



Vol. 25 No. 5

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# The Annapolis Times

A Baltimore Times/Times of Baltimore Publication

## Native Baltimoreans Own Tote Bag Company in Fells Point



*Jason Bass (left) and Aaron Jones (right) are guilty of “treason.” They have defied the status quo by “going against the grain.” Jones and Bass are the men behind Treason Toting Company. Located at 1714 Thames St., in Fells Point, the company specializes in domestically manufacturing backpacks and other high quality travel accessories. (See article on page 11)*

Photo: Dena Wane

# *Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, BGE break ground on West Baltimore youth development park*

*Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park to host James Mosher Baseball, the oldest continuously operating African American youth baseball league in the country*

**Baltimore**—The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation (CRSF) and Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) broke ground at the future site of Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park in West Baltimore.

Recognizing the need for change within the Baltimore community, the Ripken Foundation and BGE will develop the Youth Development Park to provide youth in the West Baltimore community with mentorship through sports and recreation.

Speakers from the ribbon cutting ceremony included Cal Ripken Jr., Baseball Hall of Famer and Ripken Foundation vice-chairman; Eddie Murray, Baseball Hall of Famer; Calvin G. Butler Jr., CEO, BGE; and Steve Salem, President, Ripken Foundation.

"It's with great pride that we dedicate this field to my dear friend, Eddie Murray," said Cal Ripken Jr. "Kids in our local communities need our help now more than ever, especially when it comes to finding a positive environment where they can play, learn and grow. Because of our dedicated partners in BGE, we can provide the youth in West Baltimore with a safe place to simply be kids."

Named in honor of Baseball Hall of Famer and Orioles legend Eddie Murray, the youth size baseball field will host after-school programming in addition to James Mosher Baseball – the oldest continuously operating African-American



*BGE CEO Calvin Butler was joined by baseball hall of famers Brooks Robinson, Cal Ripken, Jr and Eddie Murray along with Baltimore Mayor-elect Catherine Pugh and City Council President Jack Young at the groundbreaking of Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park in West Baltimore on Friday, November 18, 2016.*

Courtesy Photo/BGE

youth baseball league in the country. The programming will help keep kids safe by providing a positive outlet, mentorship opportunities and a variety of activities that teach life skills.

"This park is a symbol of BGE's commitment to the Baltimore region, and we are pleased to provide this legacy gift in our 200th anniversary year," said BGE Chief Executive Officer Calvin G. Butler Jr. "BGE supports initiatives that positively impact the community, especially the lives of young people—our most precious resource."

Eddie Murray Field at BGE Park will feature a synthetic turf baseball diamond

equipped with dugouts, a backstop, and a digital scoreboard. Located behind James Mosher Elementary, the field will be gifted to and maintained by the Baltimore City Public School system. BGE's support of this and other corporate citizenship programs is made possible through the use of Exelon shareholder dollars.

Over the last six years, the Ripken

Foundation has completed 60 multipurpose synthetic turf facilities, impacting over 239,000 youth in 16 states nationwide, including 11 parks located throughout the Baltimore area. Additionally, the Ripken Foundation continues to reshape the relationship between law enforcement and youth in Baltimore communities through its Badges for Baseball juvenile crime prevention program.

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# Guest Editorials/Commentary

## Back to Basics: No Permanent Enemies, No Permanent Friends, Just Permanent Interests

By Robert L. Johnson

How should black American voters respond to the tectonic political rift and the stress of a permanently divided nation that the election of Donald J. Trump has laid bare?

This national and irrational divisiveness, if left unanswered, could render African Americans a declining voice in the increasingly zero-sum game of the electoral process that is today's American political system, and I fear that of the future. In my opinion, for far too long, African Americans have failed to draw upon and exercise our historically unified voting clout and bloc to become "the balance of power" between the two parties before deciding to support or oppose either party based solely on our unique and special interests.

The times demand that we take the necessary and urgent steps to address this reality. Based on the outcome of this election, if we feel a need to protest and raise our voices to draw attention to both our fears and concerns, we should do so. However, as the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement did so effectively, we should protest with peaceful confrontation and in full recognition that the greatest strength of this country is the peaceful transfer of power and governance based on free and open elections.

This governance is regulated by the checks and balances and the separation of powers enshrined by the rule of law of the U.S. Constitution. Most importantly, as a minority population, we want the assurances that a peaceful transfer of power will be sustained when the president or political party that we support comes to power.

