence. One of the bullets had missed my heart by less than centimeters. I could feel the life slowly leaving my body. I was thinking about those last moments. Is this it?"

Lee was resuscitated at the University of Maryland Medical Center. After rehabilitation, Lee visited Empowerment Temple. He heard Jamal Bryant delivering a thought-provoking message. Lee realized that he had a bigger calling. He reportedly left street life behind, selecting God as fuel to change his life.

Pieces started falling into place through Lee's work as a paraeducator. Rhonda Richetta, the one person Lee said believed in him, offered employment when he needed to get on his feet. Lee accepted her offer. He quickly fell in love with working with youth.

"I started a mentoring group and [started] teaching them different things like how to tie a tie and grooming. That's when Ms. Richetta saw my gift as far as how I was able to help the young men be successful. She wined up sending me to a school in Pennsylvania called International Institute for Restorative Practices. When I got certified, I brought it back to City Springs. That is how I became the Restorative Practices Facilitator," Lee said.

Lee still strives to reach youth who are often considered unreachable. For the next six weeks, 92Q is granting Lee a chance to contribute to Motivational Mondays. The radio station will repost his uplifting video message on Instagram.

"I just want to encourage more pastors and more community members to collaborate with me and give me more opportunities to do what I did at City Springs," Lee said. "I am a believer that as long as a person has breath in their body, they still have a chance to change. If every time the good people say, 'I'm not coming back to the hood,' who is going to go back and get them?"

Follow Lee on Instagram via #thisis-godswork or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/brendan.lee.9235199](http://www.facebook.com/brendan.lee.9235199).

# Women's History Month Literary Festival

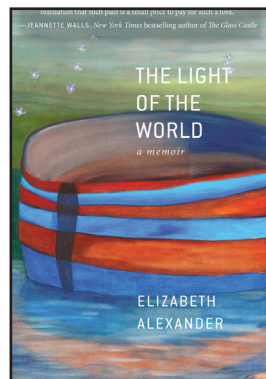
*Three women writers discuss the intersection of place, time, and culture in literature and in the lives of women.*



*The conversation will be moderated by Linda A. Duggins, Hachette Book Group.*



*Elizabeth Alexander*



## Elizabeth Alexander - *The Light of the World*

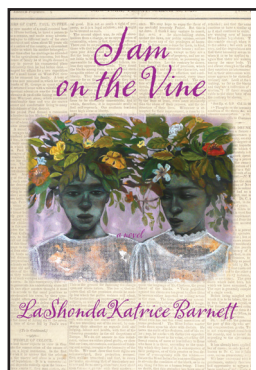
Following the death of her husband, artist and chef Ficre Ghebreyesus, poet Elizabeth Alexander found herself at an existential crossroads. Her new memoir, *The Light of the World*, describes a very personal and yet universal quest for meaning, understanding, and acceptance. Elizabeth Alexander composed and read "Praise Song for the Day" at President Barack Obama's 2009 inauguration. The author of six books of poetry, she is the inaugural Frederick Iseman Professor of Poetry at Yale University and was recently elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets.

## LaShonda Katrice Barnett - *JAM! On the Vine*

LaShonda Katrice Barnett is the author of a story collection and editor of *I Got Thunder: Black Women Songwriters On Their Craft and Off the Record: Conversations with African American & Brazilian Women Musicians*. She has taught literature and history at Columbia University, Sarah Lawrence College, Hunter College, and Brown University. Her debut novel, *JAM! On the Vine*, tells the story of Ivoe Williams who founds the first female-run African American newspaper in Kansas City in the early 20th century. She risks her freedom and her life to report on the atrocities of segregation in the American prison system.



*LaShonda Katrice Barnett*



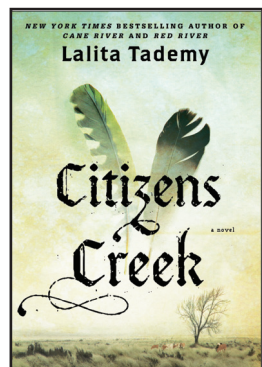
## Lalita Tademy - *Citizens Creek*

Lalita Tademy is the author of the bestselling novels, *Cane River* and *Red River*. Set against the backdrop of Alabama in 1822, her new novel, *Citizens Creek*, follows the lives of "Cow Tom," a young slave boy who is sold to work on a plantation for a Creek Indian Chief, and his beloved granddaughter, Rose, whom he nicknamed Little Warrior. Through Cow Tom and Rose, Tademy shows the strength and determination of not allowing negative circumstances or influences to stand in the way of success.

Reception and book signing immediately following in the 2nd floor corridor. The Ivy Bookshop will have copies of the authors' books for sale.



*Lalita Tademy*



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# Bowie State celebrates 150 years of excellence

By Stacy M. Brown

When the 40 African American founders opened what was then called the Baltimore Normal School on January 9, 1865, their mission was to establish educational facilities across Maryland that would help educate the more than 85,000 newly emancipated slaves.

