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Odenton nonprofit provides free grooming services to Annapolis students



Starting this month, an on-site barber/beauty salon at Phoenix Academy located at 1411 Cedar Park Road in Annapolis will be used to provide grooming services for students in need free of charge. The school joined forces with local charity Rob's Barbershop Community Foundation to convert a rarely used storeroom into a full-service barber/styling salon. Robert W. Cradle, managing director of Rob's Barbershop Community Foundation and Riley Cradle, his 12-year-old daughter, carry equipment required for the barber/beauty shop at the Phoenix Academy. (See article on page 6)

Photo: Jordan Ulmer

HIV/AIDS outreach ministry empowers people to take charge of their health

By *The PATIENTS Program*

Whenever Gail Graham, director of HIV/AIDS Outreach Services and Ministry at Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church, performs an HIV screening, she remembers what it was like to sit on the other side of the table, waiting for the results. Graham has lived with HIV for over 17 years, and over those 17 years there have been incredible advances in detecting and treating the virus.

When she was first diagnosed, Graham had to take a “cocktail” of pills; now, she takes a single pill a day and her viral load is undetectable.

“You can now live a normal, long, healthy life,” Graham said. “But you have to be in treatment.”

The first step toward that healthy life is getting tested, which is why Mt. Lebanon’s HIV/AIDS Ministry offers screening events for members of the community.

On November 27, 2014, the church—with support from community partners— sponsored their 3rd Annual World AIDS Day Testing for Turkeys, a health fair where participants who showed up for screenings were offered free turkeys.

Another health fair is slated for May 9, 2015 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., as part of a cel-



Gail Graham
Director, HIV/AIDS Outreach Services and Ministry
Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church
Courtesy Photo

bration of the ministry’s seventh anniversary. This event will also feature members of The PATIENTS Program, who will be on hand to talk about how patient-centered research can lead to better health care outcomes for all kinds of people.

Graham, who is a certified tester and counselor, started the ministry to serve the needs of the community.

“This zip code has one of the highest rates of HIV and AIDs,” she said.

Graham first started going to Mt. Lebanon with her best friend. She connected personally with Pastor Franklin Lance, D.Min, expressing her desire to help people just like her.

Pastor Lance told her, “that’s your ministry,” and since then, Graham has devoted her energies to screenings, education and empowerment.

The ministry offers free, confidential HIV testing and prevention counseling.

Bi-annually, the HIV/AIDS outreach group teams up with the JACQUES Initiative, an organization that offers a wide gamut of care options for people with HIV; the JACQUES Initiative’s Journey to Wellness program connects people with clinical services and research, as well as case management and social support services.

“JACQUES Initiative will see people without insurance, and can even help them get set up with insurance,” explains Graham, who adds that she has also benefited from the JACQUES Initiative’s support services.

Graham is also able to offer a very personal kind of support, even providing her personal cell phone to newly diagnosed people who need encouragement.

She refers anyone who tests positive for a follow-up screening, and provides interim counseling and assistance in connecting them with the resources they need. Graham proves that one can do more than merely survive with HIV—they can actually thrive.

Her volunteer work with the ministry gives her a sense of purpose. She enjoys time with her grandchildren and she even goes on dates with her significant other.

The HIV/AIDS Ministry’s hours of operation are from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

New initiatives launched to maximize resources and results for Maryland’s children, youth, families

Annapolis— One Tuesday, April 21, 2015, Governor Larry Hogan charged the Children’s Cabinet with the responsibility of contributing to his goal of an economically secure Maryland by focusing on two new initiatives:

1. Reducing the impact of incarceration on children, families, and communities
2. Increasing the number of youth and young adults who are either advancing their educations or engaged in the workforce.

“In order to provide economic stability and opportunity for all of Maryland’s children, youth, and families, I need you to work together to help build a stronger economy in our state,” said Governor Hogan. “I am tasking you with developing, implementing, monitoring, and being successful in a Maryland strategy

that will provide critical services to vulnerable families and children. Be results-driven in your thinking. Provide the best return on Maryland’s investment.”

“The Children’s Cabinet will move aggressively to break down the ‘silos of government,’” said Arlene F. Lee, executive director of the Governor’s Office for Children. “We will work across agencies and with other partners to ensure a more efficient and coordinated use of resources toward the common goals set for us by Governor Hogan.”

It is estimated that on any given day, approximately 90,000 children in Maryland have a parent under some form of correctional supervision— parole, probation, jail or prison— and most reside in Baltimore City. One in 10 teenagers

and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 is either not working or not in school, with the highest percentages located in Worcester County, Caroline County, Baltimore City, Washington County, and Dorchester County.

The Children’s Cabinet, established in 1988, is chaired by the executive director of the Governor’s Office for Chil-

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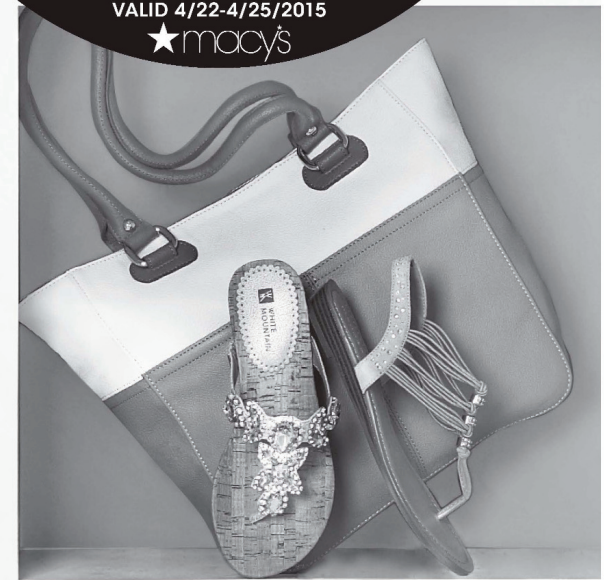
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Normalizing Relations with Castro

By Bill Fletcher, Jr., NNPA Columnist

I was standing in the Jacksonville, Florida, airport waiting for a flight home when I looked up at the television at the gate. CNN was repeating the story that President Obama and Cuba's President Raul Castro were to have a one-on-one discussion and were also to speak to the press. This was a sight that, until a few months ago, I had never expected.

The change in United States/Cuba relations has been a long time coming. The United States has attempted through a combination of a blockade, assassinations, invasions and support of terrorism, to undermine and overthrow the Cuban government. Though it has succeeded in creating great misery for the Cuban people, it never shattered their reserve. In effect, the Cubans stood firm.

At the same time, the U.S. took on more and more the appearance of, not only a global bully, but also a global brat. It has had to have its way at whatever cost. The problem is that its belligerence towards Cuba continued to backfire, leading to a situation of increasing isolation. As the April 2015 "Summit of the Americas" approached, the isolation of the U.S. and Cuba became very evident, necessitating that something change.

President Obama, despite protests from many domestic right-wingers, recognized that the jig was up and that the USA/Cuba relationship needed to alter. Undoubtedly, what the U.S. now hopes to accomplish is to subvert Cuba through various economic incentives. Only time will tell whether such an approach will work. What is clear, however, is that the Cuban government, while looking forward to an improvement in relations, is not planning on getting on its knees for the United States.

Ironically, at the same time that U.S./Cuba relations were improving, the U.S./Venezuela relationship had worsened. The U.S. announced that Venezuela represents an alleged security threat. Most of the Western Hemisphere have rejected this characterization, and the approach of the U.S. toward Venezuela, apparently forcing the Obama administration to reconsider its stand towards Venezuela.

The ruling elite in the U.S. seems to have great difficulty appreciating that Latin America is not its property. There really is something called "national sovereignty" that nations on this planet are supposed to respect. Yet, when it comes to Latin America there is a long history— dating back to the Monroe Doctrine of the 19th Century— of assuming that the entire hemisphere is made up of different components of Washington, D.C.'s realm.

