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New Emergency Department Opens At MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

\$43 million project supported by MedStar Health associates aims to meet community's care needs

By **BRENDAN MCNAMARA**
MedStar Health

CLINTON, Md. (April 8, 2021)—MedStar Health is celebrating the opening of its newly-renovated emergency department

(ED) at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, the largest construction project in the hospital's history. The \$43 million renovation expands the facility by 18,000 square feet, adding almost 50 percent more treatment space

and several new services uniquely designed to meet the needs of surrounding communities like Prince George's County and Washington, D.C.

"Emergency departments are important to the community because whether it's a surgical emergency, a cardiac episode, or diabetic episode, when patients come to the ED, they're often sicker than they've ever been," said Chile Ahaghotu, MD, vice president of Medical Affairs at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. "This new state-of-the-art emergency department gives us the ability to get patients in quickly, identify their issues, and provide our community with the best quality care that we can. In designing this new space we took into account the history of the kinds of medical conditions we see here at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease, behavioral health and cancer. We made sure that we had the technologies and the physical features to support that type of care."



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY MEDSTAR HEALTH

MedStar Health expanded the number of treatment rooms in the emergency department from 28 to 40.

"Prince George's County continues to grow rapidly, and its residents need seamless access to the most advanced care," said MedStar Health President and CEO Kenneth A. Samet at a ribbon-cutting ceremony held for the grand opening of the new department. "MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's ED is a critically important access point. This facility is part of our wide-ranging efforts to improve care delivery across the region, with more specialty care located here, so patients don't have to travel long distances to see their doctors, and population health strategies designed to keep people healthier and out of the hospital in the first place."

Crews broke ground on the project in September 2019 and continued to work tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, starting April 8, emergency department patients have access to:

- Additional treatment rooms, which have been expanded from 28 to 40.
- A designated behavioral health area to help manage patients suffering from a behavioral health crisis or substance abuse issues in a quiet and therapeutic environment.
- Modernized ambulance access and

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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY MEDSTAR HEALTH

The new lobby and waiting areas were designed to get patients evaluated faster, while enhancing patient privacy.

Cicadas Will Soon Invade the State of Maryland

By **MADISON HUNT**
Capital News Service
Annapolis Bureau

Brood X, a new generation of cicadas, will begin to show up in Maryland in the next few weeks, after a 17-year-long hiatus.

These periodical cicadas—cicadas that emerge every 17 years—are only found along the eastern half of the United States, according to experts.

The red-eyed, "straw-nosed" bug will begin to show up as early as late April, will fully emerge by the beginning of May and last until June, experts said.

Michael Raupp, professor emeritus of entomology at the University of Maryland, said this will be one of the largest groups of cicadas the states have seen.

"It's called the Great Northern Brood," Raupp told Capital News Service. "There will be literally billions, if not trillions, of these periodical cicadas emerging more or less simultaneously."

This brood of cicadas are

found in 15 states, ranging from Georgia to Northern Virginia, as well as along the state of Mississippi, Raupp said.

This group is made up of three different species—*Magicicada septendecim*, *Magicicada cassini* and *Magicicada septendecula*—according to The Washington Post.

During their hibernation period, these cicadas have been feeding off the liquid found on plants and leaves known as sap, experts said.

"Their immature stages, which we call nymphs, feed on a liquid diet," Raupp said. "When the adults emerge they will also feed on this same fluid."

After the bugs emerge from the ground, typically at night, they will fly to vertical structures and shed their skin, Raupp said. By the next morning their exoskeleton will have hardened, and they will be able to fly, leading them to the treetops, he continued.

This is where the noise begins, the distinct mating calls of

cicadas are some of the reasons most people find these bugs annoying, according to experts.

According to Raupp, the cicada's sound levels can get as high as 80 to 100 decibels, which is the volume of a lawnmower or a jet aircraft going by.

During their time in Maryland, they will become a delicacy to many animals and even some people, cicada experts said.

"Birds will eat them, raccoons will eat them, turtles will eat them," Raupp continued. "I will surely be snacking on a few as well."

These bugs are highly nutritious and high in protein, according to experts.

Even though there is a lot of anticipation for the new wave of these unique bugs, there are also some negative connotations that come with them.