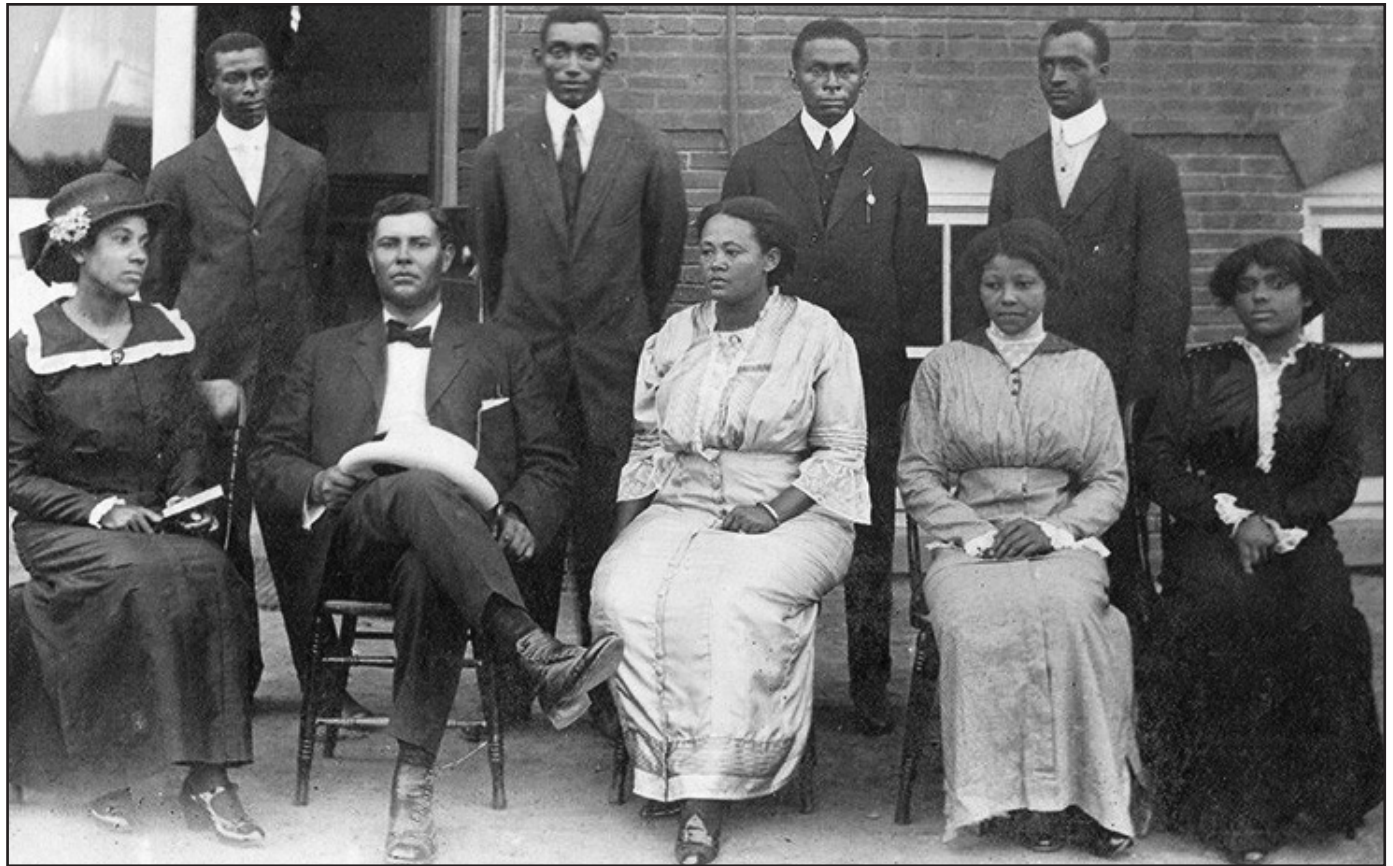
Today, the school now famously known as Bowie State University counts among the many proud Historical Black College and Universities (HBCU) in the country. It has become an acclaimed, comprehensive liberal arts school now in the midst of a yearlong celebration of its 150th anniversary.

"I have spoken with those who used to walk the railroad tracks to Old Bowie Town to the local store. This year I rode in a parade through one of the malls in the Bowie community and waved to people of many nationalities proudly wearing BSU paraphernalia. It was an awesome display of unity among Bowie State University and the community," said Clarence Mollock, a 1972 graduate of BSU and president of the Baltimore chapter of the BSU National Alumni Association.

"During the 1970's, I was one of the student representatives on the Commission for Campus Development as well as the Commission for Acquisition of Land for Bowie State College. Since that time I am humbled to see the growth of the University," said Mollock, who earned election in 2014 to the BSU Sports Hall of Fame. "I often bring back alumni so that they can see their influence over the years that Bowie State University has been in existence."

Cassandra Robinson, a co-chair for BSU's sesquicentennial steering committee and the school's director of university relations and marketing, said the anniversary is naturally a special time for those associated with BSU as well as the community at-large.

"The celebration of the anniversary marks the significant impact that this institution has had in lives of so many Maryland citizens since its founding in 1865," Robinson said. "We have a proud legacy that began in Baltimore as a school providing basic educational opportunities for newly emancipated citizens. It evolved into



*The faculty of the Maryland Normal and Industrial School at Bowie in 1912. Courtesy BSU*

a normal school and teachers college producing teachers and administrators for schools throughout the state."

Today, BSU stands as a quality and comprehensive university that attracts a diverse population of students to its broad array of programs that prepare them to be dynamic leaders who make a difference in the world, according to Robinson.

Robinson says the anniversary provides a platform to engage individuals who may not know much about BSU and to showcase a continuing commitment to serve students seeking opportunity and the needs of our surrounding community.