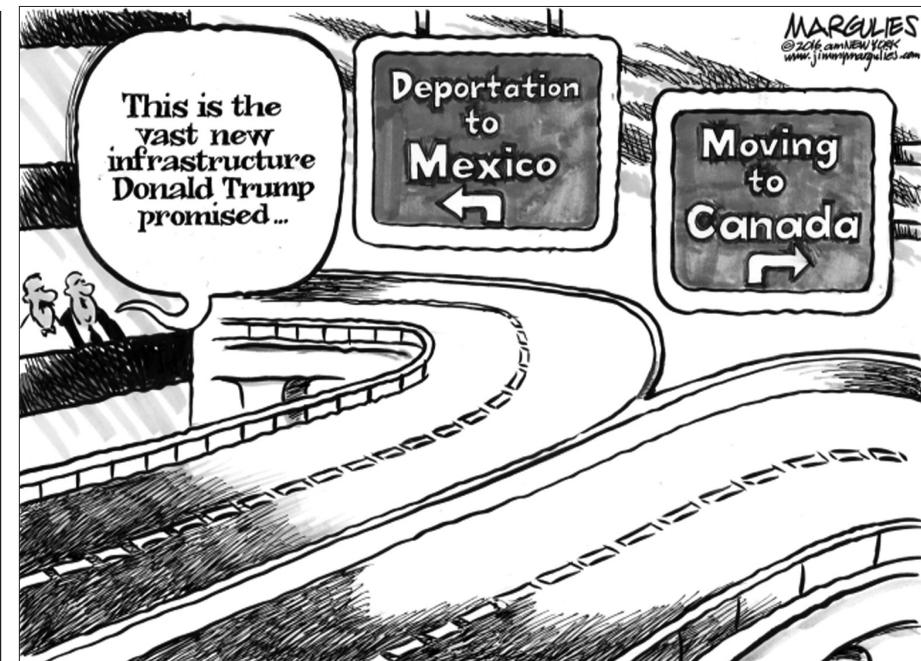
We must realize, this is not the last election in America and that elections at every level of government—federal, state and local—will continue to take place. Our job now is to continue to mobilize in these elections whenever and wherever they occur. We should, as before, educate and inform our voting community about the critical social and economic issues that impact our families, our community and this nation.

We are required to challenge and to demand that all candidates or parties in pursuit of our vote, whether they are Republican, Democrat or Independent, explain in comprehensive terms what they propose to do for us to make our lives better. Remember, the most precious and powerful asset we possess in this democracy is the right to vote in favor of or against those who seek to govern us. Let us not give away that right; let us make them earn our vote!

Finally, and this is most critical, it is time for black American voters to return to a political ideology and an engagement strategy with the two-party system that was proposed to us almost 45 years ago at the founding of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). Why shouldn't we, as black voters, reject the notion that we are locked into one party, which undoubtedly limits and dilutes our voting power? We should instead use the power of our vote to support and elect whichever party best serves our interests. I am convinced that this is what Congressman William Clay of Missouri had in mind when the CBC was formed in 1971. Congressman Clay, who I had the honor of knowing, was bold, astute and showed amazing insight when he declared, and I quote, "Black people have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interests." That was the CBC motto then and black Americans should embrace it as our rallying cry today.

To the Republican Party, we say to you, even though you have ignored us or often times actively conspired against our rights, "we have no permanent enemies." To the Democratic Party, we say to you, even though you have taken our vote for granted and often patronized us, "we have no permanent friends." What we do have are "permanent interests" and we invite both parties to demonstrate your understanding and willingness to respect and address our interests.

Robert L. Johnson is the founder and chairman of The RLJ Companies and the founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET).



## Community Affairs

### PANDORA Ice Rink, It's a Waterfront Life return to Baltimore's Inner Harbor

Baltimore—Waterfront Partnership's It's a Waterfront Life is back this holiday season!

This year's festivities officially began with the opening of the Pandora Ice Rink on November 11, 2016.

Other, "It's a Waterfront Life" highlights will include holiday-themed special events, discounts and deals for all to enjoy along the waterfront through January 16, 2017.

"The holiday season is one of our favorite times to get everyone out and about and enjoying the Waterfront," said Laurie Schwartz, president of the Waterfront Partnership. "The return of the Pandora Ice Rink is just one of the many opportunities to celebrate with friends and loved ones."

Rink hours are Mondays through Thursdays, 12 noon to 10 p.m. (open until 11:00 p.m. on Fridays); Saturdays, 10 a.m.-11 p.m.; and Sundays, 10 a.m.



to 8 p.m. with adjusted Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and Martin Luther King Day hours.

Throughout the season, special programs such as Saturdays with Santa, Inner Harbor Frost Fest, and the annual SkateFest benefitting Special Olympics Maryland will be offered. Admission to the ice rink is \$10 for adults and \$9 for children, seniors and military. Skates can be rented for just \$4.

The rink is made possible through the generous support of Pandora as well as Constellation Energy Group, The Can Company, T. Rowe Price, The Next Ice Age, Village of Cross Keys, Mindgrub, and the Pearlstone Family Foundation.

For full rink program details and updates throughout the season visit: [www.innerharboricerink.org](http://www.innerharboricerink.org).

# Page Opposite/Commentaries

## *It's time to give our money marching orders!*

By James Clingman  
NNPA Newswire Columnist

In April 2005, I wrote an article titled, "Billion Dollar March," at the behest of "The Ice Supreme Man" Ashiki Taylor in Atlanta. The article was in reference to our penchant for marching when we are upset, and then going home to sit down and wait for another crisis. This reaction to our grievances is so predictable and has no effect on the situations against which we protest and demonstrate. The obvious question is, "Why do we continue to do it then?"

Because I don't do foot marching, I won't spend my time trying to answer that question; you can ask those who are calling for marches to explain it to you. What I will do, however, is suggest another kind of march: The Billion Dollar March.

Just as in 2005, we are confronted with the same problems, the same conditions, the same powerlessness, and the same black leadership that opts for foot marching as a way to get politicians to change, and as a remedy against unfairness, such

as being killed by a rogue cop.

Those of us who were members of the MATAH Network in 2000 will remember our monthly "Standing Order." We received a book and a tape to help elevate our consciousness; two of the tapes were "Internal Reparations," by Dr. Conrad Worrill and David Whitaker's "The Wake-Up Call."

