

Lt. Col. Jason B. Davis Honored at Huber Memorial



US Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Jason B. Davis (left) is retired by Col. Grady A. Belveu at the Clubs of Quantico. The Baltimore native and Baltimore City College graduate retired from the military earlier this year. He was recently honored at a special surprise ceremony held at Huber Memorial Church on York Road. His storied 32-year military career includes deployments to the Mediterranean Sea aboard the 'USS Kearsage', participating in the Operations Noble Anvil and Shining Hope in Albania. He is the first African American promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Military Occupational Specialty 6302 Avionics Officer. (See article on page 12) Courtesy Photo

Baltimorean co-authors dynamic book celebrating faith, turning trials into triumph

By Andrea Blackstone

Patricia Johnson-Harris knows firsthand that making a change in life can open unexpected doors and reignite success. The Baltimorean who has lived in Maryland for 20 years relocated from Bronx, N.Y. to improve her two sons lives and her own. Johnson-Harris is now sharing some of her insight about conquering failure in the Amazon best-selling anthology, "Shift On: Twenty Stories of Turning Trials Into Triumph!"

"My greatest obstacle was trusting God enough so that I can begin to walk in faith. See, I knew that If I was going to leave that place... where I lived and how I was living – depressed, lost, afraid and feeling defeated— I needed to trust that God had my back, and that He was going to protect me and my family, if I just stepped out on faith," Johnson-Harris said. "I felt as if I was suffocating in New York. I was existing but I wasn't living. I know if I was to live, I need to get out of New York and Baltimore was the lucky city."

"Shift On" was officially released in early February. However, Johnson-Harris' book signing and reading of her chapter was held at Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park in Baltimore on March 24, 2016. The project accountant by trade founded the popular African American Authors & Empowerment Expo, now in its seventh year of opera-

tion. The local event creates a platform that exposes independent and national authors to the general public, by helping authors connect with national book clubs, organizations and readers abroad. Patricia Johnson-Harris is also the founder of a nonprofit called The Youth Writers Challenge. The organization's mission is to provide a platform for youth to creatively express themselves through writing.

After helping a plethora of authors to embrace their passion to write and promote their work, Johnson-Harris finally realized that she had a nonfiction story of her own to put on paper. The opportunity to publish it began during the 2015 African American Authors & Empowerment Expo that was held in Timonium. Nikki Woods, CEO of Nikki Woods Media, CEO of Victoria Street Publishing and Media Solutions and senior producer of The Tom Joyner Morning Show, participated in the event and told the Johnson-Harris about the forthcoming project, "Shift On."

After much prayer, Johnson-Harris explained that she opted to share her story in hopes of helping other people through writing her chapter, "Failure Isn't Fatal or Final." She hopes that readers will be reminded that, "trouble don't last always."

"I want them (readers) to build a relationship with God so that they can learn to walk in faith. My story is my faith



Baltimore resident Patricia Johnson-Harris is co-author of the book "Shift On: Twenty Stories of Turning Trials Into Triumph!" The book brings together 20 inspirational voices from various backgrounds who overcame setbacks in their lives. Johnson-Harris founded the popular African American Authors & Empowerment Expo, which is now in its seventh year, as well as the nonprofit organization, The Youth Writers Challenge.

Courtesy Photo

journey. I want them to realize that no matter how many times you've failed at something, that is not fatal or final, Johnson-Harris said. "Failure will make you stronger... It's a stepping stone to your success."

Woods, creator of the project, is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, graduated from Howard University. She penned the foreword and introductions for both installments, "Shift" and "Shift On," while telling part of her story. Twenty co-authors contributed to each book that is published through Nikki Woods Media. Woods explained that "Shift" was inspired by the belief that by sharing our stories, we give others per-

mission to embrace their truth and use it to turn trials into triumphs.

"The target audience for "Shift" is anyone who is looking to get to the "better" in their life or experience," Woods said. "We hope that they walk away knowing that they can overcome anything because we have all been there, done that and triumphed."

To purchase "Shift On," or to learn more about the 7th Annual African American Authors & Empowerment Expo to be held at Morgan State University on October 15, 2016, visit: www.aaexpo.net. A free companion journal to the anthology is available at: www.ShiftOn-TheBook.com.

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Energy Bill Would Strengthen U.S. Economy, Global Energy Security

By Drew Johnson

Let's be honest: The future of the U.S. economy is bleak. A new report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development predicts that the U.S. economy will grow only two percent this year—a downward revision of the already anemic 2.4 percent growth predicted late last year.

Fortunately, some Washington lawmakers are trying to turn this dreary forecast around. A bipartisan group of U.S. senators is working to pass an energy bill that would allow the country to export more natural gas. That would create thousands of jobs and generate billions in economic growth, while improving U.S. leverage in international energy markets.

The United States is enjoying a historic energy boom. Domestic natural gas production has increased 42 percent since 2005 and is on pace to jump another 39 percent by 2040. According to one report by the U.S. Energy Information Association, the country has enough sources of natural gas to meet the country's needs for at least the next 80 years.

With this ample supply, many companies have turned their attention to the export market. But before companies can begin new liquefied natural gas projects (gas is transported in liquid form), they must submit an application to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Right now, though, the Energy Department isn't required to decide on liquefied natural gas applications in any specified timeframe. Today, about 30 applications still awaiting approval. The Department has been slow walking some requests since 2012. That's downright ridiculous.

Consider an application for one export facility in Texas that has been pending for 49 months. If accepted, the project would support nearly 45,000 new jobs and produce exports valued at up to \$45 million every single day.

A project in Georgia could create over 1,000 jobs and support exports valued at nearly \$8 million per day. And one in Louisiana could employ 1,000 Americans and bring in \$17 million daily.

Overall, easing restrictions on natural gas exports could create nearly half a million jobs and add \$73.6 billion to U.S. GDP over the next 20 years.