Recently, to help kick-off the yearlong celebration, school officials invited Beatrice Payne, who graduated from BSU more than 80 years ago, to reflect on the role BSU played in her life and career as an educator.

"I just thought teaching was the grandest thing, and that was what I was going to do," said Payne, who at 105 is the University's oldest living graduate.

"Going to Bowie influenced me from

when I began teaching until ending," she said in a prepared statement. "And, when I got out of the classroom and into administration, there were still things that were very helpful to me."

A Baltimore resident, Payne retired after more than 40 years in education, serving as a teaching principal, special education teacher and special education department supervisor in the Baltimore County public schools.

Payne's experience fits well with the original school's mission, which was to train African Americans to become teachers. The founders formed the Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of Colored People and opened dozens of schools around the state at a time when Maryland refused to fund schools for blacks, officials said.

In 1908, the state assumed control of BSU and relocated it to Bowie in 1911, where it was known as the Maryland Normal and Industrial School at Bowie.

Payne went on to complete three years of high school and two years of normal

school at Bowie, graduating in 1928 with a first-grade teaching certificate.

"The teachers at Bowie really taught us and taught us well," she said.

From that time, the school evolved into a state teachers college in 1938 and then a liberal arts college in 1963, finally achieving university status in 1988. In the same year, BSU joined the newly formed University System of Maryland.

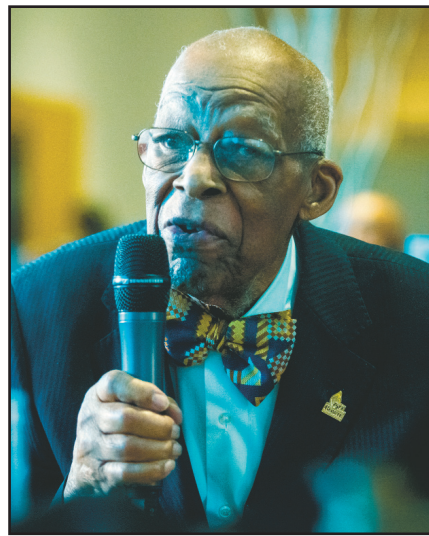
"Bowie State has a commitment to graduating students in the STEM disciplines to help meet the state's critical workforce needs and prepare students for jobs to meet the changing needs of society," BSU President Mickey L. Burnim said in a news release.

"We remain committed first, however, to excellence in teaching, which is at the heart of what we do. Our faculty's primary interest and passion is teaching, and that passion is what propels our students' success."

*Photos: Rodney Choice/  
www.choicephotography.com*



*BSU President Mickey L. Burnim*



*Former BSU President Samuel L. Myers (1967-77) reflects on the University's 150th anniversary.*



*Back row, left to right: BSU Director of Regional Giving Darren Swain ('93, '95), Estelle Johnson ('65, '75), BSU Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving Rosalind Muchiri ('03), and Clarence Mollock ('72) (front row, left to right): Beatrice Payne ('28), J. Sidney Sheppard ('47), and Essie Banks ('48)*



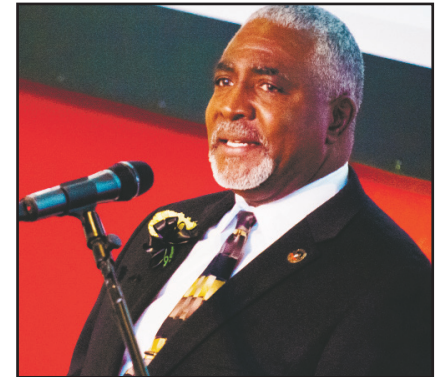
*Dr. George Simmons, author of an unpublished manuscript on the history of Bowie State University.*



*Karen Shaheed, Bowie State general counsel and co-chair of the Sesqui-centennial Steering Committee.*



*Murvyn Cannady, II ('18) sings a stirring rendition of the spiritual, "Deep River," accompanied by BSU Professor of Music Latonya Wrenn.*



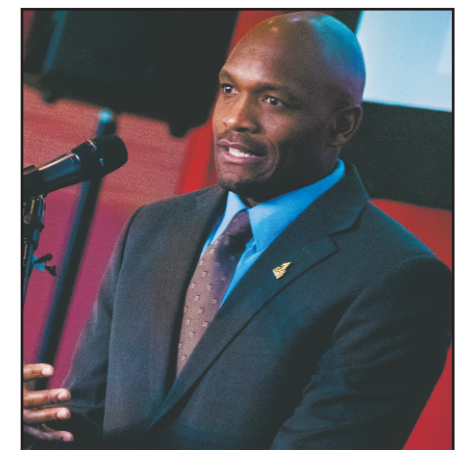
*BSU National Alumni Association President John Word introduces some of the University's early educators who graduated from the school in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s.*



*Left to right: Estelle Johnson ('65, '75), Beatrice Payne ('28) and Miss Bowie State University Marissa Massey ('15).*



*Army ROTC cadet Brandon Van Dyke ('15) shares how Bowie State is preparing him for his future.*



*William Thomas ('02), the 2009 Maryland Teacher of the Year, reflects on all the ways that Bowie State prepared him to become an outstanding educator.*

# Choral concert honors longtime organist

By Stacy M. Brown

James Spencer Hammond has always been the kind of person that simply wants to do his job well. Attention has never been high on his list of wants and, those who know him, say it's difficult to find someone more humble.

So, when officials approached Hammond about a special concert in his honor, it wasn't much of a surprise that he balked.