I listened to both of them this week, and while they reconfirmed my decades of spreading the "Economic Gospel," those

Billionaires like Mark Cuban give their dollars marching orders. We must do no less. Our Billion Dollar March must be organized, measurable, maintained, sustained, and used to empower us. It must not be done solely to hurt someone else; it must be implemented to benefit black businesses owned by conscious and conscientious brothers and sisters, because we know that, "everything black ain't black."

The businesses we support must use

blacks go out of their way to patronize black-owned businesses?

African American buying power is over \$1 trillion and yet only two cents of every dollar an African American spends goes to black-owned businesses." A Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management study found that a million jobs could be created if black consumers spent \$1 of every \$10 at black-owned stores and other enterprises."

What's wrong with us, y'all? Worrill, Whitaker, Reed and others have given us the formula for economic success and, thereby, political success for many years. We don't need another foot march, we need and must have, a Billion Dollar March.

Here is our charge: Start right now to redirect \$1 billion back to ourselves in 2017, via the example now being shown by The One Million Conscious and Conscientious Black Contributors and Voters. We are buying and promoting a ubiquitous product, one that is consumed worldwide in amounts on par with oil and wheat: Sweet Unity Farms Coffee from Tanzania.

To purchase, go to our website at [www.iамoneofthemillion.com/products.html](http://www.iامoneofthemillion.com/products.html). We are also getting our tax returns prepared at Compro Tax Offices. Buy black products and professional services. If one million of us spend \$1,000 per year at black businesses we will bring our Billion Dollar March to fruition.

So, take a load off your feet and let your dollars do the marching!

*James Clingman is the nation's most prolific writer about economic empowerment for black people. His latest book, "Black Dollars Matter! Teach Your Dollars How to Make More Sense," is available on his website: [Blackeconomics.com](http://Blackeconomics.com).*

two messages from two astute, conscious and conscientious black men really illuminated—once again—the importance of marching our dollars to black businesses and wielding economic power as a means to change our situation.

Using dollars to reward and punish is a proven way of getting someone's attention and, thereby, causing them to change their ways. Look at the many examples that have taken place just over the past ten years or so. Nations and their products were boycotted; sports organizations, entertainers and conferences refused to hold events in cities whose policies went against their beliefs; and most recently we saw NBA Commissioner, Adam Silver take the All-Star Basketball game out of Charlotte, North Carolina. Now in reaction to the election, three NBA team owners are boycotting all Trump hotels.

some of their windfall profits to build a war chest to sustain the coordination of our Billion Dollar March.

In addition to supporting and growing our local black businesses, we must adopt a consistent, continuous, habitual movement centered on buying from ourselves. Every black household should have black-made products coming in at least once per month. Goods and services that we use on a regular basis, offered by black producers, must find their way into our homes continuously. The "One Million" will keep track of our participation via pledges and feedback from our members and the businesses we support.

Nationally syndicated columnist William "Bill" Reed recently wrote, "Blacks spend less money in black-owned businesses than other racial and ethnic groups spend in businesses owned by members of their groups. How many

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# Organizations partner to help families have a Happy Thanksgiving

By Deborah Bailey

Thanks to Hungry Harvest, Shop Rite and The Community Health Improvement team of the University of Maryland Medical Center, more than 100 families in West Baltimore will celebrate a happy, healthy Thanksgiving. Hungry Harvest donated the vegetables while Shop Rite donated turkeys to 100 families who are parents of children at Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School and James McHenry Elementary/Middle School.

"Our health initiative is about food access and we wanted to give our families in West Baltimore a healthier option for the holidays," said Asunta Henry, Community Health Advocate at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

"I actually met Will at a conference this year when we were just in the planning stages of doing this," Henry said. "He immediately said, 'we're going to donate.' I was so grateful for his donation to the effort. It really helped us get started."

Henry is referring to Will McCabe, from Hungry Harvest, a non-profit organization that recovers produce from area retail outlets and other locations and resells the food at a reduced cost to customers throughout the Baltimore area weekly. For every paid delivery made by Hungry Harvest, the organization donates one to two pounds of produce.

Hungry Harvest is in the midst of expanding its partnerships with Baltimore City Public Schools to offer extremely discounted food boxes at area schools. So far, the organization runs weekly food box pick-ups for families at Franklin Park Elementary School, Frederick Douglass High School and Reginald F. Lewis High School. The organization is expected to launch additional school sites in East Baltimore in December.

"We are on a mission to reduce food waste and fight hunger. I can't think of a better use of our time than to develop partnerships with Baltimore Public Schools where we can offer healthy food alternatives and show Baltimore families that eating healthy can be fun," McCabe said.

Parents and school administrators were



(Left) Terrance Ham and Erika Scott received a Thanksgiving gift bag. Erika's daughter is in the third grade at Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School. (Right) Mariellen Syan, Asunta Henry, Lauren Davis and Anne Williams with Community Health Improvement at the University of Maryland Medical Center prepare to distribute Thanksgiving donations to parents and families at Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School on Tuesday, November 22, 2016.

Photos by Deborah Bailey

grateful for the effort to reach out and remember them at Thanksgiving.

"I'm just appreciative for all each of the sponsors and for bringing this together for the families here in the neighborhood," said Terrance Ham who picked up a food basket from Samuel-Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School with Erika Scott.

Betty Adams, principal at Coleridge-Taylor said that the food donation is critical for many of her families.

