

Ford Launches Men of Courage for African-Americans



Ford Motor Company Fund celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day by launching a national initiative around Men of Courage— a program that honors and amplifies the accomplishments of African American men with the goal of strengthening communities and creating positive social change. Ford, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, and 100 Black Men of America convened a diverse group of 60 black men ranging in age from 17 to 70 for a daylong forum of storytelling, visioning and developing plans for action. Participants stand with the “I Am A Man of Courage” sign at the end of the day to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. (See article on page 12)

Photo Credit: Gar Roberts

Maggie Paylor Celebrates 100th Birthday

By Ursula V. Battle

On February 1, 1916, Maggie Paylor was born just outside of Roxboro, North Carolina. The daughter of sharecropper, Joseph and his wife Josephine, Maggie was one of nine children. On February 1, 2016, the longtime Waverly resident will celebrate her 100th birthday.

Family members and friends of Paylor, whom they affectionately call "Miss Mag" or "Aunt Mag," will celebrate the historic occasion on Saturday, January 30, 2016. They are throwing a special birthday party in her honor. Family members are traveling to Baltimore from North Carolina, New Jersey, Washington, D.C. and other areas for the special day.

"I feel fine," said the soon-to-become centenarian with a smile. "I'm excited about my birthday party."

Mary Russell is Paylor's niece and caregiver.

"She is doing well," said Russell. "Aunt Mag still goes up and down the steps, eats by herself, and dresses her-

self. She is very independent. She really loves to sit and look out the window. In the summer, she really loves sitting on the front porch."

According to Russell, Paylor was the seventh of nine children and came to Baltimore when she was in her early 20s. During that time, the former Maggie Russell, would meet and eventually marry her husband Henry Paylor, who served in the United States Army during World War II. The couple never had children, but Paylor was like a mother to many, taking family members in during times of need, and helping others whenever possible.



On February 1, 2016, the longtime Waverly resident Maggie Paylor will celebrate her 100th birthday. A special birthday party will be held in her honor on Saturday, January 30, 2016.

Photo by Ursula V. Battle

Russell noted that when Paylor's brother became ill, she left Baltimore and headed back to North Carolina to take care of him.

According to Russell, the devoted sister was well into her 70s at the time. While there, she joined Warren's Chapel Baptist Church, where Russell says she is still a tithing member. "Aunt Mag took care of her brother until he died," recalled Russell. "Then she moved back to Baltimore. She is the only surviving sibling of the nine children."

Paylor's face may be a familiar one to those who

shopped or worked at Stewart's in downtown Baltimore many years ago. According to Russell, Paylor worked for the department store for years until her retirement.

Russell, who helped spearhead a 90th birthday party for Paylor 10 years ago, talked about her longevity.

"Aunt Mag has a strong spiritual foundation," said Russell. "She also never allowed things to stress her out. She also loves her family. She taught me the importance of family, and doing things to help other people."

Over the years, Paylor also enjoyed puzzles, sewing, and baking.

"Aunt Mag also used to love to party," said Russell as she looked at Paylor with a fond smile. "She also loved to make pound cakes for people's birthdays."

This time, it will be Paylor's turn to receive a birthday cake. However, this one will be emblazoned with a candle with the numerals 100 to mark her momentous milestone.

Tax returns from Baltimore businesses halted due to questionable filings

Annapolis— Comptroller Peter Franchot announced that his office would suspend processing electronic tax returns from several Liberty Tax Service franchise locations in the Baltimore metropolitan area due to a high volume of questionable returns received.

The businesses, which have been sent written notice of the action, are located at: 2400 E Monument Street, Baltimore; 7730 Wise Avenue, Dundalk; 1742 W North Avenue, Baltimore; 2401 Liberty Heights Avenue, Baltimore; 1808 Pennsylvania Avenue, Baltimore; 3308 Greenmount Avenue, Baltimore; and 503 W Lexington Street, Baltimore.

Comptroller Franchot, pursuant to the recently signed IRS Security Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), has shared this information with other tax agencies. The Comptroller's Office also has advised the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation of the decision, so that they can take any additional appropriate actions.

The suspicious characteristics detected on the tax returns prompting the determination included: Business income reported when taxpayers did not own a business; Refund amounts requested much higher than previous year tax returns; Inflated and/or undocumented business expenses; Dependents claimed when taxpayer did not provide required 50 percent support or care; and inflated wages and withholding information.

Taxpayers should carefully review their returns for these issues and should be suspicious if a preparer: deducts fees from the taxpayer's refund to be deposited into the tax preparer's account; does not sign the tax return; or fails to include the Preparer Taxpayer Identification number "P-TIN" on the return.

