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Rising artist pens first children's book



Roger James is an independent artist with an illustration, graphic design and oil painting background. He released his book, "Pecan's Spelling Bee Championship" on Amazon on January 1, 2016, marking his debut as an author. James became interested in becoming an artist at the age of five. He resides in Riverdale, Maryland. (See article on page 14) Photo Credit: Kevin Smith

Legendary Songstress Natalie Cole Remembered

By Stacy M. Brown

Tony Bennett said that he is deeply saddened about the death of legendary soul singer Natalie Cole and other celebrities like Jordin Sparks and Andy Cohen talked about their favorite songs the daughter of the late great Nat King Cole was known for.

Friends and family alike expressed their devastation over Cole, who died late Thursday night— December 31, 2015— at the age of 65. The cause of death was listed as congestive heart failure, but in recent years the “Unforgettable” singer underwent a kidney transplant.

“I have cherished the long friendship I had with her, her father Nat, and the family over the years,” said Bennett, an 18-time Grammy winner who in 2006 released the CD “Together” that featured duets with Nat King Cole. “Natalie was an exceptional jazz singer and it was an honor to have recorded and performed with her on several occasions. She was a lovely and generous person who will be greatly missed.”

Sparks, who rose to fame in 2007 after becoming the youngest singer to win “American Idol,” says she feels as though Cole has always been a part of her life.

“Her father is my favorite artist of all time. ‘Smile’ is a song I sing to myself whenever things get overwhelming,” Sparks said. “I sang ‘This Will Be’ on the American Idol tour and a few years later I had the honor of actually singing it with her on stage. I don’t remember what I sounded like, I was too much in awe of her but I sure remember her standing next to me. I will never forget that moment.”

A nine-time Grammy winner, Cole was



Natalie Cole
1950 - 2015

born in Los Angeles on February 6, 1950. She was just eight when her father recorded his first album and carved out a path that his daughter would not only follow, but also excel at.

Nat King Cole died in 1965 at the age of 45 and 10 years later, his daughter won her first Grammy Award as Best New Artist because of her hit, “This Will Be,” which also won a Grammy for Best R&B Vocal Performance by a Female.

In 1991, her tribute album, “Unforget-

table... With Love,” won Album of the Year. Her biggest hits included “Sophisticated Lady,” “Everlasting,” “Our Love,” “I’ve Got Love on My Mind,” and “Daydreaming.”

In recent years, Cole was diagnosed with kidney failure and started receiving dialysis treatments three times a week. Appearing on CNN, she made an appeal for a kidney donor.

Watching at home was a nurse named Esther who “serendipitously” had been

on duty at the hospital one day when Natalie was in for treatment. “Oh, I took care of that lady,” the nurse told her niece, Jessica, who was also watching. “She’s so nice, I wish I could help her find a kidney.”

Less than two months later, Jessica, who was only 30 years old and eight months pregnant, died unexpectedly of a stroke. Her aunt came forward and offered the kidney, because her niece was an organ donor. She was a perfect match with Natalie.

Ironically, the donor and her family were immigrants from El Salvador and Cole said the experience brought her even closer to the culture.

“I wouldn’t put it past the possibility that there is a spirit of Latino inside of me, because of this family,” Cole said at the time. “Ever since then, my passion for Spanish and everything Latin, all of a sudden became more intense. I couldn’t even figure it out myself.”

When Cole got the news that a kidney was available, she was at the bedside of her beloved sister, Carole, who was dying of cancer and Cole had to rush into surgery and wasn’t there when her sister passed away. Her final album was a tribute to her sister.

“Losing Natalie Cole is a sad start to a new year,” said talk show host Andy Cohen.

Cole’s family, including her son Robert Yancy and sisters Timolin and Casey Cole also released a statement mourning her death.

“Natalie fought a fierce, courageous battle, dying how she lived ... with dignity, strength and honor,” the statement read. “Our beloved mother and sister will be greatly missed and remain unforgettable in our hearts forever.”

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Guest Editorials/Letters

Need Customer Service from Facebook? Good Luck!

By Bill Fletcher, Jr.

NNPA News Wire Columnist

It happened very suddenly over the summer. I have been using Facebook for several years. A friend convinced me that once my Facebook “friends” had hit the 5000 mark (the maximum permitted) that I should replace my existing page with a “Fan Page” or “Celebrity Page.” It sounds more important than it actually is. It permits you to get an unlimited number of “Likes” to your page; you can post whatever you choose; you can get private messages from anyone who likes your page. But you cannot “like” other pages and you cannot have “Facebook Friends.” Let’s leave aside, for a moment, whether or not it was a good idea for me to create this page.

In any case, this summer, overnight, the ability to reply to “Comments” that were made on my page disappeared. In other words, anyone “liking” my page was still able to offer a comment on anything that I posted, but I no longer could respond to their comments. I assumed that all I needed to do was to reboot my computer. I did that, yet nothing changed. I tried opening up Facebook via Internet Explorer rather than Chrome. Nothing changed. I tried opening Facebook via my iPhone; again nothing changed. I sent a “Help” message to Facebook about the problem. No answer. I started asking around, but no one knew what to do. A computer expert friend of mine started looking into the problem and discovered that many other people were having exactly the same problem, yet no one was getting an answer from Facebook. I sent two or three more messages to Facebook asking them for help, but heard nothing. Finally, my computer expert friend discovered a way around the problem so that I have regained the ability to respond to “Comments.” To this day, Facebook has yet to reply to my inquiries.

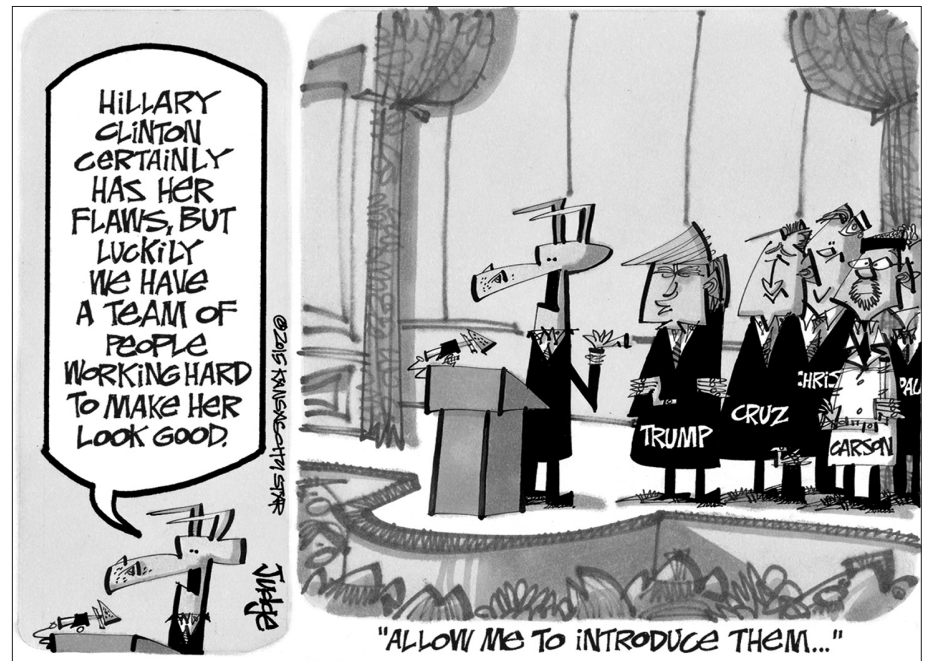
Why do you need to know any of this? The experience has been very unsettling. Instead of being addressed by Facebook, I felt blown off. To add to this problem, there was no other way to get Facebook to respond to my concerns. In other words, there was no accountability and, simply put, I was stuck. There is no phone number to call, nor any monitoring agency from which I could gain assistance.