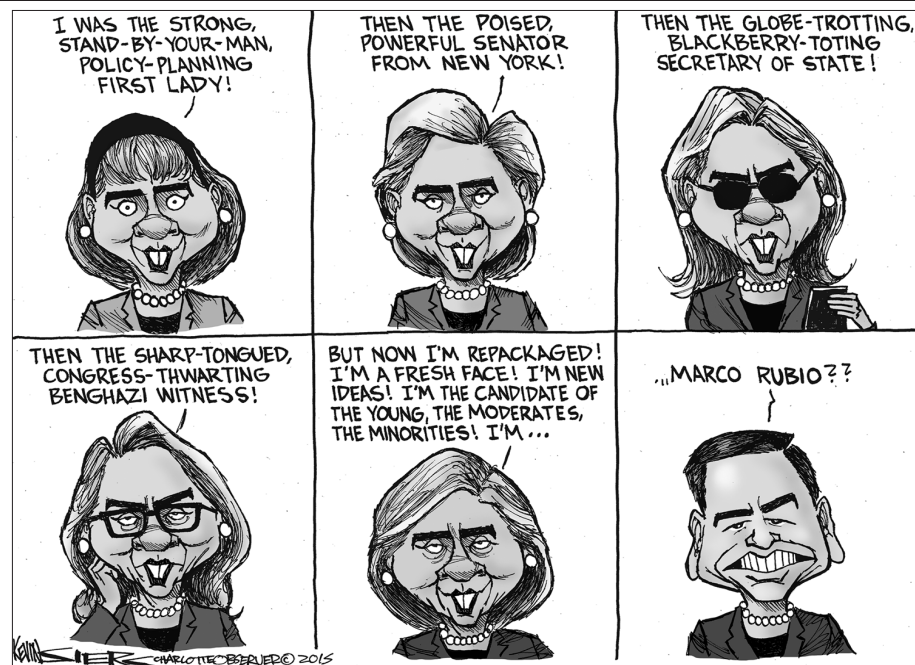
Upon looking at President Castro on CNN the other day, it was clear that he has different ideas.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is the host of The Global African on Telesur-English. He is a racial justice, labor and global justice writer and activist. Follow him on Twitter, Facebook and at www.billfletcherjr.com.



President Barack Obama met with his Cuban counterpart Raul Castro on Saturday, April 11, 2015 in Panama City, Panama at the Summit of the Americas. It was the first time the two nations' top leaders have sat down for substantive talks in more than 50 years.

Courtesy Photo/www.CNN.com



Community Affairs

Drycleaners keep 35 million hangers out of landfills in time for Earth Day 2015

Many people have a pile of steel hangers in their homes from their drycleaners and all too often, these hangers end up in the trash.

For Earth Day 2015, 357 professional members of the Drycleaning & Laundry Institute (DLI), pledged to reduce wire hanger waste by 35 million hangers, or 1,050 tons of steel.

The program began in 2012, when drycleaners helped reduce steel hanger waste by 25 million hangers or 750 tons of steel. In 2013 the number grew to 30 million hangers or 900 tons of steel. In 2014 participants raised the goal to 35 million more hangers, or 1,050 tons of steel. This year will see 35 million more hangers diverted from landfills.

By recycling hangers drycleaners prevent waste and save money. Now in its fourth year the program has prevented 125 million hangers, 3,750 tons of steel from entering landfills since 2012.

"This program is designed to help the

environment, customers, and cleaners," said DLI CEO Mary Scalco. "Our first year with this program was remarkably successful and we've enjoyed the enthusiasm expressed by program participants as we progress to loftier goals. We'd like to see that number continue to grow as awareness of the program spreads."

Cleaners participating in the program pledge to reuse hangers whenever possible and recycle unusable hangers with local steel scrap yards. The Institute provides in-store materials cleaners can use to raise awareness of the program, which often results in more hangers coming into their stores. Participants track the hangers by estimated count and report their recycling numbers to the Institute for inclusion in the program's grand total.

Anyone wishing to recycle their wire hangers may do so at a participating drycleaner. For the list of participating drycleaners, visit: <http://www.dlionline.org/Participating-Dry-Cleaners>.

If there is no participating cleaner near you, ask your local cleaner if they will take the hangers. The answer is often yes and you can do your part to keep hangers out of your local landfill.

Who can we turn to politically?

By James Clingman
NNPA Columnist

“Who can I turn to, when nobody needs me? My heart wants to know, and so I must go where destiny leads me.” Listening to an old album by the Temptations, “In a Mellow Mood,” made me think about the political trick-bag that black folks are in now that Barack is on his way out and the focus is on 2016 presidential candidates.

I thought about how black folks are nowhere in the political conversation, neither on the Democratic nor Republican side. Based on the last mid-term election, after which pundits said the emphasis must now be placed on white men and Hispanic voters, blacks find ourselves on the outside looking in, asking, “Who can I turn to?”

Politically, black voters are obsolete—no longer needed and in some cases, no longer even wanted. Who can we turn to, now that’s over? Terms such as the “middle class,” “minorities,” “LGBT,” and other nebulous classifications do

not identify a group of people who have been in this nation since it began, and do not address our needs or our deserved compensation, in some form or another, for the labor and wealth that we generated.

Oh, we are good little boys and girls when it comes to carrying the water for the Democrats for the past 80 years or so. We are so docile and compliant as we traipse to the polls every four years to choose from the two persons put in front of us by the real powers in this country.

It’s nearly always a case of voting for

turn to?”

What is our “destiny,” as the words of that song imply? Where is destiny leading us now? Well, here is what Martin Delany said in his book, “The Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent,” “No people can be free who themselves do not constitute an essential part of the ruling element of the country in which they live. The liberty of no man is secure who controls not his own destiny. For people to be free, they must necessarily be their own

As the new political season gets underway, I reiterate that although we have a trillion other tools, called dollars, the only tool we have relied upon has been the vote. Thus, we now face a political climate that has absolutely no concern for the black electorate because they already know what we are going to do and not do.

Hillary is the likely choice for blacks now, even though she will not commit to issues that directly benefit black people, just as the ones on the Republican side will not. Unless we organize a critical mass of black people willing to be politically independent, vote (or refuse to vote) as a bloc, and leverage our dollars against a political system that has no regard for us, we are doomed as a concern in public policy.

Another song on that Temptations’ album, our political swansong, says, “What now my love, now that you’ve left me? How can I live through another day? Watching my dreams turn into ashes, and my hopes into bits of clay. Once I could see, once I could feel, now I am numb, I’ve become unreal. What now my love, now that it’s over? I feel the world closing in on me. No one would care, no one would cry if I should live or if I should die.”

Better yet, why don’t we all join in a chorus of “What kind of fool am I?”

Jim Clingman, founder of the Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce, is the nation’s most prolific writer on economic empowerment for black people. He can be reached at: www.blackonomics.com

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We are so docile and compliant as we traipse to the polls every four years to choose from the two persons put in front of us by the real powers in this country.”

the lesser of two evils— and sometimes the evil of two “lesser” but still we continue to rely on a corrupt political system to do right by us.

We are so good at crying in front of statues and on bridges and at gravesites. We are great at listening to rousing speeches that cause us to feel good but never make us go out and “do good” for ourselves. We are so captivated by many of those for whom we vote, and we really believe they will work for us when they get to Washington, rather than work for themselves. Our naiveté is off the charts when it comes to politics, which is now causing us to ask, “who can we

rulers.”

Will we follow Delany’s lesson or will we continue to be swayed by U.S. Representative John Lewis, who says the vote is “sacred” and is the “most powerful” weapon in a democratic society. Will we follow the likes of the “Five M’s” – Marcus, Medgar, Malcolm, Martin and Maynard— or will we continue to slobber over many of today’s politicians who have overstayed their time in office and who have not nor will do anything that specifically benefits black people?