Dawn Biehler, associate professor in the department of geography and environmental systems at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, who studies the social impacts and cultural connotations of insects, said she's gotten different responses from the anticipated invasion.

According to Biehler, Marylanders are either excited about the opportunity to reconnect with these bugs or they aren't looking forward to one more thing adding to the tumultuous year.

"People get really grossed out about the way they emerge from the ground, they seem like zombies in a way," she said.

Biehler recommends that



PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT JONTE LEE

Calvin Coolidge High School Chemistry Teacher, Jonte Lee, (left) poses with Andy Burton, Founder of Uncle Dell's Mambo Sauce at his entrepreneur event held at the school on Thursday, April 8.

Andy Burton, Founder of Uncle Dell's Mambo Sauce, Inspires Calvin Coolidge High School Students With His Entrepreneurial Journey

Entrepreneur is from Upper Marlboro, will attend PGCC this fall

By **CAITLIN WOLF**
Andy Factory

WASHINGTON (April 9, 2021)—At the age of 17, Andrew "Andy" Burton is the founder of one of the most popular "Mambo" sauces in DC—Uncle Dell's Mambo Sauce. On Thursday, April 8, Andy visited students at Calvin Coolidge High School to share his entrepreneurial journey, and inspire freshman students to pursue their passions, overcome obstacles, and most importantly, believe in themselves.

"We're thrilled to be able to have our students hear first-hand from Andy about his experiences starting his own company at such a young age," said Jonte Lee, a Chemistry teacher at Calvin Coolidge High School. "I was recently introduced to Andy and we immediately connected, sharing a passion for entrepreneurship and inspiring our next generation of leaders. I'm so glad we could bring his story—and his sauce—to our students."

Jonte Lee's class hosted a barbecue lunch, sponsored by A Better You Today, LLC, where students got a taste of Andy's unique Mambo sauce paired with chicken wings and french fries. Dessert was donated by Mr. Bake Sweets. Following the lunch, Andy presented to students in the classroom, as well as those tuning in virtually from home. The most popular topics he covered included how to

start your own business and giving back to the community.

"I'm so glad to not only share my story with people my age but also share the culture I grew up with—driving around DC to experience 'mumbo' sauce and wings from my mother's favorite places," shared Andy. "I hope that my presentation today inspires at least one student to pursue their passion and that many students walk away with a new fondness for Mambo sauce!"

Andy first founded his company, Andy Factory, at five years old. He made cookies for a homeschool project and his mother assigned him and his siblings to create a business. He continued to keep the name and evolve the business, landing on the world of sauce. Soon after he perfected Uncle Dell's Mambo Sauce, it was a hit and sold out within hours. With his older brother by his side, they continue to innovate the world of sauce and are prepared to launch two new sauces this spring.

Andy Factory is the creation of Andrew Burton and has been operating informally since 2008. With brothers Andrew and Nyles Burton at the helm, Andy Factory specializes in making unique and flavorful sauces. Currently, Andy Factory has three sauces available online and in select stores in the DC region. For more information on the sauces and where to purchase them, visit <https://www.andyfactory.com/shop>.



PHOTO CREDIT: MICHAEL RAUPP AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Michael Raupp is holding a group of newly emerged cicadas known as nymphs.

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Candidates Wade, Mullins unopposed in Morningside's elections

Morningsiders will hold elections for two Town Council seats on Monday, May 3. Only two candidates are running for the seats and both are popular incumbents. The candidates are:

Bradley Wade. He is seeking his 4th term as Councilmember and currently serves as Vice-Mayor. He continues to work on improving the operation of the Town through working with the annual budget, State training, recreation events and meeting with a State official. Bradley moved to Morningside in 1987 when he was ten years old. Currently he "shares the love of the Town" with his wife Amy and their four daughters.

Todd Eugene Mullins. His family moved to Morningside in 2008 and he became involved with the Town. He ran for the Council and has been serving since 2012. He oversees streets, roads and sidewalk repair. He is partnering with the Morningside Fire Department, County and State governments in an effort to re-install the speed cameras on Suitland Road. Todd currently works with Metro Earth Works as a driver, as well as maintaining a lawn-care business for the Town and surrounding communities.

The polls will be open at the Town Hall, 6901 Ames Street, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on May 3. All residents registered with the Town, County, State or Federal elections are eligible and encouraged to vote.