We are in an era of incredible dependence on electronic technology, the so-called Information Age. We seem to speak with other human beings less frequently in business, commerce, and even social interactions. Instead we either interact with machines or we are told that we need to get answers from other ‘customers’ rather than being addressed by the company, organization, etc., where the problem lies. We are then left to accept our situation, whether the problem has been resolved or not.

The situation we have found ourselves facing is one with the growth of robotic technology, the massive accumulation of wealth by a small number of people who control this technology, the dismissal of human labor in the supposed interest of increasing productivity, and the burden for resolving problems— or even the burden of carrying out the work of the company or organization— placed on the “customers.”

Welcome to 2016!

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is the host of *The Global African on Telesur-English*. Follow him on Twitter, Facebook and at www.billfletcherjr.org.



Letters to the Editor

Editor:

Re: *Four Oblivious Apocalyptic Horsemen*

President Obama, Secretary of State Kerry, former Secretary of State Clinton, and Senator Bernie Sanders are oblivious to the danger posed by ISIS.

Bernie Sanders keeps harping on about our economy and hardly talks about ISIS. He is way out in left field.

President Obama referred to ISIS as the JV team and dithered when moderate Syrians asked for air strikes. Over the past year Obama’s air campaign against ISIS averaged 20 sorties per day compared to 1100 sorties per day in Operation Desert Storm and 800 per day during the second Gulf War. Obama continues to refuse to call them radical Islamic terrorists.

When referring to the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, Secretary Kerry said there was "a rationale that you could attach yourself to somehow and say, okay, they’re really angry because of this and that". And then he described the killing of 130 people in Paris as indiscriminate. There is no rationale for any terrorist attacks, and showing sympathy for the Charlie Hebdo attack is ridiculous.

In a Democratic debate former Secretary

Clinton said she couldn’t refer to the Paris killers as radical Islamic terrorists, which is parroting Obama’s view of the terrorists. Clinton and Obama think we should lead from behind and let others be out front, and ISIS and others are taking advantage of this policy of non-leadership, and they threaten the security of this country and the Western world.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry, NH

Editor:

This year has been a very unusual year for me. On February 25, 2015, I had a brain aneurysm. I had surgery on March 2, 2015 and was able to come home on March 9, 2015.

I did not know anything or how this happened. It was only by the love, grace and mercy of God and the wonderful people he placed in my life, that I have made it to this 12th month of 2015, to share this story with you one more time for His Glory.

I am a widow and I believe in miracles. I know that God is able.

Valerie Foy
Philadelphia, PA

Government needs to work better

By Lee H. Hamilton

Whoever wins next November's presidential election, it's a sure bet that at some point he or she will vow to set the federal government on the straight and narrow. Maybe the new President will even resort to the time-honored pledge to create a government "as good as the people." It's a bracing sentiment. But you'll want to take it with a grain of salt.

Our history is filled with remarkable government accomplishments. Our involvement in World War II and hands-on approach to the postwar reconstruction of Europe and Japan, our role in ending the Cold War, the interstate highway system, extending the right to vote to all our citizens, federal research and support for ending diseases such as polio. There's a long list of crucially important efforts the federal government has executed well.

Yet every American ought also to be alarmed by an expanding list of missteps and blunders. In a report last month for the highly capable and too-little-noticed Volcker Alliance—whose goal is to

improve government effectiveness—NYU Professor Paul C. Light drew attention to what he calls "a shocking acceleration in the federal government's production of highly visible mistakes, miscalculations and maladministration." He went on to say, "[T]he aging bureaucracy can no longer guarantee faithful execution of all the laws, and it has become increasingly unpredictable in where and how it will err."

reasons: muddled policy, insufficient resources, poor organization, lack of leadership, lack of skills, sometimes even outright misconduct. The question isn't really what or who is to blame. It's how we turn things around and reverse the accelerating pace of breakdowns.

To start, the executive and the legislative branches need to focus on the implementation of policy. A lot of hard work goes into its creation, both on

rate lawyer negotiating arms control or trade agreements. You don't want third-rate scientists defining drinking-water requirements. Getting things right means hiring good people, retaining them, and then making sure they're held to account with well-conceived metrics.

Finally, we have to put an end to the politics that so often stymies policy. Too often these days, the losers of a policy debate immediately turn to torpedoing it. They block the filling of key positions, cut funding, twist the objectives, or impose hiring freezes. They block policy changes that would improve implementation, put unqualified executives in control, or tolerate misconduct and confusion. Some government failures aren't the result of muddled policy, lack of leadership, or incompetence; they're the result of what amounts to calculated sabotage.

Most Americans want government to work well. We want it to enhance the quality of our lives and our communities. Arguments over the appropriate size of government are important, but that's not the issue here. The issue is that when a policy is adopted, it needs to be executed effectively. Whoever our next President turns out to be, let's hope he or she takes that charge seriously.

Lee Hamilton is a Distinguished Scholar, Indiana University School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

***"These failures can occur for many reasons:
muddled policy, insufficient resources,
poor organization, lack of leadership,
lack of skills, sometimes even outright misconduct.
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A moment's reflection will call to mind a sobering litany of failures: the inability to stop the 9/11 attacks; the confused, inadequate response to Hurricane Katrina; the even more confused response to the 2008 financial collapse; shortfalls in the care of our veterans; bridge collapses, mining accidents, and other failures caused by inadequate funding for inspection and regulation; the breaches in White House security; the fact that we've now been fighting a war on terror for nearly 15 years with no end in sight. It's enough to make the staunchest champion of government action lose hope.

These failures can occur for many

Capitol Hill and in the agencies, but the sad truth is that much less attention goes to how it's going to be carried out. This is largely in the hands of the President, but Congress has a crucial role to play both in crafting the law to account for how it will be implemented, and then in pursuing oversight afterward. Both branches need to pay attention to how they will assess effectiveness, anticipate problems, make sure that staffing is adequate, and provide necessary resources.