Abraham Maslow said, “If a hammer is the only tool you have, every problem in front of you will look like a nail.”

The Annapolis Times

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Call for Participation

BANNEKER-DOUGLASS MUSEUM



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PRESENTS

Jumping the Broom: Celebrating African American Weddings in Maryland

May 2016 - November 2016

The Banneker-Douglass Museum is the State of Maryland's official museum of African American heritage. The museum serves to document, interpret, and promote the history and culture of African American Marylanders through exhibitions, programs, and projects in order to improve the understanding and appreciating of America's rich cultural diversity for all. In an effort to continue our mission, the BDM is looking to celebrate African American couples who live in the state of Maryland and who have been married for 50 years or more. If you would like the chance to participate in this inspirational exhibition, please see the criteria listed below.

- **Must be Maryland State Resident**
- **Both spouses must identify as African American**
- **Married for 50 years or more**
- **Both husband and wife must still be living**
- **Must have photographs that document the wedding and 50th anniversary.**

If you meet the criteria listed above, please submit a brief narrative explaining when/where the couple met and the dates of their marriage. Please feel free to share any additional special memories in your narrative that may highlight your journey towards love.

If you are interested in showcasing your love story in *Jumping the Broom*, please contact BDM Curator of Exhibitions Shakia Gullette at Shakia.Gullette@maryland.gov by **July 20, 2015**.

Banneker- Douglass Museum
84 Franklin Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
www.bdmuseum.maryland.gov

Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree Comes to Southern Maryland CSM



CSM President Dr. Brad Gottfried (center) shakes hands with University of Maryland, Baltimore Senior Vice President and Dean of Graduate School Dr. Bruce Jarrell (right), as Dean of UMSON Dr. Jane Kirschling looks on as the Dual Admission Agreement between UMSON and CSM was signed April 8, 2015 in La Plata, Maryland. Courtesy Photo

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) and the University of Maryland School of Nursing (UMSON) signed an agreement of dual admission April 8 to bring a seamless transition from the Associate of Science in Nursing to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree to Southern Maryland.

“Over the years, the CSM nursing program’s success has resulted in strong community partnerships such as collaborations between the college and regional health care facilities to provide support for health care education. Today, we celebrate another outstanding partnership,” said CSM President Dr. Brad Gottfried.

“CSM has established a solid reputation as the leading resource for accessible education and academic excellence to the citizens of Southern Maryland. It is vitally important to me that the college is always looking ahead for workforce disruptions,” said CSM Trustees Chair Michael L. Middleton on the looming need for nurses with a BSN to meet new standards under the Affordable Care Act. “If we don’t address this need, a critical shortage of nurses will be upon us in a

very short time.”

To fill the workforce need, CSM partnered with UMSON to design a dual admission program for current or incoming nursing students. Students apply to both schools simultaneously and progress through the nursing program satisfying requirements of both schools. In addition to transfer credits for completed coursework, UMSON will award students 30 credits toward their UMSON BSN upon verification of an active RN license. BSN coursework can be completed through Web hybrid courses taught on-site at CSM by UMSON faculty.

“The 2010 Institute of Medicine report [on the future of nursing] said that by 2020, 80 percent of our nurses need to hold a baccalaureate degree or higher. Baccalaureate programs in this country can’t meet that target; we can only meet it when we embrace and welcome these opportunities to partner together between associate degree and baccalaureate education,” said UMSON Dean Jane M. Kirschling.

For 40 years, CSM’s nursing department has been one of the region’s pri-

mary providers of quality healthcare training. Today, the college graduates about 90 nursing students each academic year with the majority finding employment in the Washington, D. C. metro area and Southern Maryland.

“This agreement is important to me because it means that students like me can continue our education toward a bachelor degree right here in Southern Maryland at a great nursing school that is highly respected,” said CSM Third-Semester Nursing Student Suzanne Hammett of Lexington Park.

Hammett is a mother of two young children who returned to school in order to create a better life for her family after her marriage ended. When her father suggested college and taking advantage of a second chance, Hammett chose nursing. “The labor and delivery nurses were so kind and caring when I had my daughters, I knew that if I had the opportunity I would like to pursue a career in nursing,” she said.

“A dual admission opportunity such as this one and having high quality academic resources available locally is par-

ticularly attractive to a student like me, as I appreciate the face-to-face instruction rather than learning in an online environment. The traditional classroom experience is much more conducive to fostering supportive relationships with my professors, and developing study groups with fellow students,” said Valerie Dowell of Lusby.

At age 38, Dowell was a single mother after the death of her husband. She chose to enter the nursing program because it provided a stable career and combined her humanitarian and medical interests.

“The dual admission articulation agreement expands the opportunity for students to succeed and pursue their lifelong goals right here in the community,” said Lindsey Acquaviva of Swan Point.

Acquaviva chose CSM for her education in nursing because of the credibility of the program and how highly recognized it is in the community, she said. “Nursing is such an exciting career option because it has so much to offer. In nursing you will find great job security and the opportunity to learn is endless.”

Ravens C.J. Mosley adjusting to NFL off-season program

By *Turron Davenport*

C.J. Mosley is coming off an outstanding debut season in the NFL. He was a consensus All Rookie selection and came close to winning the Defensive Rookie of the Year Award. Mosley recently took time to talk about adjusting to the Baltimore Ravens' off-season program.

Mosley had wrist surgery recently and has not been able to do too much other than work with free body weights. He said that he is progressing. Injuries are a part of the game and Mosley isn't immune to them. He suffered two shoulder injuries while he was at Alabama. Fortunately, that is something that he hasn't had to deal with the Ravens.

Ravens Strength and Conditioning Coach Bob Rogucki had a good explanation as to why so many collegiate players suffer multiple shoulder injuries and how to limit those injuries from reoccurring.

"A lot of the people that come into the program, they don't understand the shoulder capsule. That's a big concern of ours," Rogucki said. "We look at the shoulder capsule as bumpers on a car; they protect that capsule. We attack the shoulder probably more than most guys coming into our program, because of the vulnerability that is there every time they receive a blow on the field."

The need to strengthen and condition the shoulder for all of the hard hits is especially the case for a linebacker like Mosley.

Mosley says that the weights they lift at the Ravens facility are different from the ones at Alabama. The team does more lifting with free weight, which helps Mosley because of his previous shoulder injuries.



Ravens linebacker C.J. Mosley pursues a play in a game during his rookie 2014 season. Mosley likes the way the Ravens strength and conditioning staff set workouts, which has helped him isolate certain muscles enabling them to get stronger.

Courtesy Photo/www.baltimoreravens.com

Mosley says he likes the way the Ravens strength and conditioning staff set workouts according to how the body is, which has helped him to isolate certain muscles enabling them to get stronger.

The recovery time in an NFL off-season before getting back to workouts is actually longer than Mosley experienced during his time at Alabama. He says that the biggest change from college for him has been the timeframe. At Alabama, the players got a few weeks off after the bowl game and then they were right back at it, doing mostly condition and workouts.

Adjusting to a new city has been fun for Mosley. He says he likes that Baltimore is a football town. The first time he saw the rich, green surroundings at the Under Armour facility in Owings

Mills, he was pleasantly surprised.

"[When] you hear Baltimore— you hear city and you think all you're going to see are buildings here and there," Mosley said.

Fortunately for him, the really cold

weather didn't hit Baltimore until after the season ended when he had already left to go back home to Alabama.

Mosley is thankful that he didn't have to endure the bad elements of the mid-Atlantic climate in the winter.



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More Baltimore Ravens stories by Turron Davenport available at: www.baltimoretimes-online.com

Roland Park Place Nurse Among Best in Baltimore

By Stacy M. Brown

She was just as surprised as her colleagues when she discovered that she had been named one of the top nurses in Baltimore.

It wasn't because Tanya Allen didn't deserve the honor, it was because to her and those who know her, it is no secret that she loves her job and going above and beyond is simply second nature.

