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Annapolis Clothiers Styling for Weddings, NBA Players



Brett and Angie Hovington, owners of Capital Custom Clothiers make hand-tailored suits, shirts and formal wear. They dress their clients for weddings and other special events while also providing standard tuxedo rentals. The Hovingtons pride themselves on time-tested measuring techniques that allow their clients a customized fit. Capital Custom Clothiers is located in the heart of downtown Annapolis, Maryland at 50 Maryland Avenue.. They also have a location in Occoquan, Virginia at 310 Mill Street, Suite C. (See article on page 10)

Photo: Dennis Roberts

Steps to manage and prevent chronic disease

By Stacy M. Brown

Sixty percent of Maryland residents had a chronic disease in 2015, costing the state \$21.6 million in healthcare spending, and more importantly, resulted in 18,500 deaths, according to the most recent health data available.

With those sobering statistics, the city of Baltimore has devised a plan to reduce those numbers by increasing access to healthy foods and fresh produce for city residents.

Programs like Baltimarket, a suite of community-based food access and food justice programs through the Baltimore City Health Department, have teamed with neighborhood corner stores to stock shelves with healthier food options.

Health experts say this is important because individuals who are overweight are two to three times more likely to develop heart disease or hypertension, and 10 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who maintain a healthy weight.

"The higher your BMI—body mass index—the greater your risk of developing chronic disease," said Dr. Ken Thorpe, a health policy expert who serves as chairman for the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease.

"Being overweight can also put you at a higher risk of developing cancer, especially endometrial cancer," Thorpe said, citing one study that revealed lowering



(Left to right) Paul Baker, senior director for programs at the National Alliance for Hispanic Health; Celeste James, director of community health for Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States; and Dr. Ken Thorpe, chairman of the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease.

Courtesy Photo

BMI by just one unit can lead to 28 fewer cases of certain chronic diseases including hypertension, cholesterol, diabetes, asthma and osteoarthritis, per 1,000 people.

Beyond causing chronic disease, excess weight can exacerbate symptoms. Maintaining a balanced, nutrient-heavy diet of fruits, vegetables, protein, dairy, grains, and oils is the best way to prevent chronic disease, Thorpe added.

"Fruits and vegetables are especially important. Research has shown that consumption of fruits and veggies can re-

duce one's risk of stroke, hypertension, and heart disease," he said.

To minimize chances of developing chronic disease, it's equally important to cut out foods with added sugars, sodium and saturated fats from your diet. Replacing high-fat foods with ones packed in nutrients is a great way to maintain a healthy weight and impede the development of chronic disease, Thorpe noted.

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, also makes for a great resource to learn more about healthy eating, especially as it pertains to chronic disease.

Exercise is also important. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that adults aim for 150 to 300 minutes of physical activity each week.

Those who can commit more time to

exercising will reap greater benefits, but, for example, just 30 minutes of exercise, five days a week has been shown to reduce one's risk of heart disease.

"What's just as important as the frequency of exercise is the type of exercise you do. To reap the full benefits of exercise, it's important to vary your routine and be sure to break up cardio with some weight-lifting, or give yoga or even dancing a try," he said. "It's important to note that exercise is just as important for people living with chronic disease as those who are trying to prevent it. For example, moderate aerobic activity and strength building exercises have been proven to help those with osteoarthritis and type 2 diabetes."

Getting enough sleep, seven to nine hours per night also helps. People who sleep fewer than six hours heighten their risk for heart disease and can exacerbate pre-existing hypertension, he said.

Clinical preventive services are just as important in the fight to manage or prevent chronic disease.

"In this setting, you can receive immunizations and screenings that can help you prevent, detect, and manage chronic disease," Thorpe said.

Community-sponsored classes and information sessions about chronic disease management are another great resource, he said, noting that the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is one workshop available nationally in which participants meet once a week to discuss all aspects of living with a chronic disease— pain management, family interaction, exercise plans, diet, future treatments, and medications.

"The program is offered in Baltimore at Total Health Care," Thorpe said.

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ONE DAY SALE PRICES IN EFFECT 8/4-8/6/2017.

Guest Editorials/Commentary

Jamboree Travesty!

By Robert J. Byers

I don't blame the Boy Scouts for President Donald Trump's bizarre speech at the National Jamboree in West Virginia on Monday, July 24, 2017.

The U.S. president is, after all, the honorary president of the Scouts. If he wants to speak at the National Jamboree, it would be hard to say no.

I don't blame the boys in the audience who took the bait and booed Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama or who chanted "USA! USA!" in response to Trump's childish cues. They're impressionable kids.

I'm long past laying blame at the feet of the electorate. It gets us nowhere. And honestly, it's hard to even blame Trump. He's just being himself — inappropriate, unhinged and narcissistic.

However as an Eagle Scout, I'm still disappointed at what is yet another stain on the Boy Scouts program. After finally pulling itself from the mire of discrimination against gay Scouts and leaders, Scouting is on a path to right the ship and lure another new generation to its ranks. West Virginia's Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve, home of the National Jamboree, is proof of that.

Throughout the past week, this paper has had numerous stories and photos showing Scouts having fun and working in our communities. We've also explored the economic impact that 40,000 Scouts, troop leaders and others can bring to an area and unfortunately, we've also shown how quickly all of that can be tarnished for the benefit of one man's ego.

Speaking to the children as if they were voters, Trump said his election was "an unbelievable tribute to you and all of the other millions and millions of people that came out and voted for 'Make America Great Again.' "

He recounted the Electoral College breakdown, trying for the umpteenth time to re-live the victory he claimed on that night in November. He revisited the Merry Christmas non-issue. He made false claims about the press. He made threats about the health care vote. He basically defied most of the 12 points in the Scout Law — you know, the one that includes terms like trustworthy, loyal, friendly, courteous, kind.

But, then again, Trump has made his presidency about defying storied American institutions. The free press comes to mind.

The backlash against the Boy Scouts over Trump's speech led the organization to put out a statement on Tuesday:

"The Boy Scouts of America is wholly nonpartisan and does not promote any one position, product, service, political candidate, or philosophy. The invitation for the sitting U.S. president to visit the National Jamboree is a long-standing tradition and is in no way an endorsement of any political party or specific policies."

Of course, that's not really a response, just a reiteration of the Scouts' stance on these matters. The response has been largely panned as not being strong enough.

I can't say I'm surprised the Scouts wouldn't say more. It would be a tricky move to come out and disavow some of Trump's remarks, embarrassing their honorary president and making an enemy of the nation's top, loose cannon. But, just for the sake of argument, what if the statement included a few more sentences:

"Furthermore, the Boy Scouts of America is first and foremost about kids — about building strong kids with a strong resolve. It is about honesty. It is about succeeding — with humility. It is about service and instilling the drive to help others. It is about encouraging our peers to rise to the challenge and offering a hand when needed. It is about civility."

That's the Scouting that I remember — one man playing the fool can't change that.

Robert J. Byers, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is the executive editor of the Charleston Gazette-Mail in Charleston, West Virginia.