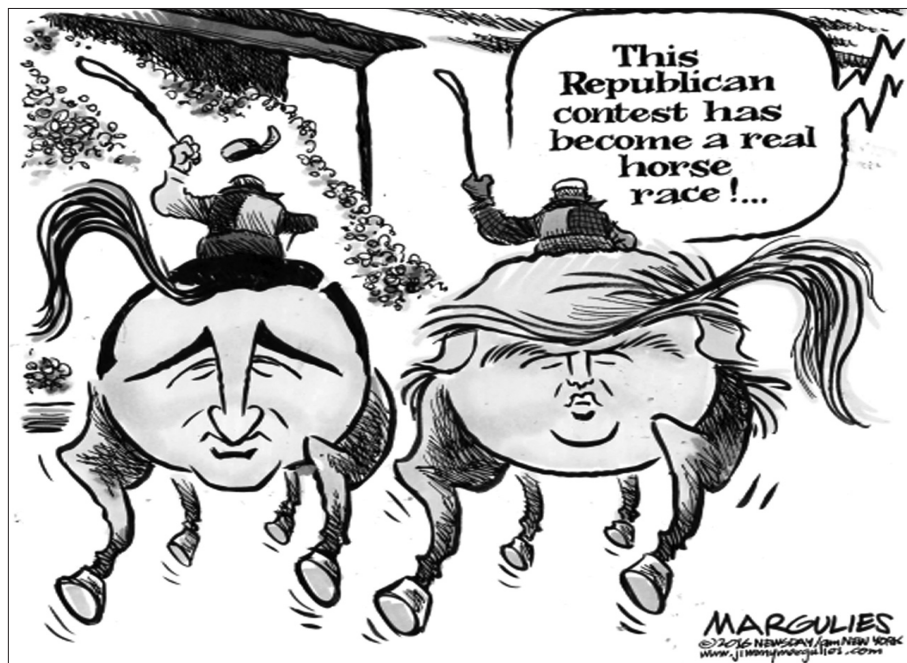
Exporting LNG would also help ease geopolitical tensions. Take Russia, a big natural gas exporter, which has repeatedly shown its willingness to threaten supply disruptions to obtain political concessions from dependent neighbors. If the United States could sell more natural gas to European countries, we could limit Russia's grip on our allies in the area.

Without knowing that LNG permit applications will be considered in a timely manner, companies won't invest in the jobs and facilities required to liquefy and export the gas. And other countries won't consider America a reliable sellers. Simply stated, they'll look for their gas elsewhere.

Thankfully, for the first time in nine years, the Senate is serious about passing legislation that would expedite the process for LNG exports. It would require the Energy Department to make a final call on project applications within 45 days of the completion of an environmental review—a reasonable standard by any measure.

Now, Congress must get it passed. This legislation would open up thousands of jobs and billions in economic growth while improving international security. Congress must move forward on sensible energy policy right away in order to ensure a brighter economic future for the United States.

Drew Johnson is a Senior Fellow at the Taxpayers Protection Alliance, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to limited, responsible government.



Community Affairs

BGE reminds customers to dial 811 before they dig

Baltimore—April is National Safe Digging Month and BGE reminds all customers and contractors to call 811 to have utility-owned underground lines marked before digging.

Nationwide, there were nearly 350,000 incidents of damage to an underground utility line because of digging without first calling 811, according to the Common Ground Alliance, the national association that promotes the 811 phone number and safe digging practices.

Striking an underground electric or natural gas pipe can cause serious injury, damages and service interruptions. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck, planting a tree and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects where a call to 811 should be one of the first steps.

BGE manages nearly 16,000 circuit miles of underground electric lines and more than 7,000 miles of buried natural

gas lines in its region, many of which may cross through residential properties. Properly locating these lines is essential to safely completing a digging job. In addition to BGE's lines, there are underground communications cables, water and sewer lines, and other utilities. Even properties that are not served by a particular service may still have utility lines running below ground.

When calling 811, customers and contractors are connected to Miss Utility to provide information about their project. Miss Utility will notify BGE and all member utilities of your plan to dig. The utilities will then mark their underground facilities. Calls are required at least two business days in advance of digging.

Once lines are located, excavators also must understand the markings and look for evidence of unmarked lines, such as water and sewer lines on private property. Sewer clean-outs and water valve covers are examples of equipment that can indicate the presence of underground lines.

For information about digging safely, including how to get lines marked and what to do after lines are marked, watch BGE's Dig Smart video. To learn more, visit: www.bge.com/811.

ACLU Report Documents Police Abuse in Maryland

By Barrington M. Salmon
Special to The Baltimore Times

A recently released report by the Maryland chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reveals the dangers black people continue to face during encounters with law enforcement.

In 2015, there were at least 21 individuals killed by police in Maryland. The ACLU study found that 81 percent of the victims were Black, nearly half were unarmed, and all the unarmed individuals killed were Black.

“Marylanders, and particularly communities of color, have long lived with the reality of unchecked police abuse,” said Policy Director Sara Love. “The public is rightfully demanding a seat at the table to ensure that officers who have committed wrongdoing are appropriately disciplined. Law enforcement has shown, time and again, that they are unable to police themselves. This session, the General Assembly must reform the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights to ensure that civilians have a meaningful role in the disciplinary process.”

Staff Attorney Sonia Kumar concurred. “Even as police custody deaths continue and demands for reform grow more powerful, we have seen little evidence that Maryland police departments are engaging with the issue on a systemic level,” she said. “Police agencies must commit to valuing the sanctity of all human life, regardless of race or class, and doing what it takes to infuse that into the culture, policies and prac-

One of the people who died in police custody was Freddie Gray, the 25-year-old Baltimore resident who was arrested without cause in last April, suffered severe injuries to his neck and spine and succumbed a week later from his injuries. His death added another layer to the clamor for fairness and justice for black residents and it is fueling an expanding movement in Maryland for police accountability reform, now being

these cases.

The briefing paper comes against the backdrop of a national push, primarily from Black Lives Matter and other millennial activists over the past three years, to force greater accountability in law enforcement and press for criminal justice reform. The murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012 triggered the creation and growth of the #BLM, while Michael Brown’s killing by a Ferguson, Missouri police officer in 2014 and the choking death of Eric Garner reinvigorated the demands for meaningful change.

Some of the highlights from the ACLU’s briefing paper: nearly half of those who died had a disability, substance use or a mental health issue of some kind. Ninety percent were Black; although the leading cause of death was gunshot wounds, in at least three instances, victims died almost immediately after being tased; in 20 of 21 cases, no criminal charges were filed; and after review of a number of cases, states attorneys declared the killings justified.

ACLU staff say it was impossible to determine whether any officers were disciplined for misconduct in these cases because as is customary, police officials refused to release such information.

Meanwhile, families are left to mourn.

“Looking at the high number of African-Americans killed I would be remiss not to say black lives matter. We are more than hashtags and body bags,” said Tawanda Jones, whose brother Tyrone West was killed during an encounter with Baltimore City police officers on July 18, 2013. “I will continue to fight for our lives until the end of time. The police need to be above-board in doing right, not above the law.”

“The briefing paper released last year, notes that between 2010 and 2014, at least 109 people died in police encounters. Those deaths occurred in 18 Maryland jurisdictions, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s, Washington and Wicomico Counties and Baltimore City.”

tices of their agencies. Maryland leaders can help them take a step in this direction by passing strong, statewide police accountability reform legislation.”

The briefing paper released last year notes that between 2010 and 2014, at least 109 people died in police encounters. Those deaths occurred in 18 Maryland jurisdictions, including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George’s, Washington and Wicomico Counties and Baltimore City.