"I learned through an email that I was one of the winners but when I first saw the email I thought it was a hoax," said Allen, a 16-year veteran of nursing who decided when she was just 14 that she wanted to be a nurse. "I ignored the first email but then I kept getting more emails and decided to finally open one of them up. I was like, 'maybe this is for real.'"

Indeed, it was for real! In a survey drawing hundreds of nominees over a nine-month period, Allen was selected among the nursing elite by Baltimore Magazine for its inaugural "Excellence in Nursing" Top Nurses 2015 list.

According to a news release, in order to arrive at the results of the survey, Baltimore Magazine recruited a panel of registered nurse advisors appointed by the Maryland Nurses Association and major local hospitals, to review nominations and select the top candidates under 18 different nursing specialties.



Tanya Allen was selected among the nursing elite by Baltimore Magazine for its inaugural "Excellence in Nursing" Top Nurses 2015 list. Baltimore Magazine recruited a panel of registered nurse advisors appointed by the Maryland Nurses Association and major local hospitals to review nominations and select the top candidates under 18 different nursing specialties. Courtesy Photo

Allen, the director of health services at Roland Park Place, the only nonprofit

continuing care retirement community in Baltimore City, oversees the operations at the center, its on-site Ambulatory Care Center, and all aspects of health and wellness support for residents.

Incidentally, a serious illness she suffered as a 14-year-old proved to be a pivotal moment in her life and it led Allen on the path to a career in nursing.

"I had a stroke when I was 14 and the nurses at Johns Hopkins Hospital here in

Baltimore treated me very well," Allen said. "So, I thought that I can be a person who could provide the same kind of care to others."

When Allen told her mother, Grace Crowner, about her career plans the idea didn't exactly resonate.

"My mom was a little taken aback at first because she thought seeing blood would scare me," said Allen, who holds a Bachelor of Science degree in health systems management from the University of Baltimore.

However, her mom and Allen's husband, Leroy, have been among the nurse's biggest cheerleaders, she said. "[They are] very supportive," Allen said. "I've sincerely enjoyed working as a nurse and working with older ones. I just have a love and a passion for people."

Allen says her first director of nursing, Betsy Euris, proved to be a true inspiration for her and taught her everything that she needed to know about caring for her patients.

She says she wouldn't trade nursing for any other job in the world and being named among the top 50 nurses in Baltimore is just the icing on the proverbial cake.

"I was once the patient and now I'm providing the care for those who can't provide it for themselves and that's really the highlight for me," Allen said.

In dispensing advice to aspiring nurses, Allen noted that the nursing field is large with many areas in which an individual can choose to work.

"I'd tell those who want to be a nurse to find their niche and flourish," she said. "Never stop learning because things are always changing in nursing so it's important to keep abreast of those changes."

NAMIWalks
Saturday, May 16, 2015
Inner Harbor, Baltimore
Registration at 9 a.m.
Register in advance:
www.namibaltimore.org

#hopestartswithyou

Our Daily Bread needs volunteers!

The largest soup kitchen in Maryland is located in downtown Baltimore and serves a over 780 hot lunches 365 days a year and breakfast on weekday mornings. Volunteers as young as 15 (14 when accompanied by an adult) are needed to assist in serving lunch from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Donations of casseroles, cookies, desserts, canned foods, baby food, diapers and seasonal decorations are needed. For more information, call 443-986-9031 or visit: www.catholiccharities-md.org.

Katie Couric, Co-Founder
EIF's National Colorectal
Cancer Research Alliance

Really?

Did you know that of cancers affecting both men and women, colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer? But this is one cancer you can prevent.

Screening tests help find polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

So, if you're 50 or older, do everything you can to prevent colorectal cancer. Screening really does save lives!



1-800-CDC-INFO
(1-800-232-4636)
www.cdc.gov/screenforlife

Minority Health Month: Making Progress on Health Disparities

by *Sylvia Mathews Burwell*

Secretary of Health & Human Services (HHS)

Half a century ago, our nation was in the midst of a Civil Rights revolution. Over these last few years, we've reached several milestones: the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, Dr. King's transformative "I Have a Dream" speech, and the historic march from Selma to Montgomery.

As we commemorate these events, we feel the weight of their expectations. We see the path that has moved us closer to justice and equality, but we also see the stumbling blocks and shortcomings along the way. April is National Minority Health Month, and while health equity is always a top priority at the Department of Health and Human Services, it's an important time to highlight how far we've come, and how far we have left to go.

Today, African-Americans have the highest mortality rate of any racial and ethnic group for cancer generally and for most major cancers individually. Latino communities also suffer from disproportionate rates of illness, like cervical cancer. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are more likely to have hepatitis B than non-Hispanic whites, and African-Americans, Latinos, and American Indians are all more likely to have diabetes.

The statistic that exacerbates all of these health realities is that communities of color are more likely to be uninsured than white Americans.

Working to close these racial and ethnic disparities is some of the most important work we do at HHS, and key to that work is giving more people of color access to quality, affordable health insurance.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, all Americans have new options for getting covered. During our last Open Enrollment, nearly 11.7 million Americans signed up or were re-enrolled through the Health Insurance Marketplace. And since several of the Affordable Care Act's coverage provisions began to take effect in 2010, about 16.4 million uninsured people have gained health coverage. That's the largest reduction of uninsured adults in four decades.

For African-Americans, the uninsured rate has declined 9.2 percentage points, while the Latino community has seen a 12.3 percentage point drop.

We are also making progress against many racial health disparities. For instance, since 2012, the disparities in some important vaccination rates have been substantially reduced for African-Americans, Latinos, and American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, American families across the country have the financial and health security that comes with coverage. They can rest a little easier at night, knowing a sickness or an accident won't mean a lifetime of insurmountable debt.

But we also know that insurance alone won't bridge this gap.

Many of these newly insured are navigating coverage for the first time in their lives, and it can be confusing. They may not think to seek out the preventive services that can detect their cancer early or help keep their diabetes under control. They also may not realize that many of these kinds of services are offered at no out-of-pocket cost.

If we want health equity, we need to make health literacy a priority. That's why HHS has launched a campaign to bring people from "Coverage to Care," to connect people to the care they need; teach them how to understand their benefits and their bills; and give them the tools to make healthier decisions.

Racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare are complex and there is no one silver bullet. That's why we will continue to work in every area of our healthcare system to find and eliminate racial and ethnic barriers to good health.

We are committed to building a better health care system for everyone. Dr. King said, "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability," and we know it will take work to give America the health care system it deserves. But we are committed to that goal and we will deliver for the people we serve.

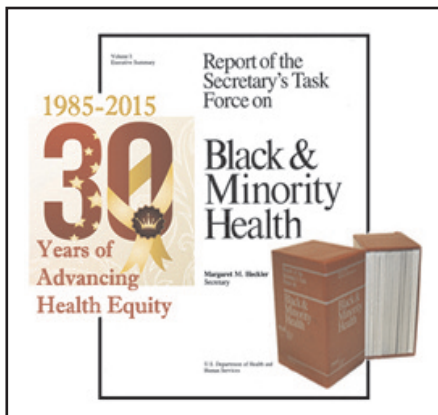
Our nation has come too far to turn back.



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



EIF National Colorectal Cancer
RESEARCH ALLIANCE
Entertainment Industry Foundation Program



2015 celebrating the 30th Anniversary of a Landmark Report

The year 2015 marks the 30th Anniversary of the 1985 Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health, a landmark eight-volume report, known as the **Heckler Report, 1985-2015, 30 Years of Advancing Health Equity**, the Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health documenting health disparities affecting Americans of color and recommending action steps for the nation to address these disparities. Both the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and CDC's Offices of Minority Health were set up in response to the report.