Commentary

Think, see and listen for ourselves

By Dr. Ken Morgan

Malcolm X said: "One of the first things, I think, young people, especially nowadays, should learn how to do is: see for yourself and listen for yourself and think for yourself. Then you can come to an intelligent decision for yourself." All ages apply here. View President Donald Trump's domestic policies through this lens.

First some background is in order. In the United States, 10 percent of the population owns 77 percent of the wealth and are owners of all facets of the means of production. Their weight on the economy helps to unduly influence the political and social life of the nation.

Their worldview spans from conservative to liberal or from an unfettered free market complete with less laws and regulations to those with more.

Trump like those he represents wants the free market to reign unfettered with minimum interference from government. Three of Trump's main priorities are more jobs, the repeal and replacement of Obamacare and tax reform. What are their effects on every day black people?

Blacks are the last hired and first fired. We have the lowest paying jobs between blacks and whites. Our unemployment rate is about twice as high as whites, regardless of who is president.

The U.S. Congressional Budget correctly revealed to us that Obamacare beats Trumpcare. Black people, because of our overall lower economic status and healthcare disparities render more illnesses. Still many flaws exist under Obamacare mainly due to its dependence on the free market.

Tax reform means the rich pay even less than their fair share of taxes from their profits and wealth.

This is what we need to do: Demand quotas and a timetable for blacks. Make \$15 an hour a minimum wage now. Demand public jobs creation. Provide unemployment insurance until work is found. Demand free healthcare for all. Demand a heavily leveled graduated income tax on the wealthy and big businesses. Eliminate taxes on the working class and the small farmer.

The struggle continues 365 days a year. Put people before profits, Republicans, and Democrats.

Dr. Ken Morgan is a long time local, national, and international activist and scholar.

Page Opposite/Commentaries

Trump's White House Circus Continues

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Newswire Contributor

In only six months in the White House, the Trump Administration has delivered the shortest tenure of any White House Chief of Staff in United States history (189 days) and the shortest tenure for a White House Communications Director (10 days). President Trump's former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, holds the record for the shortest tenure of any National Security Advisor in U.S. history (24 days).

On July 21, Anthony Scaramucci made his debut as the new White House Communications Director in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. It was a smooth-talking, personality-driven press conference; Scaramucci showed all the signs that he was ready for prime time as newly-appointed White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders stood nearby. The political commentator and capital management executive took question after question and many political observers called Scaramucci Trump's "Mini Me."

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The conservative New York Post ran a cover that depicted the jungle-set reality TV show "Survivor" featuring several current White House employees including Counselor to President Trump Kellyanne Conway; then-Chief of Staff Reince Priebus; senior advisor to President Trump Jared Kushner; and then-White House Communication Director Anthony Scaramucci. It turns out the

is the third White House communications director to leave the post that had been vacant since late May, when Mike Dubke left after about three months on the job. Sean Spicer, the former White House press secretary, also assumed some of the communications director role before he resigned when Scaramucci was hired July 21.

The article continued: "In addition to

The staff shakeups fly in the face of one of President Trump's biggest claims of his 2016 presidential campaign: That he was an incredibly successful, billionaire real estate mogul driven by "The Art of the Deal." Trump's skills as an alleged master of negotiation are yet to be seen during his time in the White House.

Trump's biggest and most embarrassing legislative failure, to date, occurred on July 27 after the Senate failed to vote on a partial repeal of the Affordable Care Act. The vote failed after Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) walked in through a Senate lobby and at the front of the chamber, as other senators and congressional staffers milled about, lifted his hand and quickly pointed his thumb down. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) looked on in dismay.

Republicans control the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate and White House, but with Trump's combustible managerial style, it feels as if Republicans are in control of nothing.

Now that President Trump has named retired four-star Marine General John Kelly as his new Chief of Staff, the beleaguered reality TV star will have yet another shot at trying to run the country with some semblance of order.

Lauren Victoria Burke is the White House Correspondent for NNPA Newswire, a writer and political analyst. Lauren appears on "NewsOne Now" with Roland Martin every Monday. Connect with Lauren by email at LBurke007@gmail.com and on Twitter at @LVBurke

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Howard University student uses journalism to give back

*By Alexa Imani Spencer
NNPA/DTU Journalism Fellow*

Born on a warm July day during the summer of 1997, Noni Marshall entered the world destined to create, lead, and inspire. Marshall grew up in Nashville, Tennessee. It was there that she stepped into her greatness and accepted her calling as a storyteller.

An only child, Marshall spent much of her days in the company of her parents. She recalls them as supportive with high expectations. Her parents divorced, when she was 12 and despite the split, both remained heavily involved in her life. Together they invested in her interests and continued to push her academically.

"They always expected excellence from me, since pre-K," said Marshall. "I was expected to [earn] all A's in school, which I lived up to until high school, where I got a few B's, but still graduated with a 3.5."

Those high school years were pivotal in Marshall's life. During her sophomore year at an all-girls school, she had an epiphany that redirected her career goals. After years of training in performing arts, she decided that journalism was the route that she wanted to take.

"I began watching Soledad O'Brien and Lisa Ling. I decided that that's the type of journalism that I wanted to do," Marshall said, "I fell in love with profiles and investigative journalism."

With her plans for the future all mapped out, Marshall continued to strive for excellence by becoming a well-respected student on her school's campus.

"I was that person you'd go to if you had a problem with anything," Marshall said, "I was also the liaison between students and staff."

Marshall served as president of her class and in many other campus organizations, including a diversity initiative club. She was also involved on the cheerleading squad, the dance team, and in the theater arts department. Even though she maintained high levels of service and leadership, Marshall was still surprised when she was honored



In honoring the historic Black Press, Noni Marshall participated in the National Newspaper Publishers Association "Discovering The Unexpected" Journalism Fellowship, the eight-week program was sponsored by Chevrolet. Marshall plans to produce a daytime talk show, after she graduates from Howard University.

Courtesy Photo/Chevrolet

with two high-ranking awards, during her senior year; winning those awards has been her greatest accomplishment to date.

"To me, that was just a testament to the impact that I was able to make within those four years," said Marshall. "I wanted to be one of those people that people looked up to."

Marshall continued to succeed academically, as she entered higher education. Wanting to follow in the legacy of her parents by attending an HBCU, she enrolled at Howard University in the fall of 2015 with her passion for journalism still intact.

In the future, she plans to begin her own daytime television show that highlights stories that are often overlooked.

"I want to showcase [unique individuals] that go against what [society's] stereotypes would say they should be doing," Marshall said.

With the show, Marshall also plans to give back; by incorporating philanthropy and mentorship into the show's format, she hopes to inspire others, just as she once was.

"When I do have my own show, I want to hire people that look like me, give opportunities out, and fund scholarships," Marshall said.

Since she has been at Howard University, Marshall has gained a great appreciation for the Black Press. When she was younger, her father worked at The Tennessee Tribune. There, she spent time chatting with publishers and editors. Though she was exposed to the Black Press at an early age, it wasn't until she began taking classes in college that she truly gained an understanding of its importance.