During those four years, almost 70 percent of those who died in police encounters were Black, more than 40 percent were unarmed, and police officers were criminally charged in less than two percent of the 109 cases cited by the ACLU.

considered in Annapolis.

Gray died after what Baltimore city officials describe as a “rough ride,” when a detainee’s seat belts are left unbuckled and the driver drives in a manner to throw them around. Gray’s death triggered civil unrest which led to scores of arrests, millions of dollars in property damage and steadfast demands by embattled residents in Baltimore City for an end to police harassment and brutality. Six Baltimore City police officers are on trial for complicity in Gray’s death and city officials paid the Gray family a \$6.4 million settlement.

Meanwhile, in the past three years, Baltimore residents have filed 317 lawsuits alleging police brutality, and the city has paid out \$5.7 million to settle

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Financial Analyst Turned School Teacher Advocates Financial Literacy

By Stacy M. Brown

Robin Woodlon strongly believes that children live what they learn. A former regulatory analyst at the National Association of Securities Dealers, Woodlon suggests that if parents want their children to become good managers of money, they need to set the example.

“It’s unfortunate that we have to learn these lessons by living and finding ourselves in situations where we acquire debt. We have to be educated and find ways to prevent the pothole that is debt,” Woodlon said. “And, it begins in the home and in school from kindergarten.”

That’s where Woodlon is today, teaching kindergarten at Hollifield Station Elementary School in Ellicott City.

It’s a place and position where Woodlon feels she can be most helpful in the struggle to bring financial literacy into schools and, just as importantly, into the homes of less affluent individuals.

“There’s a big need for financial literacy and the adults who prompted me to look into becoming financial literate did so long before it became a crisis,” Woodlon said. “The primary years of education, is where it begins.”

The global economy mandates that everyone become financially literate in order to be competitive, Woodlon said, adding that more than 28 million households and individuals are unbanked in the United States, meaning that they don’t have banking accounts.

One recent survey revealed that almost three-quarters of millennials said financial advice from their parents along with examples their parents displayed greatly influenced their monetary decisions.

BMO Harris Bank in Chicago recently released results of its 2015 parenting study on how children are financially educated at home and found that 68 percent of parents turn to others to talk to and teach their children about money.

“You have to have a fundamental knowledge of finance and it’s known that many adults aren’t financially literate, so most kids can’t balance a check book and when they get to college they are introduced to



Former financial analyst Robin Woodlon who is now a kindergarten teacher believes that the lack of financial literacy in the African American community is a major concern and advocates that financial literacy education should start as early as kindergarten. A 2013 National Institute on Retirement Security report revealed that 62 percent of black working-age households have no assets in a retirement account in comparison to 37 percent of white households.

Courtesy Photo

debt,” said Woodlon who also cautions against college students getting credit cards, too.

“I think there needs to be a law that requires credit card companies to force students to get a co-signor. You can’t, as a student, buy a vehicle without a co-signor but credit card companies will give a freshman a credit card and load them down with a 22 or 23 percent interest rate,” she said.

Financial literacy in the African American community is a major concern, according to Woodlon.

A 2015 Morgan Stanley report noted that the retirement security issues so many Americans face are more pronounced among minority groups, such as African-Americans.

Sixty-two percent of black working-age households have no assets in a retirement account, compared with 37 percent of white households, according to a 2013 National Institute on Retirement Security report.

Another report from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, released last year, found that half of white, Hispanic, and Asian households are in the upper half of national wealth distribution, compared with just 25 percent of African American households.

Income disparity is a prominent issue, but recent research also shows that some of the gap could be due to differences in investing patterns. Also, African American financial planners currently account for only two percent of all planners in the profession.

“Financial literacy, in my opinion, is a core platform on which financial inclusion is built,” Woodlon said. “You cannot become a part of a system and truly become successful without basic financial literacy. We need the next generation to be smarter, we need to take small proactive steps to make sure that it is part of the school curriculum.”

Woodlon says education should start as early as when the child is three years old.

“It also has to be part of the home. We have to make sure parents are educated,” she said. “We have to have these conversations in the home because kids today still think they can barter; they don’t understand the power of money.”

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Ravens wide receiver Steve Smith Sr. to hold football camp for area youth

By Turron Davenport

The Baltimore Ravens have been a constant fixture in the community over their 20-year history. There are numerous prospects from the Baltimore area who have gone to big time colleges and eventually the professional level. Many of them grew up as Ravens fans.

One of the things that helps establish a bond between the Ravens and area youth is how tangible they are. The players make it their business to interact with young people. A good way to get the opportunity to have extensive interaction with Ravens players is by attending their youth camps.

Steve Smith Sr. who has become a fan favorite, decided to come back for one more season. He will hold a two-day football camp open to boys and girls of all skill levels in grades one through eight in Columbia, Maryland on June 18-19, 2016. The cost of the camp is \$149.

Campers at the Safeway Steve Smith Sr. Football ProCamp in partnership with Tide will have the opportunity to receive instructions from Smith Sr. and coaches from ProCamps Worldwide.

The camp will be split up into small groups to allow campers to get more personalized coaching and maximum instruction from their coaches.



Baltimore Ravens wide receiver Steve Smith Sr. instructs a camper during his youth football camp last year. Smith will hold a two-day football camp in Columbia, Maryland for area youth June 18 - 19, 2016. Courtesy Photo/ProCamps Worldwide

The campers will learn the fundamentals of football as they work through various stations. The kids will get to showcase the skills that they acquire when they participate in different games and contests and each camper will also receive: an autograph from Steve Smith, Sr.; a limited edition Steve Smith, Sr. Football ProCamp t-shirt; and a camp team photo with Steve Smith, Sr.

Smith has worked with the Baltimore area youth at different community outreach projects. He is a kid at heart and it shows by how intensely he plays with

the kids. It's almost as if he has more fun than the kids.

Last season was supposed to be the final year for Smith Sr. However, it ended prematurely when he tore his Achilles. That injury turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Ravens fans. They now get to see him play for one final season.

This will be one of the last opportuni-

ties for Baltimore area youth to experience hands on interaction with one of the most animated players in the NFL.

For more information or to register to attend the camp, visit: www.pro-camps.com/SteveSmith. Group rates are available for your team, school or group of friends!

Men in the Kitchen

The Howard County Center of African American Culture, Inc. is hosting the 22nd Annual Men in the Kitchen fundraiser on Sunday, April 10, 2016 from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Ridgely's Run Community Center located at 8400 Mission Road in Jessup, Maryland. Come out and enjoy special culinary dishes prepared by over 40 volunteer chefs. Proceeds from the event will support the museum's ongoing programs and projects.

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Baltimore Celebrates 'Opening Day for Trails' along Jones Falls

Washington, D.C.— Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, REI and Bikemore have teamed up to create a fun-filled day along the Jones Falls Trail on Saturday, April 16, 2016 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to celebrate Opening Day for Trails 2016.