Second, if making policy today is complicated, so is implementing it. This means that we need skillful people within the government to carry it out.

Let's be blunt. You don't want a second-

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Nonprofit offers free school supplies to teachers, families

By Andrea Blackstone

Public school teachers around the nation are responsible for helping to shape the future of young people, but tight school budgets often leave many without adequate classroom supplies and educational materials. Baltimore residents Melissa Badeker and Kathleen Williams, who met while volunteering at the House of Ruth, decided they wanted to help. The former teachers founded Baltimore Teacher Supply Swap (BTSS) in July of 2014.

Badeker and Williams wanted to establish a resource similar to the Baltimore-based Maryland Book Bank, which distributes free books to families, teachers, schools and organizations. As a result, Badeker—who currently serves as the executive director of BTSS—and Williams created a way for student and office supplies, arts and crafts supplies, curriculum supplements and classroom materials to be put to good use. Badeker confirmed that 378 BTSS visitors took 1,043 bags free of supplies in 2015.

“Our goal is to help teachers reach some goals that they need to reach with their kids and give them the tools and support,” Badeker said. “They usually find us through word-of-mouth.”

The organization’s inventory includes an eclectic list that ranges from folders, notebooks, scissors, pencils, crayons, glue, and bulletin board decorations to toys and storage containers.

Badeker says that many educators do not have what they need for their classrooms, while various schools and institutions have a surplus of items. Much of the supplies come from these sources, along with individual donations.

“A lot of individuals have office supplies sitting around the house [that] they’re not using, or their kids are older and they don’t use puzzles and games anymore. So we’re a good place to get rid of things like that,” Badeker said.



The nonprofit, Baltimore Teacher Supply Swap collects education materials and supplies and puts them in the hands of teachers free of charge. Anyone in the community in need of educational supplies and other items are welcome to utilize the resource located in the Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter, 5513 York Road in Baltimore. Over 378 visitors to the Baltimore Teacher Swap took 1,043 bags of free of supplies in 2015.

Courtesy Photo

Although Badeker works full-time for a virtual education company, she runs BTSS on a part-time basis. The nonprofit organization is open approximately six days a month at the Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter, located at 5513 York Road in Baltimore.

Badeker said that she feels the hard work that is required to run BTSS is worth it when teachers like Jesalyn Gordon, a second grade teacher in Baltimore City, provide feedback after using the Swap. Gordon reportedly found many things that have helped her students.

“I’ve gotten a class set of dry erase boards that get used every day and help our classroom save paper. I’ve gotten a bunch of stuffed animals, which my second graders love to read to and also go to for comfort. The Swap makes it possible for me to get materials I need, partic-

ularly as a first year teacher,” Gordon said.

Badeker said approximately 70 percent of BTSS visitors come from Baltimore City, while 10 percent travel from Baltimore County. The rest typically come from surrounding counties.

In addition to educational items and supplies, BTSS browsers may bring canned goods. They are donated to Christian Liberty Church located in Baltimore to support their food pantry program. BTSS also donates supplies to their mentoring program, Imagine Me Ministries. Pet food donations are given to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).

BTSS also opens its doors to anyone in need of school supplies or educational materials. Jasmine White, a home schooling mother, is a happy BTSS user

who provided favorable feedback to Badeker.

“If home schooled children are to succeed academically, they need parents to take their commitment seriously and provide individual instruction. Most of all, we need to seek out resources that help create a rich, educational environment for our children,” White said. “Baltimore Teacher Swap has been that resource for my family! Through this program, we’ve been able to have access to materials I may not have been able to afford. Rather than choosing between supplies or curriculum, I can get everything I need.”

For more information about BTSS, hours and days of operation, visit: <http://teachersupplyswap.org>.

“Teachers do the noble work of educating our children. And we can’t thank them enough for the hard work they put in every day to ensure a bright future for all of us.” —Denise Juneau

Maryland women urged to get screened for cervical cancer through Pap tests

Baltimore— Of all cancers that affect women, cervical cancer is one of the most preventable. Pap test screening finds cervical cancers and pre-cancers early. But the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination can prevent boys and girls from being infected with the virus that causes cervical and several other cancers. For Cervical Health Awareness Month, Maryland recommends that women get Pap tests and that preteens get HPV vaccinations.

In 2016, an estimated 220 women in Maryland will be told that they have cervical cancer. Seventy-three Maryland women will die from the disease this year. In order to eliminate these preventable illnesses and deaths, it is essential that individuals, families, healthcare providers and public health organizations focus on promoting regular Pap tests among women 21 years and older, as well as HPV vaccinations for preteen boys and girls.

“No woman in Maryland should have to hear the words: ‘You have cervical cancer,’” said Van T. Mitchell, Secretary

of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. “With increased cancer screening and HPV vaccination rates, we can prevent cervical cancer diagnoses in our state.”

In Maryland, the majority of women 21 to 65 years old, about 88 percent, have had a Pap test in the past three years. However, younger women (ages 21 to 29) and non-black minority women are not getting screened as often as their counterparts. The HPV vaccine is highly recommended for girls and boys, 11 or 12 years old (and up until age 26 for those who have not been vaccinated). However, only 39 percent of girls have had all three doses of the vaccine. Only about 25 percent of boys have been fully vaccinated.

There are many options for obtaining and paying for Pap tests and the HPV vaccine. Health insurance can cover this cancer screening and vaccine. For example, lower-income women 40 to 64 who do not have health insurance or who have out-of-pocket costs may be eligible for a Pap test at no cost; to learn more



about this, Marylanders should call 1-800-477-9774 to discuss eligibility requirements. Medicaid enrollment through Maryland Health Connection is available year-round for Marylanders who qualify.

The Center for Cancer Prevention and

Control works to promote cervical cancer screening and is dedicated to the implementation of initiatives aimed at decreasing cervical cancer mortality rates in Maryland. For informative videos and other materials, call 1-800-477-9774 or visit <http://goo.gl/xp36eD>.

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Shareece Wright settles into groove with Ravens defense

By *Turron Davenport*

Shareece Wright wanted to be a Baltimore Raven for quite some time prior to joining the team in October. His ties to the team run directly through high school and current teammate Jimmy Smith. Wright signed a one-year deal with the San Francisco 49ers after playing his first three seasons with the San Diego Chargers.

The Ravens were able to pick up Wright after he was released by the 49ers and he has proven to be a valuable addition. Wright has been able to rebound from his Ravens debut and show why he should be brought back after the season.

Defensively, the Ravens have improved significantly over the last few weeks. Wright has locked down the left corner position when the Ravens are in nickel packages. He and Smith have done a very good job of putting the clamps on opposing receivers on the outside.

Smith lobbied for Wright to become a Raven when he was a free agent. He has been impressed with what Wright has been able to do. Their success reminds Smith of their days at Colton High School in California.

