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Ringling Bros Returns to Baltimore One Last Time!



For 146 years, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® Circus has entertained generation after generation of families with their extraordinary performers and exotic animals. The circus returns to Baltimore's Royal Farms Arena from April 20, 2017 through April 30, 2017 with "Out Of This World," featuring an immersive circus experience that takes families to space to witness incredible acrobatic performances on different planets. Feld Entertainment, Inc. parent company of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® producer of live family entertainment, announced in January that the iconic circus would hold its final performances at the Dunkin' Donuts Center in Providence, R.I., on May 7, and at the Nassau Veterans Memorial. Ringmaster Jonathan Lee Iverson (above left) has been with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® Circus since 1998. (See article on page 10)

Courtesy Photo/Ringling Brothers

Buckets Blakes of the Harlem Globetrotters visits local schools

By Ruth Young Tyler

For some basketball players standing at the free-throw line— 15 feet from the basket— and making it, can be stressful. But for Anthony “Buckets” Blakes a member of the iconic Harlem Globetrotters for 15 years, shooting a basketball 583 feet and 8 inches is just another trick shot. The 6’2” guard broke the record for the highest basketball shot ever taken in North America with an epic shot off the Tower of the Americas in San Antonio, Texas.

Some may call it practice but for him, it’s all about doing what he loves— traveling the world, entertaining families, playing basketball and empowering youth across the globe.

Before the team’s March 25 games in Baltimore, Blakes visited area schools to discuss the team’s anti-bullying initiative, “The Great Assist,” which spotlights the ABC’s of anti-bullying. A is for action; B is for bravery; and C is for compassion.

As the team’s brand ambassador, Blakes engaged in conversations with students at St. Agnes School about how to handle bullying scenarios, including cyber-bullying, during his March 22 visit. Blakes noted that cyberbullying “can hinder you later in life.” Students were encouraged to post only positive content about themselves and others, if they were to post anything at all.

Blakes shared simple techniques on how to manage their reactions when confronted by a bully. Fifth grader Finn Smith said he would not verbally retaliate with a bully. “I would try to keep the mean things to myself,” said Smith.

Seeking the counsel of a teacher or an administrator was the number one alternative for third grader Veronica King.

“I would tell an adult and hopefully the bully will get the punishment they deserve,” she said.

Sixth grader Hahns Hairston opted for a different approach in responding to a bully’s actions.

“If someone [a bully] is doing some-



Anthony “Buckets” Blakes of the Harlem Globetrotters visited schools in Baltimore City and County before the start of the team’s 2017 World Tour. (Above) Students from St. Agnes Elementary School in Baltimore with Buckets Blakes (left to right) Finn Smith, Veronica King, Seamus Smith and Hahns Hairston on Wednesday, March 22, 2017. Photo by Ruth Young Tyler

thing to you, don’t over-react,” said Hairston. Remembering a bully he responded to in the same way, Blakes could relate.

A native of Arizona, Blakes was introduced to the game of basketball at age five. Even then, he knew he wanted to become a professional athlete. Entering his 15th season with the Harlem Globetrotters, Blakes has traveled across the United States and to 79 countries.

“Regardless of religious affiliation, culture or race— joy and happiness is universal, and that’s what we all strive for,” he said, recalling the one commonality he noticed among people he met along his travels.

During the school visit, Blakes simulated The Magic Circle, a pre-game warm-up routine practiced among the Harlem Globetrotters. The practice session is filled with a series of basketball

tricks. With the team’s theme song, “Sweet Georgia Brown” by Brother Jones, playing in the background, the school’s principal, Dr. Eric Watts; administrator Makenzie Weber; and three other students were taught a series of basketball tricks to perform with Blakes.

The popular tune has been associated with the Harlem Globetrotters’ multi-generational, crowd-pleasing performances for 92 years.

“Brother Bones’ rendition of Sweet Georgia Brown and the Harlem Globetrotters was the perfect marriage,” Blakes laughed.

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Blakes says what makes basketball so popular among youth is that it “involuntarily develops life skills in kids.”

“There is constant movement in the game and we come together to reach a common goal,” he said.

If he was not with the Harlem Globetrotters, Blakes says he would be working with kids in some capacity. Blakes encourages students to “find out what’s unique and cool about you and do that.”

“Be the best you that you can be, because it’s very difficult to be someone else.”

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Guest Editorials/Commentary

Central West Baltimore eager for State Center redevelopment

By Dr. Steva A. Komeh-Nkrumah

When you walk through Historic Marble Hill, you will appreciate the architectural craftsmanship with details that have stood the test of time and can't be replicated by today's builders. From our Italianate-inspired high ceilings and masterful brickwork to our white marble steps, Marble Hill demonstrates why Baltimore is called "Charm City."

In spite of its charm, Marble Hill and the surrounding communities are in dire need of redevelopment and revitalization. The health statistics for Marble Hill and the surrounding communities are among the worst in the City even though our boundary begins two blocks from State Center. One reason is the absence of a quality supermarket with fresh wholesome food. Through recent efforts of our City Council, the Department of Recreation and Parks, Parks & People Foundation, and the Department of Transportation, our community has had a bit of a face-lift. Our park has been transformed and landscaped, our broken sidewalks have been replaced and trees have been planted. The community's image has improved a tiny bit, but the deep problems that resulted from decades of redlining and neglect remain. We are deeply grateful to our City Council for their efforts to persuade our Governor to allow the State Center redevelopment project to proceed.