Join the partners for morning refreshments at Cylburn Arboretum followed by a leisurely walk, guided trail tour, bike ride or run down the Jones Falls Trail. The Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks will provide bikes for those who wish to borrow them (ID required), and shuttles will be provided to transport individuals back the starting point at Cylburn Arboretum.

The Jones Falls Trail wanders through bucolic forests, arboretums and parks, former industrial mills, stream valleys, redeveloped urban villages and Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The trail tours will focus on watershed ecology, Baltimore history, parks, and open space planning.

"RTC's annual Opening Day for Trails is a great way for people to enjoy the nation's network of trails, which serve as catalysts for creating healthier places for healthier people across the country," said RTC President Keith Laughlin. "Engaging everyone in America to champion trail networks is at the heart of our movement. There are many ways to get involved: become a member, plug in to our social media, spread the word or



just walk or ride your local rail-trail."

Increased mobility, improved public health, economic development, a cleaner environment and enhanced community are some of the primary benefits of active-transportation systems. A member-supported nonprofit, RTC has been advocating for the development and protection of trails throughout America since 1986.

Opening Day for Trails events are free and open to the public. Visit railsto-trails.org/OpeningDay to take this year's pledge to get out on a trail on Opening Day. All individuals who take the pledge will be entered for a chance to win a free bike from Fuji.

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- ★ Fight to reform our police departments.
- ★ Fight to end mass incarcerations.

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation Annual Photo Contest Under Way



Chesapeake Bay at dusk from Columbia Beach in Shady Side, Maryland
Photo by Kathy Reeve

Annapolis— The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) announces its 12th annual watershed photo contest is now underway. Photo submissions are being accepted between now and April 13, 2016. Photographers of all skill levels are encouraged to participate to win cash prizes of from \$100 to \$500, and to have their photos featured in CBF's award-winning publications.

We are seeking photographs that illustrate the positive aspects of the Bay and its rivers and streams. We want to see your vision of the Bay region— from Pennsylvania to Virginia, from the Shenandoah Mountains to the Eastern Shore. Images depicting people, wildlife, recreation and farms within the watershed will all be considered. All photos must include water from the Chesapeake Bay or a river, stream, creek, or other body of water in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

"I am always amazed by the talent the

contestants show in their photos," said Jennifer Wallace, CBF managing editor and contest organizer. "It's wonderful to see how connected and aware people are of our great rivers, streams and the Bay."

All winners will receive a one-year membership to CBF and winning photos may be displayed on CBF's website, in a CBF e-newsletter, in CBF's 2017 calendar, and in CBF's award-winning magazine, Save the Bay.

Judging will be conducted by a panel of CBF employees on the basis of subject matter, composition, focus, lighting, uniqueness, and impact. The public will also be able to vote online for their favorite photo in the Viewers' Choice Gallery, starting May 5, 2016.

Last year the judges considered more than 1,000 entries. Participation in the Viewers' Choice Award was outstanding, with more than 2,400 votes cast.

Contest rules and details are available online at cbf.org/photocontest.

Imagine Me Ministries Second Annual Dinner Banquet Fundraiser
Wednesday, April 20, 2016 — 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
The Hunt Valley Wyndham Grand
245 Shawan Road in Hunt Valley
Tickets: \$75.00.

Featured Speaker: Christina James, 95.1 Shine Evening Host
For more information or tickets, call 410-523-5683
or email: plee@imaginementor.org

"Honor Your Mom"

The Baltimore Times
The Annapolis Times

Mother's Day Edition 2016

will publish on
Friday, May 6, 2016



The Baltimore Times and The Annapolis Times will publish a keepsake Mother's Day edition on Friday, May 6, 2016. Honor your mother or special lady by submitting a high quality photo (may include children). Submit first and last name of everyone in the photo, identify from left to right and a daytime contact number. Photos must be submitted by April 22, 2016 with payment of \$25. We accept checks, money orders, and credit cards.

Bring photo and payment from 11am -4 pm
The Baltimore Times
2513 N. Charles Street



If sending by mail, fill out form below and submit with photo and payment



Mother's Name: _____

Children (left to right): _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Email address: _____

For more information:
Call 410-366-3900 ext 3022

BCCC Celebrates National Robotics Week

By Linwood Outlaw III

Students in Baltimore City Community College's Robotics/Mechatronics Technology Program are learning how to maintain and operate modern robots.

Program Coordinator Yun Liu says a major part of the curriculum is having students build Lego Mindstorm robots with light, ultrasound, touch and sound sensors.

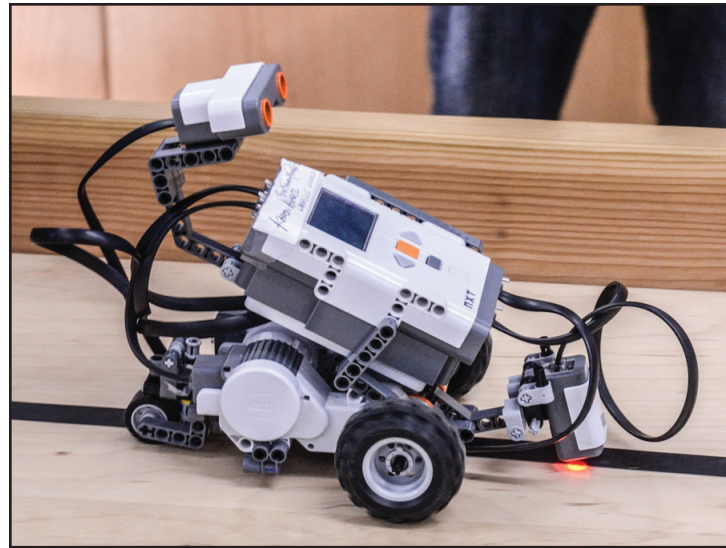
"Once finished, the robots should be able to follow lines, hear noise levels, and detect obstacles," Liu said.

BCCC Robotics student Emmanuel Lewis, 18, of Loch Raven, says it is the authenticity of the Robotics program which gives him confidence he is on the right path to becoming a technician capable of programming and repairing robots in different applications.

"This program goes in-depth. It gives you a chance to experiment with equipment you'll actually be using on the job," said Lewis, who aspires to start his own robotics engineering company.

During this week's seventh annual National Robotics Week celebration (April 2–10, 2016), BCCC focused its efforts on encouraging more students, particularly more women and minorities, to become Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) professionals and enroll in the BCCC Robotics/ Mechatronics Technology Program—a gateway to top bachelor's degree programs in engineering at nearby institutions including Morgan State University and Capitol Technology University in Laurel, Maryland.