“The first game was rough for him but since then, he has kind of showed his technique, showed the player that he is, the type of player he can be, and hopefully we can keep him around,” Smith said. “He came in, and he has done a lot for us, and he has the left corner spot right now. [It’s] kind of reminiscent of high school days when we used to go down— shut it down in high school.”

John Harbaugh was very upset about two specific plays in which Wright struggled in his debut against the 49ers. Harbaugh has since had nothing but praise for Wright since then. Harbaugh’s blue-collar mentality makes him appreciate the players who come into the building and put in the necessary work every day. Wright has certainly exhibited a good work ethic since he has been in Baltimore.

“He has done nothing but worked his rear end off to do everything we’ve asked him to do technique- and assignment-wise, and it has showed up in his game,” Harbaugh said. “As a coach and a player, that’s so rewarding to see that.”

“The thing about Shareece is— and I’ve always loved this about him— this guy is a humble, hardworking, confident [and] good-hearted guy that wants to be really good and wanted to be in Baltimore from way back even when he was coming out of the draft.”

Wright was especially pleased that the coaches trusted him enough to be in one-on-one match ups with Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown and Cincinnati Bengals receiver A.J. Green. Knowing that the coaches believe in him enough to let him line up outside on an island has given Wright a lot of confidence.

It’s safe to say that Wright has settled into a comfortable zone with the Ravens defense. The secret for him has been hard work and the help of his teammates.

“I keep working hard every day. I’m learning this defense and I have gotten comfortable with what my role is. It was great to have Jimmy and be able to sit next to him on the plane and talk about the game on the way back,” Wright said. “It helped a lot. All of the guys in the secondary embraced me and have been a big help.”



Cornerback Shareece Wright points to the sky before a Baltimore Ravens game during the 2015 season. Courtesy Photo/www.nfl.com

Wright definitely wants to return to the Ravens next season. He will be an unrestricted free agent. Wright signed a one-year deal with the Ravens earlier this season. The team has a high draft pick and may end up selecting a defensive back, but Wright would be insurance on the outside.

The chemistry with the team is definitely there. He fits into what the Ravens want to do at times from their corner on the outside. There were other teams interested in Wright when he was released by the 49ers. He chose the Ravens. Now it’s the Ravens turn to choose him to be a part of their defense going forward.

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STARTS FRIDAY, JANUARY 15 CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THEATERS AND SHOWTIMES

High School Senior Awarded Full Engineering Scholarship

By Ruth Young Tyler

Morgan State University Makes Room for Scholar

Weeks before the New Year, Woodlawn High School senior Dameatria Washington had good reason to celebrate.

Washington, 18, received a full scholarship to the engineering program at Morgan State University (MSU), which covers tuition, housing, books and meals, with the caveat that she maintains a high G.P.A in the program.

Washington says she learned the good news after visiting MSU's admission office on what started out as an ordinary school day and ended with cheers and excitement.

Washington took the bus to her mother's job and they drove to MSU's campus to meet with the admissions staff. She presented her SAT scores, high school transcripts and a desire to succeed. After reviewing her documents, she received an acceptance letter and what Washington and her mother, Ethel

Joy, initially thought was a partial scholarship. Much to their surprise, it was a full scholarship. The National Honor Society student will begin her freshman year in fall 2016.

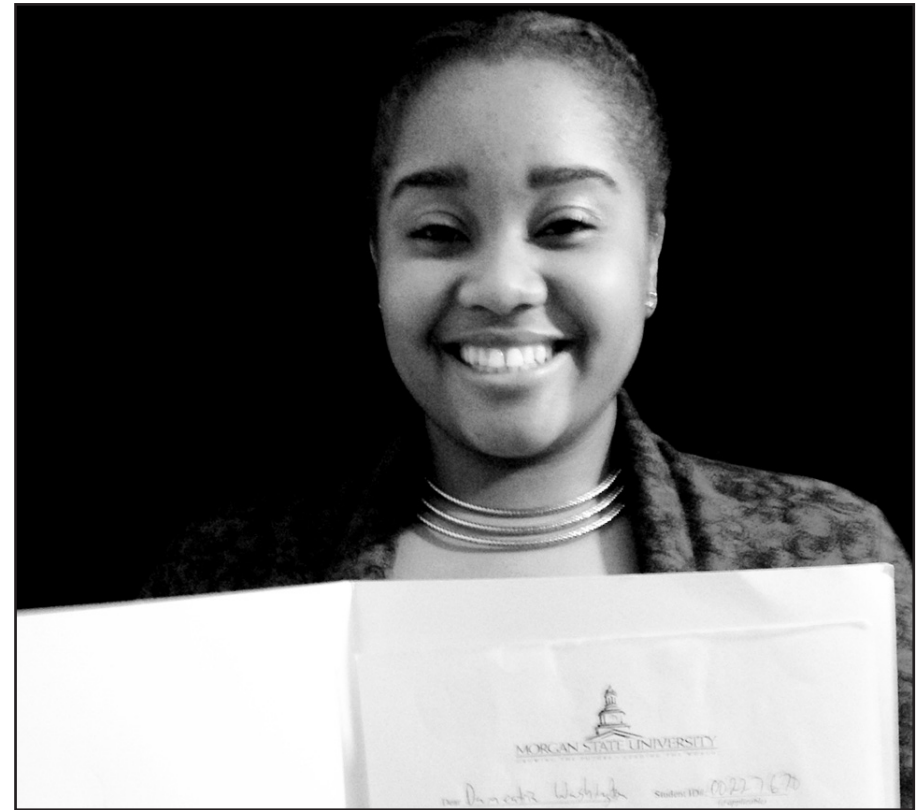
Washington says that she had lots of help along her academic journey and her greatest supporter has been her mother. She and her mother relocated to Maryland from South Carolina after a few setbacks. Joy said she wanted her daughter to have a greater chance of succeeding.

"I want her life to be different and better than some things I had to endure growing up," said Joy. "I want her to understand that a good education can take her far—around the world!"

Washington acknowledged the support she received from Ashley Gallant, a guidance counselor at Woodlawn High School.

"She helped me to fill out my college application and other forms too," said Washington. "She's supported and encouraged me every step of the way."

Washington also credits Alloysius Ndyio, a Morgan college assistant who



Woodlawn High School senior Dameatria Washington was awarded a full scholarship by Morgan State University to study civil engineering in Fall 2016.

Courtesy Photo

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managed the internship program established through a partnership between Woodlawn High School and Parsons Brickerhoff, an engineering consulting firm. The competitive program is designed to recruit and train honor roll students who are interested in pursuing a career in engineering. Washington wrote a 500-word essay, which stated why she wanted to study business and engineering in college. She was one of six students selected from the high school who received a letter of recommendation from the guidance counselor and was given an internship or acceptance into the program.

As an active member of the National Honor Society at Woodlawn High School, she helped tutor her peers and collected toiletry items for them too. She also participated in several community events and served dinners at a local homeless shelter.