"Once I started learning about the Black Press, it just got me excited, because we have a different responsibil-

ity to our community than other journalists do," said Marshall. "There's such a history of our stories being told by other people, that I think it's so important for us to be able to tell our stories. We're the only ones who understand it."

This summer, in honoring the historic Black Press, Marshall participated in the National Newspaper Publishers Association "Discovering The Unexpected" Journalism Fellowship; the eight-week program was sponsored by Chevrolet. The Nashville native worked alongside staffers at The Washington Informer in the nation's capital as a contributing writer.

As a young, black journalist, she describes herself as a part of a generation of storytellers that are dedicated to continuing the legacy of the Black Press that began 190 years ago. With the role, she explained, comes great responsibility.

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Because of our DTU Fellows, summer '17 was full of important stories that inform, inspire, and shatter perceptions about African American culture as well as our community.

Don't miss their stories and videos from this road trip of a lifetime.

#discovertheunexpected

DISCOVER MORE OF THEIR STORIES AT NNPA.ORG/DTU

New York Life's African American Market Agents Welcomed to D.C.

New York— \$50.5 billion of life insurance face amount is now in-force by the African American Market Agents, driven by their focused \$50 Billion Empowerment Plan efforts over the last six and a half years; this achievement is made in the 60th anniversary of Cirilo McSween becoming the first African American Agent to cross the color barrier, honoring his legacy.

Over the last six and a half years, the campaign called the '50 Billion Empowerment Plan' has raised consciousness and changed the old perception of life insurance from covering burial and final expenses, to a tool for income protection, wealth building and legacy creation. The program encompassed recruiting, training, lead generation and branding components, with a goal to create \$50 billion of protection and future income for the African American community. The vision was to touch the lives of 200,000 African Americans and show them the long-term impact and value of purchasing a \$250,000 life insurance policy. (200,000 families X \$250,000 in face amount = \$50 billion future income).

The vision became a mission, and then a movement to use the empowerment plan message as a starting point and benchmark for personal family conversations. This was the formula for the vision, but in reality our agents worked with each family to meet their individual needs, producing various life insurance policy amounts.

Even more impressive is that \$655 million has been paid out in death benefits to African American families, over the last six and a half years. And, nine agents last year were able to deliver \$1 million checks to African American families after a breadwinner passed away,



African American NY Life Agents will attend the American College – Conference of African American Financial Professionals, at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, D.C. from August 7 to 10, 2017.

Courtesy Photo/New York Life

making them recipients of this inherited 'wealth.' We are saying that this was not a lottery ticket, but the head of a household taking on sound financial planning for their family, helping to pass family wealth and inheritance to the next generation.

African Americans are now using and leveraging life insurance as a tool to help close wealth gap, and they are also benefiting from the living benefits associated with the policies including dividends, and loan disbursement from the cash value within policies.

The achievements of the Empowerment Plan initiative also coincide with the

diamond jubilee or 60th anniversary celebration of the hiring of Cirilo A. McSween, New York Life's first African American agent. A trailblazer, McSween crossed the color barrier within the insurance industry in 1957, and qualified for Million Dollar Round Table during his first year in the business, and every year thereafter for 26 years.

McSween dedicated his life to empowering the African American community. A civil rights leader and confidant of Martin Luther King Jr., he was treasurer of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and a member of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition's board of direc-

tors. He was also a successful businessman and McDonald's franchisee.

Although McSween passed away in 2008, his name, legacy and dream of equality live on. New York Life's 1,200+ African American agents proudly carry the torch that he passed to them. And with the wealth of white households 13 times greater than that of black households, according to a CNN Money article in June 2016, today's agents are working to close the racial wealth gap as passionately as McSween and his cohorts fought for civil rights.

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Alan Amrhine, Communications Director
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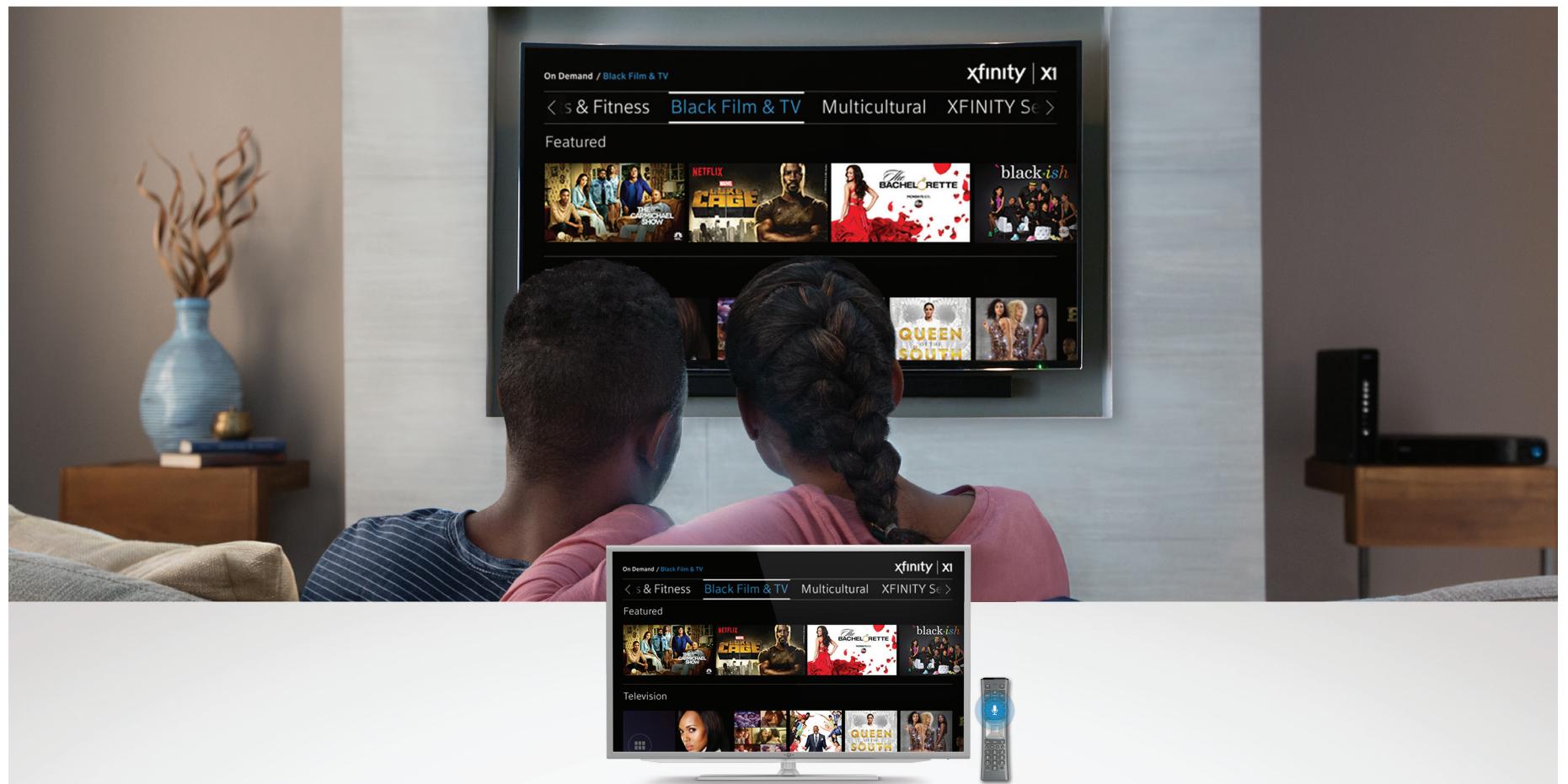
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Annapolis Clothiers Styling for Weddings, NBA Players

By Stacy M. Brown

When the Philadelphia 76ers selected Maryland native Markelle Fultz as the No. 1 overall pick in this year's NBA draft, there is little doubt that many noticed the custom-made gray pinstriped suit, he sported.