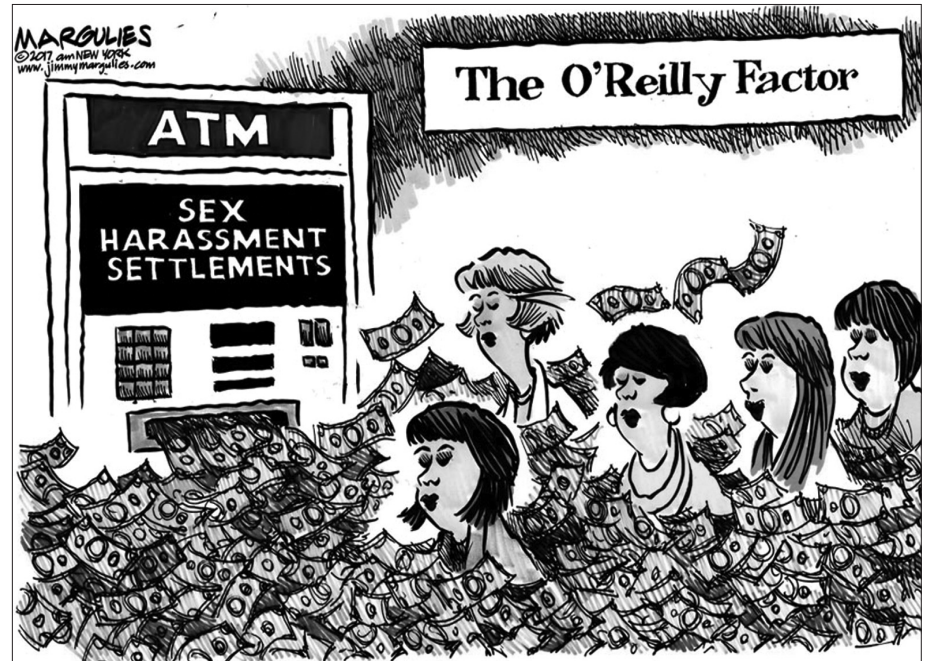
Nevertheless, in the 38 years that I have lived in Marble Hill, residents have never had real access to capital, economic parity or sufficient resources for the community to thrive. Marble Hill and the surrounding communities need the infusion of investment that would stimulate interest and attract new residents. We have witnessed the transformation of Bolton Hill, Canton, Federal Hill and Hampden-Remington and even the Rotunda. We know that a major project like the development of State Center would be the perfect catalyst to set this section of Charm City on the path toward a bright future.

If completed, State Center's sprawling campus would offer 2,000 new affordable housing units, an accessible supermarket, retail stores and commercial space for dozens of new businesses. This configuration of the space would facilitate the creation of thousands of new jobs. All of this would be in addition to the new, state-of-the-art office complex to accommodate the State Departments and the 3,000 state employees who work there. Baltimore City needs to keep these jobs right here. The community needs to have this project right here.

This project would be privately funded. It would generate property taxes to support Baltimore City Schools, and I think it would solve two problems. First, property tax income would solve some of the budget shortfall and second, school enrollment would increase as new families move into the area. The community met at least 145 times over 10 years until the State Center development project offered what residents need. We look forward to the implementation of both the Community Benefits Agreement whereby the developer would contribute \$1 million to the State Center Neighborhood Alliance for community uses, and the economic inclusion plan that prioritized local hiring, participation of women and minority contractors, and job training. It seems that our hopes and aspirations will be disregarded again while Port Covington and Harbor East enjoy tax-funded enhancements.

We owe it to ourselves to persevere toward a future that includes renewal, reinvestment and revitalization for the communities of Central West Baltimore, which have been neglected for decades. If not now, when?

Dr. Steva A. Komeh-Nkrumah is a former president of the Marble Hill Community Association—a member of the State Center Neighborhood Alliance



Community Affairs

Aperture Education Launches Essay Contest with \$1000 College Scholarship Prize

Charlotte N.C.— Succeeding in high school and college often requires more than just good grades. Strong social and emotional skills are also important. To highlight this, Aperture Education has launched an essay contest asking high school seniors and college students to write about the non-academic skills that helped them get through high school.

The public will vote on the essays and Aperture will choose a winner from the three essays receiving the most votes. This individual will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship. Participants must submit their essay by July 31, 2017. For more information or to submit an entry, visit <http://www.apertureed.com/funding/scholarship/>.

To enter the contest, participants must answer this question in 300 to 400 words: "What non-academic skill helped you get through high school? How did you acquire this skill (maybe a sports team or a specific event in your

life)? How will you apply this skill to your time in college?"

Qualifying submissions will be posted online on August 4, 2017 and the public will be invited to vote until August 15, 2017 for their favorite. The essay contest is open to students between the ages of 16 and 22 who are graduating from high school in 2017 or who are freshmen, sophomores or juniors in college.

"Social and emotional skills are so important to a child's lifelong success," said Aperture Education CEO Jessica Adamson. "Skills such as being able to make good decisions build healthy relationships and communicate well with peers, co-workers and bosses help students tremendously in high school, college and beyond. We hope this essay contest will get students thinking about these non-academic skills as they look toward the future."

The essay contest is part of Aperture Education's ongoing work to support students' social and emotional health. Its goal is to ensure members of school and out-of-school time communities, including adults, have the social and emotional skills needed to thrive. For more information, visit: <http://www.apertureed.com/funding/scholarship/>.

Mr. President, what if it was your Mama?

By Austin R. Cooper
NNPA Newswire Columnist

During the summer before the election, then-presidential nominee Donald Trump, added this message to his speeches: “You’re living in poverty; your schools are no good; you have no jobs; 58 percent of your youth is unemployed. What the hell do you have to lose?”

It was an attempt to appeal to black voters. Needless to say, this was an unusual way of trying to expand his political base among a constituency that had not shown much support for the GOP in recent years.

President Trump is perhaps the first political candidate to knowingly insult the very ones to whom he was appealing for votes. What also made these appeals to African-Americans outside of the norm, and even bizarre, is that they were often made before predominantly, white audiences.

After reviewing the president’s first budget proposal, titled “America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America

Great Again,” his question of “What the hell do you have to lose?” can now be more broadly posed beyond African-Americans. Based on his fiscal priorities, many Americans, including a significant number of those who voted for him, stand to lose a great deal. Unfortunately for some, Hell might seem like a better alternative than trying to

ered meal programs significantly improve diet quality, increase nutrient intakes and improve the quality of life among recipients. The program also reduces government expenditures by reducing the need of recipients to use hospitals, nursing homes or other expensive community-based services.

Mick Mulvaney, the new director of the

porter then asked, “What would you tell him to convince him not to cut the program?” Preast responded, “What if it was your mama?”

Preast, who is white, poor and confined to a wheelchair due to a stroke, signed up for Meals on Wheels two years ago. Last November, she, like a majority of Macon residents, voted for President Trump.

According to Robert A. Caro, the author of “The Passage of Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson,” President Johnson loved the phrase “War on Poverty.” From personal knowledge, he knew that the causes of poverty stem from a “lack of education and training, a lack of medical care and housing, a lack of decent communities in which to live.” These were, to President Johnson, real-life foes. Poverty in America is Democratic, Republican, independent and nonvoting.