In addition to daily social media outreach, the college's National Robotics Week campaign featured a Twitter chat during which Associate Professor of Mathematics and Engineering Michael



(Left) Lego Mindstorms® NXT robot programmed by students in the BCCC Robotics Program to follow a line using a light sensor (Right) Professor Michael Kaye prepares robots for an upcoming class as Nada Mukhtar, BCCC CADD student and member of the ET Scholars program (right, with purse), interacts with visitors to the BCCC Robotics Lab.

Courtesy Photos/BCCC

Kaye answered questions about the BCCC Robotics/Mechatronics Technology Program and the career outlook for electro-mechanical technicians.

"As the only two-year college in Maryland that offers an associate degree in robotics technology, BCCC is committed to preparing students for careers in the rapidly expanding industry of automated manufacturing," said Kaye. "The need for minorities and women mechanical engineers and electro-mechanical technicians with broad skills is becoming more crucial as demand increases for engineers to design and build new robotic equipment across multiple sectors."

Established in 2010 by Congress and the iRobot Corporation, an American advanced technology company specializing in building robots for home and defense/security purposes, National Robotics Week stimulates interest in robotics and other STEM fields through

school events, competitions, and other learning-focused activities.

Robots continuously revolutionize ways in which people conduct everyday activities. A pillar of 21st century American innovation, Robotics Technology is positioned to produce an array of next-generation products in manufacturing, health care, national defense and security, and transportation in the coming years.

Electro-mechanical technicians, who operate and test robotic equipment, earn a median annual wage of about \$53,000, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. They typically need either an associate degree or a postsecondary certificate to gain employment. As demand increases for engineers to design and build new equipment in various fields, so will demand for highly skilled electro-mechanical technicians.

STEM jobs are growing at a faster rate than non-STEM occupations, iRobot

says, and BCCC is helping to meet this demand.

The college's Robotics/Mechatronics Technology Program offers extensive training in electronics, computer and mechanical controls, pneumatics, data acquisition and hydraulics related to industrial robots. In two years, students can earn an Associate of Applied Science degree in Robotics Technology and transition directly into a bachelor's degree program.

Students in the BCCC Engineering/Technology (ET) Scholars Scholarship can receive up to \$4,150 per academic year. The deadline to apply for the fall 2016 ET cohort is April 15, 2016. In addition to Robotics, ET programs at BCCC include engineering transfer, computer information systems, and computer-aided design and drafting.

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'I Was Proud To Serve My Country'

Lt. Col. Jason B. Davis Honored at Huber Memorial

By Ursula V. Battle

When Jason B. Davis left for the United States Marine Corps (USMC), on June 9, 1984, the Baltimore City College graduate was 18. Some 32 years later, and now age 50, Lieutenant Colonel Jason B. Davis has served 31 years, 8 months, and 20 days in the Marines. His military accomplishments read like those you might find in a Hollywood military movie. His deployments include Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and a tour of duty with the presidential helicopter 'Squadron HMX-1.

In 2013, the Baltimore native was promoted to his current rank of lieutenant colonel, and served as the avionics officer for the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command Aviation Logistics Department. Davis holds the distinction of being the first African American lieutenant colonel to serve in this position. In this capacity, Davis served as a staff officer for a three star general.

Davis retired from the military earlier this year. In March, he was honored at a special surprise ceremony held at Huber Memorial Church on York Road in Baltimore. Having served in the military, he was taught to always be prepared. However, he was completely caught by surprise at Huber Memorial, where his mother Shirley Davis has been a long-time member. Reverend Dr. P.M. Smith is the church's pastor.

"I had no idea they were going to honor me," said Davis with a chuckle. "A lot of my family members were there for the program, but I thought they were there for my cousin. Pastor P.M. Smith started talking about my about my accomplishments, and my mom, who raised three boys. It was really touching to be recognized. It was humbling."

Davis' official retirement ceremony was held in February at The Clubs at Quantico located on the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia. He reflected on his 32-year military career.

"I knew I needed structure, so my plans were to go to college and to go into the military," said Davis. "The U.S. Marines called. I originally enlisted when I was



L-r: Corey Davis (brother), Shirley Davis (mother), and Lt. Col. Davis during his surprise ceremony at Huber Memorial Church. Courtesy Photos



Lt. Col. Jason B. Davis along with fellow Baltimore City College alumni following his Retirement Ceremony at The Clubs at Quantico.

17, and left to serve when I was 18. I have spent my entire adult life in the Marine Corps. I had no idea I would stay in the service for so long, but I am glad I did. It shaped my life, and also allowed me to see the world."

Davis said his military career took him to California, Hawaii, Virginia, Japan, The Philippines, Saudi Arabia and many other places. He recalled his tour of duty in Afghanistan.

"I went to Afghanistan after 9/11," re-

called Davis. "That was pretty scary because we were on the front lines of uncertainty. There was also the constant threat of shrapnel and bullets. I saw many war injuries, and some people died over there that I knew. But I was proud to serve my country."

His career included service as an enlisted Marine and warrant officer. His storied military career also includes deployments to the Mediterranean Sea aboard the USS Kearsage, participating in the Operations Noble Anvil and Shining Hope in Albania, and combat operations during Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo. He also served aboard the USS Bataan in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Swift Freedom.

One of Davis' proudest moments was becoming the first African American promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Military Occupational Specialty 6302 Avionics Officer.

"I was 46-years-old at the time, and stationed in Norfolk, Virginia," he recalled. "I really felt extremely humbled and proud. I feel good about that because I believe I helped to pave the way."

Davis' awards include the 'Meritorious Service Medal', Navy and Marine Corps 'Commendation Medal,' Navy and Marine Corps 'Achievement Medal,' and 'Combat Action Ribbon.' He is the father of two daughters.

Davis said he is an advocate for enlisting in the service, and encourages youngsters to strongly consider a military career.

"The U.S. Marine Corps taught me how to be a leader, how to be a good follower, and about humility," said Davis. "It was all about maturity and responsibility. It also taught me about hard work and persistence. Serving in the military also allows you to learn a trade."

He added, "I did my best to serve my country, and hope that the legacy I left behind is helping others."

Author Delves Deep in Family History for New Book

By Stacy M. Brown

Part of the challenge facing young African-Americans today is that they're unaware of where they came from, according to author Wayne Rudolph Davidson.

Further, young blacks are mostly not sure of who their grandparents are, or, in other cases, they don't know their parents and are being raised by relatives who did not give birth to them.

"In today's society, there are a lot of black males and females incarcerated, so the young ones are being raised by family members and everyone is in survival mode," said Davidson, who has released the book. "Discombobulation: When Clans Collide under the Influence of Urban Renewal, Baby Boomers, Knuckleheads, and Stupidville."

Inside the 508-page book, available at most major retailers like amazon.com, Davidson delves into his family history, which began with his first book in 2013, "When Clans Collide."

"The first book was about my genealogy, where I discovered who and where I came from via my surname and I was able to trace my family tree," Davidson said. "That experience provided me with empowerment because I now knew where I came from."