What the millions of viewers who watched the NBA draft in June probably didn't know was that the suit was crafted by Brett and Angie Hovington, owners of Capital Custom Clothiers in Annapolis.

The clothiers pride themselves on time-tested measuring techniques they say allows them to get the perfect fit for their clients.

Their hand-cut and hand-stitched garments have led to a strong client base that include individuals like Fultz, a 2016 McDonald's All-American who starred at DeMatha Catholic School in Hyattsville.

"We provide professional business attire and formalwear. A strong client service ethos combined with energy and creativity have built Capital Custom Clothiers into one of the leading brands of custom clothing in Maryland," said Brett Hovington, who's originally from Pennsylvania. "We provide three primary points of interest to our clients: Education, Consultation and Professional Services."

"Markelle Fultz probably would not use the word superstar to describe himself; he's one of the most humble young men whose ever crossed our threshold at Capital Custom Clothiers," Hovington said. "We were fortunate to dress Markelle for the 2017 Draft Day and also for Press Day. We were honored to get to know him, his mother and trainer and we could not be happier for them."

Hovington and his wife, who is from Virginia, worked for the government for many years – she left early to care for the family while he retired five years ago.

"My wife has always been into fashion and, I too, enjoy looking dapper on occasion so we stepped out on faith and haven't look back," Hovington said.

"Our business started as an in-home business and we have been in the custom clothing industry for over 25 years. We have been doing business on Maryland



Angie and Brett Hovington



Hovingtons and their clients (left to right) Troy D. Holt and his fiancée, Victoria E. Ellis, and his mother Kathy P. Smith. Photos: Dennis Roberts



Avenue in Annapolis for about five years now, which is post retirement for me."

At Capital Custom Clothiers, the Hovingtons make hand-tailored suits, shirts and formal wear. They dress their clients for weddings and other special events while also providing standard tuxedo rentals.

The couple also offer custom alterations and Hovington says their experience and expertise allows them to offer recommendations throughout the entire process thus reducing any stress their client may have.

Among the secrets to their success is community involvement, according to Hovington.

"My wife and I believe that building relationships, old fashioned customer service and giving back to the community are the keys to our success," he said, adding that "laughter doesn't hurt" and, as a small business, they don't chase dollars, they build relationships.

The Hovingtons also are looking toward the future.

"We are looking forward to offering ready-made collections which is important so that we can also cater to those visiting Annapolis which is a destination wedding location," Hovington said.

The business also offers services in which they cater specifically to the



groom with the bride in mind. They hold consultations with the groom and his bride to help them with styling their wedding day while also managing the groom's attendants from start to finish.

Additionally, Capital Custom Clothiers offers "The Groom's Place," where they entertain the groom and his wedding party on the wedding day.

"This is the ideal place for the group to have breakfast, get hot shaves, get dressed, enjoy moments of reflection and meditation, rest and relax with their choice of music and light refreshments," Hovington said.

STEP Opens in Theaters

Documentary Showcases Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women

By Ursula V. Battle

STEP, an inspirational documentary about a high school step team's dual quest to become the first in the school's history to win a step championship, and the first in their families to attend college, opened in theaters on Aug. 4, 2017. With Baltimore as its backdrop, the film chronicles the real-life journey of a group of students at the Baltimore Leadership School For Young Women (BLSYW).

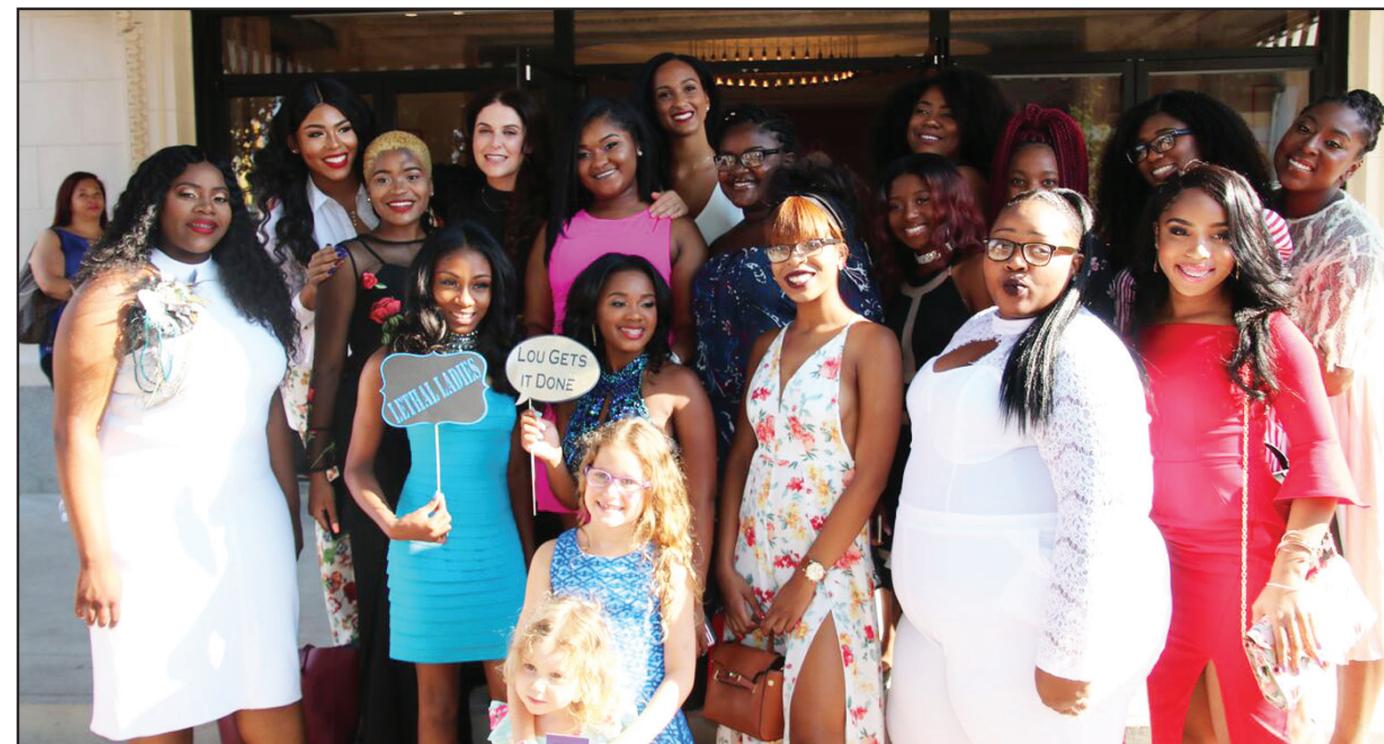
Prior to opening in theaters, a red carpet premiere for the film was held Monday, July 24, 2017 at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Parkway (Parkway Theatre) located at 5 W. North Ave.