If taxpayers suspect fraud, immediately report the issue to the Comptroller's Office by calling -800-MD-TAXES (1-800-638-2937) or 410-260-7980 in Central Maryland or by emailing TAX-HELP@comp.state.md.us.



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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Iowa Caucus, reminds me of Groundhog Day

By Glenn Mollette

I have watched the movie titled “Groundhog Day” with actor Bill Murray. Looking back, I’m wondering if that movie was about the Iowa Caucus. The caucus just keeps coming back and back and it seems we just can’t escape the Iowa Caucus.

Groundhog Day is coming and the best news about the annual holiday is that the Iowa Caucus will be over! There is a bad rumor though that if the groundhog sees his shadow we will have six more weeks of Iowa!

I know Iowa is a great state with great people but why must our country be pounded with the ongoing onslaught of Iowa, Iowa and more Iowa Caucus? Personally, I’m sick of hearing about the Iowa Caucus. CNN and Fox news started talking about the Iowa Caucus over a year ago and for the last six months it seems Iowa has been mentioned every day.

I get it. Iowa is the first rung on the ladder to the presidency. Candidates who miss this rung have further to step up to New Hampshire and with a little less momentum.

Although it appears Donald Trump could lose both caucuses and still be the Republican nominee, he isn’t taking any chances. Iowa is being treated to about as much Trump as they can probably stand.

Past presidents have gladly taken Iowa and then moved on with the wind behind their march to victory. You remember George W. Bush in 2000 and Barack Obama in 2008. However, winning Iowa has not always been the answer. John Kerry won the Caucus in 2004. Robert Dole won it in 1988. Rick Santorum won Iowa in 2012 and it led to nothing except a life of more campaigning, raising money and speaking to hamburger joint crowds who are killing time before their next doctors’ appointments.

Mike Huckabee won Iowa and had a lot of momentum in 2008. Unfortunately, Iowans hardly knew who he is as he moves along in his RV speaking to crowds that he could almost fit in an old fashioned telephone booth, if anybody remembers what those were. I actually thought Huckabee would do a little better than he is doing. He had a national television program on Fox that aired on prime Saturday and Sunday evenings. Iowans and apparently few others were paying attention to his program, or maybe they were.

I started to say I feel sorry for Huckabee, Santorum, Rand Paul, Chris Christie and Martin O’ Malley and others but I don’t. I feel sorry for the people in Iowa. The good people in Iowa can’t go to the local Dairy Queen without having a political candidate staring at them or trying to shake hands. I would say the people of Iowa might be more tired of the Iowa Caucus than most Americans. At least we can turn off the television. They can’t step for politicians and media people.

Groundhog Day is coming Iowa and when the day finally comes they will all be gone. Rest awhile and reclaim your lives because unfortunately in two years we will have to go through the caucus again and then again and then again. Now, I’m starting to understand a little more what Bill Murray’s character was going through in the movie Groundhog Day.

Glenn Mollette is an American Syndicated Columnist and the author of 11 books. His column appears in all 50 states. For more information, visit: www.keepourfreedom.com.



Community Affairs

Writing Contest for Maryland Middle School Students

All Maryland middle school students are invited to enter a statewide writing contest focusing on the themes of peace and social justice.

Annapolis— The contest, which is sponsored by Anne Arundel Peace Action, the Maryland Peace Action Education Fund, the Benjamin Peace Foundation and the Peace and Justice Center of Annapolis Friends Meeting, is open to all seventh and eighth grade students enrolled in public or private schools in Maryland and to home-schooled students corresponding to the same grade levels. This is the 20th consecutive year the contest has been conducted.

Four cash prizes will be awarded: \$350 for first place, \$250 for second place, \$150 for third place, and \$100 for fourth place. The winners will be honored at a special ceremony, although attendance is not required to receive an award.

To enter, students must submit an

entry of up to 1,200 words on this topic: “The United States is considering resettling as many as 10,000 refugees this year from the Syrian civil war. Approximately half of these refugees are children. Suppose that some of these children become students at your school. And suppose that your principal asks you to serve on a committee to develop a plan to welcome the new students and help them become part of your school and your community. Describe a plan of action that you would suggest to the committee to attain these goals.”

Entries must be accompanied by a separate cover sheet including the student’s name, address and phone number or e-mail address; school’s name, address and phone number; and the name of the teacher sponsor if applicable.

Entries and accompanying materials must be postmarked no later than April 30, 2016 and mailed to Fred B. Benjamin Peace Writing Contest, 310 Riverview Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403-3328.

For more information, call 410-263-7409 or e-mail mjkeller@att.net.

Documentary tackles challenges returning citizens face

By **Barrington M. Salmon**
Special to The Baltimore Times

After 30 years of ‘three strikes,’ mandatory-minimum sentences and harsh federal, state and local government responses to crime, elected officials and communities now realize that being tough on crime didn’t produce the desired results.