Joy says that her daughter is "a very strong young lady" who has a "giving spirit."

"I encourage her every chance I can," said Joy. "I always tell her, don't let this world change you. I'm praying that she will be a strong leader for other young ladies to look up to."



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Civil and Human Rights Activists to be Honored at MLK, Jr Dinner

Annapolis— The 28th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Dinner—the largest celebration of Dr. King’s birthday in Anne Arundel County— will be held Friday, January 15, 2016 at La Fountaine Bleue located at 7514 Richie Highway in Glen Burnie at 6 p.m.

Among the 11 honorees who will be saluted at the event are: Anne Arundel County Councilman Chris Trumbauer for his dedication to diversity in government and bettering the educational opportunities in the Anne Arundel County; Bay Wine and Spirits owner Charles “Chuck” Ferrar for his entrepreneurial spirit, generosity and devotion to the community; Light House Board President Carol Brantley for championing the cause of the County’s homeless and less fortunate individuals, and Felicia Carroll who, after losing her only son to gun violence, has become an advocate for victim’s rights.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Awards Dinner in Anne Arundel County was founded in 1988 by then Alderman Carl O. Snowden. Designed to pay homage to the memory of Dr. King, the dinner honors those whose deeds, words and actions have helped to keep his legacy alive. With honorees from the county and greetings from the County Executive Steve Shuh and members of Congress John Sarbanes, Chris Van Hollen, Dutch Ruppersberger and Donna Edwards, the banquet is a reflection on the best that Anne Arundel County has to offer.

Other individuals who will be recognized for their dedication to the ideals of Dr. King include: Richard Madaleno; Samaritan House; Zina Pierre; Pastor Jimmy Rollins; Anthony Smoot; Merchelle Halsey and Dr. Angela Leimkuhler Moran.

Dinner tickets are \$60 (\$65 after January 13). VIP tickets are \$100 and include premium seating and a private reception before the dinner with hors d’oeuvres and an open bar. The Naval Academy Gospel Choir will provide entertainment.

Tickets may be purchased by phone at 410-760-4115; by mail to MLK Jr. Committee, P.O. Box 371, Annapolis MD 21404; or on-line at www.mlckskmd.org.



Charles “Chuck” Ferrar

Recipient of the Peace Maker Award. Ferrar is the owner of Bay Ridge Wine & Sprits in Annapolis and a former member of the Anne Arundel County Council. During his term he co-sponsored and passed legislation for additional funding for the Community Action Agency of Anne Arundel County and for the Anne Arundel County Library. He is known for his generosity in providing monetary support for youth in need. He has been awarded the National Retailer of the Year Award by Brown Forman and last year received the Small Business of the Year Award from the Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce.



Michael Goldfaden

The Samaritan House is the recipient of the We Share the Dream Award. Founded in 1971, Samaritan House is a state-certified treatment facility located in Annapolis. The 16-bed, long-term residential facility serves adult men who have completed a detoxification program, but still are recovering from alcohol or drug addiction. It also serves as a nine-bed transitional house for clients who wish to continue their treatment in a sober living environment. Clients may live at Samaritan House for up to one year to reinforce success in recovery. Executive Director Michael Goldfaden and President of the Board of Directors Kirk Noonan, both of Annapolis, will accept the award.



Senator Richard Madaleno

Recipient of the Maryland Citizens’ Health Initiative Courageous Leadership Award. Sen. Madaleno represents Maryland’s 18th Legislative District. He currently is serving his third term as a member of the Maryland State Senate, having first served one term in the House of Delegates. He is a leader in the fight against Homelessness and has sponsored civil rights legislation.

Sen. Madaleno also serves as the Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Ending Homelessness, and the Senate’s representative on the Maryland State Arts Council.



Kirk Noonan



Councilman Chris Trumbauer

Recipient of the Morris H. Blum Humanitarian Award. Trumbauer is serving his second term representing the 6th District on the Anne Arundel County Council, which includes the City of Annapolis and much of the greater Annapolis area.

Interested in making positive change in the County, Trumbauer ran and was elected to the Anne Arundel County Council in 2010.

Trumbauer also has used his capacity as an elected official to make appointments to increase diversity on numerous Boards and Commissions including the Community Action Agency of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, the County Executive’s Community Center Task Force, the Anne Arundel County Boards of Appeals, Spending Affordability Committee, the Anne Arundel County Arts Commission, and the newly-created Clergy Advisory Board.

In addition to diversity, Trumbauer has been a strong advocate for the environment, education and improved communication between government and constituents.



Zina Pierre

Recipient of a Drum Major Award. She is the founding president and chief executive officer of the Washington Linkage Group, Inc., and president and founder of The Breaking Room Ministry. Author of the book, "Your Prayers Matter to God," Pierre also is a noted speaker, business and community advocate, communications tactician and political strategist. Pierre provides advocacy, lobbying and international trade development to non-profit organizations, elected officials and corporate America. She conducts leadership and fund development training to faith-based and non-profits.



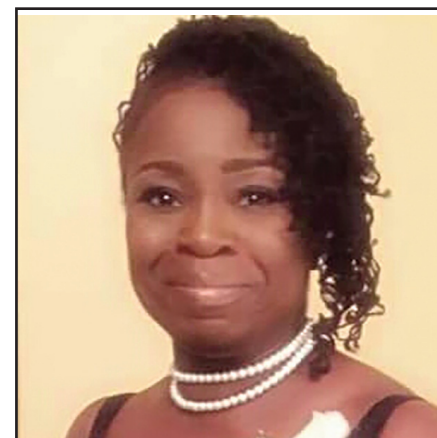
Merchelle Halsey

Recipient of the Drum Major Award. With over 25 years in the telecommunications field, Halsey is a contractor for the Maryland Department of Information Technology, administering the PBX III State-wide contract. She is a longtime leader of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women and Jack and Jill of America. Halsey also serves as president of the Anne Arundel County Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. A member since 2009, she has worked on several committees, and served as corresponding secretary and has co-chaired the Youth Awards Recognition and Scholarship Committee for the past four years.



Pastor Jimmy Rollins

Recipient of a Drum Major Award. Rollins serves as the lead pastor of i5 CHURCH in Odenton. Over the past three years, he has successfully led the church in the transition from a traditional, predominantly African-American institution to an ever-diversifying church. Over the last year, Rollins has traveled the country with a unique message of diversity that goes beyond race and ethnicity. Rollins also co-founded the first independent youth track club in Anne Arundel County, – i5 ELITE. This club provides mentoring, accountability and tutoring to over 350 youth on a weekly basis. The vision is to build a well-rounded youth, not just a supreme athlete.



Felicia Carroll

Recipient of the Dream Keepers Award. Carroll's only son Kendall lost his life to gun violence in September 2013, in one of a growing number of cases in which an unarmed black man was shot and killed. Although there was an arrest and an indictment, the Judge dismissed the case without prejudice. She has become an effective victim's rights advocate.