The film, which was directed by Amanda Lipitz, has been hugely successful. STEP premiered at the Sundance Film Festival to sold-out screenings, enjoyed rave reviews, and received the U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Inspirational Filmmaking. Fox Searchlight Pictures has also acquired worldwide distribution and remake rights to STEP.

Known as The Lethal Ladies step team, the group of young women are empowered by their teachers, teammates, counselors, coaches and families to keep stepping forward, despite the obstacles or circumstances they face, including civil unrest in Baltimore around the death of Freddie Gray.

Lipitz, along with the cast, their families, and several others attended the Baltimore premiere. Mayor Catherine Pugh was also in attendance.

"Originally, I set out to do a film about these young women at the Baltimore Leadership School For Young Women who were looking to become the first in their families to attend college," recalled Lipitz. "It is truly an amazing program. Blessing Giraldo, one of the students in the program, asked me to come to film the STEP team. Stepping, or the culture of stepping, wasn't something I was familiar with at all. But I went to film the team stepping and the art of stepping just sang to me."



The Lethal Ladies step team from the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women arrive at the Parkway Theatre to celebrate the premiere of STEP. Courtesy Photo/Courtesy of FOX Searchlight Pictures

Located at 128 W. Franklin Street, the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women is an all-girls college preparatory public charter school that is an affiliate of the Young Women's Leadership Network. The school serves young women in Baltimore. Its mission and goal is a 100 percent graduate and 100 percent college acceptance rate.

"I am grateful and humbled," said Lipitz, who is a native of Owings Mills, Maryland. "This film is really about Baltimore. I would have been part of that step team whether we were making a documentary or not. We set out to change the conversation about Baltimore. Freddie Gray was killed in their junior year, which made the making of this documentary even more important. It impacted the girls a lot."

The documentary includes real life footage of the team competing at Bowie State University for the stepping championship.

"I was rooting for them to win the competition," said Lipitz. "But for me, they were going to win either way be-

cause they were going to graduate from high school. That was always going to be the end of the movie, and the main reason to watch."

In addition to Giraldo, the film's stars include step team members Tayla Solomon, Cori Granger, and their coach Gari McInyre ("Coach G").

"I want people to come see the film and leave with the understanding that they must do something to help our community," said Giraldo. "We want people living in the black community to have confidence and hope, and to stand up and do something different."

Tayla Solomon is studying Computer Science and International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

"There's nothing better than doing something in Baltimore for Baltimore," said Solomon. "One of the things that I really want the film to highlight is that we don't want sympathy or for people to feel sorry for us. We know our circumstances – we are black women growing up in a place where people don't have the right things to be on the right track."

She added, "It's hard out here. But, we have to look in the mirror and tell ourselves we are great. Everyone's path is different, but at the end of the day, we are still black women of color. Graduating from high school and getting into college is a great accomplishment."

Cori Grainger reflected back on the group's journey.

"All of this is so exciting," said Grainger. "An opportunity like this doesn't get passed along to little black girls from Baltimore too often. None of us were expecting to go on a national tour for the film or be on the big screen. This process has been a huge learning experience of both big and small lessons. But our struggles are not our stories – our successes are."

Did The Lethal Ladies of the Baltimore Leadership School For Young Women (BLSYW) win the stepping competition? You'll have to step into theaters to find out. For more information visit <http://www.foxsearchlight.com/step-movie/>

Alodia Hair Care Focuses on Natural Products

By Stacy M. Brown

A personal hair journey, which began several years ago for Dr. Isfahan Chambers-Harris led her to start the latest and one of the most innovative healthy hair solution systems for natural hair growth.

Chambers-Harris, who earned a bachelor of science degree in biology and a Ph.D. in bio-medical sciences at the Cardiovascular Research Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine, says her Bowie-based Alodia Hair Care business possesses a carefully created line of quality, scientifically proven, hair care products that are made with natural ingredients and cater to the essential needs of hair.

"More importantly, it caters to the needs of your scalp to encourage and induce the growth of healthier, more beautiful tresses," said Chambers-Harris, who also holds a Masters of Public Health degree and became a Presidential STEM Fellow at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda in 2014.

For years, Chambers-Harris says she battled hair breakage and scalp damage from chemical straighteners. Desperate for a solution, she used her science and chemistry background to create her first product, an all-natural hair and scalp oil.

"After using it for a couple of months, I was so inspired by my hair results and I decided to pursue my passion which always has been to create a hair care line," she said. "For three years, I worked to meticulously design a full line of high quality products made with natural ingredients."

Among the various products featured at Alodia are moisturize and define curling cream gel; moisturize and protect heat style cream; and a nourish and grow healthy hair and scalp oil.

After speaking with many women about their hair care needs, Chambers-Harris said she discovered that many were confused and overwhelmed when it came to selecting products for their hair care regimens.

She created four style kits, which contains three to four products and a step by step guide streamlining the wash, condition, moisturize and style process, taking the guesswork out of having healthy hair. By providing high-quality products made with natural ingredients and offering simple to use style kits, Alodia is well on its way to achieving its mission of helping women around the world "Learn, Love and Grow" their hair, Chambers-Harris said.

"The ingredients in every single product is infused with peppermint oil, lavender, Aloe Vera juice, honey, marula oil, avocado oil and other quality all-natural ingredients, that have been proven to moisturize and strengthen your hair strands and nourish your scalp to allow for healthy hair growth," she said.

Like many who start their own business, Chambers-



Dr. Isfahan Chambers-Harris
Courtesy Photo

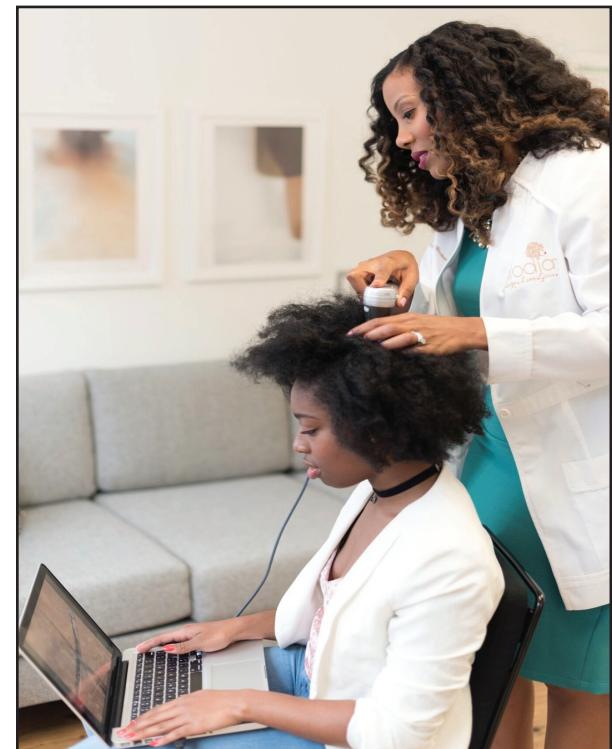
Harris said there have been challenges. Some remain.