Last Chance Dance at La Reine, before it's gone forever

On June 21, preparation for La Reine's demolition begins. By mid-August, the building will be gone. Razed.

What a sad ending for such a magnificent building! I remember the amazing labs, the excellent auditorium, the large dining hall, the beautiful chapel. All planned by the Bernardine Sisters of St. Francis who were to staff the school.

Now the alumnae want to pay their last respects to their beloved high school with what they call the Last Chance Dance at La Reine. The event will be on Saturday, June 12, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with Brunch/Lunch and Holy Mass. There will be events throughout the Building and opportunities to purchase memorabilia. There will also be an opportunity to visit the new La Reine Science Center due to open in a

year or so at Bishop McNamara High School in Forestville.

The Last Chance Dance (which isn't a dance) will be open to all alums and their company, to celebrate all things La Reine. The event will be Covid-compliant, with timed tickets of groups of 15 or so. There will be live Facebook feeds. The price is \$75, which includes lunch and a donation to the Bernardine Sisters and for the new science center.

I hope to attend. Before St. Philip's opened, construction on their school building was delayed. So, grades 1 and 2 (and later grade 3) were held at the new La Reine, which still had empty classrooms. Three of my kids were among them. Later, my four daughters—Kathleen, Therese, Elaine and Sheila—attended La Reine High School.

If you have La Reine friends, please let them know about this Last Chance.

Neighbors & other good people

Larry and Jody (Bowman) Nyers will celebrate their 41st anniversary on April 18. They met through mutual friends back when Larry attended Suitland (class of '73) and Jody—who lived in Morningside—went to Central (class of '74). They were married at the Prince George's County Courthouse on April 18, 1980, and then celebrated with family and friends at the Silver Hill Fire Department where both were members. As Jody says, "We met in high school and have been together ever since."

Had an email from Cathy Miller who lived on Woodland Road 1982–2000. She has three daughters, Angela Demattia, Kimberly Muir and Christy Cooper, and five grandkids, Caitlyn Rose, Colin, David Jr., Noah and Dominic. You might remember her aunt, Nellie Downs, who sold Avon in Morningside.

Stacie Smith emailed about the Skate Palace. She said she and her husband John both started skating at DC's Kalorama, which closed years ago, sending many of the skaters to Alexandria until it, too, closed. If the Temple Hills Skate Palace closes, Stacie and John will continue on at Lanham or Laurel's rinks. She says, "The closing of skating rinks is happening all over and in many states, mostly due to big development."

Last week in Milestones I listed Wanda Brooke's April 16 birthday. Her daughter

Susan Mullins emailed that her mom, Wanda, died in 2013. It's hard to lose a mom! My special condolences, Susan.

Town of Morningside

The Town Council has voted to allow rentals to resume at the Municipal Center. There will be restrictions which mirror that of Prince George's County. Current restrictions are 50% capacity, which means parties no larger than 35. Other requirements: social distancing, facemasks and contact tracing. Call 301-736-2300 for more information.

April 20: Town Hall Meeting, 7 p.m. Call for information.

April 22: Conversation with the Mayor, 6:30 p.m. Call the Town for Call-in Info.

May 3: Morningside Elections, 8 a.m.—8 p.m. Morningside Municipal Center.

Joseph Koles, of Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs

Joseph Edward Hake Koles, 94, of District Heights, a chemist who retired from DEA in 2000, died Feb. 12 at Adventist Hospital.

A Newark native, he served in the Army during WWII, graduated from Rutgers, earned a master's from the U. of Kentucky, and PhD from McCrone Research Institute in Chicago. He served in several federal agencies and trained forensic scientists through classes at the University of Maryland.

He was a member of Mount Calvary Church, volunteered with the County Library, SOME (So Others May Eat), Smithsonian, and Share Food Network.

He was a loyal blood donor.

Survivors include his wife Wilma of 64 years, 8 children, 8 grandchildren and one great-grand. Services will be held later.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Eloise Carnes, Ruby Cunningham and Veronica Frostbutter, April 17; Cameron Trexler, April 19; Devaughn Branham, April 20; Jill (Gilmartin) Booth and Tiffany Jackson, April 21; and Taylor Foster, April 22.