"We have many families [who] will now have a Happy Thanksgiving because of the generosity of Hungry Harvest, Shop Rite and The University of Maryland Medical Center. Many of our families struggle to make ends meet. To have a turkey, vegetables and people in this community who care about our students and families sends a message of encouragement to our students," Adams said.

Anne Williams, director, Community Health Improvement for the University of Maryland Medical Center says that the hospital is committed to West Baltimore and is investing in long-term engagement.

The medical center has a wide portfolio of community outreach programs and workforce development initiatives, as

well as partnerships with four West Baltimore schools.

"We are committed to improving health

outcomes, and we are doing the outreach that it takes to engage West Baltimore," Williams said.

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# Final games of Steve Smith Sr.'s NFL career

By Turron Davenport

Steve Smith Sr. was released by the Carolina Panthers a few seasons ago and had a choice to make. The man considered the most intense wide receiver in the National Football League (NFL) was out of a job because the franchise that gave him a shot to be a star had given up on him.

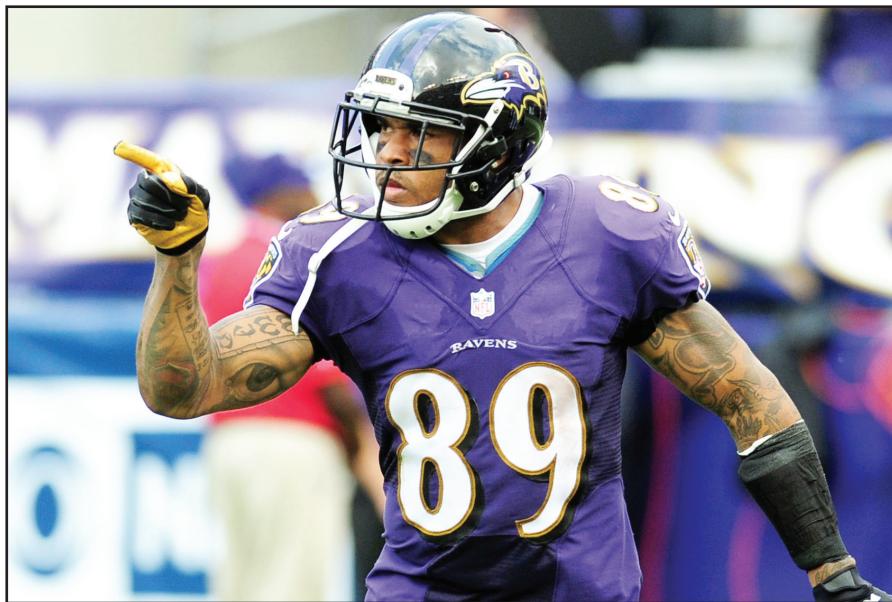
Hardly in need of another reason for the chip on his shoulder, Smith was now given new motivation. He was close to signing with the San Diego Chargers, but instead chose to play for John Harbaugh, a coach equally as fiery.

The following two seasons were highlighted by plays in which Smith exhibited the tenacious style that he plays the position. His stiff arm of Adam Jones in his first game against the Cincinnati Bengals was one of the best plays ever by a Ravens receiver.

Smith was, by and large, the spark plug the Ravens hoped he would be when they signed him. In just two seasons, Smith has rewritten many of the Ravens single season and single game receiving records.

Jim Harbaugh, head coach at University of Michigan and former NFL quarterback, was asked recently about Smith and said he wants him back for another year.

"If he wants to come back, he is welcome, absolutely," Harbaugh said at a press conference on Monday. "You like



Ravens wide receiver Steve Smith Sr. celebrates after making a catch against the Oakland Raiders at M&T Bank Stadium during the 2016 regular season.

Courtesy Photo/NFL.com

every good football player you can get, but I don't want to speak for Steve. He has had an unbelievably awesome career. He got his 1000th catch, so he needs to be commended for that. Congratulations to Steve on that accomplishment. I am looking for many more this year."

Smith became the 14th wide receiver in NFL history to catch 1,000 passes. The fact that he accomplished the feat as a Raven is ironic because of the many shortcomings that Baltimore has encountered at wide receiver over the years.

The 2016 season is a bonus round for Ravens fans because Smith originally made the decision to make 2015 his final year. Smith decided to come back after

rupturing his Achilles against the Chargers last season.

There was no way a player with the heart that Smith possesses was going to end his career by way of injury. Smith was on his way to another 1,000-yard season before the Achilles injury.

Smith collected football cards recognizing wideouts for having 1,000-yard receiving seasons. He envisioned himself being on one of those cards.

After 16 seasons in the NFL, Smith has eight 1,000-yard receiving seasons under his belt. Although he may not have another season like that in him, Smith is still a force to be reckoned with.

Through eight games, Smith has 44 receptions for 516 yards and three touchdowns this season—quite an accomplishment for a 37-year-old receiver considered to be too old to return from a major injury, and once considered too small to play the position in the NFL.

This will likely be Smith's final NFL season. Ravens fans need to cherish their final opportunity to see one of the best receivers of all time.