"I said, no, no. They really had to twist my arm," said Hammond, a longtime organist and choir director who will be honored at a choral concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, February 22, 2015.

The concert will be held at Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church in the Bolton Hill section of Baltimore.

The program will include classical choral works and spirituals featuring the works of African American composers R. Nathaniel Dett, Undine Smith Moore, Wendell Whalum and Robert L. Morris.

The program will also include selections from Johannes Brahms' "A German Requiem," and Felix Mendelssohn's "St. Paul," as well as works by classical legends Gabriel Faure and Cesar Franck, both French composers.

"I studied music and I love music," said Hammond, who served as minister of music at Baltimore's Douglas Memorial Community Church under Rev. Marion Bascom for nearly 40 years.

"This is why I'm doing this, why I accepted this. It's because of Rev. Bascom because he brought me here way back in the 1959," Hammond said. "I went to see him when he came down to Florida



*A concert honoring longtime Douglas Memorial Community Church music director, J. Spencer Hammond will be held on Sunday, February 22, 2015 at 3 p.m. at Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church located at 1320 Park Avenue in Baltimore City. Brown Memorial's Chancel Choir will sing. For tickets to this Tiffany Series event, call 410-523-1542. (Above) J. Spencer Hammond at the organ at Douglas Memorial Community Church.*

Courtesy Photo/Douglas Memorial Community Church

where I was at the time and he said how would you like to come to Baltimore and work in my church? Because of him, I have such wonderful memories."

Hammond's choirs have been widely celebrated, and his men's choir performed at the White House for President

Richard Nixon. They also performed at various other institutions including at the John F. Kennedy Center and at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

"We were able to accomplish a lot and it has always been fun," he said.

With degrees from Florida A&M and

Northwestern Universities, Hammond has also been lauded as an educator, having taught elementary school in the Baltimore City Public School District for 31 years.

Hammond also taught the history of African American music for several years at the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

He retired from Douglas Memorial Community Church in 2002, but still conducts a community choir, the Douglas Singers, and he still provides private piano lessons and remains active with the Hymn Society and the Organ Historical Society.

"I have to say that Rev. Bascom is the only way you can get me to accept such an honor that they are doing for me, but I know that it's going to be enjoyable," Hammond said.

The performance will include former members of Hammond's choirs at Douglas Memorial Community Church who will join Brown Memorial's Chancel Choir in singing the concert's concluding work, Harry T. Burleigh's "My Lord, What a Mornin'," which Hammond himself will conduct.

The event also will feature short reminiscences by friends and admirers, and will be followed by a free reception.

"The ending should be great," he said. "We will sing a piece that Bascom loved so much and it'll give me great pleasure to conduct it."

Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$5 for students. They can be purchased at the door or at [www.brown-downtown.org](http://www.brown-downtown.org). In case of snow, organizers say the show will take place on March 1, 2015.

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# 2015 Newbery Medal winner makes slam dunk with novel in verse

By Andrea Blackstone

On Monday, February 2, 2015, something extraordinary happened to Kwame Alexander. The author of 18 published books was notified that he was the winner of the (John) Newbery Medal, which is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)—a division of the American Library Association—for the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year.

The Virginia based poet and author won what many consider the highest award for children's literature for penning his hip book, "The Crossover."

Alexander's win could easily inspire an extra celebratory fist pump, considering the book's interesting back-story. Alexander felt that he crafted a good book about twin junior high school basketball stars, but the road to get it published was difficult. The Newbery Medal winner said that he was tempted to self-publish his middle grade novel written in verse.

"It was a hard sell. It took five years to sell it and about 20 plus rejections. It took a while for it to actually resonate with a publisher and eventually find somebody who believed in it. There was a point where I said I am going to publish this myself because I believed that it was a really good book. A week after that, that's when we got the offer," Alexander said.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt published the book. On the heels of Alexander winning the Newbery Medal, "The Crossover" recently made its way to the New York Times Children's Bestsellers list. Alexander may not have predicted the flood of accolades that would result from honoring his instincts to bring his book to the marketplace, but the visionary said that he did feel confident that "The Crossover" would resonate with kids. For a long time, Alexander had known and practiced the power of poetry. Although he observed how much young readers are attracted to it, Alexander is still shocked about winning the



***Kwame Alexander, author of "The Crossover," is the 2015 winner of the John Newbery Medal, which recognizes an author for the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year. Alexander used basketball to encourage boys to read. Girls also enjoy reading the award-winning story told through verse.***

**Photo Credit: Nataki Hewling**

Newbery Medal.

"I was completely shocked when I got the call because who is ever really prepared for something that amazing to happen? When you spend your whole life writing, you want to have an impact

with young people, but you also want to be recognized by your peers. To be recognized like this, the honor is still pretty mind-boggling," Alexander said. "I think that the committee recognized that the best books weren't necessarily the

typical books. I hope that it continues. That is really what is going to empower readers, and empower writers that some of gatekeepers of children's literature are going to say, 'The best books are just the best books, regardless of who writes them or how they look.' They really stepped up to the plate. Hopefully, other committees will sort of follow suit."

Despite the basketball theme, "The Crossover" appeals to girls and boys. Alexander explained that basketball was a hook to get boys interested in reading a book. Other subjects in the novel about what children and families go through are relatable to all youth.