Happy anniversary to Edward and Jane (Martin) Talbert, their 72th (!) on April 16; Larry and Jody (Bowman) Nyers, their 41st on April 18; Jim and Pat Conlon, their 47th on April 20; John and Ruth Anthony, Jr., their 43rd on April 22; and Lewis and Trisha (Pitts) Woods, their 32nd on April 22.

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

Brandywine-Aquasco

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY ARMY ROTC

The U.S. Army Cadet Command has named Bowie State University's ROTC program as a winner of the 2019–20 MacArthur Award, recognizing the program as one of the best in the nation. The award recognizes eight schools from among 274 ROTC programs nationwide. The U.S. Army Cadet Command selected Bowie State University's program from among 37 other schools in the 4th Brigade, which includes ROTC programs in West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. It is the first time that the BSU ROTC program has received the MacArthur Award, which was last awarded to an HBCU, Morgan State University, in 2001.

"This award is a testament to the years of hard work and cooperation between the cadets, ROTC Staff and the university to elevate the BSU ROTC program from a small, developing program into one of the best in the nation," said Lt. Col. Wesley Knight, chair of the BSU Department of Military Science.

The award is based on a combination of the school's commissioning mission, its cadets' performance and standing on the commands' National Order of Merit List, and its cadet retention rate.

"We are immensely proud of all our Bulldog Battalion cadets and their accomplishments under the leadership of Lt. Col. Knight to achieve recognition as MacArthur Award recipients," said BSU President Dr. Aminta H. Breaux. "Our cadets continue to set a high standard in leadership and academic leadership on our campus. We are proud to have the support of educators, community members, and public officials as we continue preparing these officers for their service to the nation."

In a press release announcing the award, Maj. Gen. John Evans, commander of the U.S. Army Cadet Command and Fort Knox, "said the recipients exemplify the ethos behind the ROTC motto of 'leadership excellence' and embody the legacy of leadership as practiced by General Douglas MacArthur.

"Being named a MacArthur award winner acknowledges that these programs are going above and beyond to train the next generation of Army officers," Evans said in the release. Media Contact: Cassandra Robinson, crobinson@bowiestate.edu.

MIGHTY WONDERS

The Mighty Wonders of Aquasco, Maryland originated from Aquasco, Maryland was featured at the Smithsonian Institute of African American History and Culture March 8, 2018. Several members had been with the group when they were featured March 8, 2018. The members were Alfred Johnson, Lowell Washington, Joseph Blake, Ernest Johnson, and Tom Contee.

HBCU TEACHER RECRUITMENT

The First Maryland HBCU Teacher Recruitment will be held April 22, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bowie State, Coppin

State, and Morgan State Universities are partnering together to host its First Maryland HBCU Teacher Recruitment Fair. This fair will give students the opportunity to connect with over 15 employers in the field of education.

Location: Zoom. Contact: JaNay Adams, Email: jsadams@bowiestate.edu, phone: 301-860-3825. Website: <https://tinyurl.com/HBCUeducate> Categories: Career Development Center.

MEDSTAR SHAH MEDICAL GROUP

MedStar Health Location in Waldorf. New MedStar Shah Medical Group location brings high-quality care to Charles County. The facility includes a walk-in primary care clinic; cancer center, pharmacy, diagnostic services (i.e., CT scans and MRIs); surgical specialties; and medical specialties such as cardiologists, neurologists, pulmonologists, cancer specialists and more.

"Instead of a patient seeing one doctor who sends him or her to different places for multiple follow-up appointments, we have a whole team of doctors in the same building working together to take care of that patient," said Vinoh Shah, MD, medical director of MedStar Shah Medical Group. That instantaneous collaboration allows patients to get immediate access to preventive care, like early cancer detection, with less appointments. It is complete care at one location.

"This new building allows us to care for this community in the way we care for our own families," said Dr. Shah. "When we take care of people that way, we do justice to our community and to our profession." Medstar Shah Medical Group of Waldorf is located at 10 St. Patrick's Drive. To schedule an appointment, call 301-705-7870. Information from MedStar Health 2021.