After years of observing poorer health for Blacks and other minorities in comparison to Whites, the Secretary of HHS, Margaret Heckler, commissioned a powerful task force in 1984 to describe the health status of racial and ethnic minority populations more fully and to consider what the federal government could do to address them.

The Task Force defined minorities as Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian/Pacific Islanders. The Task Force paid particular attention to the higher death rates of Blacks and other minorities in comparison to Whites; noting that there were 59,000 greater deaths for Blacks per year, higher than for any other racial or ethnic group.

To learn more about the Heckler Report visit baltimoretimes-online and read "Now is the Time to Answer the Call" by J. Nadine Gracia, MD, MSCE

No easy solution to eliminate health disparities

By Stacy M. Brown

There are no easy answers for finding out the key to eliminating health disparities and several factors might help lead to the reason why such inequities exist.

"In the public health, I think we realize now that eliminating health disparities or achieving health equity will take work on multiple levels including [with] the individual, the community or neighborhood, the health care system and policy levels," said Dr. Cheryl Holt, a disparities expert and co-director of the population science program at the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center. "We recognize that almost everything impacts health including factors such as poverty, education, employment and where a person lives." "With that, eliminating health disparities will take work on all of these levels."

In 2014, Dr. Holt, who is also associate professor of behavioral and community health and co-director of the Center for Health Behavior Research at the university's School of Public Health, joined internationally recognized molecular epidemiology of breast and prostate cancer investigator Dr. Joanne Dorgan in leading a new research program that focused on issues of cancer epidemiology, prevention and disparities at the Greenebaum Cancer Center.

The program brings together investigators with a range of expertise including cancer disparities, tobacco control, molecular epidemiology, genetics and genomics of pain, as well as other disciplines. It includes investigators from the School of Medicine and School of Nursing on the UMB campus as well as researchers from the School of Public Health in College Park.

While numerous reports continue to suggest that certain policies at medical facilities create barriers for minority patients, Dr. Holt says she isn't sure that is the case.

"I am aware that certain facilities have in their mission to serve patients in the Baltimore area which includes a significant proportion of minority individuals, for example, the Greenebaum Cancer Center," she said.



Dr. Cheryl Holt

Courtesy Photo/University of Maryland

As a result of a long documented lack of trust that minorities tend to have toward physicians, Dr. Holt noted that trust does play a key role in health care. She says it could also play a larger role

cate themselves about their condition so they are more informed on the choices made," Dr. Holt said.

"Taking a family member or companion to a medical appointment should also be considered and can prove helpful in many instances," she said.

"There can be culture or language differences that make for challenges in the health care setting. There can be limited health literacy among the patients, which makes it difficult for people to access and interact with the health care system even when they do have insurance," Dr. Holt said.

The medical research also shows racial and ethnic minority patients tend to receive a lower quality of care than non-minorities.

"In some cases, there may be bias, even unintended or unconscious bias on the part of the providers treating people who in many cases are different from them," Dr. Holt said.

"Trust is an important issue and it is part of the health disparities or inequities picture. There are legitimate, historical reasons why people may not trust doctors, hospitals and [other] institutions," said Dr. Holt. "It is important today that people become advocates of their own health care. Find a regular doctor that you feel comfortable with and remember that you are the consumer and you can change doctors if you don't feel you are getting good care."

in helping to reduce disparities.

"Trust is an important issue and it is part of the health disparities or inequities picture. There are legitimate, historical reasons why people may not trust doctors, hospitals and [other] institutions," she said. "It is important today that people become advocates of their own health care. Find a regular doctor that you feel comfortable with and remember that you are the consumer and you can change doctors if you don't feel you are getting good care."

"It's also important that patients edu-

With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the White House has repeatedly noted that there has been a closing of the disparities gap. However, only time will tell if that assessment holds.

"I think it may be that people are enrolling and accessing health insurance. However, in the overall big picture, it is going to take more time to determine the impact on health disparities," she said.

'The Book Thing' marks 10 years of donating books

By Andrea Blackstone

National Volunteer Month is an ideal time to recognize people like Russell Wattenberg and volunteers who assist him.

The founder of The Book Thing of Baltimore, Inc. gives away books year-round, with the help of volunteers and part time hired assistants who pitch in when a load of books arrive or when expertise is required.

The Book Thing's supporters recently celebrated 10 years of book giving and sharing at 3001 Vineyard Lane in Baltimore, which is the unique nonprofit's permanent home.

As a result of what one man started after volunteering to help teachers, each patron may take up to 150,000 books a day— every Saturday and Sunday.

Visitors can periodically catch a glimpse of Wattenberg when he emerges from the garage where he sorts book donations to ask if any help is needed to find particular selections.

"One of the biggest problems I have is trying to convince people that yes, the books are free! Yes, they can take as many as they want," Wattenberg said. "Many books people take— books they didn't even know they are looking for."

Wattenberg explained that book browsers may find titles that college friends raved about 20 years ago but never got around to reading. In some cases, book lovers have heard about an author on the radio and they prefer to take a free book to determine if they like it, before buying the author's other titles.

The movement to take and share books was created after Wattenberg volunteered to support teachers, during the time when he managed Dougherty's Pub in Baltimore.

"It just started out as me giving away some books to some teachers who were at the bar," Wattenberg said. "Teachers would come in for Friday happy hour. They remarked they did not have enough books for their classroom. I would go to thrift stores and used book sales and browse myself. I couldn't pass up a copy of 'To Kill a Mockingbird' for 10 cents. I had a bunch of books I picked up so, I told teachers if you guys



Supporters of The Book Thing of Baltimore, Inc. located at 3001 Vineyard Lane in Baltimore recently celebrated 10 years of book giving and sharing. As a result of what founder Russell Wattenburg started after volunteering to help teachers, each patron may take up to 150,000 books a day— every Saturday and Sunday. All the books at The Book Thing are free and people from all over Maryland as well as neighboring states regularly visit the book store. Courtesy Photos

need books, go through the back of the van and take whatever they wanted. Other people started bringing in books they didn't want anymore. More and more, people started getting books. It just kind of grew from there."

Wattenberg's operation was granted 501(c)(3) status in 1999. When The Book Thing had to move from a rented row house basement in 2005, Wattenberg wondered if putting together a deal to acquire a new location would be possible.

"The banks just laughed at me. I was asking for a mortgage and my business was giving away books," Wattenberg said. "Eventually we raised the money for the down payment and found someone to give me a mortgage."

Today, people often find out about The Book Thing by word of mouth. Everyone from homeschoolers to students who attend Johns Hopkins

University have visited The Book Thing.

Wattenberg's operation regularly attracts visitors from Pennsylvania; Delaware; New Jersey; New York; West Virginia; Virginia; and the District of Columbia.

When it comes to taking thousands of books, individuals who run prison libraries have turned to The Book Thing as a resource, and so have book seekers who are building a school library or rebuilding one that burned down. Some people have even traveled from other parts of the world to book hunt. Doctors who work overseas search The Book Thing looking for medical books and patrons have reportedly shipped books to Eastern Europe, Africa, the Philippines and Indonesia.

New books and trade paperback versions of a title released in hardback find their way on to bookshelves at The

Book Thing.

"Some publishers and printers drop off loads of books. We'll get overstock from bookstores. We'll get stuff from authors," Wattenberg said. "We get a lot of review copies."

Wattenberg remarked that the most rewarding part of what he does is having a place where people can drop off books for others to take and read. Many donors are thankful that they don't have to throw their treasured books away, when they transition to assisted living facilities, when loved ones with collections pass away or during a move.

"Getting books is never the problem. It's getting the right books in the right hands," Wattenberg said. "Spread the word and take books!"

To learn more about The Book Thing, visit: www.bookthing.org or call 410-662-5631.