"We have to meet young people where they are, sort of as a bridge. We have to give them something that's accessible and something that relates to them. I think that's important," Alexander said. "I knew that children would respond favorably. I felt that once that happened, the librarians and the teachers and the parents would say, 'Oh...wow. Let me check this out.' And then I knew that once they checked it out, they would be hooked on it too. I knew all of this, because when I wrote the book, I fell in love with it, and I'm an adult. So I knew that pretty much anybody, if they allowed themselves to check it out, would find something that they could connect with and hopefully enjoy in the book."

Alexander's busy writing life has been full of leading workshops, speaking at conferences, traveling and promoting his books. He also co-founded LEAP for Ghana, which "supports communities through literacy education, youth development and community engagement." The organization is building a library in the village of Konko, located in Ghana, along with other educational endeavors there. Alexander expects to visit the Enoch Pratt Free Library for a future event and also participate in the next Baltimore Book Festival.

For further information about Alexander and his upcoming event schedule, visit: [www.kwamealexander.com](http://www.kwamealexander.com).

***"The best advice I ever got was that knowledge is power and to keep reading." —David Bailey***

## 'Legend of Lead Belly' on Smithsonian Channel

By Phinesse Demps

On Thursday February 5, 2015, Comcast and the Smithsonian Channel hosted a private screening of "Legend of Lead Belly" at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, which will premiere on the Smithsonian Channel on Monday, February 23, 2015 at 8 p.m.

With so much emphasis on music, it is only right that people, especially today's youth, understand the past in order to move forward.

Before hip-hop there was folk music, which dealt with what was really happening in life, with the community and with social issues. Lead Belly is an icon in music and as the film shows there are many of today's artists who were influenced by Lead Belly.

The film appropriately gives Lead Belly his just due. It details his life from how he was discovered to how he was able to survive in the music business. The film also details how his family has been able to preserve his legacy. Make sure to carve out time to see what could become a classic for Black History Month.

To see the trailer for the "Legend of Lead Belly," visit The Baltimore Times facebook page at Facebook.com/TheBaltimoreTimes.

Cohen Film Collection has just released a digitally restored and re-mastered version of the 1942 film "Syncopation" starring Jackie Cooper for the first time on home DVD and BLU-RAY, as well as nine short jazz films featuring Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith, Louis Armstrong and Artie Shaw.

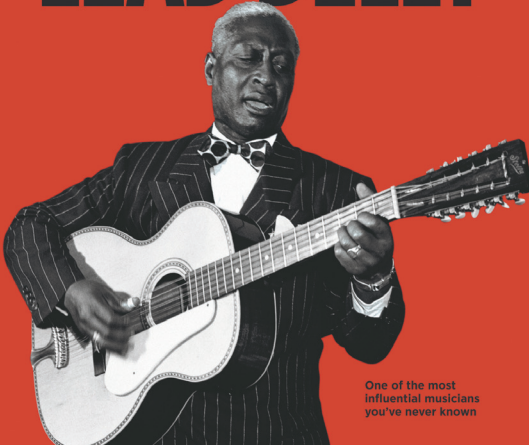
To contact Phinesse Demps, call 410-366-3900 ext. 3016 or 410-501-0193 or email: [pdemps@btimes.com](mailto:pdemps@btimes.com).

SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL PRESENTS

# LEGEND OF LEAD BELLY

PREMIERES MONDAY FEBRUARY 23 8PM

Huddie Ledbetter was born into poverty, battled racism, and did time, but in spite of his early hardships, or perhaps because of them, he became one of the great musicians of the 20th century. We trace the life and career of Lead Belly, a man praised by critics and revered by artists, whose unique music crossed a host of genres and influenced countless industry legends. See how his talent, humanity, and determination defeated all that stood in his way to make his voice heard, then and now.



One of the most influential musicians you've never known

Thursday, February 5  
Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture

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### Downtown Cultural Arts Center Needs Volunteers

The mission of the Downtown Cultural Arts Center is to provide opportunities for art and cultural development in Maryland and particularly in the Baltimore area. Current volunteer opportunities include administrative support; assistance with special events planning and set-up; facilitation of children's programming; and marketing promotions. For more information and to volunteer, contact Adrian Bobb at 410-837-2787 or email: [dculturalartcenter@gmail.com](mailto:dculturalartcenter@gmail.com).

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# Baltimore native serves aboard U.S. Navy warship in Japan

By Navy Office of Community Outreach Public Affairs

A 2004 Western School of Technology and Environmental Science graduate and Baltimore native currently serves aboard the U.S. Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS George Washington, stationed at a U.S. Navy base located 35 miles south of Tokyo.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Jahmai Stokes is a mass communication specialist aboard the aircraft carrier operating out of Yokosuka, Japan. While at sea, the ship visits numerous countries each year such as the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand.

George Washington is one of only 10 currently operational aircraft carriers in the U.S. Navy. It is the sixth Nimitz-class carrier and the fourth Navy vessel named after the first president of the United States. Measuring nearly 1,100 feet from bow to stern on the flight deck, the ship is longer than three football fields. It is 257 feet wide, 244 feet high and weighs nearly 100,000 tons.

As a sailor with numerous responsibilities, Stokes says he is proud to serve his country aboard an aircraft carrier in Japan.

"I'm proud that the George Washington is the first line of defense in this region," said Stokes.

Stokes also says he is proud of the work he is doing as part of the Washington's 3,300-member crew, living thousands of miles from home, and protecting America on the world's oceans.

"My job is tell the world what my shipmates and what my brothers-and-sisters-in-arms do around the world," Stokes explained.