APRIL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Alvin Pinkett, Joe Pratt, Maudie Goodrum, Glenna Graves, Cosmos Samuel, Barron Neal, Samuel Bell, Patrice Perkins Pratt, Lindsay Joiner, Claudette Oghogho, Nadia Long, Veronica Thomas, Veronica Thomas, Audrey Johnson, Eric Knight, Charmaine Grant, Sarita Georges, William Stroman, III, Jerre Kauffman, William Stroman, IV who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in April and Zilpha Pinkney who is Clinton United Methodist Church Secretary.

APRIL WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Ron and Beth Davis, Lloyd and Shirley Brown, Trevor and Denise Bourne, Norman and Jean Noel, Clarence and Dorothy Glasgow Reid, Eddie and Ruth Wilson, George, and Karen Taylor, Anston and Angela Williams, Cosmos and Stephnie Samuel who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating Wedding Anniversaries in April.

Events Around the County

Marietta House Museum Presents:

A Virtual Program for Earth Day Food from the Earth: Herbs in Thyme

Please join us virtually on **Thursday, April 22**, 6:30–7:30 p.m. for an Earth Day presentation, "Food from the Earth: Herbs in Thyme". Stacey Hawkins and Trena Davidson will discuss African American food culture and history, including agriculture, spiritual and religious beliefs, herbs and medicine, food sources and use. Speakers will also discuss research and foodways at Marietta and will view the original kitchen.

\$5/person, ages 12 & older. Please register on Parks Direct using this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/y2x6fsu6>

Questions about registration? Please email stacey.hawkins@pgparks.com or call 301-262-0532.

Marietta House Museum is a property of Maryland National-Capital Park and Planning Commission and is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD 20769.

—Stacey Hawkins, Marietta House Museum

Power, Prowess & Pearls—April 22, 2021

Please join State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy for "POWER, PROWESS & PEARLS" **Thursday, April 22** from 6–8 p.m. This virtual event will feature a powerful panel discussion with leading black elected female prosecutors around the nation on the issues and the unique challenges faced as elected prosecutors in the pursuit of justice. Please register in advance and join the conversation.

Guest Speakers:

Letitia James, New York Attorney General
Sherry Boston, Dekalb County (GA) District Attorney
Diane Becton, Contra Costa (CA) District Attorney
Darcel Clark, Bronx County (NY) District Attorney
Shameca Collins, 6th Judicial District, (LA) District Attorney
Satana Deberry, Durham County (NC) District Attorney
Kim Foxx, Cook County (IL) State's Attorney
Kim Gardner, St. Louis (MO) Circuit Court Attorney
Stephanie Morales, Portsmouth (VA) Commonwealth Attorney
Rachael Rollins, Suffolk County (MA) District Attorney
Lynnece Washington, Jefferson County (AL) District Attorney
For Questions: Judy Danso, jsdanso@co.pg.md.us

Please register in advance and join the conversation. This event will be virtual via Zoom and streamed live on Facebook. If you would like to attend, please register via Eventbrite.

—Office of the State's Attorney for Prince George's County

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and

Recreation, Prince George's County

Announces The Tempest: An Audio Adventure

RIVERDALE, Md. (April 9, 2021)—Prince George's Shakespeare in the Parks, a program of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation's Arts & Cultural Heritage Division, Department of Parks and Recreation, announces The Tempest: An Audio Adventure. This is the third installment in a series of audio dramas, presented free of cost to the public **beginning April 23**.

In response to restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, Shakespeare in the Parks presents Shakespeare's last play in an audio format, suitable for listening online or downloading as a podcast. This format can be enjoyed at home, in the car, or while walking our beautiful parks and trails.

"Our production of The Tempest, one of Shakespeare's most well-known plays, is appropriate for families and listeners of all ages," stated Performing Arts Specialist Christel Stevens. She continued, "This adaptation, by Artistic Director Christopher Dwyer, highlights the rich poetry, exciting action, and human comedy that make Shakespeare's plays popular around the world and across generations."

Take a virtual vacation on a lonely island in the Caribbean Sea, a land of magic and fantasy, where mysterious voices whisper in the palm trees, and a magical fairy sings as she flies over the jungle. Hear the voice of powerful sorcerer Prospero as he commands the winds and the waves. Follow the story of young lovers, Miranda and Ferdinand, who meet on the shore of the stormy sea.

Starting on April 23, The Tempest: An Audio Adventure will be available at no cost, for listening online or downloading, at arts.pgparks.com. The accompanying Study Guide will be available to download and print.