Mass incarceration has devastated the lives of those behind bars, ripped families apart and ravaged black and brown communities.

Despite the United States representing five percent of the world’s population, this country has the dubious distinction of having 25 percent of the world’s prison population. The 2.3 million people— one million of whom are black— currently in the nation's prisons or jails is a 500 percent increase over the past 30 years. Meanwhile, every year, about 700,000 citizens return home to their communities from state and federal prisons.

Award-winning Filmmakers Duane de la Vega and Katie Calloway produced

and directed a documentary called “The Return,” which vividly illustrates how deep imprisonment cuts were.

The filmmakers followed a number of returning citizens over the course of four years to document California’s efforts to re-integrate thousands of “lifers” into their families and communities after the state amended the three-strikes law in 2012.

Ensuring successful reentry is an issue around which recent efforts at criminal justice reform by elected officials, advocates and organizations revolves, said Maryland Congressman Elijah Cummings, who hosted the screening. National progressive and conservative advocacy and other organizations from across the political spectrum have been meeting for well over a year seeking consensus on reforms to the American criminal justice system to make it fairer, more just, and more effective.

“We had a panel discussion at Howard University and there were representatives from the Koch Brothers and [Congressman] Rand Paul,” Cummings said in an interview after the screening. “They said it was about economics, that we’re spending too much money. They didn’t talk about it from a moral or compassionate position. They have come for different reasons but have the same goals.”

“There was a time when legislators were afraid of being soft on crime. With tough laws, they could go out and brag about doing something. People were going in for minor offenses. There were a lot of factors involved.”

Cummings, who represents Maryland’s 7th District, said Congress is considering his Fair Chance Act, which has bipartisan, bicameral support and which would solidify fair chance hiring policies in the federal government. Rep.

John Sensenbrenner has sponsored the Second Chance Reauthorization Act and the SAFE Justice Act in the 114th Congress, which will help inmates reintegrate more successfully into their communities.

The documentary chronicles prisoners being freed, families adjusting to the changes, attorneys and judges struggling with thorny legal issues, and reentry providers overseeing difficult transitions.

One of the returning citizens featured in the film, Kevin Bilal Chapman, a reentry advocate, was in the packed audience of Congressmen and women, Congressional staffers and other invited guests. Chapman served 11 years of six life sentences plus 150 years for selling \$200 worth of drugs to an undercover agent.

In the documentary, he noted at one point, that many of the people who ended up behind bars never had a chance because they were born and grew up poor, may have had little or no education, were mentally ill or homeless— all of which contributed to their incarceration.

“The homeless, those exposed to drug use never had a chance,” he said. “Poverty, addiction, mental illness: the solution was to put them in prison for the rest of their lives. They never had a chance. The system is rigged and there are always the temptations of drugs and alcohol.”

Chapman, now married, working as the Logistics Supervisor for Exel Logistics in California— and whose hobbies include growing tomatoes— said he refused to return to the community where he lived before being sent to jail because he knew he would fall into the same old destructive habits that might cause him to end up back in jail.

“We need real jobs for people coming

out to give them their ego and strength back, and build capacity for families,” said Chapman during a panel discussion following the screening held at the Visitor’s Center in downtown Washington. “The biggest problem and enablers are our family. It’s too easy for people to be enablers, too easy to go back. I’m not that prisoner today. I’m a taxpayer. I work, I’m a citizen, I’m a voter. That’s who I want to be. Those are the things that define me today.”

“I had a 24-hour plan, a 72-hour plan. It was no reverse ... my job was looking for a job. I was very intent on succeeding. I had slacks, a white shirt and six or seven different ties.”

Calloway, an Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker and investigative reporter, and de la Vega, founder of Loteria Films, said their parents’ legal work made them aware of the conditions and vagaries of justice.

“We grew up exposed to the problems of the criminal justice system and we saw the collateral damage of harsh sentences,” said de la Vega. “The New York Times profiled non-violent offenders sentenced to life. Seventy percent of California voters passed the amendment. Every single county voted for Proposition 36. The prison crisis was becoming front page news now.”

Calloway agreed.

“The sentences are five to 12 times the length of industrialized countries,” she said. “In the U.S. we usually don’t look at other countries or look at systems. There’s so much that needs to be undone.”

De la Vega and Calloway say the recidivism rate of the 2,300 inmates released by California stands at five percent and the state has so far saved \$1 billion.

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Couple relies on faith in adopting children

By Stacy M. Brown

Adoption was something Derwin Penson and his wife Wendy considered only in passing a long time ago.

For about a quarter of a century, the couple enjoyed a marriage that included lots of fun together, travel and their work as stateside missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators USA in Florida.