With the assistance of the NAACP and African American Caucus, Carroll has participated in meetings, brainstorming sessions and rallies for domestic violence and victim advocacy with Capital Gazette Newspaper, States Attorney's Office, and Anne Arundel County Police. This past October, she spoke to the Commission Board in Baltimore City on behalf of Commissioner Kevin Davis.

Once a single mother, Carroll knows and understands that it takes a village to raise a child. Over the years she has "stood in the gap" for many children. Although the loss of her son was great, she now knows that pain has pushed her into purpose and opened her eyes to the fact that "the struggle continues" Carroll resides in Glen Burnie.



Angela Leimkuhler Moran, Ph.D

Recipient of a Drum Major Award. Dr. Moran joined the faculty of the United States Naval Academy Mechanical Engineering Department in the fall of 1993 as an expert in materials manufacturing and engineering. She has taken a leadership role in bringing STEM education to underserved students in Anne Arundel County.



Carol Brantley

Recipient of a Drum Major Award. Brantley is the president of the board for The Light House, Inc., in Annapolis. The Light House provides shelter and services to prevent and break the cycle of homelessness and empower people to transition toward self-sufficiency. She has turned around the financial health of the Light House and grown its services to its clients.



Anthony Smoot

Recipient of the Drum Major Award. He is a member of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, which is responsible for the Foot Soldier Memorial, MLK Jr. Monument at AACC, Coretta Scott King Gardens and the Fannie Lou Hammer Fundraiser. Smoot worked for Domino Sugar Refineries, located in south Baltimore for more than 37 years, and in 1995, he started Anthony A. Smoot Productions, a video events production company.



Boys & Girls Clubs expands effort to close digital divide with Comcast Foundation Grants

My.Future Initiative celebrates one-year anniversary of providing hands-on technology training to help youth succeed in the digital age.

Philadelphia— Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and Comcast NBCUniversal announced that the Comcast Foundation has invested more than \$3 million in BGCA's My.Future technology initiative. The grants are part of the company's five-year partnership with BGCA announced last year and is valued at tens of millions of dollars.

The grants will further develop the My.Future technology platform and curriculum and give more clubs access to the technology, tools and teachers to activate the program. My.Future provides hands-on technology training to equip club kids with the skills needed to compete in a 21st century economy.

BGCA is using \$1.5 million to further develop and build-out the My.Future program. The remaining funding is being awarded to approximately 90 local Boys & Girls Clubs across the country to provide club staff with training and to purchase state-of-the-art equipment that reflects today's mobile environment, including computers, tablets, smartboards, digital cameras, music studio tools and video-editing technology needed to fully implement and teach the My.Future curriculum.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore is one of 90 local Boys & Girls to receive a \$20,000 grant in support of the club's My.Future technology program. In celebration of the one-year anniversary of the launch of My.Future, the grant will be used to provide club staff with additional training and funding to purchase state-of-the-art equipment to implement and teach the My.Future curriculum.

"With the ever-changing technological world we live in, it is our responsibility to make sure that kids and teens are equipped with the tools and resources needed to compete for 21st century jobs, leadership opportunities and to thrive in today's digital world," said Jim Clark, President and CEO of BGCA. "Thanks to our partnership with Comcast



Through a partnership between Comcast and the Boys & Girls Club of Metropolitan Baltimore, children at the Brooklyn O'Malley Club are learning valuable digital skills through the My.Future technology initiative. The program provides Club members with the ability to safely build, explore and communicate in their own digital worlds while helping them to develop the skills needed to pursue promising careers. (Left to right) Antoine Banks, Sr. Manager, Government Affairs; Candice Crenshaw, Director, Brooklyn O'Malley Club; and Brad Palazzo, Director, External Affairs with My.Future participants.

Courtesy Photo/Comcast

NBCUniversal to create and continually evolve our My.Future program, we've seen valuable impact for Club members, improving digital literacy from igniting passions in robotics to coding and game design. We are excited to see the program grow and influence even more Club youth."

"Comcast NBCUniversal is proud to partner with BGCA to expand My.Future to help conquer the digital divide," said David L. Cohen, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Comcast Corporation. "My.Future is an

exceptional initiative to help educate today's youth about our digital world, and I commend BGCA for their dedication to teaching Club members the skills they need to pursue bright futures."

My.Future is a cutting-edge technology education initiative that provides hands-on experiences and enables Club members to select from more than 40 activities to help them understand how to safely and productively engage online and identify and develop digital interests— from Internet basics for technology beginners, to robotics, coding, game

design and online journalism for advanced learners.

Since 2011, Comcast and the Comcast Foundation have dedicated more than \$240 million in cash and in-kind support to fund digital readiness initiatives nationwide, reaching nearly 3.2 million people through non-profit, digital literacy partners, including Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Comcast has supported local Boys & Girls Clubs for more than a decade, providing more than \$100 million in cash and in-kind contributions.

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Pro-Golfer - \$600

Non-golfer Guest Fee - \$279

*For more info and to register visit billdickey.org or call 602-258-7851.

Eight Financial Tips for the New Year

By Joseph M. Jennings Jr.

The New Year offers a fresh start, when many of us feel energized, optimistic and open to change. When you set your New Year's resolutions, consider financial goals too. Set goals that are attainable and measurable. Break each goal into steps, write those steps down, and set deadlines for accomplishing each step. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

1. Pay yourself first. Set a savings goal. You can start with three to five percent of your pay and work up to 10 percent. Set up automatic deposits into a separate account. If your employer offers a 401(k) plan, try to at least contribute up to the match. If your employer doesn't offer a 401(k), set up an IRA. If you are already contributing to your 401(k) or IRA, consider increasing your contributions to the maximum. In 2016 the maximum amount for a 401(k) is \$18,000 and if you are at least 50 you may contribute up to \$6,000 more.

2. Create a budget. This is not as hard as it sounds. If you use your bank's online bill pay, a good place to start is the summary information found right on the website. Your credit card company may also provide you a year-end summary of your spending. You can't set goals for spending and saving without understanding where your money is currently going. As you look at your spending, think about what you are spending your hard-earned money on - differentiate between wants and needs. Much of our overspending is on little things like a daily latte or eating lunch out every day. Cutting back on these seemingly minor expenditures can have a big impact on your finances.

3. Pay off credit card debt. This is likely the highest interest rate debt you have. If you have only been paying the minimum, set a goal to pay a certain amount more each month. And through creating a budget and setting savings goals, you should be able to find ways to reduce spending on the "wants" and reduce your use of credit cards. Your ultimate goal should be to charge no more than you can pay off each month.

4. Prepare a personal net worth statement. This is simply a list of all your assets (home, 401(k) plan, IRAs,

bank accounts, life insurance, etc.) and your liabilities (mortgage, auto loans, credit card debt, etc.) Many people are surprised to discover how this simple exercise helps you focus on financial goals.