Davidson traced his roots to the Ashanti people of Ghana. To the Ashanti, the family and the mother's clan are most important, according to Davidson.

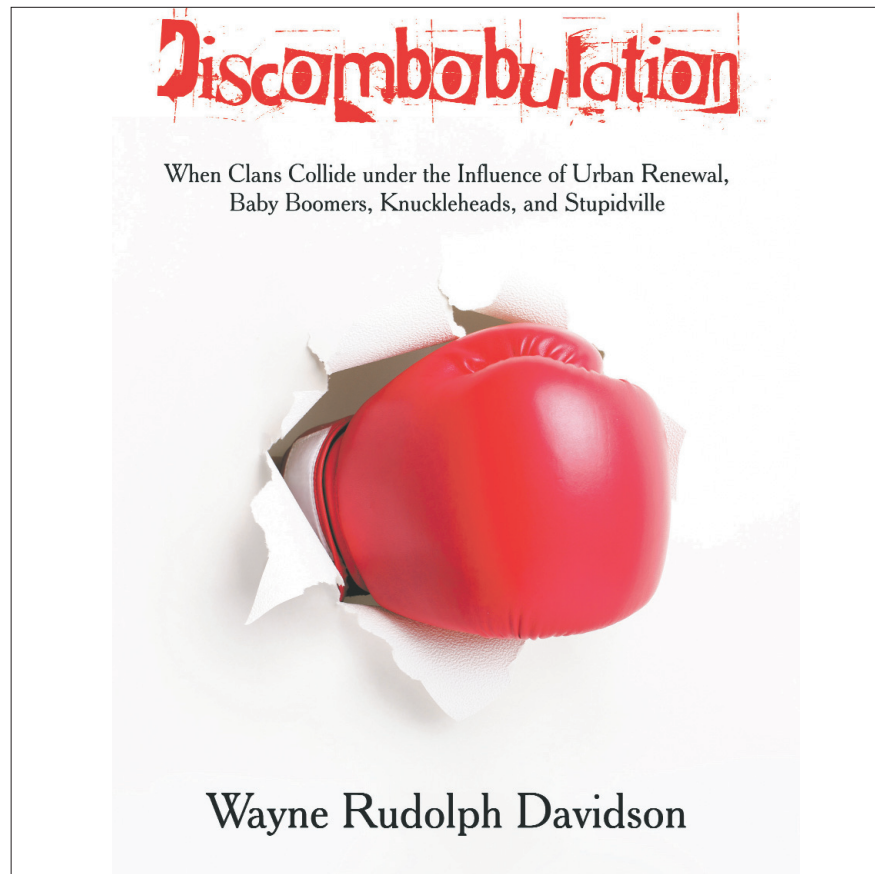
"It's a matriarch driven culture where the mothers control or have a say in everything. Here, in America, it's a patriarch or paternal driven culture, where man dominates the economy and all the decisions," he said.

Those facts are what Davidson says he was deprived of growing up in the Baby Boomer Generation and serving in the United States Army. Now, Davidson better understands his life as an African-American male born in the post-World War II era who was caught in a firestorm of extraordinary social change, civil disturbance and a burgeoning drug culture.

In the book, Davidson describes his life during the migration of African-



Author Wayne Rudolph Davidson



Americans from the rural south to urban centers in the north and many historic events. He blends his family genealogy and his own mistakes and triumphs with

American history, according to one review of his new book.

"I was able to understand how I ended up in the north in places like Cleveland

and Detroit and how my parents had southern values but, at that time, I wasn't able to connect to them," said Davidson, a former autoworker. "It was the industrial age and it was pretty rough. Everything for young black males was geared to becoming bigger and stronger so that we'd become part of the industrial labor force. Everything centered on your being able to go work in the factory."

Davidson writes that understanding the institution of family is important, but for African-Americans to achieve the American dream there must be a shift from a collective focus to an individual focus.

"Once there is discovery of one's own talent, gift or aspiration then share the harvest of discovery with the African-American community so it too can prosper and contribute to the global community," he said.

Davidson also recounts a moment of "discombobulation" after a classmate socked him on the jaw, leaving him bewildered and angry.

These two feelings went on to comprise most of his reactions to events in his life, including his involvement in a neighborhood he dubs "Stupidville," where drugs ran rampant and danger lurked.

Kirkus Reviews notes that Davidson offers abstract descriptions of his interactions in Stupidville, rather than recounting his substance abuse in detail, but his reckless ways led him to blow paychecks earned during stints as a line-man in Detroit car factories and as a general laborer and made him miss the birth of his first daughter.

Davidson finally escaped Stupidville, if not all the habits he learned there, when he joined the military in 1979 at the age of 28.

Later, Davidson earned a Ph.D., became a teacher, and joined the Toastmaster's Club in order to become a practiced public speaker. "Hopefully, the book will be an encouragement to young ones today," he said.

Baltimore Resident Helping Children Through Music

By Stacy M. Brown

As a child, Inga Davis was a big fan of Kindermusik, an educational musical and movement program that children can listen and dance to while they learn.

With Sesame Street, Captain Kangaroo and Mister Rogers' Neighborhood serving as inspirations, Davis, a Baltimore native, says she possesses an inner zeal to help young ones and others succeed.

She has dedicated the rest of her life to teaching and developing her Positive Thoughts Kinder Music Program that she hopes will help her to spread peace, love, joy and the knowledge of music. She has even taken on a new persona, "Kinder Queen."

"I'm happy to announce that I'm now starting a citywide tour of Baltimore, introducing to schools and local organizations the new edutainment core knowledge program," Davis said. "Due to the social and emotional ills of the city, many children have experienced fear and anxieties. This new music program gives them hope, vision and a solid foundation and it is a healthy alternative to the negative music that surrounds them."

Davis' program uses a mix of entertainment and social therapy to help young students grow educationally and emotionally. She says the body of the music is composed of different genres like hip-hop,



Inga Davis "Kinder Queen" with pre-school students at Kiddie Castle Child Development Center on Reisterstown Road in Baltimore. Courtesy Photo

country and pop, but overall the music she uses preserves old-fashioned values.

The youth will be getting self-enrichment that will last a lifetime, according to Davis.

"I decided to do a school tour when I met the Emmy award winner John Kinder Man Taylor last Year. I was inspired by his 35 years of work that he

created as a kinder entertainer and I wanted to build on the foundation that he had already established with the community and thought-out the nation," Davis said. "When I really realized the incredible need for this kind of education I knew I would dedicate my life to it. The first stop was Kiddie Castle on Reisterstown Road in Baltimore."

The benefits of the music are that it teaches imagination, self-control, self-esteem, confidence, faith, hope, forgiveness, etiquette and self-celebration, Davis said, adding that it's easy for children and care givers to bond around the music.