It is my hope that the 45th president will learn from his predecessor and find the compassion to use the bully pulpit to alleviate, not compound, the pain currently being experienced by so many Americans, many who supported the president as well as many who did not.

So, Mr. President, what if it was your mama?

Austin R. Cooper, Jr., serves as president of Cooper Strategic Affairs, Inc., which provides legislative, political and communications counsel in Washington, D.C., for governmental, nonprofit and for profit organizations. Cooper has worked for three Members of Congress, the Turner Broadcasting System (TBS), former NYC Mayor David Dinkins and former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young. You can follow Austin on Twitter @acooper62.

“The president’s budget identified steep cuts in numerous domestic programs. It calls for the elimination of a key program that Meals on Wheels groups depend on: a \$3 billion program—community development block grants (CDBG)—that began under the Ford administration to combat poverty by giving states and cities greater flexibility in how to combat poverty.”

survive under some of the president’s proposed cuts.

Take, for example, the “Meals on Wheels” Program. The president’s budget identified steep cuts in numerous domestic programs. It calls for the elimination of a key program that Meals on Wheels groups depend on: a \$3 billion program—community development block grants (CDBG)—that began under the Ford administration to combat poverty by giving states and cities greater flexibility in how to combat poverty.

Therefore, pain and hardship will be felt if Congress enacts the cuts. Meals-on-Wheels delivers food to individuals at home who are unable to purchase or prepare their own meals. The name is often used generically to refer to home-delivered meal programs, not all of which are actually named “Meals on Wheels.”

Research has shown that home-deliv-

Office of Management and Budget recently stated, “We can’t spend money on programs just because they sound good...to take the federal money and give it to the states and say, ‘Look we want to give you money for programs that don’t work.’”

Try telling someone, who is no longer experiencing hunger pains because of Meals on Wheels that the program does not work.

President Trump is blessed to have never gone hungry a day in his life but I wish that he would visit with 56-year-old Linda Preast in Macon, Georgia.

During a recent interview on “CBS Evening News,” Preast was asked if she was surprised by the spending cuts to Meals on Wheels being proposed by the president. She replied, “Yeah, because I was told—I was under the [impression] that he was going to help us.” The re-

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Students explore southern HBCUs on annual tour

By Ruth Young Tyler

For ages, there has been meaty discussions in the African-American community around the topic of whether it is culturally necessary to attend a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). One side says attending an HBCU puts limitations on students' worldview—especially for those looking to compete globally in careers and professions commonly secured by non-blacks.

Maryland native and business owner Kim Hinton encouraged her son, Kris, not to attend a HBCU. Kris grew up in an affluent community and was accustomed to seeing African American doctors, lawyers and business owners, according to Hinton. Hinton said what Kris lacked was diversity and an authentic look at what he will face after graduating from college. Currently, he attends the University of Maryland, School of Architecture where out of the 160 students he is one of 10 African American students. Hinton's concern is that her son needs to know how to interact with his future peers who are not predominantly African American.

Although Hinton attended an HBCU, she later earned an MBA from a non-HBCU school.

As the pendulum swings to the other side, HBCU advocates cite the importance of noticing that HBCUs are mainly responsible for graduating students who were well-rounded enough to integrate the fields—the high compensating and socially superior professions—that were traditionally closed to people of color in the first place. It is argued that attending an HBCU helps students develop a strong sense of who they are as part of a cultural group that has been, and continues to be, systematically marginalized by society.

"A black American student would be unlikely to obtain an accurate worldview and self-knowledge at a predominately white college," said Charles Reeves, an auditor supervisor in Washington D.C., who graduated from Howard University's School of Business, with a bachelor of business administration in finance. A quality education is obtainable in either environment but I believe the addi-



Aliyah Thompson, 14, a freshman at Carver Center for the Arts and her brother Jabari, 16, a sophomore at Randallstown High School traveled to Johnson C. Smith University in North Carolina during Spring Break on an eight-day HBCU tour sponsored by the Caring for Young Minds Foundation.

Courtesy Photos/CFYM

tional enrichment at my alma mater [Howard University] gave me a competitive advantage over my peers attending non-HBCUs."

During his undergraduate studies, Reeves says he was taught by professors who believed in his potential and inspired him to perform well in courses that struggled with or failed during his high school years, such as calculus and analytic geometry.

Reeves earned a MBA from University of Michigan.

The HBCU, many argue, trains students how to negotiate their seat at the table as the Black and White dissolve into color and overt injustices evaporate into subtlety. The sense of pride students generally get from the HBCU experience is unparalleled and advantageous to African American students in the grand scheme of things.

This is why Caring For Young Minds Foundation (CFYM), hosts its annual HBCU tour, an educational initiative open to middle and high school students who have a desire to attend college. Entering its 20th year of service, CFYM has guided hundreds of students on an annual HBCU tour. Expanding its pro-

grams and services to the community, the organization's mission is to empower youth and provide them with resources through mentoring, strategic planning, educational enrichment programs and cultural activities.

The purpose of the college tour is to expose young people to a breath of college life from the admission process to student life on campus to preparing for graduation.

Students from the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and as far away as Delaware, boarded a tour bus on April 8, 2017, the dawn of Spring Break to explore 10 Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the southern part of the U.S. The tour's itinerary included visits to North Carolina Central University; North Carolina A&T University; Johnson C. Smith University; Allen University; Fort Valley State University; Albany State University; South Carolina State University; Bethune-Cookman University; Edward Waters College; and Florida A&M University.

The college tour culminates in Florida, April 15, 2017, where students would spend the day at Universal Studios in Orlando.

"Students are never too young to be exposed to new opportunities and their options for a higher education," said Mike Thompson, vice president for CYMF. Thompson also serves as the behavior interventionist specialist at Randallstown High School in Baltimore County. His children Jabari, 16 and Aliyah, 14, were among the 115 college explorers.

Thirty volunteer chaperones, two registered nurses and two police officers traveled in support of the students. The chaperones who were HBCU graduates shared their perspectives about college life on an HBCU campus.

Although the students traveled further south to consider their college choices, the greater Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area is noted for its HBCUs, which includes: Morgan State University, Coppin State University, Bowie State University, University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Howard University. These HBCUs have attracted local residents and students from the northern states.