5. Review your estate planning documents. Documents that everyone needs include a will, durable power of attorney, medical power of attorney, directive to physicians (living will), and a HIPAA (medical privacy) release. If you have minor children, a will is necessary for naming a guardian in the event you die. The importance of these documents cannot be overemphasized. And review with your closest family members so they know where the documents are in case they are needed in an emergency.

6. Rebalance your investment portfolio. The asset allocation in your investment portfolio is a road map towards your financial future and should be aligned with your financial goals. Throughout the past year certain asset classes may have performed better than others and your portfolio should be rebalanced back to your target allocation. A financial planner can help you envision your future, determine your financial goals, and devise a strategy for achieving those goals including an appropriate asset allocation.

7. Review your insurance. Life insurance policies should be reviewed annually to see if they still meet your needs. Similarly review your property and casualty coverage. Depending on your situation, consider an umbrella policy. You should also review your disability coverage, an area people often leave themselves exposed to risk as you are much more likely to become disabled than to die prematurely.

8. Review your tax plan. Work with your financial advisor to identify opportunities for tax savings. Tax laws change frequently and you should understand how these laws affect you.

Joseph M. Jennings, Jr., CFA, Senior Vice President, Investment Director, PNC Wealth Management has 19 years of wealth management experience. He can be reached at: joseph.jennings@pnc.com.

We look forward to you joining us at Reunion in January 2016!
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Bill Dickey Scholarship Association

Rising artist pens first children's book

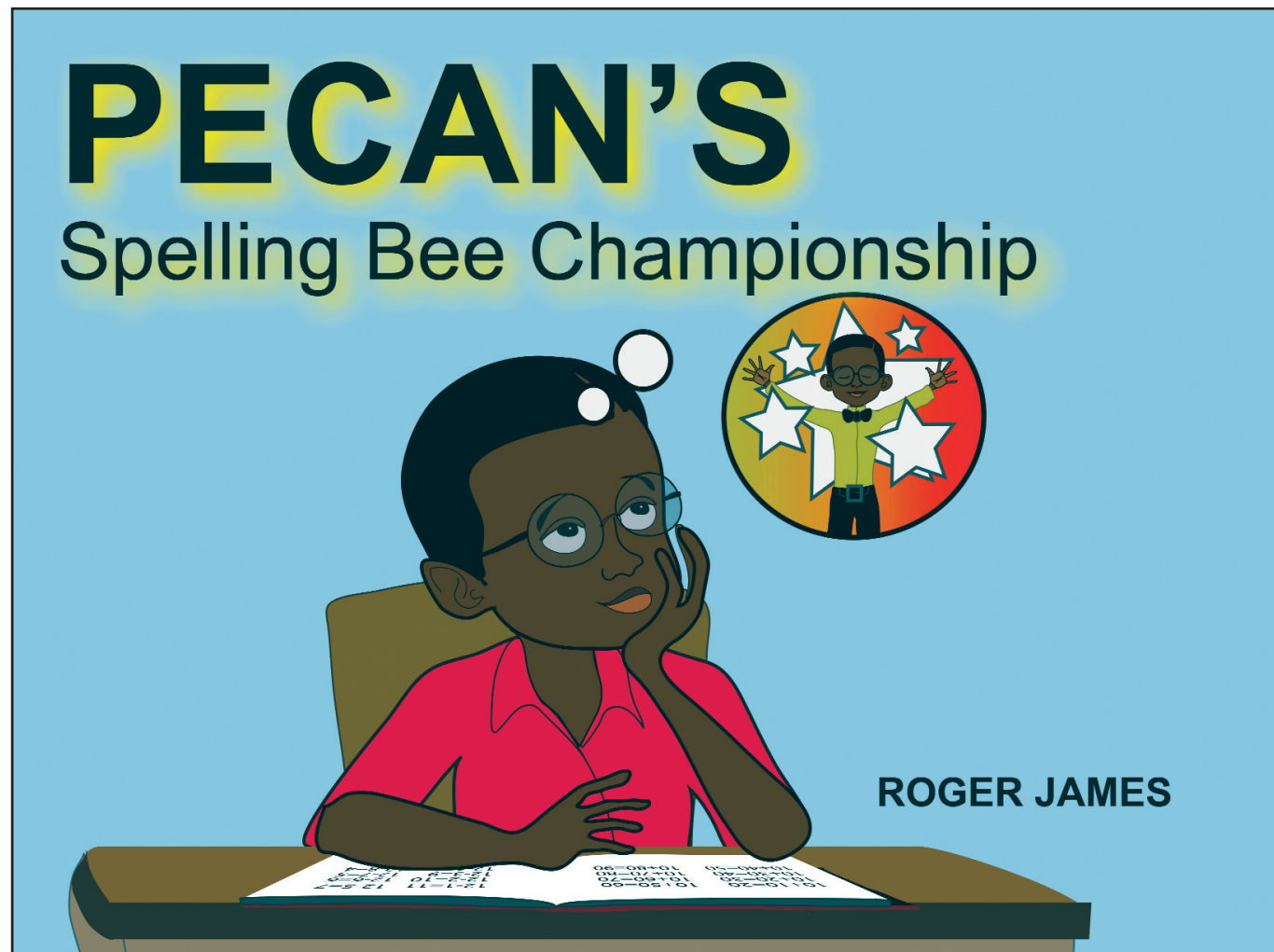
By Andrea Blackstone

New Year's resolutions are sometimes left unfulfilled. However, hearing motivating stories about others who take deliberate steps to turn their dreams into a reality over time can offer substantial encouragement to others. Roger James, 41, is a multi-talented visual artist from Riverdale, Maryland with an illustration, graphic design and oil painting background. On Jan 1, 2016, James released "Pecan's Spelling Bee Championship" on Amazon, officially marking his debut as an author. James regards writing, illustrating, designing and self-publishing his own children's book as his biggest professional accomplishment. James previously created children's illustrations for other authors over the years, but this story is loosely based on the artist. Readers from age six to eleven may relate to Pecan's golden wish to become a spelling bee champion.

"I felt it [writing and publishing "Pecan's Spelling Bee Championship"] was the best way to showcase my overall talents that includes writing stories, layout and book illustrations. I've always wanted my art work to tell a story, so outside of creating a themed painting, writing a children's book is the best thing for me to do," James said. "Honestly, this book is just the beginning of where I would like to go ultimately. I want to this book be a gateway into animation. With the illustrations, I will show perspectives from different areas. I learned in animation how important camera location and angles are."

James' parents, Anthony James and Elizabeth James are originally from Grenada in the West Indies. James explained that he was unaware of the many careers that an artist could pursue, until he began his senior year of high school, then later in college. In 1997, James graduated with an art degree from University of Maryland, College Park. He earned a Media Arts & Animation degree from The Art Institute of Pittsburgh (Online Division) several years ago.