"One of the biggest challenges to running my business is overcoming the fear of failure. However, one of my favorite quotes is 'Feel the fear and do it anyway,'" she said.

"What really helps me to overcome these feelings [is] prayer [and] I've also learned to follow my intuition, that gut feeling that something is right or not quite, right. My husband and my family are truly my backbone; I can talk to them about anything and know that I will get sound advice and encouragement."

As a woman of color and a mother, Chambers-Harris said experience has been the great equalizer and a pretty good teacher.

"I can speak from experience that learning and loving our hair as it naturally grows from our scalps isn't an idea that is universally embraced or accepted. As a result, we tend to not understand what our hair needs which leads to breakage and damage, resulting in little to no growth," she said. "As a mother, it is extremely important to me to create a brand that is full of integrity; that's honest and that's committed to creating high quality products with natural ingredients that people can trust for themselves and their families."



Chambers-Harris performing a hair and scalp consultation as a Certified Hair Practitioner of Trichology (International Association of Trichology Certified)



Chambers-Harris and her husband Dr. Rashad Dupree-Harris (M.D.) with their children four-year-old twins Ezra and Landon.

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Social Media

Contest for Tax-Free Week in Maryland

Easton, Md.— Comptroller Peter Franchot joined the Maryland Retailers Association in announcing a new contest coinciding with Shop Maryland Tax-Free Week that will see two winners receive \$1,500 and \$500 scholarships, respectively, to any Maryland university, college or trade school.

Leading up to and during the annual Shop Maryland Tax-Free Week, which takes place August 13 to 19, shoppers should like or follow the official social media pages on Facebook (Shop Maryland Tax Free), Twitter (@shopmdtaxfree) and Instagram (@shopmdtaxfree).

Then during the tax-free week, take a picture, write a creative caption and use #shopmdtaxfree to submit an entry on any or all of the social media platforms.

After the tax-free week ends, the Maryland Retailers Association, which is providing the scholarships, will select the two entries that best reflect the spirit of Shop Maryland Tax-Free Week.

"This year, Marylanders can not only save money during tax-free week, but they have the opportunity to win a big scholarship, while supporting local businesses, all with a few clicks on their phone," said Comptroller Franchot. "It's so easy to participate, and the scholarships being provided by the Maryland Retailers Association are a great incentive to help defray the cost of tuition."

"Tax-free week provides a much-needed boost to brick-and-mortar retailers in our state and we encourage all consumers to support their local businesses," said Cailey Locklair Tolle, president of the Maryland Retailers



New this year is the addition of backpacks and bookbags to the list of tax-exempt items. However, it only applies to the first \$40 of the purchase.

Photo Credit: ClipArt.com

Association. "This year we are thrilled to help promote shopping local and tax-free week by offering scholarships to our contest winners."

During tax-free week, any single qualifying article of clothing or footwear priced \$100 or less—regardless of how many items are purchased at the same time—will be exempt from the state's six percent sales tax. New this year is the addition of backpacks and bookbags to the list of tax-exempt items, although it only applies to the first \$40 of the purchase.

As a result of legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2007, the tax-free week is held annually during the second week in August. Businesses selling items that are not eligible for inclusion in the tax-free week can still participate in Shop Maryland. Under "Sellers Privilege," other unqualified merchandise can be sold tax-free, but the retailer is responsible for paying the sales tax owed to the state.

For more information about qualifying items, visit: www.marylandtaxes.com, email taxhelp@comp.state.md.us or call 410-260-7980.

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Crisis Response Team launching in Baltimore City

Baltimore— Behavioral Health System Baltimore (BHSB) and the Baltimore City Police Department are launching a specialized Crisis Response Team (CRT) to improve police responses to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. The CRT is an expansion of Baltimore's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program, a nationally recognized model for reducing unnecessary hospitalizations, improving access to community-based care and improving public safety.

Police are often the first responders on the scene of a behavioral health crisis. How police understand and respond to a mental health, alcohol, or drug related crisis can have life-or-death consequences. The CIT equips officers to respond to individuals with behavioral health disorders in a way that reduces unnecessary incarceration and unnecessary use of inpatient hospitalizations and/or emergency departments. After the initial intervention, officers help connect individuals with resources and community-based care options. The CIT model aims to keep people with mental illness out of jail and get them into treatment, where they are more likely to have better outcomes on their road to recovery.

"The CIT model gives the Baltimore City Police Department resources to respond in an effective and compassionate manner to people experiencing a behavioral health crisis," said Crista M. Taylor, President and CEO of BHSB. "A goal of the program is to better serve residents by connecting them with community-based care."

The CIT program, formerly known as BEST (Behavioral Emergency Services Team), has provided a crisis intervention, training program for all new recruits at the police academy since 2004. The CIT training gives officers the knowledge and ability to reduce the stigmatization of persons with mental illness, reduce unnecessary use of force, incarceration and hospitalization and link individuals to resources in the community.

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Grapefruit juice and some drugs don't mix

Washington, D.C.—Grapefruit juice and the actual grapefruit can be part of a healthy diet. Grapefruit has vitamin C and potassium—nutrients your body needs to work properly. But it isn't good for you when it affects the way your medicines work, especially if you have high blood pressure or arrhythmia (irregular or abnormal heart beat).

This food and drug interaction can be a concern, says Shiew Mei Huang, Ph.D., of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The FDA has required that some prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs taken by mouth include warnings against drinking grapefruit juice or eating grapefruit while taking the drug, Huang says.