“Then, one day, my husband turned on the television and saw this little girl crying out to her father; begging him to stop as he was beating a police officer nearly to death. She was crying stop and he said, ‘I’m sorry baby but I’m not going to jail.’ And, of course, he was going to jail and we thought, ‘who was her mother to leave her with this man and who was going to take care of her now?’” Penson said. “That just stayed with me.”

Later, Derwin Penson read an article about African-American children growing past the age of when most people are reluctant to adopt them.

So, they reached out to a friend who suggested they contact Community Based Care of Central Florida, an organization that provides an adoption training class.

“We thought that it was time for us to open up our home,” Wendy Penson said. “Everybody deserves a chance at life and when you take the class you do realize it’s not for everybody but everybody can help by giving, by mentoring and in other ways.”

The class the couple enrolled in was designed to weed out those who would not make good parents and to prepare those who would.

“There were so many of us there but on the first day they told us that many of us wouldn’t stick it out, we’d be gone,” Penson said. “I remember after the first break when everyone came back there were so many missing. They didn’t stick it out and we kept noticing each day, attendance dwindled.”

The Pensons would fist-bump each other each day for added encouragement as the intense twelve-week program involved homework and constant internal and



Derwin and Wendy Penson with their children, 10-year-old Ebony; five-year-old Skylar; and seven-year-old Nevaeh. In the fall of 2015, the Pensons were approved by a family court judge to officially adopt and provide a permanent home to their three children.

Courtesy Photo

external assessment, that included telling their life story, background checks, and examining relationships with family members and co-workers.

“The classes are designed to assess how you’re living, what your lifestyle is, what your influences are, to determine your readiness,” Derwin Penson said.

The goals of foster care are to foster until a permanent home is found; to stabilize until an adopted or biological family is found, and again, to weed out those individuals who are not ready, according to Penson.

In the fall of 2015, the Pensons were approved by a family court judge to officially adopt and provide a permanent home for three children.

“People have been praying for us along this journey and for that, we are truly grateful,” Wendy Penson said, noting that the need to adopt children, particularly African-Americans is great.

Studies examined by the National Black Caucus of State Legislators reveal that African-American children who come into contact with the child welfare

system are disproportionately represented in foster care, and are less likely than children of other racial and ethnic groups to move to permanent placement.

Further, African-American children account for 15 percent of the U.S. child population but as of September 2011, were 27 percent of the 400,540 children in foster care and have lower rates of adoption than those of other races and ethnicities.

“There are kids out there who will never get adopted who just want love and care. You don’t have to be superhuman. These kids just want a consistent place to live,” Penson said. “When you hear them speak, you realize they know what they’re missing and it breaks your heart. If everyone who ever thought about adoption would just explore it and pursue it we could probably get all of our children out of foster homes.”

For more information about adoption, visit: www.cbccfl.org, www.AdoptUSKids.com, or www.africanamericanadoptiononline.com.

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Five Tips to Safely Shovel Snow

Milwaukee— With the first significant snowfall set to pound the Mid-Atlantic this weekend, the Snow & Ice Management Association (SIMA), the North American trade association representing snow management professionals, has these five tips for safely shoveling snow.

"Shoveling snow has a number of health risks associated with it, including the most serious one— a heart attack," said Martin B. Tirado, CAE, Executive Director, SIMA. "Other more common health risks include dehydration, back injuries, pulled muscles, broken bones and frostbite. But the good news is there are ways to safely shovel snow."

Here are SIMA's tips for safe snow shoveling:

TIP #1: Stay on top of the snow. We aren't suggesting that you make snow angels but when there's heavy snow, the best advice is to stay ahead of the storm. SIMA recommends that you clear the snow every few inches instead of waiting for the snow to stop falling.

TIP #2: Layer it up. Wear loose layers



of clothing so you can peel a layer off if you get hot. Avoid wearing wool or manmade material because they don't allow perspiration to evaporate— better choices are cotton and silk. And when it comes to footwear, waterproof boots with good traction will help ensure that

you don't slip and fall. They aren't pretty but they are critical to preventing a fall.

TIP #3: Push, don't lift. Sounds like something a high school wrestling coach might say, but if you push the snow to the side rather than trying to lift the snow, you exert less energy, thereby

placing less stress on your body.

TIP #4: Do an exercise warm-up. Although you aren't running a marathon, shoveling snow is exercise. So warm up before you start with some simple stretches that engage your entire body— especially your arms, legs and back. Drink plenty of water and take breaks when you need them.

TIP #5: Call and text. We're not suggesting that you make calls and text while shoveling snow, but it is important to have your cell phone on you so you can make a call in event of an emergency.

Following these tips will help ensure that you survive and thrive through winter. For more snow and ice removal tips or to interview a snow management professional, visit SIMA.