Ashley N. Richardson is one of them. Richardson attended a predominately white institution (PWI) in New Jersey. Now she is a Juris Doctorate candidate at Howard University School of Law.

"There's a feeling of connectedness at Howard University that I didn't feel at my undergraduate alma mater," Richardson said. "Law school is challenging. However, being part of a community of people who are willing to help me along this journey is very encouraging."

Richardson says her parents approved of her decision to attend both a PWI and a HBCU but there are some parents with a different perspective.

"Our student's goals are attainable," said Thompson, noting the organization's steadfast commitment to supporting the academic achievement of young people in the Baltimore metro area. "Our mission is to change their perspective about attending college. Education is a passport to their future and preparation begins today."

For more information about Caring for Young Minds and the HBCU tour, visit: www.caringforyoungminds.com.



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Baton Rouge Area Foundation accepting entries for 11th Annual Gaines Award

Deadline for \$10,000 prize is August 15, 2017

Baton Rouge, La.— Entries for the 11th annual Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence will be accepted through August 15, 2017. Information about the criteria and entrance forms for the award, which includes a \$10,000 cash prize, is available at www.ernestj-gainesaward.org.

Sponsored by foundation donors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the Gaines Award was created to honor outstanding literary work from rising African-American authors while recognizing Louisiana native Ernest Gaines' extraordinary contribution to the literary world. The Gaines Award honors outstanding fiction— novels or short-story collections— published in 2017. Galleys for 2017 publications are also accepted.

A native of Pointe Coupee Parish, Gaines is writer-in-residence emeritus at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. His critically acclaimed novel "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" was adapted into a 1974 made-for-TV movie that received nine Emmy awards. Published in 1993, his book "A Lesson Before Dying" won the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction.

The Gaines Award winner is chosen annually by a panel of professional writers and academics. The 2016 winner was Crystal Wilkinson's novel, "Birds of Opulence."

Previous Gaines Award winners include T. Geronimo Johnson for "Welcome to Braggsville," Attica Locke for "The Cutting Season," Stephanie Powell Watts for "We Are Taking Only What We Need," and Dinaw Mengestu for "How to Read the Air."

The Ernest Gaines Award ceremonies will be held on Jan. 18, 2018, at the Manship Theatre at the Shaw Center for the Arts in downtown Baton Rouge.

Lardarius Webb finds a way back to the Ravens

By Turron Davenport

The Baltimore Ravens announced on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 that defensive back Lardarius Webb has re-signed with the team after he was released last month. Webb signed a three-year deal that is worth \$10.5 million.

Webb and the Ravens agreed to a six-year, \$52 million contract in 2012, which was restructured to a three-year \$16.5 million contract in 2015.

Baltimore saved \$5.5 million by releasing Webb last month. Ravens General Manager Ozzie Newsome hinted at the possibility of Webb rejoining the Ravens after making the tough decision to let him go in March.

"The longer I'm in this job, the tougher those conversations are when you have to talk to a player about waiving him," Newsome said during a March press conference. "But I had a really good conversation with Lardarius. The door is not closed [on him returning] because we need as good football players as we can."

Releasing Webb and veteran pass rusher Elvis Dumervil helped allow the Ravens to sign free agent safety Tony Jefferson and all-purpose back Danny Woodhead. Jefferson not only took over for Webb as the starting safety, he also took No. 21, Webb's old jersey number.

After eight seasons with the Ravens, the 31 year old from Nicholls State will have the opportunity to finish his career in Baltimore. Webb was selected by the Ravens in the third round (No. 88 overall) of the 2009 NFL Draft.

Appearing in 111 games (83 starts), he produced 436 tackles (14th in team history), 13 interceptions (sixth in team history) and 89 passes broken-up, including a career-high 22 in 2013. Webb has contributed to the Ravens' success as a punt returner, kick returned, as well as starting at cornerback and safety.

Webb has a 25.9-yard kickoff return average (38 for 985 yards) and 9.5-yard punt return average (57 for 540 yards). According to the Ravens public relations department, he is the only player in Ravens history to return a punt (68 yards), kickoff (95 yards) and interception (73 yards) for a touchdown.



Lardarius Webb has signed a three-year deal worth \$10.5 million with the Baltimore Ravens after he was released by the team in March this year. (Above) Webb who is a spokesperson for the United Way distributes free turkeys to families in Baltimore just before the Thanksgiving Holiday in November 2013.

Baltimore Times File Photo

Moving to safety last year helped the Ravens tie the Kansas City Chiefs and San Diego Chargers to lead the NFL in interceptions (18) last year. Webb and free agent additions Eric Weddle solidified the secondary as the starting safeties.

Webb started all 16 games in 2016 and posted 73 tackles (59 solo), one interception five pass breakups and one sack. He has 13 career interceptions.

Webb has been a huge contributor to community outreach projects during his career with the Ravens. His foundation, The Lardarius Webb Foundation focuses on providing aid to underprivileged children and their families in Baltimore and his hometown of Opelika, Alabama.

The Lardarius Webb Foundation has various yearly events ranging from a celebrity charity softball game to holiday meal distributions. Webb is also a spokesman for the United Way in Baltimore.

Baltimore Times

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Baltimore comedienne survives heart attack, urges women to be aware of wellbeing

By Ursula V. Battle

For more than 20 years, Pamela Hill has been making people laugh. The comedienne, whose performance name is “Miss Maybelle,” has participated in many comedy shows, fashion shows, plays, and even starred in car insurance commercials. She is also a familiar voice on WOLB’s 1010 AM’s Larry Young Morning Show, where her comedic opinions and views on life are a source of much laughter. But one December day in 2013 was no laughing matter. The performer literally found herself halfway between life and death.

“I have chronic asthma, and had back-to-back asthma attacks,” recalled Hill. “I was taken to Mercy Hospital for the asthma attacks, where they discovered I was having a heart attack. I was then moved to Union Memorial Hospital. Two of my heart valves were blocked and I had to have emergency heart surgery.”

The 50-year-old added, “I was told to pull my family together because there was a 50/50 chance I would make it. I

told my kids no matter what happened, God was in control and to take care of one another. It all happened so fast. I was then taken back for surgery, where I had to have stents put in my heart.”