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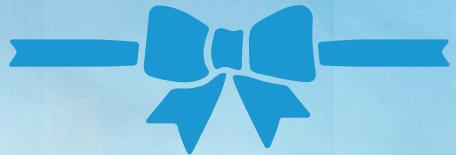
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## Nation's top young entrepreneurs invited to compete in Cupids' Cup

Baltimore— Applications are now being accepted for the 2017 Cupid's Cup Entrepreneurship Competition, presented by Under Armour Founder and CEO Kevin Plank. As the signature program of the Plank Foundation for Entrepreneurship (PFE) with over ten successful years of tremendous growth, 2017 will bring another evolution as the competition moves to Chicago, with Northwestern University hosting the event next spring. The University's reputation of being a top-tier incubator for entrepreneurs offers the perfect opportunity to expand Cupid's Cup and to continue to grow the competition. The expansion to Northwestern University marks the start of a rotation of host venues, as Cupid's Cup continues to move across the nation.

As a thought leader and advocate of entrepreneurship, Plank continues to the entrepreneurial spirit with his own success story. The name of the event is a nod to one of Plank's first businesses—Cupid's Valentine Rose Delivery—an enterprise that he started as a student at the University of Maryland to sell roses on campus. Those profits eventually became the seed money that launched Under Armour.

Cupid's Cup aims to reach the top entrepreneurial minds in the country, and more importantly, to inspire and foster the community of college students and recent graduates who have already followed Plank's lead and are running their own companies.

The Cupid's Cup participants will be competing for over \$100,000 in total cash prizes, access to Kevin Plank's professional network and the prestigious Cupid's Cup title.

The competition is open to undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled at accredited colleges and universities, or recent alumni of those institutions who are 30 years old or younger.



Applicants must be running a legal business entity that has demonstrated proof of traction. There is no fee to apply.

The application deadline is January 1, 2017. Validation Day (semi-finals) will be held on February 8, 2017 at Under Armour's global headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland with the final competition scheduled for March 30, 2017 at Northwestern University's Pick-Staiger Concert Hall.

To apply and learn more about Cupid's Cup, visit: [www.cupidscup.com](http://www.cupidscup.com).

**Send your community calendar events  
to: [kreevie@btimes.com](mailto:kreevie@btimes.com)**

**Holiday Bazaar & Tea at the Cloisters  
The Cloisters Castle  
10440 Falls Road in Lutherville  
Friday, November 25 & Saturday, November 26, 2016  
11 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Holiday Bazaar features 100 percent local Maryland artisans selling handmade items. Inside the "Tea Room," visitors can enjoy tea, finger sandwiches, fresh fruit, scones, cheese and an assortment of pastries and desserts. Free to shop at the Bazaar but the tea is \$30. For Tea reservations, call 410-821-7448**

# Customers turn to Harbor Bank to show ‘Black Dollars Matter’

By Stacy M. Brown

After the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin, the “Black Lives Matter” movement began in earnest.

As more incidents involving law enforcement officers and black men and women like Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Sandra Blank in Texas; and Freddie Gray in Baltimore, the movement took on greater meaning and energized many to become activists in African-American communities around the country.

Now, an important outtake from that movement has begun and, just like “Black Lives Matter,” those behind the latest “Black Dollars Matters” action are hoping that it’s not just a moment but also a movement.

“Because of the ‘Black Dollars Matters’ movement, we’ve received many telephone calls from individuals and organizations who’ve shown a lot of interest,” said Harbor Bank president, CEO and chairman, Joseph Haskins Jr.

“Once folks learned or discovered that we are black controlled, things took off,” Haskins said of the numerous new accounts customers have opened recently in support of the movement.

Reacting to the wave of shootings of black men by police officers, thousands of African-American consumers across America are directing their dollars by opening checking and savings accounts in Black-owned banks.

A grassroots effort found the nation’s Black banks receiving calls and on-line requests to open accounts.

“This is a movement that began over 100 years ago, but had become dormant because of racial integration. Thousands have been mobilized to protest with their spending power,” said National Bankers Association president, Michael Grant. “Many African-American consumers are linking the shootings with a sense of powerlessness, feeling undervalued and disrespected.”

A significant number of African-American bankers are hearing that black lives do not seem to matter because less value



**Harbor Bank president, CEO and chairman, Joseph Haskins Jr.**  
Courtesy Photo

is placed on the lives of black people as a group in America, the NBA said in a statement.

Since July, however, thousands of checking and savings accounts have been opened at black-owned banks.

“We’ve had such an account opening success with deposits varying from the hundreds to the thousands of dollars,” said Haskins, noting that Harbor Bank’s locations in Baltimore and Randallstown have been the beneficiary of the movement.

“We’ve had several high-profile individuals, sports stars and entertainers, come in and ask what they could do,” he said, noting that the bank has realized close to \$10 million from account openings.

Singer Solange Knowles, the sister of pop star Beyoncé, recently announced that she was moving her dollars to a black-owned bank. In the summer, Knowles reportedly posted on her Instagram account – where she has over a million followers – “I’m proud to say I made that step today. Time to literally put my money where my mouth is.”

Her post included a list of the black-owned banks in the United States. There are 22 of them. In addition, there are 318 credit unions with African-American designations to also choose from, according to Yes Magazine.

Haskins, one of the founders of Harbor Bank when it opened in 1982, said the movement has unprecedented momentum.

said. “But, I have not seen the level of what we are now seeing since the call of ‘Black Dollars Matter.’ There is legitimate interest in moving money toward black-owned institutions and in keeping money inside of the community.”

Grant cautioned black consumers to be mindful of the voluminous requests that the banks are receiving on-line, in person and by telephone.