Founded in 1996, the Snow & Ice Management Association is the North American trade association for professionals involved with the snow and ice industry. For more information, visit: www.sima.org.

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Eugene Monroe faces uncertain future with Ravens

By Turron Davenport

When it comes to the offensive line, left tackle could be considered the glamour position. That position attracts the most attention and generally warrants the highest salary. The Baltimore Ravens traded a fourth and fifth round pick in the 2014 NFL Draft for left tackle Eugene Monroe.

The Jaguars had a new coaching staff and decided to part ways with Monroe. He came to the Ravens and took over at left tackle during the season. The Ravens were pleased with Monroe and rewarded him with a five year \$37.5 million deal.

However, Monroe has faced multiple injuries since signing the deal and his future is truly in question with the Ravens. He has missed a total of 15 games over the last two seasons, which he will use as motivation during his off-season training.

"No one likes to be hurt and not be on the field, but it is what it is, and I've had some things happen that just were unfortunate," Monroe said. "I'll make sure I continue to work my ass off and continue to get better."

The Ravens had to move left guard Kelechi Osemele to left tackle in December. It was an idea they had contemplated before. Osemele had experience playing left tackle in college and has played well over the final four games of the season.

The team has flirted with the idea of keeping Osemele at left tackle, which could be a sign that they may move on from Monroe. Osemele is set to hit the free agent market and will garner plenty of attention from teams.

General Manager Ozzie Newsome addressed what went on behind the move



Baltimore Ravens left tackle Eugene Monroe in pass protection during a game against the Denver Broncos on September 13, 2015 at Sports Authority Field in Denver, Colorado.
Courtesy Photo/espn.com.

at the Ravens season ending press conference.

"Left tackle is important to protect the blindside of the quarterback. When [Kelechi Osemele] agreed to move to left tackle, we thought it was a good thing for us to get a chance to watch him over the course of four games, and then also improve his value to the National Football League." Newsome said.

Monroe has an \$8.7 million cap number if he remains on the roster next season. The Ravens can save \$2.1 million if he is released but the team will still be on the hook for \$6.6 million in dead cap money. Newsome acknowledged that Monroe has played well when healthy, but the problem is keeping him healthy.

Monroe says that he is not concerned about whether or not he will be back with the Ravens next season and is focused on "getting healthy and back to playing ball." He was placed on injured

reserve and had shoulder surgery. This is the second time that he had surgery on his shoulder.

"This is unfortunately the second time I've gone through this shoulder deal, so

I sort of know what to expect in terms of my rehab process," Monroe said. "I'm fully confident that I'll be healthy and back on the field."

The Ravens will have the sixth pick in the 2016 NFL Draft. Some analysts predict Notre Dame left tackle Ronnie Stanley to be the Ravens' selection. Investing such a high pick on left tackle would definitely be a sign that the team is preparing to move on from Monroe.

Monroe is set to work his way back from injury regardless of what happens with the Ravens. Putting in hard work is something that he is accustomed to during the off-season.

Last summer, he reported to camp with a noticeably leaner build. He will approach this off-season with a positive mindset as he works toward a more successful season in 2016.

"I've had some time to look at my game and how I've improved from the year before," Monroe said. "I've made major strides. I've played some pretty good ball and I'm looking to build off of that."

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diaspora (di-as-po-ra): dispersal or scattering of a group of people from their original homeland



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Recipes can be found at www.oldwayspt.org



Oldways' African Heritage & Health Ambassador Network is a collective of talented community volunteers dedicated to improving nutrition and public health. The Ambassador Network was designed especially for A Taste of African Heritage teachers who want to take their community outreach work to the next level. Oldways provides Ambassadors with additional outreach support and exclusive materials to be able to offer cooking classes, workshops, and other community health outreach events in their areas.

Courtesy Photos

Ford Launches Men of Courage for African-Americans

By Stacy M. Brown

Ford Motor Company is helping to kick off Black History Month by honoring African-American men and amplifying their accomplishments.

The Detroit-based auto company kicked off its “Men of Courage” contest on Martin Luther King Day at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore and Ford officials have begun recognizing black men whose primary goal is strengthening their communities and creating positive change.

“The goal is to help change perception of African-American men, so the theory of change is that by helping to share real stories of good fathers, loving husbands and entrepreneurs where you create a sense of empathy in peoples’ minds which leads to change,” said Shawn Wilson, the manager of Multicultural Community Engagement for the Ford Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Ford Motor Company.

“This is a solutions oriented program with three different components,” Wilson said. The first part is to share stories, then create a vision for what they want the future of black men in America to be and finally there is action, where they support initiatives that positively impact the community.”

Already, the program has the backing of such prominent individuals as rapper Big Sean, basketball Hall of Fame member Dave Bing and pop superstar Usher.