Odenton nonprofit provides free grooming services to Annapolis students

By Andrea Blackstone

When money is extremely tight for families, haircuts and hairstyling are often not top priorities. Nevertheless, having a well-groomed appearance can be an important part of self-esteem. Robert W. Cradle, founder of the Odenton-based nonprofit called Rob's Barber-shop Community Foundation (R.B.C.F.), finds resources to fund grooming projects. Six donors—Allstate Capital Women in Business, Ronald McDonald House Charities, the Gilliam Foundation, The Meltzer Group, the Fort Meade Officers' Spouses' Club and Sam's Club in Severn, Maryland—helped to bring a full-service barber/beauty salon to the Phoenix Academy in Annapolis. In August of 2014, the school joined forces with R.B.C.F. to create a space where no-charge grooming services can be provided for students in need of them.

The principal of the alternative school, Dr. John A. Thompson says 200 students are currently enrolled at the Phoenix Academy. Marie T. Gomba is the school's social worker that will identify students in need of assistance.

Based on information provided to Cradle by Gomba, the top barrier of students at Phoenix Academy to having regular hygienic and grooming care is lack of available household funds. Thus, Thompson said that he believes the new barber/beauty salon will benefit students on many levels.

"We want to make school a place where kids want to come. I think it's a part of our way of building those relationships...and trust. It is something to offer them as a reward. It's something that we can offer to kids who don't have a means to do it on their own," Thompson said.

The project at the Phoenix Academy marks R.B.C.F.'s sixth fully installed barber/beauty salon. As project manager until July 16, 2015, Cradle will continue to generate resources, make site visits to the installed barber/beauty salon, provide operating supplies and supply home maintenance products for students as needed, such as brushes and combs.

Cradle has been running R.B.C.F. full-



Before Rob's Barbershop Community Foundation completed work at the Phoenix Academy in Annapolis, the space was used as a storage area. It was converted to a barber/beauty salon for students who need grooming services.



The project at the Phoenix Academy marks R.B.C.F.'s sixth fully installed barber/beauty salon.
Photo Credit: Jordan Ulmer

time since 2003. His background includes barbering, resource development and nonprofit management. The nonprofit raises money to help provide grooming services for people who lack access to regular hygienic care. If Cradle

believes that he can find donors who will underwrite a prospective project, he searches for supporters, installs equipment and gets the barber/beauty salon up and running. R.B.C.F. and partnering schools locate contracted barbers, beau-

ticians and volunteers to provide on-site services.

"It's a unisex one-chair shop. We converted a storeroom that wasn't being used as much. It is actually capable of performing services on all genders and races," Cradle said, referring to the Phoenix Academy's project. "Last year, we just did a case managed project with the entire AACPS (Anne Arundel County Public Schools) where we case managed...grooming and hygiene (services) for 90 homeless students in Anne Arundel County. This is actually the tail end of that. The same funding that we had to perform that case managed project, we were able to squeeze this particular project out," Cradle said.

R.B.C.F. is a spin-off of Rob's Barber-shop, which was a barbershop once owned by Cradle. He started the nonprofit, after noticing that a number of students who are served through social service agencies like shelters did not have access to regular grooming. Through R.B.C.F., Cradle has handled 23 projects for portable shops, case management or fully installed projects in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore and the District of Columbia.

Thompson said Phoenix Academy takes a holistic approach to supporting youth. This undertaking is just another step taken to meet their needs. He expects that having the resource in the school will also help students to feel good about themselves, enabling youth to prepare for special occasions like prom season, holidays and graduation.

"I see it spiking a certain points of the year, but I also see it as something that we can consistently do for a number of kids kind of as a reward for coming to school and doing what they are supposed to do. In theory, every kid in this building has not been successful at their home school or comprehensive school, so we have to look to do things a little bit differently," Thompson said. "I see it being a big win for us."

To learn more about R.B.C.F.'s projects or to make a donation, Visit: <http://www.rbcf.org>

Rambling Rose

*Spend an Evening
with your Favorite Jazz Musicians*



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello everyone, how are you? I hope you all had a very nice weekend. The weather was in our favor. Before I get started, I want to thank all the supporters from the bottom and top of my heart who came to the "Rosa Pryor Music Scholarship Fund Gospel Prayer Breakfast" fundraiser last Saturday. It was awesome to see over 200 people who got up so early to be at an 8 a.m. breakfast to help us raise money for the children.

The event was a success. It could not have happened if it wasn't for you and my special, very special performers; Just Being Blessed Gospel Singers and Heavenly Bless Gospel Singers. Both groups were outstanding. Also Nina Dennard, a gospel soloist, who was fantastic and Michele Middleton, the young lady who brought tears to the eyes of my guests as she danced to several gospel songs with grace and spiritual meaning.

The master and mistress of ceremony, Carlton and Darlene Douglass were awesome in keeping the program moving very professionally. The minister, Lamont Brown, Jr. from Mt. Zion Baptist Church was remarkable in his ten-minute message that brought guests to their feet at the conclusion.

Special thanks go out to Rev. Daniel Worthy and his staff for the use of the Forest Park Senior Center.

Now, let's talk about some dynamite jazz and blues shows coming your way. **The Baltimore Blues Society** presents Terry Hanck and his band at the Rosedale American Legion Hall located at 1331 Seling Avenue in Rosedale on Saturday, April 25, 2015. Showtime is 8:30 p.m. For tickets and information, call Sam Cohen at 410-866-6280.

Bilal Ali Productions offers "A Night of Smooth Jazz & R&B" as part of "Jazz Appreciation Month" featuring na-

tional recording artists Wake Campbell, Blez Coe and many others on Saturday, April 25, 2015 at the Best Western Ballroom located at 1800 Belmont Avenue in Windsor Mills, Maryland. Dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m. and show time is 8:15 p.m. For ticket information, call at 443-540-7797 or visit: www.bilalproductions.com.

The Royal Theater & Community Heritage Corporation presents their Courtyard Summer Music Series "A Taste of Jazz at The Avenue Bakery" featuring the Phil Butts Sunset Band at 2229 Pennsylvania in Baltimore on Saturday, May 2, 2015 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. There will be food and drink included with your tickets. Call 410-225-3881.

My group, "**Signature Live!**" Motown 10 piece group from the Washington, D.C. area will perform two shows at Lexington Market on Saturday, May 2, 2015—noon until 2 p.m.

Jazz Expressways Foundation is hosting a bus trip to the Cape May Jazz Festival in Cape May, New Jersey from May 29-31, 2015 and invites you to join them. Please call now to reserve your seat and hotel accommodations so you won't be disappointed. For more details, call 410-323-7294 or 410-435-6334. Booking deadline is May 1, 2015!

St. Paul's School Jazz Band under the direction of Carl Grubbs will perform on Friday May 8, 2015 at the Liberty Senior Center at 1 p.m. at 3505 Resource Dr., Randallstown, Maryland 21133.

Just one more thing before I leave you, how about meeting me at the Mother's Day Expo on Wednesday, May 6, 2015 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the State Office Complex located at 201 W. Preston Street in Baltimore. Do all your Mother's Day shopping in one place.



The Hoppy Adams Foundation took students and chaperones from the Annapolis area on a field trip to the National Aquarium in Baltimore with a donation from the aquarium for fun and educational opportunities. The Charles W. "Hoppy" Adams, Jr. Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 2006 to promote and provide charitable, religious, scientific, literary and educational services for youth and adults individuals located in Annapolis, Maryland and the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Areas.



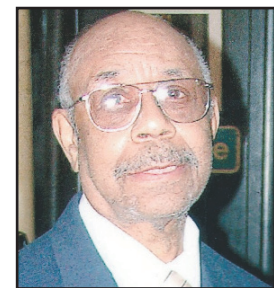
Jazzway 6004 invites the public to spend an afternoon with Cyrus Chestnut, renowned jazz pianist at a fundraising reception for the Walden School Young Musicians Program at 6004 Hollins Avenue in Baltimore, on Sat., April 25, 2015 at 4 p.m. For more information, call 410-952-4528 or 410-624-2222.