Here are examples of some types of drugs that grapefruit juice can cause problems with (interact):

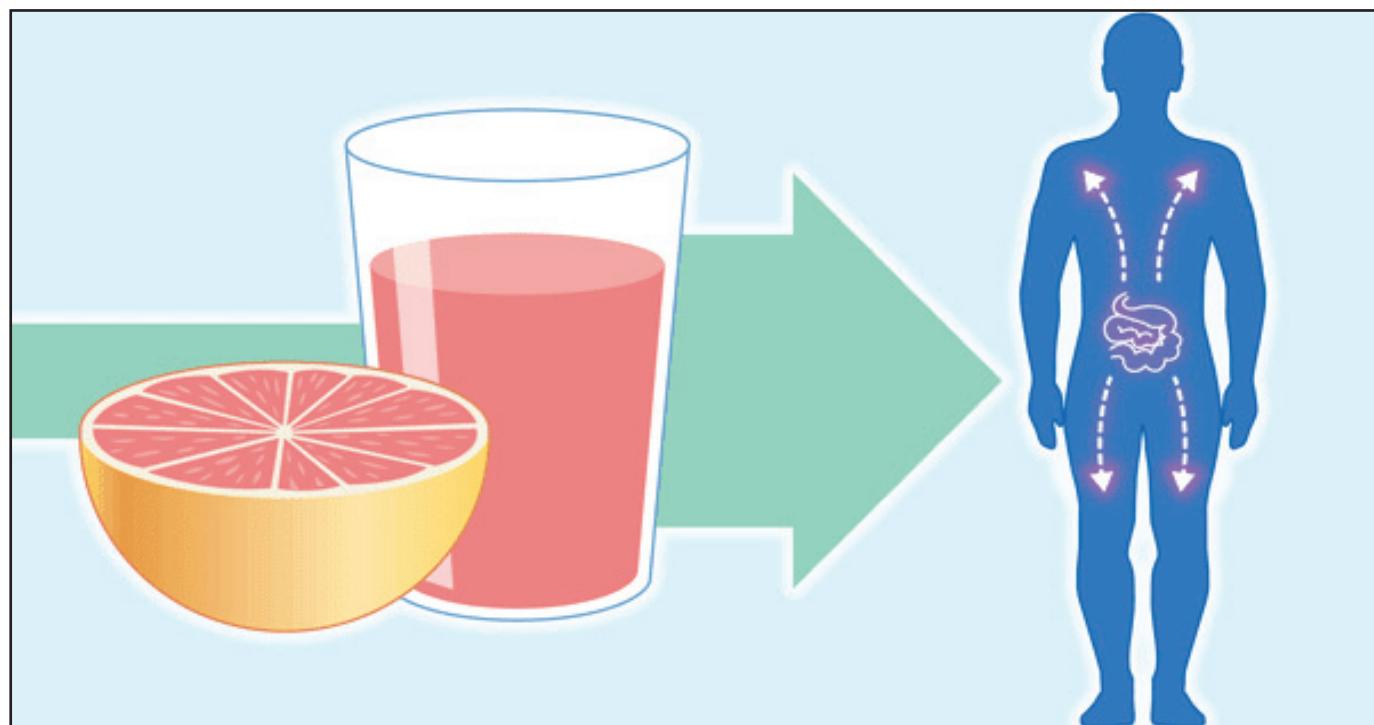
- Some statin drugs to lower cholesterol, such as Zocor (simvastatin) and Lipitor (atorvastatin).
- Some drugs that treat high blood pressure, such as Procardia and Adalat CC (both nifedipine).
- Some organ-transplant rejection drugs, such as Sandimmune and Neoral (both cyclosporine).
- Some anti-anxiety drugs, such as buspirone.
- Some corticosteroids that treat Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, such as Entocort EC and Uceris (both budesonide).
- Some drugs that treat abnormal heart rhythms, such as Pacerone and Nexterone (both amiodarone).
- Some antihistamines, such as Allegra (fexofenadine).

Grapefruit juice does not affect all the drugs in the categories above. The severity of the interaction can be different depending on the person, the drug, and the amount of grapefruit juice you drink.

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or other health care provider and read any information provided with your prescription or OTC drug to find out:

- If your specific drug may be affected.
- How much, if any, grapefruit juice you can have.
- What other fruits or juices may also affect your drug in a similar way to grapefruit juice.

With most drugs that interact with



Grapefruit juice can affect how well some medicines work, and it may cause dangerous side effects. This food and drug interaction can be a concern, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Courtesy Photo/FDA

grapefruit juice, "the juice lets more of the drug enter the blood," Huang says. "When there is too much drug in the blood, you may have more side effects."

For example, if you drink a lot of grapefruit juice while taking certain statin drugs to lower cholesterol, too much of the drug may stay in your body, increasing your risk for liver and muscle damage that can lead to kidney failure. Many drugs are broken down (metabolized) with the help of a vital enzyme called CYP3A4 in the small intestine. Grapefruit juice can block the action of CYP3A4, so instead of being metabolized, more of the drug enters the blood and stays in the body longer. The result: too much drug in your body.

The amount of the CYP3A4 enzyme in the intestine varies from person to person, says Huang. Some people have a lot of enzymes and others just a little. So grapefruit juice may affect people differently even when they take the same drug.

Although scientists have known for several decades that grapefruit juice can cause too much of certain drugs in the body, Huang says more recent studies have found that the juice has the opposite effect on a few other drugs.

"Grapefruit juice can cause less fexofenadine to enter the blood," decreasing how well the drug works, Huang says. Fexofenadine (brand name Allegra) is available as both prescription and OTC to relieve symptoms of seasonal allergies. Fexofenadine may also not work as well if taken with orange or apple juice, so the drug label states "do not take with fruit juices."

Why this opposite effect? Instead of changing metabolism, grapefruit juice can affect proteins in the body known as drug transporters, which help move a drug into our cells for absorption. As a result, less of the drug enters the blood and the drug may not work as well, Huang says.

When drugs are swallowed, they may be broken down (metabolized) by enzymes and/or absorbed using transporters in cells found in the small intestine. Grapefruit juice can cause problems with these enzymes and transporters, causing too much or too little drug in the body.

Some drugs, like statins used to lower cholesterol, are broken down by enzymes. Grapefruit juice can block the action of these enzymes, increasing the amount of drug in the body and may

cause more side effects.

Other drugs, like Allegra (fexofenadine) used to treat allergies, are moved by transporters into the body's cells. Grapefruit juice can block the action of transporters, decreasing the amount of drug in the body and may cause the drug to not work as well.

Find out if you should avoid grapefruit or other juices:

- Ask your doctor, pharmacist or other health care provider if you can drink grapefruit juice while taking your medication.

- Read the medication guide or patient information sheet that comes with your prescription drug to find out if grapefruit juice affects your drug.

- Read the Drug Facts label on your OTC drug, which will say whether you shouldn't have grapefruit or other fruit juices with it.

- If you must avoid grapefruit juice with your medicine, check the labels of fruit juices or drinks flavored with fruit juice to see whether they are made with grapefruit juice.

- Seville oranges, pomelos, and tangelos may have the same effect as grapefruit juice. Do not eat those fruits if your medicine interacts with grapefruit juice.

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The Pulse of Entertainment: National Convention of Gospel Choirs & Choruses Celebrate 84 Years

By Eunice Moseley

"Dr. Thomas Dorothy had a vision in 1932, where lay people had a place to get organized," said Dr. Marabeth E. Gentry, the current president of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs & Choruses (NCGCC), about its humble beginnings. "It's the camaraderie; it's the spirituality; it's the beautiful music [and] the family atmosphere. We're a large family reunion."

Dr. Gentry took over as president of the NCGCC in 2010 after then president Bishop Kenneth Moales, Sr. passed away. He succeeded founder Dr. Thomas Dorothy who served from 1932 to 1993.