The “Men of Courage” initiative consists of a national contest of inspirational stories from which Ford will select a winner to honor at the Ford Freedom Awards in Detroit on May 17, 2016. Officials at the Ford Fund are also developing a free online curriculum and teaching guide that profiles 20 prominent African-American men, a program that seeks to enable junior and secondary high school students to create visions for success.

The January 18, 2016 event held at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum served as the kick off for the national contest and included officials from Ford, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company, and 100 Black Men of America, all of whom convened a diverse group of 60 black

men ranging in age from 17 to 70 for a daylong forum of storytelling, visioning and developing plans for action.

“Ford has a long history of supporting the African American community, and is a trusted source when it comes to building communities,” said forum participant Burt Jordan, vice president of Ford’s Global Vehicle and Powertrain Purchasing & Supplier Diversity. “Men of Courage have the power to bring together African-American men in a way that will positively impact people throughout the country.”

The primary reason Baltimore was chosen as the launch city was because of its rich African-American culture, Wilson said.

“We [first announced] the program at the Charles Wright Museum of African-American History in Detroit. So, it made sense to launch at the place of another African-American of prominence like Reginald F. Lewis,” Wilson said. “We do authentic community engagement. We relish our role of being a trusted community partner.”

Wilson says the response has been nothing short of amazing. Participants at the Baltimore event have made more than 300 commitments to provide social and financial capital to projects honoring black men, including support for a yearlong program at Reginald F. Lewis Museum around the theme, “Year of the Black Male,” which explores past, present and future issues facing black men.

Ford and other members have also pledged to help scale Shop Talk, a monthly panel discussion; the series was developed by Sebastian Jackson, a Detroit-based entrepreneur and owner of Social Grooming, an innovative barber-shop and community meeting place.

“I believe we have the talent and skills to solve today’s social challenges right in our own communities,” said Calvin G. Butler Jr., CEO, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company. “Men of Courage is an important program because it provides support to those who are developing solutions, and gives our young people a guide to how they can create a brighter future for themselves.”

For contest and program information, visit www.MenOfCourage.com.



Skip Sanders, executive director, Reginald F. Lewis Museum, Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor, City of Baltimore, Calvin G. Butler Jr., CEO, Baltimore Gas and Electric Company and Burt Jordan, Ford vice president, Global Vehicle and Powertrain Purchasing & Supplier Diversity stop to say a few words of encouragement and to welcome the group before the afternoon session of the Men of Courage event.



Shaka Senghor, writer, mentor, and motivational speaker inspires the audience about how his life transformed over the last five years.



Jaylen Bledsoe, event digital strategist and CEO, The Jaylen D. Bledsoe Global Group Consulting - The Flare Digital Agency, led the social media team to keep people informed online about the event.



Shawn Wilson, manager, Multicultural Community Engagement, Ford Motor Company Fund.



Kwame Anku, VoiceLots, Inc. and Ken Jenkins, NFL Alumni Association having an engaging conversation.

Disney on Ice presents *Treasure Trove* arrives in Baltimore

By Andrea Blackstone

The ultimate Disney animation celebration will be held at the Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore, February 3-7, 2016. Produced by Feld Entertainment, Disney On Ice presents *Treasure Trove* is Disney's 50th animated feature and Disney lovers will see Peter Pan; Tinker Bell; Captain Hook; Simba; Alice and the Mad Hatter; and a host of other characters and princesses come to life in the production.

In *Treasure Trove*, Hope Alexander portrays Princess Tiana from "The Princess and the Frog." The 26-year-old who was born and raised in Wilmington, Delaware will perform in Baltimore for the second time.

"I just think the show has something everyone can enjoy," Alexander said, noting that beside her part in *Treasure Trove*, another eye-catching number is the performance of *Under the Sea* with Ariel and Sebastian from *The Little Mermaid*.

Getting accustomed to moving from city to city and country to country every week or so was once Alexander's toughest challenge during her performance career. However, she has grown accustomed to her ever-changing life of packing and unpacking while performing in exciting places.

She says she has made lifelong friendships while working for Feld Entertainment and seeing the smiles of Disney lovers and observing the excitement when they see their favorite character coming to life, has made the journey to destinations like Japan, China, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand all worth it.

While performing in Baltimore, Alexander's additional bonus is getting to see family and friends. She explained that because she is usually on the road six to eight months at a time, she really enjoys performing



Hope Alexander, who portrays Princess Tiana with Prince Naveen from "The Princess and the Frog," all part of an extraordinary lineup of stories from the Disney animated film vault that will come to life in Disney on Ice presents Treasure Trove at the Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore, February 3-7, 2016. Come ready to see some of Disney's much-loved princesses like Cinderella; Jasmine; Ariel; Aurora; Belle; Mulan; and Snow White and Disney characters including: Peter Pan; Tinker Bell; Captain Hook; Simba; Alice and the Mad Hatter. For more information, performance times or to purchase tickets, call 1-800-745-3000 or visit: www.ticketmaster.com.