For more information and vending space, call Brian Neal at 410-767-8376 or email: brian.neal@maryland.gov.

Well, my friends that is it! I am out of space. Terrible situation! But remember if you need me; email me your information to rosapryor@aol.com. Or you can call me at 410-833-9474. I am also available to do a book signing at your next event. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS,



Art Sherrod Jr., renowned jazz saxophonist along with Shang and Kevin Jackson will perform at Magooby's Joke House & Sound Stage located at 9603 Deereco Road in Timonium on Sunday, April 26, 2015. Showtime is 5 p.m. This event is produced by Charm City Jazz. For tickets or more information, call 443-858-9781.



Larry Washington, the oldest member of the Arch Social Club hosts a "Tribute to the Stroke Survival Group" with dinner, dancing and live entertainment featuring

Phill Butts and Sunset Band on Sunday, April 26, 2015 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Arch Social Club located at 2426 Pennsylvania Avenue in Baltimore. For Ticket information, call 410-669-9856.

FOOD LION

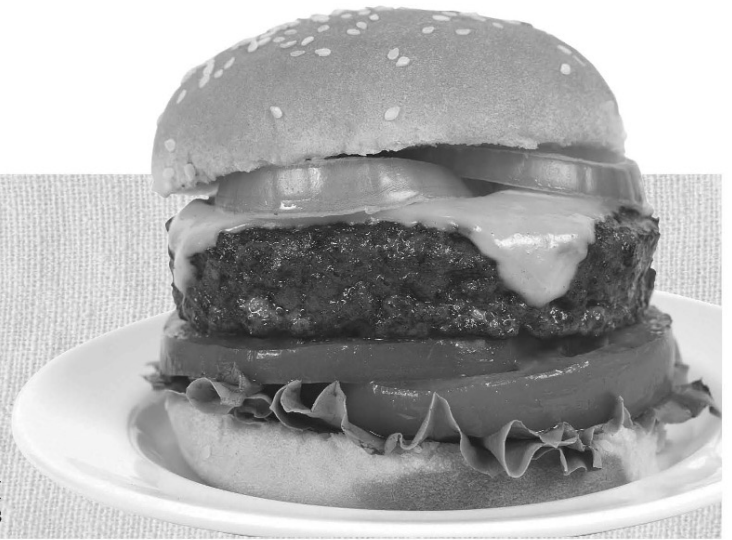
April 22 - April 28, 2015

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Hi-C Juice Drinks
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1⁷⁹
EA MVP

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EA MVP

16 Oz. - Select Varieties
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LB MVP

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Oscar Mayer Meat Franks
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**Rice-A-Roni or Pasta
Roni Boxes or Cups**
Without MVP Card 4/\$5

15 Oz.
Kellogg's Frosted Flakes Cereal
Without MVP Card \$3.39 EA

8 Mega, 16 Double Rolls
Charmin Ultra Tissue
8 Large Rolls
**Bounty Select-a-Size
Paper Towels**
Without MVP Card Regular Retail

69-75 Oz. - Select Varieties
**Tide Liquid
Laundry Detergent**
Without MVP Card \$11.29 EA

Scan Before You Shop!

30th Fallen Heroes Day honors police, firefighters killed in line of duty

Timonium, Md.— On Friday, May 1, 2015, hundreds of law enforcement officers and firefighters, dignitaries and members of the community, family and friends will gather at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens for the 30th Annual Fallen Heroes Day, a day set-aside to honor and remember those who died in the line of duty.

The 1p.m. ceremony, which honors those whose deaths have been declared "line of duty" during the past year, is the only statewide ceremony in the nation that brings together all segments of the public safety community. Fallen Heroes Day salutes police and correctional officers, firefighters, emergency medical and rescue personnel who risk their lives every day to protect the citizens of Maryland.

Since the May 2014 Fallen Heroes Day ceremony, three firefighters and three police officers have died in the line of duty. They are:

- FADO Robert Fogle, III, Baltimore County Fire Department, May 30, 2014
- Lt. James Bethea, Baltimore City Fire Department, November 12, 2014
- Corporal Jamel Clagett, Charles County Sheriff's Office, December 21, 2014
- Paramedic Erik Steciak, Bel Air Volunteer Fire Company, January 6, 2015
- Officer Craig Chandler, Baltimore Police Department, January 9, 2015
- Officer First Class Brennan Rabain, Prince George's County Police Department, March 7, 2015

The 30th Annual Fallen Heroes Day ceremony is dedicated to John W. Armiger, Jr., the ceremony's founder, who passed away in March of this year.

The ceremony begins with a procession of more than 25 honor guard units from across the state, police motorcycle and mounted units, bagpipers and drummers. WBAL news anchor Stan Stovall will be the keynote speaker; Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz and retired Baltimore Fire Chief Herman Williams will give memorial addresses. Cathy Hedrick, the mother of Kenny Hedrick who was a volunteer firefighter with Morningside Volunteer Fire Department, a Fallen Hero honored in 1992, will speak as a survivor. Mary Beth Marsden



30th Fallen Heroes Day will be held on Friday, May 1, 2015 at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens located at 200 East Padonia Road in Timonium, Maryland. Fall Heroes Day salutes police and correctional officers, firefighters, emergency medical and rescue personnel who risk their lives every day to protect the citizens of Maryland. Photo by Bill McAllen

(WBAL Radio) will serve as the emcee.

During the ceremony, after each 2015 fallen hero is remembered, their family will be presented with a replica of the Fallen Heroes Memorial and a resolution from the Maryland General Assembly. Additionally, each year police officers and firefighters who died in the line of duty before Fallen Heroes Day was established in 1986, are remembered with a presentation of a Governor's Proclamation to their families. The ceremony concludes with a wreath laying, 21-gun salute, taps, and a fly-over.

"For nearly 30 years, Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens has honored Mary-

land's fallen heroes— public servants who have given their lives in the line of duty," says John O. Mitchell, III, Chairman of Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens. "Fallen Heroes Day provides an opportunity for the citizens of Maryland to take time to show appreciation and respect for the men and women who risk

dition begun by the Armiger family."

Keeping with tradition, Governor Larry Hogan has issued a proclamation declaring May 1, 2015 as Fallen Heroes Day in Maryland and has ordered flags flown at half-staff at the State House and all state facilities.

The Fallen Heroes

Memorial is located within Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens, 200 East Padonia Road in Timonium, Maryland.

The observance is free and open to the public. For more information, call 410-666-0490 or visit: www.dulaneyvalley.com. Follow Fallen

Heroes Day on Facebook: Honoring Fallen Heroes Dulaney Valley.

"During the ceremony, after each 2015 fallen hero is remembered, their family will be presented with a replica of the Fallen Heroes Memorial and a resolution from the Maryland General Assembly."

their lives each day when they report to work. We are proud to continue the tra-

Gospel Singer Naomi B speaks to power of faith with debut single

By Ivan Thomas

Growing up on Baltimore's rough east side, singer Naomi B and her friends used to knock on every door in their neighborhood to sing to anyone who would listen.

As a young girl, she knew music was her calling but it was also her refuge from the many negative elements that surrounded her. Now, years later, her musical journey has taken a major leap with the release of her inspirational debut single, "Holding On," which is available on iTunes, CD Baby and Amazon.com.

Transparency has never been a challenge for Naomi B. Raised in the church, she was an extrovert who sang in the choir and took the lead in establishing ministries and singing groups. That is why when she recorded her song, it was easy to open up about her real experiences and share them with others.

"Holding On is a very transparent song that talks about being in that place of struggle where you honestly don't know what the end looks like," Naomi B. said. "Sometimes as Christians we believe that standing in faith means you only acknowledge where you want to be rather than the journey— but it's important to recognize where you are right here and right now— because it's in that moment that God can reach you and give you what you need. That is the message I wanted to relay with this song."