“This is a very positive development for black banks. They have always provided a disproportionate share of the small business loans and consumer loans to African-Americans,” Grant said. “Ironically, it seems that we have gone full circle back to where we were before desegregation. The black community is turning inward and seeking to provide security for itself. And few would argue against the notion that nearly every major social issue plaguing black people in America can find its roots in economic deprivation.”

“The only time that I can recall anything similar to this is when we first opened in September of 1982. And, that was fed probably by those looking to make a difference at that time,” Haskins

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# 'Guilty of Treason'

## Native Baltimoreans Own Tote Bag Company in Fells Point

By Ursula V. Battle

Aaron Jones and Jason Bass are guilty of "treason." They have defied the status quo by "going against the grain."

Jones and Bass are the men behind Treason Toting Company. Located at 1714 Thames St., in Fells Point, the company specializes in domestically manufacturing backpacks and other high quality travel accessories.

Jones, 28, serves as the company's production manager, while Bass, 36, serves as creative director.

"Jason and I originally met through our social circles and had worked on a project together," recalled Jones. "We knew we wanted to start a company, but didn't know which direction we wanted to go. We kept saying we wanted to commit treason by pushing in the opposite direction when someone told us we couldn't do it."

"We also wanted to be big in Baltimore, but also be able to grow globally," Jones added. "We had a desire to create things we absolutely loved, but with a different approach we couldn't find in other brands."

Like an ongoing ping-pong effect, Bass and Jones brainstormed and tossed around ideas about how they could tell the story of their brand, and in September 2013, Treason Toting Company was born.

The company makes their products using vegetable tanned leather, duck cloth canvas, and solid brass hardware. Their backpacks and accessories are named after streets in Baltimore and include The Charles, The Chase, and The Lexington.



Treason Toting Company's "The Charles." backpack.

Courtesy Photo

"We are a leather accessory brand," said Jones. "Today's traveler is a multi-faceted one of creativity, performance, and style. All of our bags are domestically-manufactured reaffirming our ded-

ication to creating product truly born from where we come from."

Treason Toting Company products are manufactured at City Garage in southwest Baltimore. City Garage is described as "Baltimore's space for the entrepreneurial community to gather, collaborate and succeed," and is located in Port Covington, a mostly industrial waterfront area. City Garage is the former South Baltimore bus garage, and was converted by Under Armour CEO Kevin Plank's venture capital firm Sagamore Ventures, which invests in startups and development.

"A video created by Shine Creative, a Baltimore-based production company, on our brand fell into the laps of Marcus

Stephens, Plank Industries' creative director," said Bass. "Marcus reached out to Aaron and me about Port Covington with an interest in Treason Toting Company being a business in City Garage. We talked about the idea, then he thought we could possibly do more with Sagamore Ventures. He arranged a meeting with his partner, Demian Costa, and we explored ideas on what we needed to be successful. An agreement was made and the rest is history."

Costa, is now an equity partner in Treason Toting Company.

"Aaron and I have always wanted to keep our business in Baltimore and help to create a positive shift in the city," said Bass. "The newly formed relationship with Sagamore Ventures and Plank Industries makes that possibly a reality. We want to increase quality, production volume and points of distribution. With this team, anything is possible."

Jones and Bass are both natives of Baltimore. Jones is a graduate of Northwestern High School, and attended the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia. Bass is a graduate of Milford Mill High School, and is currently pursuing a master's in business from the University of Baltimore (UB).

"We are looking to continue to develop our manufacturing capabilities at City Garage and sell wholesale on a larger scale," said Bass. "We try to figure out what the need is, and find a solution. A bag is a bag, but how do you make it different? We collaborate, and come up with ideas of making our version of a product different. Business has been great."

He added, "Treason Toting Company is proud to be from Baltimore and a part of Baltimore's ever-growing small business ecosystem. I hope that our story inspires more people to explore their creative passions, entrepreneurial ideas and lifestyle interests."

Treason Toting Company is open 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Mon.-Sat. and Sundays from 11a.m. - 6 p.m. To view their productions or for more information visit [www.treasontottingco.com](http://www.treasontottingco.com)

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## **Operation Homefront, Baltimore Dollar Tree Stores Launch Holiday Toy Drive for Military Children**

Baltimore—With repeated and extended deployments and frequent relocations, the families of many junior enlisted service members and wounded warriors face financial hardships and must forgo spending money on gifts. As the holiday shopping season gets into full swing this week, now is your chance to help them. Operation Homefront field offices and Dollar Tree Inc. are teaming up to assist military families by collecting purchased toys through December 8, 2016, to be distributed to the children of service members this holiday season.

This is the 10th year that Operation Homefront and Dollar Tree have joined forces for their annual Holiday Toy Drive. Dollar Tree shoppers purchase the toys and place them in collection boxes set up in the stores, including those located at York Road, Cranbrook Road, Taylor Avenue, and Joppa Road.

Thanks in large measure to the tremendous support of Dollar Tree patrons, Operation Homefront's Holiday Toy Drive has collected more than seven million toys nationwide in 2015 for military kids.

More information on the Holiday Toy Drive is available online at [www.operationhomefront.net/holidaytoys/](http://www.operationhomefront.net/holidaytoys/).

The national nonprofit, Operation Homefront builds strong, stable and secure military families so that they may thrive in the communities they have worked so hard to protect. With more than 3,200 volunteers nationwide, Operation Homefront has provided assistance to tens of thousands of military families since its inception shortly after 9/11. Recognized for superior performance by leading independent charity oversight groups, 92 percent of Operation Homefront's expenditures go directly to programs that provide support to our military families.