Courtesy Photo/Disney on Ice

close to home. Her family and friends are able to come to the shows to see her perform. They are always very supportive and very loud in the stands.

Alexander started to skate at the age of two, when her mother, Cherise Alexander would take her around the ice rink. Early morning lessons became

a part of her routine as she grew older.

Between age seven and 16, Alexander skated competitively on ice. A knee injury interrupted her competitive skating but a track scholarship led her to Miami University. After graduating with a B.A. in International Studies, and a B.A. in French in 2011, she revisited her passion ice-skating, which had always been a major part of her life. She joined a few smaller skating shows before joining Feld Entertainment in 2012.

"I still wanted to be involved in skating, and that's when I auditioned for shows and picked it back up again, and here I am today," Hope said. "It's my fourth year with *Treasure Trove*."

Her father, Romain Alexander, was also supportive of Hope's desire to skate. Both of her parents were athletes growing up and in college. She shares her role models' athletic genes.

"My mom ran track, and my dad played football in college and professionally," Hope said. "Just watching how hard they've worked and how they've persevered, and just to see where they came from and where they are today is really inspiring."

Hope wants to serve as inspiration for a little boy or girl who spots her happily skating on the ice. Perhaps he or she may also want to pursue a rewarding career in skating or even something considered less common.

"I just say keep at it because you never know where it will take you," Hope said. "I stuck with skating for all of these years, and now I've been throughout the U.S. and all over the world, and I wouldn't change it for the world. So just keep at it and don't give up!"

For more information, performance times or to purchase tickets, call 1-800-745-3000 or visit: www.ticketmaster.com.

Many more entertainment stories available at www.baltimoretimes-online.com

Rambling Rose

Black History Month Begins



Rosa Pryor Trusty

Hello everyone, I hope everyone is well and came out of the terrible snow-storm all right. I suppose it could have been much worse considering other places in the country.

There isn't too much going on this weekend, I guess we are still trying to dig out of the snow and get ready for all the events coming up for Black History Month in February. However, I do know that the King David Lodge #18 will host the "Men in Black, All Black Everything Cabaret" on Saturday, January 30 from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. at the Delta Center located at 2501 Springhill Avenue in Baltimore. This event is BYOB and BYOF. DJ Mike Jones will provide entertainment. For ticket information, call Curtis Williams at 410-258-1715.

"Quality Plus" is hosting a Pre-Valentine's Day Black and Gold Affair on February 6 with a buffet dinner and BYOB. I understand it will be an elegant evening of fun, dancing, networking, and shopping with vendors including yours truly. Yes, I will be there, signing both of my books on Saturday, February 6 from 8 p.m. until 12 p.m. at the Delta Center, 2501 Spring Hill Avenue. Dress to impress in your black and gold and I will see you there. For ticket information, call John Seymore at 410-660-7227.

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum begins the month with a concert featuring the world-renowned Morgan State University Choir performing traditional African American spirituals and gospel selections. If you haven't heard this choir, you owe it to yourself to check them out. In addition to the concert they have planned many other events for their visitors. Call 443-263-1875 for ticket information.

If you enjoy jazz, than check out Bilal

Ali's smooth jazz evening featuring one of the hottest vocalists "Shang" and Baltimore's own sax man, Isaac Parham on Sunday, January 31 at Magooby's Joke House and Soundstage, 9603 Deereco Road in Timonium, Maryland. Showtime is 5 p.m. For tickets and information, call 443-858-9781.

Many of you have heard about the Broadway Play "The Color Purple." Well, here is your chance to go see it with your friends and family on a bus excursion with Gwen Richards. She is putting together a very special group of theater lovers to see Academy Award, Golden Globe and Grammy winner Jennifer Hudson, Danielle Brooks and Cynthia Erivo on March 12-13, 2016. The Greyhound bus departs from Baltimore on Saturday, March 12 at 10 a.m. Reservations are due now. For more details, contact Gwen at 410-967-7503.

I hate to say it, but I am out of space. Be good to yourself and respect others. Remember, if you need me, call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.



Edmondson High School class of 1963 still "Meet & Greet" every first Friday of the month 4 p.m. at the Pikesville Hilton Hotel. Shown here are Pat Weldon Wheatley, Brenda from class of '61', Cheryl Young Johnson, Virginia Blount Jones and Michael Williams.



More members of Edmondson High School class of 1963 Robert Isaacs and his wife and Ronald McCallum having cocktails and enjoying each other.