NCGCC offers up-and-coming Gospel singers and songwriters a stage to perform. During the convention, participants have the opportunity to hear inspirational guest speakers and to attend sessions and workshops for both youth and adults who want to enhance their skills as singers, instrumentalists, educators and leaders.

The goal of the convention is to foster and promote an appreciation and a high standard of excellence of Gospel music and Gospel music performances.

The NCGCC is celebrating its 84th Anniversary in my hometown, Baltimore between August 5 and 11, 2017 at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel.

Hosted by Elder Shawn L. Bell and Reverend Dr. Derrick E. Roberts, chairman of the NCGCC Board, the guest speakers include: Rev. Dr. Lester W. Taylor, Bishop Walter Scott Thomas, Dr. Jamal Bryant, Archbishop Alfred A. Owens, Bishop Millicent Hunter and Dr. Donte L. Hickman, Sr. and guest performers: Rickey Dillard, Charles Butler



Dr. Marabeth E. Gentry, the current president of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs & Choruses (NCGCC). The NCGCC is celebrating its 84th anniversary from August 5 to 11, 2017 at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel.

Courtesy Photo/NCGCC

and Trinity, Jonathan Nelson, Maurette Brown-Clark, JJ Hairston, the Baltimore Mass Choir and many others.

"Some of our great artists, such as Hezekiah Walker...years ago came [and] look at them now—Donald Lawrence; you can go back to the Cleveland Singers; Aretha Franklin in Detroit; Della Reese are a part of us; and Dinah Washington," Dr. Gentry said about the many aspiring artists the convention help put a spotlight on. "Dr. Dorothy saw a vision, a place where songwriters and performers can come and do their music, and listen to others do their music."

Dr. Gentry says before Bishop Moales,

Sr. passed away in 2010, he told her in 2008 that he was going to hand the mantle over to her—to which she initially said no. Today against her wishes but heeding God's will, she now serves as president of the 84-year-old event that has provided a free stage to those in Gospel looking to develop their skills.

"A spiritual thing came into my room," Dr. Gentry explained when asked why she changed her mind. "It said, 'I will give you everything; I will not forsake you, just do what I tell you,' and I did a walk of faith."

It too inspires and educates participating artists who have gone on to do great things.

Dr. Thomas Dorothy Sr. is considered by many to be the "father of Gospel music." He wrote over 400 songs, including: "Take My Hand, Precious Lord."

To find out more about the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, visit: www.NCGCC.com.

Eunice Moseley is also a public relations strategist and business management consultant at Freelance Associates and is Promotions Director (at-large) for The Baltimore Times. For more entertainment news, visit: www.ThePulseofEntertainment.com.

Volunteers Needed Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival

Volunteer opportunities are available to help at the 28th Annual Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival 2017, which will be held at Susan Campbell Park at the Annapolis City Dock. The annual Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival, coordinated by Kunta Kinte Celebrations, Inc., raises an awareness of the African-American heritage and the common challenges encountered by all ethnic groups striving to preserve their culture. The festival will be held at the Annapolis City Dock on Saturday, September 23, 2017 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Volunteer are needed for set up, refreshments, clean up, children's activities and much more. For more information contact KuntaKinteCelebrations@gmail.com, or visit the website: www.kuntakinte.org where you may sign up for your desired volunteer opportunity.

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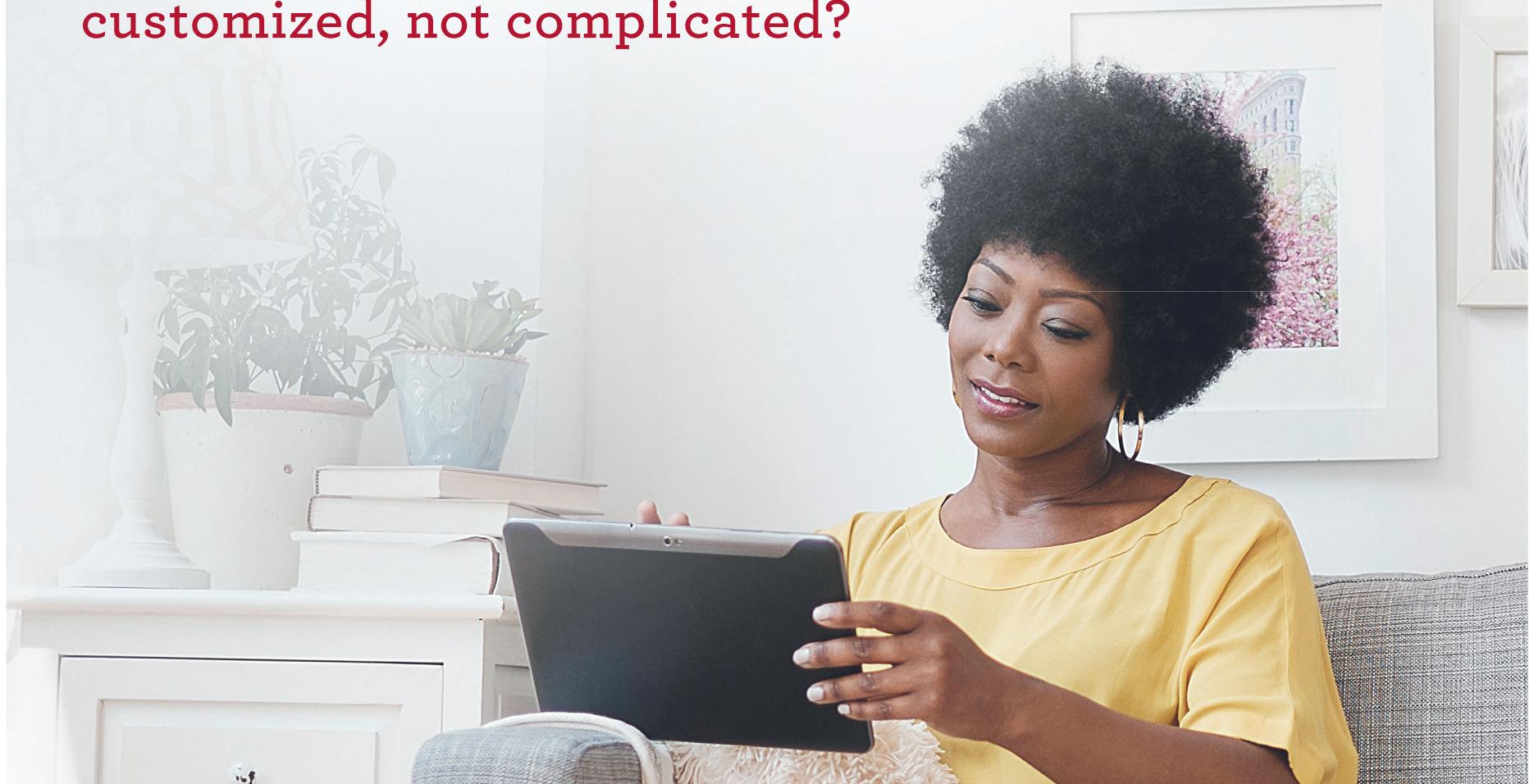
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