Hill survived the surgery and she is hopeful that her own personal story will inspire women to do a better job of taking care of themselves.

“Women are so busy taking care of everyone else but [we] don’t care of ourselves,” said Hill. “We have to do a better job of getting physicals, going to the dentist, having Pap Smears, keeping our blood pressure regulated, exercising, and taking our medications so we can be here.”

“My heart attack was so subtle. There was no pain or anything to let me know I was even having a heart attack. I was tired and started to go to sleep that day, but decided to go to the hospital. If I hadn’t gone to the hospital, I probably wouldn’t be here.”

Hill’s efforts include the Miss Maybelle’s Full-Figured Fashion Show. The sold-out annual event, which she said was sponsored by Carlton Douglass, was



Well-known comedienne Pamela Hill, whose performance name is “Miss Maybelle,” has survived a heart attack and two strokes. (Above) Hill during “Miss Maybelle’s Full-Figured Fashion Show,” which was held recently at the Forest Park Senior Center.

Photo by Ursula V. Battle

recently held at the Forest Park Senior Center located on Liberty Heights Avenue. Hill is donating a portion of the proceeds to the American Heart Association— Maryland, located on Redwood Street in Baltimore.

Hill hosted the event, which also featured full-figured models trained by fashion icon Travis Winkey. Hill’s husband Lamont Hill also participated in the event, which also featured entertainment and an awards program.

“This was our tenth year,” said Hill. “We want women who are heavy to have positive self-esteem and feel good about themselves.”

Hill is also a two-time stroke survivor.

During the event, she honored Antoine Johnson, Daphne Hicks, and Paul Harrison with the Miss Maybelle and Company’s Courage Award. According to Hill, Hicks is a three-time stroke survivor, Harrison suffered a stroke five months ago, and Hicks helped her through a difficult time in her life.

“I was getting ready for work one day, and was confused and bumping into everything,” said Hill, reflecting back on one of her strokes. “When I got to work, my mouth twisted and they rushed me to the emergency room. Following the stroke, I was getting physical therapy, but after my insurance ran out, I could no longer go to physical therapy. Daphne, who is a Zumba instructor, gave me most of my lessons for free. She taught me how to walk a straight line and how to clap again.”

Hill said after her stroke, she had to leave her job of 20 years at the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. She said her mother, the late Vivian Spells, was pivotal in assisting her during her illness.

“I could no longer do the work at the court house,” said Hill, who is the mother of three children— Antoine 30, Shawn, 25, and Nick, 11, who has cerebral palsy. “My mother really helped me out a lot with my kids.”

The Baltimore native and Edmondson High School graduate continues to bring smiles to the faces of her audiences throughout Baltimore and surrounding areas. She says on May 7, a pre-Mother’s Day roast will be held in her honor.

“I am still living with the effects of my strokes,” said Hill. “I can’t walk far distances, and the stroke messed up some of the tissue in my body. Sometimes I get tremors in my hand because my arm is weak. But I keep on pressing and refuse to give up.”

“We often take simple things for granted such as walking up the street and coming back. But when you can’t do those things any longer, you want to do them again. Now, my outlook on life is that it is so short and so precious. We have to live life to the fullest, and in order to do that, we have to take care of ourselves.”



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Ringling Bros Returns to Baltimore One Last Time!

By Ursula V. Battle

Famed Circus to Close Permanently After 146 Years

For 146 years, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® Circus has entertained generation after generation of families with their extraordinary performers and exotic animals. The circus returns to Baltimore's Royal Farms Arena from April 20, 2017 through April 30, 2017 with "Out Of This World," featuring an immersive circus experience that takes families to space to witness incredible acrobatic performances on different planets.

Sadly, the title of the latest tour fits the reality that the famed circus will soon be out of this world, as it will hold its final performances in May.

Feld Entertainment, Inc. parent company of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey® producer of live family entertainment, announced in January that the iconic circus would hold its final performances at the Dunkin' Donuts Center in Providence, R.I., on May 7, and at the Nassau Veterans Memorial.

Since 1998, clad in his top hat and suit, Ringmaster Jonathan Lee Iverson has welcomed audiences before each circus performance with the words, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Children of All Ages, Welcome to The Greatest Show On Earth!" Iverson, who holds the distinction of being Ringling Bros' first African American Ringmaster talked about the "The Greatest Show On Earth" coming to a close.

"It has everything you can imagine," said Iverson. "It's heartbreaking. We often take things for granted, and then they are gone. However, more daunting than the show closing is the fact that a culture, lifestyle, and piece of America will be gone. We really won't know the full effects of it until some years from now."

According to Feld Entertainment, the decision to end the circus tours was made as a result of high costs coupled with a decline in ticket sales, making the circus an unsustainable business for the company. Following the transition of the elephants off the circus, the company saw a decline in ticket sales.

"We are grateful to the hundreds of millions of fans who have experienced Ringling Bros. over the years," said Kenneth Feld, Chairman and CEO of Feld Entertainment. "Between now and May, we will give them one last chance to experience the joy and wonder of Ringling Bros."

Iverson is a native of New York, and graduated from The Hartt School, a comprehensive performing arts conservatory at the University of Hartford. Iverson shared how his nearly 20-year-career with Ringling Bros. began.

"I had just graduated from college and was gearing up for a career in opera," recalled Iverson. "I was auditioning for a dinner theatre. The director for the dinner theatre was also with Ringling Bros. and put me into a pool to audition. This opportunity presented itself and I



Iverson with other principal characters from the show.

Courtesy Photos/Ringling Brothers

wanted to try it out. I didn't know any Ringmasters which made it even more appealing."

Iverson's strong singing ability, dynamic voice, energy, charm, charisma, theatrical style, and other attributes landed him what he considers to be 'the greatest job on earth.' Iverson's wife Priscilla, son Matthew and daughter Lila, also perform with the circus.

"My immediate family is involved," said Iverson. "This all has been a dream come true. It's been a wonderful adventure, and truly magical."

When asked what were his most memorable moments with Ringling Bros., Iverson said: "When I was introduced to the cast and crew for the first time. They gave me the mic and said, 'give the announcement and sing'. I received a rousing applause. Another top moment was when I opened at Madison Square Garden. To stand in the same place where Frank Sinatra danced and where Muhammed Ali boxed was special with my being from New York."