Assigned to the Navy's Seventh Fleet, George Washington sailors are continuously on watch throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, acting as one of America's first responders in the Navy's largest area of responsibility.

Sailors' jobs are highly varied aboard



**Petty Officer 2nd Class Jahmai Stokes is a mass communication specialist aboard the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, operating out of Yokosuka, Japan. Courtesy Photo/Navy Office of Community Outreach Public Affairs**

George Washington. The ship's company, which keeps all parts of the air-

craft carrier running smoothly, including everything from launching and recover-

ing aircraft to operating its nuclear propulsion plant. Another 2,000 Sailors are assigned to the ship's embarked air wing, Carrier Air Wing Five, flying and maintaining aircraft aboard the ship.

"I never cease to be impressed with the type and quality of work that goes on aboard the carrier each day," said Capt. Timothy Kuehhas, the carrier's commanding officer. "Our team is filled with highly qualified young adults—in many cases, 19 and 20 years old—and they're out here launching and recovering aircraft, running a complex propulsion system safely, serving as air traffic controllers, operating sophisticated electronics, and keeping this floating city alive and functioning. Collectively, they are part of the greatest ship in our navy. They are proud of their ship and proud of what they do for the United States Navy and their country. If you pick up a newspaper in any city and examine what other 19- and 20-year-olds are doing, there is no comparison to the level of responsibility our Sailors hold."

George Washington is also a self-sustaining, mobile airport and, like each of the Navy's aircraft carriers, is designed for a 50-year service life. While underway, the ship carries more than 70 jets, helicopters and other aircraft, all of which take off from and land on the carrier's 4.5-acre flight deck. Four powerful catapults launch aircraft off the bow of the ship. After lowering a tail hook that protrudes from the rear of the aircraft, jets and aircraft land by snagging a steel cable called an arresting wire.

Stokes and other George Washington sailors know they are part of a forward-deployed team that is heavily relied upon to help protect and defend America across the world's oceans.

"Where things tend to separate us in regards to social and economic backgrounds, in the Navy, you are all brothers and sisters fighting for the same cause," said Stokes.

***"History has taught us over and over again that freedom is not free. When push comes to shove, the ultimate protectors of freedom and liberty are the brave men and women in our armed forces. Throughout our history, they've answered the call in bravery and sacrifice." —Tim Pawlenty***

# Rural Digitization Project Sheds Rich Light on African-American Lives

By Stacy M. Brown

Until the late 20th century, African-Americans found it difficult to have obituaries published in newspapers around the country. In modern times, some blacks cringe over the cost for publication of memorials for their loved ones because the charges associated with obituaries often limit the length of the document and prohibit the publishing of a complete tribute to the deceased.

However, two organizations, including one in Virginia and another in Utah, have established a method in which obscure stories of thousands of deceased African-Americans are finding their way to the Internet.

“We work with large national, state and municipal archives to make large collections like censuses and vital records more available online to the masses,” said Paul G. Nauta the public affairs manager for FamilySearch International in Utah, an organization that boasts being the largest genealogy organization in the world. “There are so many smaller collections, like the Virginia African-American Funeral Programs, that fill in the blanks of our family members’ lives and provide incredibly rich detail and context that makes them much more personal and real to us.”

The Virginia African-American Funeral Programs project began five years ago as a collaborative initiative between FamilySearch and the Tappahannock-based Middle Peninsula African-American Genealogical and Historical Society (MPAAGHS) of Virginia.

In a news release, officials said more than 10,000 funeral programs have been digitized, and over 200,000 names of the deceased persons and their families and friends mentioned in the programs were linked by volunteers and published in a free searchable database at the FamilySearch website.

“Funeral programs are a veritable treasure trove of family history information because they provide such a wealth of information about the deceased,” Bessida Cauthorne White, president of MPAAGHS, said in an email. “A typical funeral program includes birth and death dates and places and the names of parents, spouse, children, and other relatives. The biographies included on most of the programs, are mini-histories that add a glimpse of the decedent’s personality by disclosing schools attended, work history, church and organization affiliation, hobbies, and accomplishments.”

Also, funeral programs may contain multiple photographs of the deceased and family members.

“We often use the printed copies of the funeral programs to answer family history inquiries,” White said. “To be able to finally search the programs electronically will be tremendous.”

With regards to the length of the obituary that could make it costly to publish, funeral programs don’t have such limitations, according to White.



“You get a much richer picture of the deceased person,” White said.

To date, FamilySearch has published over three billion historical records online in free collections from over 100 countries. It continues to digitize and publish about 400 million new records online for free each year, according to Nauta.

The responses from families who are able to connect to both their living relatives as well as

their deceased ancestors from these types of free collections online continue to swell with growing interest in one’s roots,” he said.

Nauta says that satisfied and happy online patrons are continually posting and sharing the joys of their discoveries from free collections like these online with other family members and friends across the various social media.

“The funeral programs are wonderful as a source because they share very personally rich information,” he said. “It’s common to see a photo of the deceased and easy to discover their life story through the information the funeral programs usually disclose, such as a broad range of family relationships stemming multiple gener-

ations in all directions, their profession, personal interests, hobbies, lifetime highlights, as well as some lowlights, that help personify the decedent and endear them to you.”

For more information about the program, visit: [www.mpaagenealogicalsociety.org](http://www.mpaagenealogicalsociety.org) or [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).