Naomi B began singing professionally

at the age of 21, shortly after graduating from college. With the desire to be an R&B singer, she looked up to artists such as Brandy, Monica and Toni Braxton. However, in 2006, that all changed.

"I felt that I was being called to sing for God," she said. "I told Him if you give me the songs I will sing them. Since then, I committed to use my voice as an instrument through which God could reach people. This has been several years in the making."

Moving forward as an inspirational singer, Naomi B desires to touch the lives of people from all walks of life. Thus far, the reception to her music has been tremendous. She recently wowed an audience of thousands during a performance at her home church in Baltimore - Church of the Redeemed of the Lord. Her first album, "Break Free," is scheduled for release at the end of the summer, and for her, that time cannot come soon enough.

"There is no greater feeling than when you are doing what you feel you have been put on this earth to do," Naomi B said. "I am so overwhelmed and to hear the responses from people that I get about how my music encourages them and inspires them, there is no greater feeling."

To listen to music from Naomi B, visit her website: www.naomibmusic.com and www.reverbnation.com/naomibmusic. Her new single, "Holding On" is available for sale on iTunes, CD Baby and Amazon.com.



Baltimore native Naomi B. always knew that music was her calling ever since she was a young girl. She recently wowed an audience of thousands during a performance at her home church in Baltimore— Church of the Redeemed of the Lord. Her debut single, "Holding On," is available for sale on iTunes, CD Baby and Amazon.com.

Photo Credit: AJ Gonzalez

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Share a Haircut Program

Hair Cuttery, National Network Partner to End Domestic Violence

Goal of Donating 75,000 Haircuts to Victims of Domestic Violence

Vienna, Va.— Hair Cuttery and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) are teaming up for Hair Cuttery's Share a Haircut program. On Monday and Tuesday, May 4-5, 2015, for every haircut purchased at one of Hair Cuttery's nearly 900 salons on the East Coast, in New England and the Midwest, a free haircut certificate will be donated to a victim of domestic violence through NNEDV's national network.

"We are honored to have the National Network to End Domestic Violence as a charity partner," said Dennis Ratner, CEO and founder of Hair Cuttery. "Our Share a Haircut program is powerful and it allows our company, thanks to the help of our stylists and clients, to be posi-

tive influence on the communities where we do business."

Through the partnership, Hair Cuttery and NNEDV will work closely to distribute free haircut certificates to individuals who are most in need. With the goal of donating 75,000 haircut certificates, beneficiaries will include women, children and men.

"Stepping up and stepping in for those

whose voices and confidence have been stifled by domestic violence is at the core of NNEDV's mission," said Kim Gandy, President and CEO of NNEDV. "When a company like Hair Cuttery can offer their services and expertise, the impact is two-fold—it allows recipients to have a moment to relax and feel pampered and saves them money on a service they might not otherwise be able to afford."

Last year marked the first time the Share a Haircut program was expanded to help not just children headed back to school, but the homeless, victims of domestic violence and veterans. In 2015, Hair Cuttery continues to build on that success, already having donated more than 50,000 certificates to the homeless in February.

To learn more about NNEDV, visit <http://nnedv.org>.



AAA Exchanges Batteries for Trees

AAA Mid-Atlantic Plants a Tree for Every Auto Battery Replaced and Recycled Starting on Earth Day

Towson— In honor of Earth Day, AAA Mid-Atlantic has once again partnered with the Arbor Day Foundation to plant a tree in a National Forest for every battery that is recycled starting on Earth Day April 22, 2015. Whenever an AAA member has a new car battery installed and the old battery recycled, the auto club will have a tree planted in one of America's National Forests.

Nationally, AAA has recycled more than 10.5 million automotive batteries and continues to promote the importance of recycling this essential automotive part since improperly stored or disposed of car batteries create health, fire and safety hazards for humans, animals and the environment.

Environmental responsibility is standard operating procedure for the AAA Battery Service programs. The auto club first began its mobile battery recycling efforts in 1997, and this year, AAA anticipates it will replace and recycle an

additional two million batteries via its roadside battery replacement service.

Regionally, AAA Mid-Atlantic recycles more than 142,000 batteries a year on average throughout its five-state territory of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, as well as the District of Columbia.

Upon the completion of this year's recycling program, AAA Mid-Atlantic will have planted more than 5,500 trees in the last six years. The tree plantings are made possible through the Arbor Day Foundation, a non-profit conservation and education organization.

"AAA understands the tremendous environmental impact recycling car batter-



ies has in terms of reducing toxic waste and unnecessary production of new materials. Sixty to 80 percent of car batteries consist of hard rubber or plastic. Recycling lessens the demand for original materials required for new products," said Ragina Cooper Averella, AAA Mid-Atlantic's Public and Govern-

ment Affairs Manager. "AAA Mid-Atlantic is pleased to do its part in recycling used car batteries to help protect the earth, and to help sustain the environment by contributing to the greening of America through the planting of trees."

As a benefit to members, AAA's Mobile Battery Service travels to a member's location to test their batteries, replace those that are spent, and recycle the old battery. Additionally, at all AAA Mid-Atlantic Retail Stores and AAA Car Care Insurance & Travel locations, every customer will be offered a complimentary wristband to join

in on the recognition of Earth Day.

AAA Members can call 866-AAA-AUTO (866-222-2886) for AAA's Mobile Battery Service or visit <http://midatlantic.aaa.com/Automotive/MobileBattery>.

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Deadline to File Homestead Tax Credit Application Quickly Approaching

Homeowners have until May 1 to file to determine eligibility for July 1, 2015

Baltimore— If you own a home in Maryland, you may already know that the property value where your home is located is reassessed once every three years. But did you also know there is a program, which may help make large assessment increases more manageable? It's called the Homestead Tax Credit, and for homeowners who haven't filed the one-time application, the deadline is on May 1, 2015.

In 2007, the General Assembly enacted legislation, which requires all homeowners to submit the one-time application to determine eligibility to qualify for the credit. When the bill originally passed, there was a select group of homeowners who had acquired their homes prior to December 31, 2007, and they were "grandfathered" into the program. Under the 2007 legislation, this group was required to file an application by December 31, 2012, in order to remain eligible for the credit.

A subsequent bill in 2013 provided the grandfathered homeowners:

- An extended application deadline through December 30, 2013

- The removal of the credit for the 2014 tax year

- A reinstatement of the credit only for the 2015 tax year

- A revised filing date from July 1 to May 1 of the first taxable year for which the property tax credit is allowed.

Any grandfathered homeowner who does not file an application by the May 1, 2015, deadline will lose their eligibility to reclaim the previous Homestead Credit base.

Homeowners who file the application do not automatically receive the credit. The one-time application is used to determine eligibility for the program. If eligible, the credit helps homeowners by limiting the increase in yearly taxable assessments to a fixed percentage, up to 10 percent or less each year, on their primary residence. The credit will be granted if the following conditions are met during the previous tax year:

- The property was not transferred to new ownership

- There was no change in the zoning classification requested by the homeowner resulting in an increase value of the property

- A substantial change did not occur in the use of the property



- The previous assessment was not clearly erroneous

- The dwelling must be the owner's principal residence and the owner must have lived in it for at least six months of the year, including July 1 of the year for which the credit is applicable, unless the owner was temporarily unable to do so by reason of illness or need of special care. An owner can receive a credit only on one property---the principal residence.

The one-time application is required, because some property owners were previously, and incorrectly, receiving credits on secondary/vacation homes and rental properties. The credits for the multiple properties resulted in lost tax

revenue for the counties and local governments. That revenue helps the local governments pay for services for their residents.

If you have already filed your application, do not file again. If you're not sure if an application was submitted, look it up in the Real Property database on the SDAT website.

New homeowners should receive an application from SDAT once the deed is recorded and updated in SDAT's database. If you didn't get an application, you can fill it out and apply online, or fill out a paper application and fax it to 410-225-9344, or mail it to: Department of Assessments and Taxation

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