He continued, "My third most memorable moment was my realization of the power and reach of live entertainment. I met a family in Jacksonville, Florida who were having a great time. The mother had on clown make-up and her sons were dressed like a clown and a

ringmaster. She told me her son didn't speak until he came to a Ringling Bros. circus. Now, I'm not known for sentimentality, but I was floored. It was such a beautiful moment."

Iverson also reflected back on when his grandparents attended a show.

"Both of my grandparents were activists," said Iverson. "My grandfather narrowly escaped a lynching. When he came to a show five years ago, he told me he enjoyed it. He also said there was a time when he couldn't sit where he wanted to sit and there he was watching his grandson in the middle of it all."

Iverson, who said he plans to take a vacation once the Circus closes, is encouraging everyone to take advantage of one final opportunity to experience Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

"Out Of This World features so much adventure and such dynamic talent," he said. "I am hopeful everyone will come out and enjoy the farewell."

Tickets are available at all Ticketmaster outlets, by phone at 800-745-3000, by visiting www.ticketmaster.com, and at the Royal Farms box office. For more information, call 410-347-2006.

Park School Third Grader's Project Leads to Restriction on Idling

By Stacy M. Brown

For many, Earth Day presents a chance to advance the cause of sustainability and to promote environmentally friendly objectives with an eye toward the longevity of the planet but for Park School's third grade class, every day is Earth Day.

Their passion for conservation recently drove them to action, resulting in a formal change in school's drop-off policy.

After learning about the negative impact of fossil fuels in class, students noticed parents in the drop-off line leaving their cars running for several minutes at a time. They asked their teacher, Ellen Hoitsma, why parents leave their cars on when they know it's bad for the environment.

Hoitsma encouraged her class to conduct research on the environmental impact and present their findings and recommendations to Park's head of school, Dan Paradis and as a result, Paradis requested that all vehicles on campus—including delivery and commercial vehicles—cease idling after 10 seconds.

School officials say they are hoping the third-graders' example will inspire others in the Greater Baltimore community to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint, not just on Earth Day which falls on April 22 this year.

"The children decided they wanted to create a petition that our community could sign, and they worked really hard to write a persuasive letter that wouldn't frighten the youngest students at our school about the dangers of idling, but would nonetheless inform our fourth and fifth graders about the solid science behind limiting idling time," Hoitsma said. "Pairs of children visited each Lower School classroom to explain our goals and gather signatures. We made a short presentation during Lower School assembly, too, and designed colorful and convincing posters to hang around the school, sharing what we had learned."

The students say they were excited about their project and happily shared what they learned.

"You should never, ever idle in a confined space," Jack D., a third grader said.

"A lot of cars think they need to warm up their engines, but with today's cars, ten seconds is all you need," said Jack, who added that he felt a sense of relief when the head of school signed their petition. "It was great to go home and tell our parents to turn the key and be idle-free."

Cece L., another third grader says she has always been a fan of the environment and helping with reducing idling time works toward her goal of a sustainable planet.

"I love polar bears and, in part, because of idling and global warming, they might go extinct," Cece said.

"The matter from traffic and factories lands on the ice, turning it darker, which absorbs more sun, causing the ice to melt. I like that people really care."

Classmate Tessa says she found joy and comfort in the work, which has inspired many to help the environment.

"When you limit your idling to ten seconds, it's not hard, it's helpful," Tessa said. "You save money on gas just by moving your hand two inches"

One of the highlights of the project was presenting the petition, with over 200 signatures, to Paradis, who listened intently to the students' ideas, asked questions about the message of each poster, and was even "nice" when some third-grade fingers made their way into his candy jar, according to Hoitsma.

"As one child expressed it, 'Today we convinced the Head of School, tomorrow the President of the United States,'" she said.

Car exhaust pollutants such as carbon monoxide, benzene, formaldehyde, and nitrogen oxides are bad for our health, Hoitsma said of why the students' actions were important.

Idling cars and trucks produce 20 pounds of carbon dioxide per gallon, which contributes to global warming. An idling car uses up to half a gallon of fuel an hour. An idling diesel truck burns about a gallon of fuel an hour and, in the United States alone, which is estimated to be six billion gallons per year, and \$13 million per day, Hoitsma said.

"I am tremendously proud of these students for their energy and devotion to advocating for our community and our planet," she said. "We all learned the value of patience with the process. Our young people need to see that their voices are heard, and that with persistence, we can make a positive difference."

Ellen Hoitsma with her third grade students presenting their posters to Dan Paradis., head of the school.



Third grade class in front of Park School getting ready to hang their posters
Courtesy Photos/Park School



Third graders discuss their research with Dan Paradis



Internet security survey reveals Baltimore residents vulnerable to hacks

By Stacy M. Brown

With recent Internet hacks revealing that not even the government is safe from online threats, a new survey has revealed that Baltimore residents are just as vulnerable, if not more.

An Ooma.com Internet Security Survey revealed that 193,000 Baltimore residents and 31 percent of Americans nationwide have had their Internet network, e-mail, or computer hacked or compromised.

According to officials at Ooma, an online phone and Internet security company, multi-device Internet security has become particularly important now that a single network supports multiple devices.

With children alone consuming between six and nine hours of media per day, the company said its Zscaler-powered, DNS-based cloud security platform updates thousands of times per day to ensure effective protection.

“Standard anti-virus software does not protect you or your family from a multitude of online threats that Internet users face today when using various computers, smartphones and tablets on a home internet connection to browse the web, check email, watch video, play online games, and other things,” said Brian Jaquet, an Internet security expert at Ooma.

“Users who browse the web are sus-



ceptible to viruses, malware, phishing attacks and objectionable content that can be triggered simply by web browsing,” he said.

Also, Internet threats do not discriminate by city or state, Jaquet said.

“The worldwide web is the great equalizer, giving people access to content and information as long as they have an Internet connection,” he said.

“It’s also why protection from threats is so important because it doesn’t matter if you’re browsing the web from a high rise in Baltimore or a house in Chevy Chase. You have access to the same great content and the same threats when browsing the web,” Jaquet said.

The survey also found that about 336,000 Baltimore residents and 54 per-

cent of Americans nationwide have accidentally visited a website that infected their computer with a virus. Further, just one in five Baltimore residents are aware of the issue and want to solve it, according to the survey’s findings.