For more information, go to [www.OperationHomefront.net](http://www.OperationHomefront.net).

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# Opera Great Luca Pisaroni Debuts at BSO

By Stacy M. Brown

Earlier this year when making his debut in the role of Mephistopheles in the Houston Grand Opera's production of Faust, Luca Pisaroni confessed that as a child in Italy he was unpopular.

"I was the only one who liked opera," he explained to the Houston Press. However, Pisaroni, who speaks English, French, Spanish and Italian has seen his popularity soar. Lately, the bass-baritone has been preparing to perform in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's (BSO) presentation of Handel's Messiah," one of the world's most best known and frequently performed opera.

"Handel's Messiah is one of the cornerstones of the classical repertoire," Pisaroni said. "It contains many moments of incredible beauty. I want the audience to come and to be amazed by the power of the music. It's truly a magical work and perfect for the holiday season."

And, if spotted in Baltimore, residents might see two of Pisaroni's favorite traveling companions, Lenny and Tristant.

"Lenny is a golden retriever and Tristant is a miniature dachshund. They always travel with me," Pisaroni said. "They are endlessly entertaining and they keep life normal. I travel 10 months out of the year for work and having them with me makes me feel at home wherever I go and I am constantly amazed by the way they communicate with each other. One look is worth a thousand words."

Pisaroni's career, on the other hand, might be worth a million words. Since his debut with the Vienna Philharmonic at the Salzburg Festival, which was led by Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Pisaroni has continued to appear at the world's leading opera houses, concert halls and festivals.

This season alone, Pisaroni's concert appearances have included Rossini's Stabat Mater at the Musikverein Wien in Austria; Mozart's Concert Arias and Schubert's Orchestrated Songs with the Wiener Virtuosen and the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker in Germany; Bach's B Minor Mass with the Gewandhausorchester in Germany; and Berlioz's Romeo



*Opera star Luca Pisaroni with his favorite traveling companions: golden retriever, Lenny and miniature Dachshund, Tristant. Pisaroni will perform in the BSO's production of Handel's Messiah at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore on Friday, December 2 and Sunday, December 4, 2016.*

Courtesy Photo

and Juliet with music director Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony.

"I have been very fortunate in my life to be able to perform in amazing venues with wonderful orchestras," Pisaroni said. "I have very fond memories of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis with the Los Angeles Philharmonics conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas and Beethoven's 9th Symphony at the Musikverein in Vienna. I am very excited to make my debut in Baltimore because the orchestra has a great reputation for its sound and for the devotion of its musicians."

Pisaroni says he had a love for opera while growing up in Parma—the hometown of Giuseppe Verdi. Ever since he was nine, it's been a part of him. However, he says the career chose him instead of the other way around.

"You could say that I almost had no other choice than to become an opera singer. There is something magical and inexplicable about being on stage and being able to express emotions and thoughts through the power of music,"

he said. "Music is a language and it has been said many times that music can express more than words. Performing is to me like an addiction. I am truly fortunate to have a profession I am so passionate about."

Performing the Messiah has always been a thrill and Pisaroni says he hopes to take his Baltimore audience on a special journey during the performances.

"As a bass-baritone, I get to sing one of the best-known arias in the repertoire, 'The trumpet shall sound,' with the contribution of a solo trumpet. It's a mighty aria ... I hope to take the listener through an intense journey of sounds and emotions."

The Baltimore performances are scheduled for 7:30 on Friday, December 2 at the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall; 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 3 at the Strathmore in Washington, D.C.; and 3 p.m. Sunday, December 4 again at the Meyerhoff. Tickets for the performances range from \$25 to \$99. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit: [www.bsomusic.org](http://www.bsomusic.org).

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# Take Precautions to Be Safe this Holiday Season

(Family Features) Although good tidings and joy abound during the holiday season, this time of year can also pose a serious threat to your family, friends and home. The holidays bring an elevated risk for fires and burns, and many Americans may have a false sense of security.

A new survey conducted by Shriners Hospitals for Children® shows that most Americans know basic fire and burn safety tips but do not practice them in the home. Failure to implement safety precautions only adds to the danger.

A myriad of seasonal activities puts the action indoors, where families gather for cooking, decorating and other pursuits that may involve an open flame. Unfortunately, enjoying some of those treasured pastimes means the risk of house fires and burns increases drastically.

Many burn injuries and fire risks can be avoided by practicing a few simple safety measures. Shriners Hospitals has provided some practical steps to keep your home and family safe.

## Seasonal Decor

Live Christmas trees need water daily. However, according to the survey, less

than half of Americans perform the task. A dry tree can ignite in seconds, making tree fires one of the most dangerous types. Well-watered trees significantly reduce this risk. Set a reminder to add water daily to keep your tree safe and supple throughout the season.

Choosing the right place for your tree involves many variables. As you select the perfect vantage point, remember to keep trees away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles or heat vents.

Consider using wickless or flameless candles. There are numerous inexpensive options that cast a warm, flickering glow so you can enjoy the ambiance of a lit candle without the risk.

## Lights and Electricity

Before installing decorative lights on a house or a tree, closely inspect each strand for frayed wires, bare spots and



excessive kinking or wear. Discard and replace any lights that show signs of damage, which can pose a fire hazard.