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# Love Your Heart This February



## Practical Heart Health Tips from Giant's Nutritionists

Landover, Md.— February is National Heart Health Month and the nutritionists at Giant Food are committed to helping you care for your heart. Good nutrition is at the center of our health and by making smarter food choices you can help your heart beat longer and stronger. Here are some practical ways to make the dietary guidelines for a healthy heart part of your everyday life.

### When shopping at the grocery store:

-If half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables, so should half of your shopping cart! Start in the produce aisle and choose a variety of colors.

-Why not also try a new fruit or vegetable? Variety is good for your body and your palate.

-In the meat section, choose leaner cuts like tenderloin, sirloin or strip steak. Look for the nutrition facts poster above the meat case in your Giant's meat section.

-Try different sources of protein, like tofu or beans. Season them the same way you would meat.

-An easy way to cut cholesterol and saturated fat is to use the low-fat and fat-free dairy options like skim milk and low-fat yogurts and cheeses.

-Get creative with your grains! Instead of rice, try quinoa in a stir fry. Barley is a great grain addition to soups.

### When eating out:

-Look for items that are grilled, baked or steamed—these are generally prepared with less fat.

-Ask for no salt or butter on vegetables.

-Always get cheeses, sauces, dressings, and gravies on the side so you have control over how much fat and salt you are adding.

### When at home:

-Use liquid oils rather than solid fats. Roast vegetables with sesame oil and garlic or stir-fry veggies and brown rice with canola or olive oil.

-Sprinkle walnuts, chia or flax seeds on salads, yogurt or oatmeal for a little extra

crunch— your heart will thank you for the added benefit of omega-3 fats!

-Flavor your food with herbs and spices. Chili powder, cumin, and

ginger are a delicious combo for mixed dishes, while rosemary and thyme are excellent on lean meats. Get creative, the options are truly endless!

### Nutrients good for heart health:

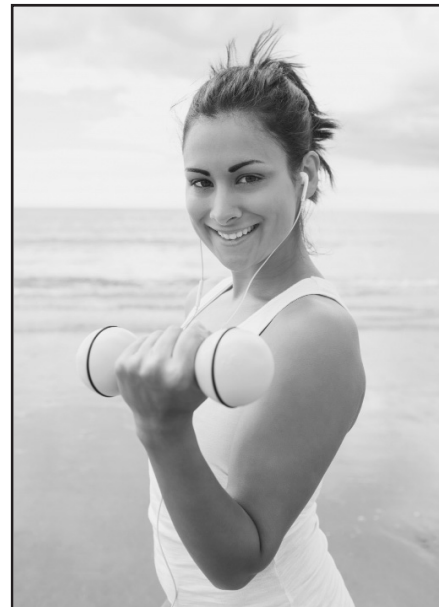
-Soluble and insoluble fiber can help



**Choose healthy grains**

reduce the risk of heart disease.

-Choosing whole grains and eating plenty of fruits and veggies will help you get the fiber you need.



**Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle!**

### Omega-3 and unsaturated fats:

-Oily fish such as salmon, trout, and herring are good sources of omega-3s. Use



**Choose the freshest fruits and vegetables**

herring instead of tuna for sandwiches or on whole grain crackers!

-Try replacing mayo with mashed avocado in deli salads and on sandwiches—it's creamy, flavorful and much better for your heart!

Read the Nutrition Facts labels to help keep track of the fat, cholesterol, sodium and fiber in the foods you eat.

Sodium: Most people should eat less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day to

ligrams of sodium.

- Good food choices that are generally low in sodium include:

- Fresh meats
- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables
- Canned or processed foods that have "low sodium" or "no added salt" labels on the package



**Oily fish such as salmon, trout, and herring are good sources of omega-3s.**



**Use healthy oils for salads and cooking**

reduce the risk for high blood pressure, which puts stress on your heart.

-Look for single foods with 140 milligrams of sodium or less per serving, and plan meals with around 500-800 mil-

Physical activity is important for heart health. Exercise helps maintain muscle mass, burn calories and improve fitness.

-Make activity fun! Sign up for a new class at a gym or walk with friends.

-Stand up and stretch or do a loop around the office every hour while at work.

Research shows that small bouts of activity throughout the day add up to huge health benefits.

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# Tips for saving energy even during extremely cold weather

**Customers are encouraged to visit: [bge.com/WinterReady](http://bge.com/WinterReady) for information about conserving energy throughout the winter months**

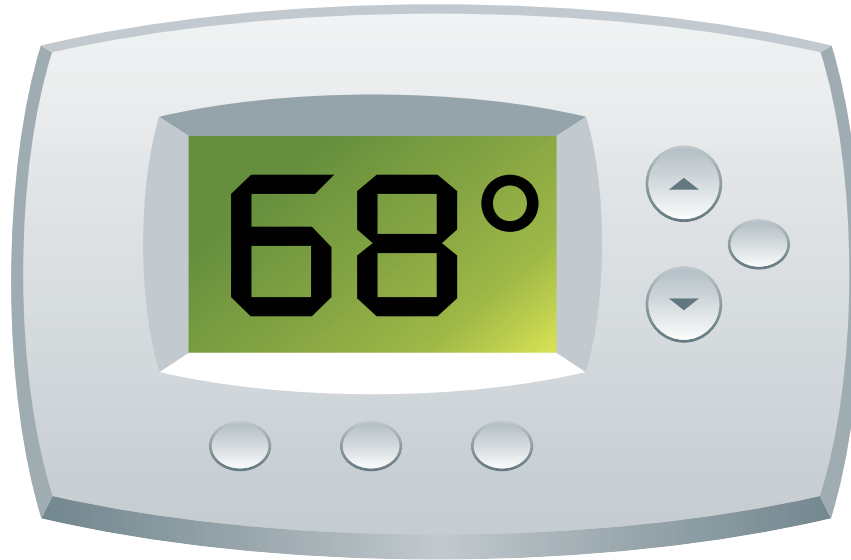
Baltimore— Throughout the colder winter months, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) strives to provide its customers with important energy saving tips to help ease the sting of the frigid temperatures. Although commodity prices remain stable and total bills have seen a steady decline over the past several years, extreme weather can trigger an increase in usage, which may result in higher-than-normal energy bills.