Morgan State University Choir launches Black History Month at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum by performing traditional African American spirituals and gospel selections on Saturday, February 6, 2016 at 3 p.m.



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Cold Weather Tips for Pet Owners

Reisterstown, Md.— Bitter cold temperatures have hit Baltimore and pets are in danger from being out in the cold just as much as humans are. Here are some tips from Baltimore Humane Society for Baltimore pet owners to keep their pets safe from the dangerous weather:

1. Bring your pets in! If it is too cold for you, it is too cold for your pet to stay outside for long periods of time. If you have outdoor cats or care for feral cats, check out this site on how to make a kitty enclosure: http://www.neighborhoodcats.org/HOW_TO_FERAL_CAT_WINTER_SHELTER

2. Dogs with short coats should wear a jacket! Breeds that do not have an undercoat (dogs with undercoats are breeds like shepherds, huskies, malamutes, retrievers) can get cold quickly.

3. Keep off of road salt. Not only is it toxic if your pet ingests it, it can be very irritating and even painful to their paw pads.

4. Wipe your pet's paws off with a lukewarm wash rag to remove any melting salt so they do not ingest it when they groom themselves.

5. Consider applying a barrier to your pet's paws like petroleum jelly to protect their paws while out on a walk.

6. Keep your pet's coat appropriately groomed. A healthy coat will work most efficiently in keeping warmth on the body and cold away.

7. Anti-freeze is extremely poisonous and also tempting to pets due to its sweet taste. If you have it in your garage make sure it is kept up high in a leak proof container. Clean up any that might drip from equipment that uses it. If you believe your pet ingested anti-freeze, get them to a veterinarian immediately!

8. Pets exposed to cold temperatures



for long periods of time can experience hypothermia. Signs of hypothermia include low body temperature, low heart rate, low respiration (breathing), violent shivering, and their gums may turn pale or blue. If you believe your pet is experiencing hypothermia, warm them slowly to avoid shock, and get them to a full service vet immediately.

9. Less time outside may mean a bored pet. Increase your animal's indoor enrichment! Frozen kongs, food puzzles, and training games all provide mental exercise to tire out a pet who can't get outdoors.

10. Cuddle up! Cold weather is the perfect time to spend snuggling and playing with your pet.

And here are two more tips for pets that are not your own:

1. Warm engines in parked cars attract cats and small wildlife that may crawl up under the hood. To avoid injuring any hidden animals, bang on your car's hood to scare them away before starting your engine.

2. Speak out if you see a pet left in the

cold. Here's advice from the Humane Society of the United States on how to handle the situation when you see a pet left in the cold. First politely let the owner know you're concerned. If they don't respond well, document what you see: the date, time, exact location and type of animal, plus as many details as possible. Video and photographic documentation will help bolster your case. Then contact your local animal control agency or county sheriff's office and present your evidence. Take detailed notes regarding when and with whom you have spoken. Respectfully follow up in a few days if the situation has not been remedied.

The Baltimore Humane Society, founded in 1927 by Elsie Seeger Barton, is an independent, non-profit, no-kill animal shelter, which offers low-cost veterinary care to the public and a pet cemetery with grief support services. For more information about BHS, and how you can contribute, volunteer, adopt, or foster, visit: www.bmorehumane.org or call 410-833-8848.

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MDDC Press Service
60 West Street, Suite 107, Annapolis, MD 21401**FREE Lifeline Service****Available for Income-Eligible Residents**

If you participate in public assistance programs or meet monthly income level guidelines, you may qualify for a free phone* + 250 Minutes & Unlimited Texts.

To apply visit www.enroll.accesswireless.com

Free phone is provided by Access Wireless. Access Wireless is a service provider for the government-funded Lifeline Assistance program. Lifeline assistance is provided by i-wireless LLC, d/b/a Access Wireless, an eligible telecommunications carrier. Lifeline service is non-transferable. Lifeline benefits are limited to one per household. A household is defined, for the purposes of the Lifeline program, as any individual or group of individuals, who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. Violation of the one-per-household rule constitutes violation of FCC rules and will result in the customer's de-enrollment from Lifeline. Only eligible customers may enroll in the program. Consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain a Lifeline benefit can be punished by fine, imprisonment, or can be barred from the program. Customers must present proper documentation proving eligibility for the Lifeline program. Your information will be validated against public records and any discrepancies could result in delays or denial of service.

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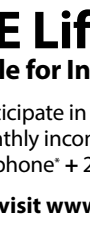
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MDDC Press Service
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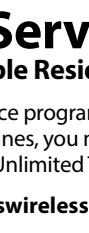
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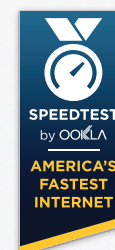
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