Nearly half of survey respondents admitted they overload electrical outlets. During the holiday season, when you are likely to have more decorations, lights and other electrical items in use, take extra care to prevent overburdening an outlet and use certified surge protectors and power strips.

Exposed electrical cords and uncovered outlets can attract the attention of inquisitive children. Take care to secure cords out of reach and cover any outlets not in use.

Despite the obvious risk of leaving lit candles unattended, 27 percent of Americans admit to this practice and 25 percent of respondents report leaving them in reach of a child. If you must use a flame-burning candle, do so only while you are in the room and extinguish any lit candles if the room will be vacant.

## Cooking Safety

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, holiday cooking is the leading cause of residential building fires in the month of December. With more cooking during this time, the risk of house fires and pediatric burns increases drastically. Outturned handles can be easily grasped by curious hands or snag on clothing or aprons and potentially scald a youngster underfoot. Be sure to turn pot handles toward the back of the stove, out of children's reach.

Follow the lead of nearly 50 percent of Americans who know to keep a lid or

cookie sheet nearby when cooking to help extinguish a fire.

Use electric appliances on a countertop, safely away from the sink or other water sources, but remember to avoid using an extension cord to supply power to kitchen appliances.

For more information, activity books for kids, tip cards and additional tools for families, visit [bebunaware.org](http://bebunaware.org).

## Turn Up the Heat Safely

During cooler weather, many households increase reliance on natural gas for heat. Entertaining during the holiday months can also raise natural gas usage. However, natural gas can be dangerous and even deadly.

Help minimize the risk of a natural gas leak with these tips:

- Leave the house immediately if you think you smell natural gas; call your gas company or 911 for assistance once you are safely away.

- Teach every member of the house how to recognize the slightly sweet, sickly smell of natural gas. Some compare it to the smell of rotting eggs or food.

- Schedule annual service by a qualified professional for all appliances, gas lines and other gas-consuming elements of your home.

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# Fireplace and wood burning stove safety urged in cold weather

Annapolis—Annapolis Mayor Michael Pantelides and Fire Chief David L. Stokes, Sr. remind residents to be aware of fire dangers now that the temperatures are dropping. Every autumn, as the air begins to chill, Annapolis residents enjoy warming themselves by the fireplace. However, not disposing of fireplace ash correctly and not cleaning the chimney regularly is responsible for thousands of dollars in damages every year and puts lives at risk.

"Each year, Annapolis Firefighters respond to an average of 15 to 20 chimney fires, Chief Stokes said. "Failing to properly maintain your wood burning fireplace or wood stove poses a hazard to your family which is real and most always preventable."

Stokes urges homeowners to follow the recommendations established by the United States Fire Administration (USFA) regarding home fire safety and fireplaces.

Nationally, more than one-third of Americans use fireplaces, wood stoves and other fuel-fired appliances as primary heat sources in their homes.

Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the fire risks when heating with wood and solid fuels. Often these fires are due to creosote buildup in chimneys and stovepipes. All home heating systems require regular maintenance to function safely and efficiently. The Annapolis Fire Department and the USFA encourage the public to practice the following fire safety steps to keep those home fires safely burning.

#### Keep Fireplaces and Wood Stoves Clean

Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist

Clear the area around the hearth of debris, decorations, and flammable materials

Leave fireplace glass doors open while burning a fire. Leaving the doors open ensures that the fire receives enough air to ensure complete combustion and keeps



creosote from building up in the chimney.

Close fireplace glass doors when the fire is out to keep air from the chimney opening from getting into the room.

Most glass fireplace doors have a metal mesh screen which should be closed when the glass doors are open. This mesh screen helps keep embers from getting out of the fireplace area.

Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces that do not have a glass fireplace door

Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures

Keep air inlets on wood stoves open, and never restrict air supply to fireplaces. Otherwise you may cause creosote buildup that could lead to a chimney fire

Use fire-resistant materials on walls around wood stoves

#### Safely Burn Fuels

Never use flammable liquids to start a fire

Use only seasoned hardwood

Build small fires that burn completely and produce less smoke

Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or debris in your fireplace or wood stove

- When building a fire, place logs at the rear of the fireplace on an adequate supporting grate

- Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended

- Allow ashes to cool before disposing of them

- Place ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from your home and any other nearby buildings. Never empty the ash directly into a trash can. Douse and saturate the ashes with water.

#### Protect the Outside of Your Home

- Stack firewood outdoors at least 30 feet away from your home

- Keep the roof clear of leaves, pine needles and other debris

- Cover the chimney with a mesh screen

- Remove branches hanging above the chimney, flues or vents

#### Protect the Inside of Your Home

- Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home and inside and outside of sleeping areas. Test them monthly and change the batteries at least once a year. Consider installing the new long life smoke alarms. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that is toxic to humans in elevated concentration. CO is produced as a natural byproduct of burning fossil fuels. In normal circumstances, the CO leaves your home through the chimney. When your chimney or the stove isn't working correctly, CO can enter your home and be poisonous to you and your family. CO is especially toxic to children and senior citizens.

- Provide proper venting systems for all heating equipment.

- Extend all vent pipes at least three feet above the roof

For more information about fireplace, wood stove, or pellet stove safety, or if you require assistance with a smoke alarm or CO alarm for your home, call the Annapolis Fire Department at 410-263-7975 for assistance.

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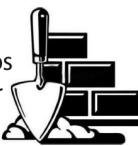
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