“During the cold winter months, heating systems typically account for more than 40 percent of customers’ energy bills because extreme weather generally triggers significant increases in energy use at home,” said Rob Biagiotti, vice president and chief customer officer for BGE. “Although BGE commodity prices remain stable, the forecasted low temperatures will likely cause energy usage to increase, even for customers who leave their thermostats at a set temperature, as heating systems must work harder and longer to maintain the set temperatures. Without taking steps to save energy during these times, energy bills will reflect additional usage and will likely be higher than in months when temperatures are more moderate. We encourage all customers to think about simple steps they can take in their home to save energy each day, no matter the temperature outside.”

Customers who heat with older model electric heat pumps are especially vulnerable to sharp increases in usage when auxiliary heating is activated during cold weather. On days when the temperature dips below freezing, a heat pump can

use 2 to 3 times as much energy as it does compared to periods when the temperature is above 30 to 40 degrees.

“Although colder temperatures are the primary driver for increased energy use during the heating season, there are many other contributing factors, some of which may not be as obvious,” said Biagiotti. “When it’s bitter cold outside, many families spend more time at home, cooking, watching television, and using



computers and other electronics. While we can’t control the weather, customers can control how they use energy, even during periods of extreme temperatures.”

Customers are encouraged to visit [bge.com/WinterReady](http://bge.com/WinterReady) for tips and information on saving energy, even on the coldest days. Customers can also find information about “winterizing” their homes and preparing their families for the winter heating season. BGE offers customers a variety of low-to-no-cost ways to make their homes more energy efficient, saving energy and money.

The following are steps that all cus-

tomers can take to reduce energy consumption and lower heating bills:

**•Manage your thermostat.**

\*During the winter, for systems other than heat pumps, set thermostats at 68 degrees F, if health allows. This can help customers see a 3-4 percent decrease in energy use vs. thermostats that are set at 72 degrees.

\*Customers who heat their homes with a heat pump should follow the manufacturer’s instructions for optimal energy

nance checked by a licensed professional to be sure it is operating efficiently and seal any leaks in furnace ducts. BGE offers rebates for these and other home efficiency improvements through the BGE Smart Energy Savers Program®.

\*Insulate your water heater. Install an approved insulation blanket around the water heater and insulate the first three feet of water pipe (keep insulation at least six inches from the flue on gas water heaters).

\*Lower the temperature on your water heater to 120 degrees F and conserve hot water when you can. Lower the temperature if you will be away from home for an extended time. Heating water is the second largest energy user in your home in the winter months.

\*Caulk and weather strip windows and doors to keep cold air out.

\*Check/add attic insulation to reach a level of R-38 or 12 inches.

\*Wash clothes in cold or warm water and rinse in cold water to reduce water heater usage.

\*Replace inefficient lighting: Replace your old standard incandescent bulbs with new compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) or light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs. CFLs and LEDs use about 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs, and they last up to 10 times longer.

\*Schedule a BGE Quick Home Energy Check-up or make your home more efficient with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®.

\*Look for energy-efficient appliances: When shopping for appliances such as refrigerators and freezers— look for the ENERGY STAR label. Newer, more energy-efficient models lower monthly operating costs.

For more information on cold weather energy saving tips, visit [bge.com/WinterReady](http://bge.com/WinterReady).

## Reginald Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture Need 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 p.m. on the last Monday of each month. Contact Erica Holmes at 443-263-1800 or email: [holmes@maamc.org](mailto:holmes@maamc.org) or visit: [www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org](http://www.AfricanAmericanCulture.org).

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**BUSINESS SERVICES**

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**PLACE YOUR AD TODAY IN THE AREA'S PREMIER NEWSPAPERS.**  
The Baltimore Sun and The Washington Post newspapers, along with 10 other daily newspapers five days per week. Reach 2.5 million readers with your ad placement in every daily newspaper in Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia. For just pennies on the dollar reach 2.5 million readers through the MDCC's Daily Classified Connection Network. CALL 1-855-721-6332 x 6; SPACE is VERY LIMITED; email [wsmith@mddcpress.com](mailto:wsmith@mddcpress.com) or visit our website at [www.mddcpress.com](http://www.mddcpress.com).

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The Baltimore Sun and The Washington Post newspapers, along with 10 other daily newspapers five days per week. For just pennies on the dollar reach 2.5 million readers through the Daily Classified Connection Network in 3 states: CALL TODAY; SPACE IS VERY LIMITED; CALL 1-855-721-6332 x 6 or 301-852-8933 email wsmith@mddcpres.com or visit our website at www.mddcpres.com

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### GARAGE/YARD SALES

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