"The feedback from the community is that they are very ecstatic that I would consider ever doing this. They think it is wonderful and when my album was released in December, people would call me and replay my songs to me and tell me how much the kids would enjoy listening to it on the way to and from school in the car," she said. "I have even had people get my music for children with special needs."

Davis hopes to attend as many schools as possible on her tour. She says her mission is to bring Kinder music to the community and have it serve as an educational and entertainment teaching tool.

She wants the message spread to schools, homes, churches, camps and communities where she feels that caregivers can establish a strong foundation with music when the concepts are reinforced to the children.

"I would like a big focus on helping the children of Baltimore to heal with the music," she said.

For information about her tour and other details about the program, visit: www.positivethoughtskindermusic.com.

The City of Westminster Calls for Letters of Interest

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Rambling Rose

New Africa Community Guilders Celebrate 11th Annual New Africa Festival



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello my dear friends, this is the season for fundraisers, festivals, banquets, concerts, and all types of indoor and outdoor shows and I will make sure you know about them so you can have fun this spring. So check this out!

First of all, I want to say, I am truly blessed. I say that because, when someone can do what I do and have fun doing it and be appreciated by others, it's truly a blessing. To have fans like you who read my column every week, and to experience the joy I feel writing about you, your family and events is truly a joy.

Well, guess what folks, yours truly, little ole me, "Rambling Rose" will be honored by New Africa Community Builders at the 11th Annual New Africa Festival Banquet & Silent Auction fundraiser at the Forum Caterers located at 4210 Primrose Avenue in Baltimore on Saturday, April 16, 2016 from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Other outstanding folks, who will also be honored at the event, include: Toya Graham; Christina Flowers; Sandi Mallory; Lena Franklin; and Ilene Shaheed. I would love for you to be there to see me being honored. I want to thank the organization for choosing me. For ticket information, call 443-621-7449 and tell them you are there for me.

The National Black Memorabilia, Fine Art & Crafts Show, the largest memorabilia show in the country will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 9 and 10, 2016 at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds located at 16 Chestnut Street in Gaithersburg, Maryland. This is the 32nd year for the show in the greater Washington, D.C. area. The show provides an environment where the public can be educated about African American history and culture, and where desirable pieces of black memorabilia, fine art and crafts are available for purchase. Items

made by African Americans, in the image of African Americans or about African Americans are all considered black memorabilia. Vendors from across the United States with black memorabilia, fine art and crafts including artifacts dating from slavery; historical documents; books; stamps; civil war artifacts; paintings; prints; textiles; autographs; toys; advertisements; photographs; political and civil rights memorabilia; kitchen collectibles; coins; posters; sports and entertainment memorabilia; magazines; postcards and more are expected to attend the event with plenty of good food and free parking! For more information, call 301-649-1915.

Caton Castle, one of my favorite entertainment venues, which is located 20 South Caton Avenue in Baltimore is celebrating "Jazz Appreciation Month" on Saturday, April 9, 2016 starting at 6 p.m. Featured at the celebration will be the John Lamkin "Favorites Jazz Quintet" with Michael Hariston on saxophone; Todd Simon on organ; Michael Raitzyk on guitar; Jesse Moody on drums; and John on trumpet and flugelhorn. For ticket information, call 410-566-7086.

One more thing I want to talk to you about before I leave is "Honor Your Mom." That's right, many of us no longer have our mothers to honor, so if you are blessed enough to still have your mother above ground, then the Baltimore Times and the Annapolis Times have designed something special for you and the the deadline is April 22! They will publish a keepsake Mother's Day edition on Friday, May 6, 2016 in honor of your mother or a special lady in your life! You can participate if you submit a high-resolution photograph, which may include children by email or hand deliver it to The Baltimore Times office,



The National Black Memorabilia Fine Art & Crafts Show will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 9 and 10, 2016 at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds located at 16 Chestnut Street in Gaithersburg, Maryland. This is the largest black memorabilia show in the country. For information, call 301-649-1915.



Baltimore Farmers' Market is the largest producers only market in Maryland, which offers an assortment of produce, meats, dairy, breads, flowers, collectibles and crafts will run on Sundays from April 17 and December 18 this year. The markets opens at 7 a.m. until sell out— around noon. Many Sundays will feature live music performances and cooking demonstrations. The Market is located below the Jones Falls Expressway at Holliday & Saratoga Streets.

located at 2513 N. Charles Street between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. with your check, money order, credit card or cash of \$25. For more information, call Dena Wane at 410-366-3900, ext 3022.

Well, my dear friends, I am out of time and space. I send get-well wishes and prayers to my boss, Joy Bramble, publisher of The Baltimore Times and The Annapolis Times.

Remember if you need me, call me at 410833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. Please send flyers, notes and press releases, etc. to me by email or mail to 214 Conewood Avenue, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136. Do not send information to Facebook, I will not get it. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Doug E. Fresh will perform at Patapasco Arena located at 3301 Annapolis Road on Sunday, April 10, 2016 from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. The show is presented and hosted by "4 Guys Entertainment & Team Dollar Bill." For more information, call 443-803-3710.

From Industry to Art: BGE to add murals to Baltimore skyline

Iconic Maryland images to adorn storage tanks at BGE's Spring Gardens campus in South Baltimore

Baltimore— As BGE marks its 200th anniversary this year, the company announced the addition of large-scale murals to the storage tanks at the company's Spring Gardens campus in South Baltimore.

The site is located near the I-95 and I-395 interchange at one of the major gateways to Baltimore. The murals will depict images synonymous with Maryland: blue crabs, thoroughbred racing and the Star Spangled Banner.

"We are proud of our heritage as the first gas company in North America and we want to reflect our appreciation of Maryland," said Calvin G. Butler Jr., CEO of BGE. "As part of Baltimore's iconic skyline, we are pleased to help welcome visitors to our hometown."

The Spring Gardens campus is one of BGE's longest continuously operating sites, with gas operations beginning there in 1855. Today, the site is still a hub for natural gas and electric operations, and is the home of a regional customer contact center. It is a base for more than 600 of BGE's 3,200 employees.

The site was once home to telescoping gasholder tanks that rose and fell as they filled with gas. Those tanks dated back to the early 1900's and were eventually dismantled in the 1990's. Today, the site's liquefied natural gas facility allows for safe, compact storage and enables BGE to deliver a lower cost, reliable supply of natural gas to customers when gas demand increases. BGE customers in central Maryland use all of the gas from the facility.

BGE has invested in environmental enhancements at the site over the decades. Today, it is a Wildlife Habitat Council Certified Wildlife at Work site and National Audubon Society Certified



Artist rendering of BGE's Spring Gardens Mural Project, which will depict images that are synonymous with Maryland, including: blue crabs, thoroughbred racing and the Star Spangled Banner. Work on the murals will begin this month and is expected to be completed in June this year. Courtesy Photo/BGE

Bird-Friendly Habitat. BGE's largest solar power installation is also located at Spring Gardens and supplies enough electricity to power the operations of the

site's regional contact center.