Another one of James' specialties is life studies. Photos of artwork that he posts online, often elicit comments within his social media circle. Some



"Pecan Spelling Bee" Book Cover Courtesy Photo

wall paintings are commissioned art pieces, others are of public figures, singers, leaders, athletes, high-profile businessmen or actresses like Taraji P. Henson and Bernadette Stanis. Stanis, who is widely known for portraying Thelma on the seventies TV show, "Good Times" has one of James' original pieces that he created of her. When he was an exhibitor at the Black Heritage Art Expo in Baltimore several years ago, he had an opportunity to meet the actress.

"I've always wanted to bring out the personalities of celebrities through paintings," James said, noting that this year he will begin working on images of people he knows.

In the meantime, James is already working on two other stories in his children's book series. The new author is satisfied choosing to self-publish his book while maintaining control of his

work. Characters of color are still underrepresented in children's books, yet James was able to create impactful artwork while telling a story.

"Kids of all colors like to be seen in cartoons, animations and especially children's books. They are not seen as much, and in some cases are afterthoughts in certain books, animations and cartoons. Artists of color should be creating art work and illustrating kids of color without having to be asked to do so," James said.

While adding to his artistic portfolio, James who aspired to be an artist from the age of five, continues to take leaps of faith to try new things that are connected to his passion for art.

"Like a musician that does a lot of gigs to less than sold-out audiences, you do it for the eventual payoff. If you love what you do, you will stay with it and deal with whatever happens," James said.



Roger James

Photo Credit: Kat Hemphill

For more information about James' art and his children's book, visit: www.jamesstudiio.com.



Food for Fines 2016

For each canned good donated, you receive \$1 off your library fine

Baltimore— The Enoch Pratt Free Library is partnering with the Maryland Food Bank in the month of January for Food For Fines.

From January 4 to January 31, 2016, donate a canned food item at any Pratt Library location and receive a \$1 off any library fine.

There is no limit on the amount of cans that can be donated. For example, five cans = \$5 off of your library card fines. Canned goods must be unopened and unexpired to qualify. To participate, just drop the cans off at the Circulation Desk of your local Pratt Library branch.

“We are encouraging our library patrons to help fight hunger in the Baltimore area. This campaign helps our neighbors and helps you reduce your library fines,” said Carla D. Hayden, Chief Executive Officer of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. “The holidays are over but the need is still there. Baltimoreans and Marylanders stand by each other and this campaign is a way to continue the holiday spirit into the New Year.”

In January 2015, the library collected more than 10,700 pounds of food for the Maryland Food Bank feeding more than 7,000 meals.

“The Food for Fines campaign is an inspiring example of how communities can come together to prioritize hunger,” said Deborah Flateman, President/CEO of the Maryland Food Bank. “It’s a win-win for everyone, and it’s a helpful reminder that hunger is a year-round struggle, one that doesn’t end once the holidays are over.”

For more information about the Pratt’s Food for Fines campaign, visit: www.prattlibrary.org.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library, the nation’s first free library system, opened its doors in 1886, the result of the generosity and imagination of businessman and philanthropist Enoch Pratt, who envisioned a public library where “races, ages, and socio-economic classes mingled and people could educate themselves— without cost,” and his passionate belief continues to guide the organization.

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State and City partner to address blight in Baltimore

Project C.O.R.E. to provide \$94 million to demolish thousands of vacant buildings and state to offer \$600 million in reinvestment funds

Annapolis— Governor Larry Hogan and Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced a multi-year, multi-hundred-million dollar initiative to address blight in Baltimore, declaring that the joint city-state partnership will bring significant resources to demolish thousands of vacant buildings and replace them with green space and a stronger foundation for redevelopment and reinvestment in the city.

The governor and the mayor kicked off Project C.O.R.E., or Creating Opportunities for Renewal and Enterprise, in West Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood, where the entire 1000 block of N. Stricker Street is slated for demolition.

"Fixing what is broken in Baltimore requires that we address the sea of abandoned, dilapidated buildings infecting entire neighborhoods," said Governor Hogan. "Together, we will transform these neighborhoods from centers for crime and drugs, to places our city, and our entire state, can be proud of. Working with the private sector to invest in projects like affordable housing, retail, and other new businesses will help ensure that Baltimore becomes a better place to live, work, and retire."

"Transforming vacant homes and vacant buildings into inviting green space and livable new developments is a critical part of our goal of attracting 10,000 new families to Baltimore City and dramatically improving the quality of life for current city residents," said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. "The governor's commitment of new state dollars will enable



us to accelerate the progress we have made through our nationally recognized Vacants to Value program and deliver new opportunities to more neighborhoods. Under my Vacants to Value program, I quadrupled Baltimore City funding for demolition to \$10 million per year, and I welcome this significant new commitment from Governor Hogan."

Under the terms of the four-year partnership, the State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore will focus on the transformation of blighted city blocks. The Maryland Stadium Authority is the project manager responsible for overseeing the demolition of vacant structures jointly identified by Baltimore City and state authorities. Total estimated funding over the next four years for the demolition portion of the project includes \$75 million from the state and in-kind administrative services from the City of Baltimore, equivalent to \$1 for every \$4 allocated by the state.

In the first year of the program, the state estimates that approximately twenty city blocks can be completely cleared of blight. In subsequent years, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development along

with the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development will establish demolition targets annually, with a goal of demolishing as many full blocks of blight as possible over the term of the project.

Once demolition is completed on a city block, empty lots will be replaced with green space and assessed for their potential to be redeveloped in the future. The first demolition in the city-state partnership will be in the 1000 block of N. Stricker Street in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood.

The elimination of blighted portions of the city will be supported by more than \$600 million in financing opportunities from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, including more than \$150 million in fiscal year 2016 alone. The state's commitment will encourage private sector developers to revitalize Baltimore's neighborhoods through housing and other investments that will attract families and support economic growth. Financing for quality development projects will be made over the next four years through a range of innovative programs and partnerships, including the Rental Assistance Demonstration pro-

gram and the issuance of potentially \$200 million in revenue bonds.

Maryland Stadium Authority Chairman Thomas Kelso said the authority has expertise managing large-scale projects such as this.

"In more than 25 years of service to improving the quality of life for Marylanders and visitors, the Maryland Stadium Authority has overseen several billion dollars in project development - most recently in Baltimore City schools' revitalization and reconstruction program now underway," Kelso said. "We have a well-deserved reputation for delivering their projects on time and on budget in the best interests of the taxpayers of Maryland."

The Maryland Stadium Authority, an independent agency, was created in 1986 for the purpose of building facilities that would attract a new National Football League team to Baltimore and retain the Major League Baseball Orioles team in downtown Baltimore. The authority has since been involved with projects involving historic preservation, adaptive reuse, community redevelopment, and economic opportunity throughout the State of Maryland.

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