Approximately 137,000 Baltimore residents and 22 percent of Americans across the country have said their desire is to have devices protected from online threats such as viruses, phishing and malware.

Others are either unaware that such threats exist, or don’t know how to conduct safe searches, blacklist or whitelist domains, or filter content, Ooma officials said.

The survey also found that just one in 10 parents have a desire for more control

over their children’s browsing habits.

“An Internet connection, regardless of where you live, gives consumers access to a wealth of content, but also susceptible to a litany of threats,” Jaquet said.

Without protection for all computing devices that use a home internet connection, parents and children can easily fall prey to one of many online threats that are prevalent on the Internet, he said, noting that it’s important to employ a strong defense against these threats that can be updated in the cloud to provide the ultimate level of protection.

“Ooma Internet Security is built into Ooma’s consumer VoIP phone service and provides protection for all computing devices that use a home Internet connection against these threats and objectionable content online,” Jaquet said.

The service comes with a monthly fee but Jaquet says consumers can feel protected against a wide variety of threats and control the content, which consumers and their family members have access to. Some of the features include threat security, safe search, content filtering, website blacklisting and whitelisting and traffic monitoring.

“Ooma gives heads of household the full ability to manage all the devices on their network and determine the level of protection they want to employ for all their computing products,” Jaquet said.

Alzheimer’s Association Annual Dementia Conference Apr. 21

Comprehensive event planned for caregivers, those with early stage dementia and healthcare professionals

Timonium, Md. – The Alzheimer’s Association Greater Maryland Chapter will present its Annual Dementia Conference, Friday, Apr. 21, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Baltimore Sheraton North Hotel (903 Dulany Valley Rd., 21204) in Towson.

As the Baltimore area’s leading dementia conference for people living with early-stage dementia, caregivers and healthcare professionals, this comprehensive, full-day event will feature ex-

perts in the field who will present the latest in Alzheimer’s research and practical information on Alzheimer’s care.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to give participants the latest information on care, supportive services, policy and research,” said Cass Naugle, executive director of the Greater Maryland Chapter.

Heather Snyder, PhD, Senior Director, Medical & Scientific Relations with the Alzheimer’s Association, will present the morning keynote address: State of Alzheimer’s Disease Clinical Research: Moving Toward 2025.

Herb Magley, who lost both his wife

and father-in-law to Alzheimer’s disease after both were diagnosed in their early fifties, will present the afternoon keynote address: The Journey of an Alzheimer’s Caregiver: Living, Loving and Laughing.

Breakout sessions will cover such topics as: Legal & Financial Planning, End of Life Care, Identifying and Supporting Caregivers in the LGBT Community, Managing Difficult Behaviors, Advocating for Your Loved One across Settings, Maryland-based Research, Sleep Disorders and Dementia and Hearing Loss and Dementia.

The admission fee – \$35 for care part-

ners/students and \$95 for health professionals who will receive social work continuing education credits – includes breakfast, lunch and conference materials courtesy of event sponsors, Genesis Healthcare, Maryland Relay, Johns Hopkins Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP), PharmaSite Research, Inc. and WeCare Private Duty Services, Inc.

Additionally, respite care is available for care partners registered for the conference. For more information or to register, visit bit.ly/2017ADC, call 800.272.3900 or email info.maryland@alz.org.

Trump's EPA Awards Flint \$100 Million for Water Crisis

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Buried in the 24-hour news cycle of Russian conspiracies, presidential tweets, and White House nepotism, the Trump Administration found the time to set aside \$100 million for the ongoing water crisis in Flint, Mich.

According to a press release about the grant, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) \$100 million to fund drinking water infrastructure upgrades in Flint.

The press release said, "The funding, provided by the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016, or WIIN, enables Flint to accelerate and expand its work to replace lead service lines and make other critical infrastructure improvements."

In the statement, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said that the people of Flint and all Americans deserve a more responsive federal government.

"EPA will especially focus on helping



The Trump Administration has set aside \$100 million for the ongoing water crisis in Flint, Michigan, plus a March 28th U.S. District Court settlement is forcing the state of Michigan to set aside \$97 million to replace defective water lines.

Courtesy Photo/NNPA

Michigan improve Flint's water infrastructure as part of our larger goal of improving America's water infrastructure," said Pruitt.

During a March 22 meeting at the White House with seven members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep.

Brenda Lawrence (D-Mich.), said that she and President Trump spoke about assistance for Flint.

"He said he thought it was awful and criminal...I was surprised he understood how that happened," said Lawrence, who represents parts of Detroit. The

congresswoman added that the president also wanted to know who was responsible for the lead in Flint's water.

After the EPA announced the news, Flint Mayor Karen Weaver expressed appreciation for the funds.

"The City of Flint being awarded a grant of this magnitude in such a critical time of need will be a huge benefit," Weaver said in a statement. "As we prepare to start the next phase of the FAST Start pipe replacement program, these funds will give us what we need to reach our goal of replacing 6,000 pipes this year and make other needed infrastructure improvements."

Weaver continued: "We look forward to the continued support of the EPA and federal government."

Additionally on March 28, a U.S. District Court settlement was announced, forcing the state of Michigan to set aside \$97 million to replace defective water lines in Flint. The settlement money will cover 18,000 homes in the city by the year 2020.

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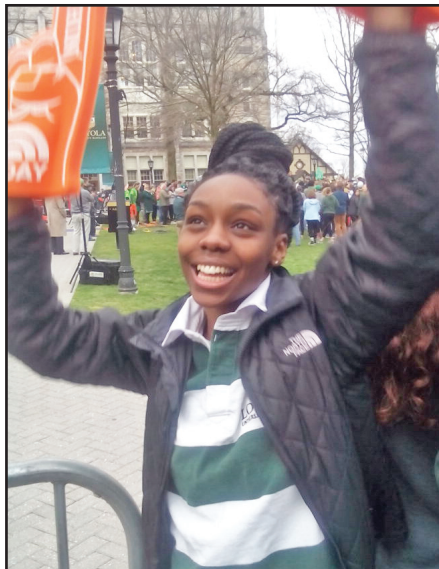
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Al Roker helps bring 'crab walk' title back to Baltimore



(Left) Al Roker with Loyola University Maryland Cheering Squad rallying the crowd before they attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the largest numbers of crab walkers on Thursday, March 30, 2017. (Right) Jo Jo Brame, a junior at Loyola University cheered on the crabwalkers.