Work on the murals will begin this month and is expected to be completed— weather permitting— in June

when BGE officially celebrates its 200th anniversary. As the project progresses, updates, photos and videos will be posted to BGE.com/MuralProject.

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Host of "The Marc Steiner Show"
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Moderator

Sean Yoes

Host of "First Edition"
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Panelists:



Chris Wilson

Founder & CEO of
Barclay Investment Corporation



Joe Jones

Founder/President & CEO of
Center for Urban Families

Bobby Marvin Holmes

Co-director and producer of
"Free Young Blood"



Neill Franklin

Executive Director of LEAP
(Law Enforcement Against Prohibition)



Panelists:

Red Cross seeks volunteer transportation specialists to deliver lifesaving blood products

Baltimore— Every two seconds a patient in the United States needs a blood transfusion. As the single largest supplier of blood products to hospitals in the U.S., the American Red Cross is seeking volunteer transportation specialists to help deliver lifesaving blood products to Central Maryland hospitals for patients in need.

Transportation specialists help to ensure that blood products are available when and where they are needed for patients with serious medical conditions. Accident and burn victims, heart surgery patients, organ transplant patients, and those receiving treatment for leukemia, cancer or sickle cell disease may all



need blood or platelets. The American Red Cross Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Blood Services Region provides blood deliveries to over 60 hospitals and transfusion centers throughout the region.

“Transporting blood products is an integral part of fulfilling the lifesaving mission of the Red Cross,” said Terry

Karloff, volunteer manager for the Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Blood Services Region. “If driving and providing exemplary customer service is something you enjoy, we want to hear from you.”

Volunteer shifts will originate at the Red Cross headquarters facility located at 4700 Mount Hope Drive in west Baltimore and include travel around the region. Training and use of Red Cross vehicles will be provided.

Volunteers must meet the following minimum requirements:

Have a valid driver’s license with a minimum of three years driving experience

·Be able to verify a safe driving record with insurance

·Be able to lift boxes of lifesaving blood products of up to 45 pounds for hospital deliveries

·Be available to volunteer for two to four shifts per month (flexible schedules available)

To learn more, contact Joe Miletta at 410-624-2023 or email at Joe.Miletta@redcross.org. To begin the application process online, visit: https://volunteerconnection.redcross.org/?nd=intake&entry_point_id=4924&unit_id=185.



Girl Scouts of Central Maryland’s Distinguished Women’s Award Celebration



Join us on April 21, 2016, 5:30pm at the Baltimore Country Club,
Roland Park, 4712 Club Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21210

You are cordially invited to spend an evening with Girl Scouts of Central Maryland as we honor five amazing women for their professional accomplishments and community contributions. Be inspired by Girl Scout mentees as they describe their unique shadow day experiences with these distinguished women. The evening includes live and silent auctions, heavy hors d’oeuvres and networking with business leaders from the Baltimore area.

The 2016 Honorees



Jody Berg
Owner and Chief
Executive Officer
Media Works, LTD



**Adrienne A.
Jones.**
MD House of Delegates
10th Legislative District



Michele Moore
Regional Bank Area
President, SVP
Wells Fargo



**Sheela Murthy,
Esq.**
President and Founder
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**Dr. Helene Rodriguez
McConnell**
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MVA expands new self-service VEIP kiosks

Customer convenience drives expansion of seven new easy-to-use kiosks and; kiosk fee from \$14 to \$10

Glen Burnie, Md.— As part of Governor Larry Hogan's efforts to make government services more convenient and put money back in the pockets of Maryland families, the Maryland Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) announced the addition of seven new self-service Vehicle Emission Inspection Program (VEIP) kiosks.

The expansion brings the total number of the easy-to-use devices to nine. The self-service kiosks are available 24/7 and have been conveniently installed at existing VEIP and MVA offices throughout the greater Washington and Baltimore regions. As part of Governor Hogan's plan to reduce fees, the cost for the self-service kiosks was reduced from \$14 to \$10.

"The Governor challenged us to make our services more convenient and less expensive, and we've delivered with the expansion of the self-service VEIP

kiosks," said MVA Administrator Christine Nizer. "These popular kiosks provide customers a quick and easy way to complete their vehicle's emissions test."

The VEIP self-service kiosks first launched in August 2015 at the Glen Burnie VEIP station and the Gaithersburg MVA branch office. The two kiosks have performed more than 2,300 VEIP tests and have a customer satisfaction rating of 85 to 90 percent.

The VEIP self-service kiosks are now located at the following locations: Bel Air, Beltsville, Frederick and Waldorf MVA branch offices, and the Annapolis, Edgewood and Owings Mills VEIP stations.

"The Hogan Administration is committed to cleaner air and better service for customers. Self-serve kiosks and other driver-friendly emissions improvements are the wave of the future and that's great news for air quality and public health in Maryland," said Maryland Department of the Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles.

The VEIP self-service kiosks conduct the same diagnostic test performed by technicians at full-service VEIP stations,

which still charge the \$14 fee. Customers simply plug the testing device into their vehicle's computer diagnostic system to determine if the engine is working properly and the vehicle's emissions are meeting Maryland's environmental standards. Eligible vehicles include: light-duty vehicles (under 8,500 pounds gross vehicle weight) model year 2005 and newer, and heavy-duty vehicles (between 8,501 and 14,000 pounds gross vehicle weight) model year 2008 and newer.

Vehicles not meeting these requirements or vehicles past their inspection due dates, must go to a full-service VEIP location for testing.

The VEIP testing network consists of 18 centralized inspection stations located in 13 counties and Baltimore City, where the air quality must meet federal clean air standards. Vehicles meeting VEIP testing requirements must have their emissions tested every two years. Envirotest is the private contractor responsible for the VEIP's day-to-day operations. The VEIP program is jointly administered by the MVA and the MDE.

Black Lives Matter: Conversation, Meetup & Concert:

Saturday, April 9, 2016 at 3 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis

333 Dubois Road in Annapolis

Conversation "Cracking the Codes" — 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

A video on the the system of racial inequity facilitated by Father Randy Callender, St. Philip's Episcopal Church and presented by "Coming to the Table - Annapolis" and the Annapolis Faith Community for Black Lives Matter

Meet Up — 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Live jazz, book signings, CDs and organizations.

Concert — 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Annapolis community working to dismantle racism through the Arts, Music, Dance, Poetry

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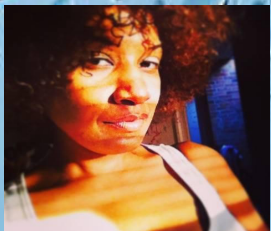
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