Photos by Deborah Bailey

By Deborah Bailey

What would college basketball season be without March Madness and Al Roker's zany weather antics?

Roker recently brought sunny weather and a helping hand to students, faculty, staff and alumni at Loyola University of Maryland's Baltimore campus where the world's record for crab walking during Al Roker's weather broadcast on the North Baltimore campus, recently.

Roker was in town for "Rokerthon 3: Storing Into the Madness," the third year of a national initiative of fun and celebration launched by NBC to partner Roker with college students across the nation during the NCAA's Basketball Championship in the name of school spirit at campus across the nation.

Loyola used the event to break the Guinness Book of World Records for having the most people participate in a two-minute crab walk, which was scheduled during Roker's 8 a.m.

weather segment on the "Today Show". Four hundred and ninety-four members of the Loyola family got down on all fours for two minutes to bring the crab walking record to Maryland— where some say it rightfully belongs. Northwestern University formerly held the crab walking record.

"I think this is just a wonderful thing that our school is able to do," said JoJo Brame, a junior psychology major, originally from Connecticut.

Brame chose Loyola not only because of the school's reputation but because she was attracted to the community oriented spirit of Baltimore.

"I love the city of Baltimore, I love the vibe. I think there is a great sense of community here," Brame said as she cheered on the crab walkers who gathered to break the world record.

Loyola was one of only five U.S. colleges and universities chosen to participate in Rokerthon 3.

Druid Hill Park Exhibition exhumes the promises of a once-segregated pool

Baltimore— The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) MFA program in Curatorial Practice and Baltimore City Recreation and Parks presents "Everyday Utopias," a public art installation at Pool No. 2 in Druid Hill Park. The exhibition is on view from April 15 to May 7, 2017 daily from dawn to dusk at Pool No. 2, Druid Hill Park, Shop Road Commisary Road, Baltimore, MD 21217.

Pool No. 2 (1921-1956) operated as a segregated pool in the historically black section of Baltimore's Druid Hill Park. From the initial campaign to construct the city's first public pool for black people to the resolute activism that led to its eventual closure, Pool No. 2 reflects the quotidian pragmatism of an "everyday utopia"—a term coined specifically to define those creative practices that we engage in daily to find new and better ways to improve our lives and the world around us.

Everyday Utopias invites viewers to consider the promise of both real and imagined aspects of civic participation as they navigate their way through physical structures and spiritual spaces of the pool's remains. Pool No.2 was a local flashpoint for the discourse on race that was happening nationally in American society during the mid-1950s and is a physical reminder that the failures and struggles of our efforts at civic repair are just as important as the successes.

Sheena M. Morrison, MFA Candidate in MICA's Curatorial Practice Program, brings together ten contemporary artists who respond to the palpable history of Pool No. 2 with imaginative wit, humor, and compassion. Artists in the exhibition: Billy Colbert, Sutton Demlong, Andrew Keiper, Fluid Movement, Tiffany Jones, Lauren R. Lyde, Antonio McAfee, Edward-Victor Sanchez, Michael Trueblood and MacArthur Genius Fellow Joyce J. Scott.



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Keyboardist Marcus Johnson to speak at 'Uplifting Minds II Entertainment Conference

Baltimore— NAACP Image Award winning keyboardist Marcus Johnson has been added to the list of entertainment business panelists for the Baltimore Uplifting Minds II (ULMII) entertainment conference at Security Square Mall on Saturday, April 22, 2017 to speak on the business of owning a successful label (Marimelj Entertainment Group), a production company (Three Keys Music) and recording facility (Studio 8121), which was launched with BET Network founder Bob Johnson. Johnson, CEO and founder of FLO Brands and FLO Wines, will also discuss his entrepreneurial venture in publishing and collecting wine.

Johnson's most popular jazz numbers include "88 Ways to Love," "Summertime Flo," and "Danny's Song." Marcus Johnson has released 17 albums. His first album Lessons in Love sold 40,000 copies independently. The album was released while he was a student at Georgetown University via his label Marimelj.

Marcus Johnson will be joined on the entertainment business panel discussion by entertainment lawyer Paul Gardner, II, president and founder of The Gardner Law Group; syndicated entertainment columnist, author, philanthropist and former singer/musician Rosa Pryor-Trusty; multi-award winning actor and



Marcus Johnson will be part of the business panel at the Uplifting Minds II (ULMII) entertainment conference at Security Square Mall in Baltimore on Saturday, April 22, 2017. For more information about the conference, call 562-424-3836 and ask for "Uplifting Minds II" coordinator. or visit: www.UpliftingMinds2.com.

filmmaker Anthony Michael Hobbs; artist manager and acting/vocal coach Nadiyah Kareem of Superstar Entertain-

ment; and stylist and make-up artist Jeneanne Collins (Rebellious Beauty). ULMII founder Eunice Moseley is the

panel's moderator. Moseley is a syndicated entertainment columnist and public relations strategist. A national talent showcase highlighting ten acts (vocals, songwriters, dancers or actors) starts at 3 p.m. hosted by Heaven 600's Doresa Harvey with DJ GWUAP Squad on the turntable.

Radio host Giovanni joins the list of media sponsors of the one day "ULMII" entertainment conference via BESOS Radio for her "Giovanni Live Stream Radio Show." Giovanni is a new age radio jock as host of the "Giovanni Live Stream Radio Show" on BESOS Radio syndicated via the Crown Media App and the Fleet DJ Radio App www.FleetDJRadio.com (as of April 10, 2017). Both free apps are available at the Google Play App Stores. Giovanni airs live daily from 12 to 2 p.m.

Other media sponsors of Uplifting Minds II, include: www.EURweb.com (over 85,000 visitors a week), Praise 98 FM's "Lady Charmaine Live" Show at www.Praise98F.com and www.ThePulseofEntertainment.com (over 60,000 hits a week). To see if you qualify to be one of the top ten acts to perform, visit: www.UpliftingMinds2.com or email: Info@ThePulseofEntertainment.com. You can also call 562-424-3836 and ask for "Uplifting Minds II" coordinator. www.UpliftingMinds2.com

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