—Angel Waldron, Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

Chesapeake Life Center Offers Healing Walks With Grief Counselors

PASADENA, Md. (April 9, 2021)—Chesapeake Life Center offers safe opportunities to find a path for healing with walking groups for grievers in Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties.

New on the calendar is a peaceful spring walk from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. **Wednesday, April 28**, around beautiful Lake Artemesia in Berwyn Heights in Prince George's County, Maryland. Join one of the center's bereavement counselors for this free and easy walk and reflect on this season of new beginnings and nature's capacity to provide healing in times of grief.

In Anne Arundel County, grievers can join one of the center's counselors for a monthly walking group. The group will meet at Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis, Maryland, for easy walks suitable for most fitness levels. After, all will pause to share their experience and talk about ways to use the outdoors as a means of healing. The walks will take place on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon April 24, May 22 and June 26. The cost to participate in each walk is \$10 to help with pavilion rental.

Per Center for Disease Control and Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties' guidelines, the number of people allowed to participate in programs in person is limited to allow for physical distancing. Face masks must be worn at all times. Childcare is not provided, and children are not permitted in any of these groups.

Registration is required for all groups and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. Visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/events for a complete listing of in-person and virtual groups and workshops for adults and children.

—Elizabeth Marcussen, Hospice of the Chesapeake

COMMUNITY

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Can I Still Suspend My Social Security Benefits?

By RUSSELL GLOOR, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: Is it still possible to suspend Social Security benefits for a time? And, if so, how often? *Signed: Curious Senior*

Dear Curious Senior: If you have already reached your full retirement age and are receiving Social Security benefits which you claimed earlier, you can voluntarily suspend your benefits to earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) and get a higher benefit amount when your payments are resumed. While your benefit payments are suspended, you will earn an additional .67% for each full month of suspension (8% per full year of suspension). If you wish to do so, you can suspend until you are 70 years old, after which you will no longer receive Delayed Retirement Credits, and your benefit will have reached maximum.

At age 70, Social Security will automatically restart your benefit at the higher amount, as appropriate for the number of DRCs you earned while suspended. If you prefer or need the money sooner, you can request that your benefit be restarted earlier than age 70.

You can voluntarily suspend and restart benefits more than once if that is necessary, but the process requires some lead time to stop/restart benefits and there are other important factors to consider. If you suspend your personal SS retirement benefit now to gain a higher payment amount later, while you are suspended no other benefits based on your record (such as a spousal or other dependent benefits) will be paid. And, if you currently have your Medicare premium deducted from your Social Security benefit, suspending your SS benefits will require you to make alternate arrangements for direct payment of your

Medicare premium(s). You would need to pay your Medicare premium via mail or by direct withdrawal from your bank account, or by charging a credit/debit card. If you decide to suspend your Social Security payments, you will need to contact Social Security directly at 1.800.772.1213 (or call your local SS office) to do so. When requesting your benefit suspension, you can also make arrangements through Social Security to pay your Medicare premium separately.

The 2.3 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AmacFoundation.org) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

CITY OF LAUREL NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Laurel in Prince George's County proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2021, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 4.68% from \$3,297,171,287 to \$3,451,599,065.
2. If the City of Laurel maintains the current tax rate of \$0.71 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 4.68% resulting in \$1,096,437 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.6782, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The City of Laurel is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City of Laurel proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.71 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 4.68% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$1,096,437 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, April 26, 2021. The meeting will be held remotely via video teleconference. Please use the following link to join the Zoom webinar: <https://cityoflaurel-org.zoom.us/j/91738205317?pwd=ZUFKY3FVenQrNm42Ym93WVFybkNaQT09>

Passcode: 441672

Or One tap mobile: US: +13017158592,,91738205317# or +19292056099,,91738205317#

Or Telephone: Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799

Webinar ID: 917 3820 5317

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged. Participants who join the video/audio conference will be enabled to speak by the meeting chair. Speakers will be allowed to address the Council for two (2) minutes. Public Comment may also be submitted by 2:00 p.m. on April 26, 2021. Comments received will be read by City of Laurel staff during the public comments portion of the meeting.

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call 301-725-5300, extension 2121 for further information.

Kimberley A. Rau, MMC
Clerk to the Council

First-Time Christian Author Sandra Adona-Durham Debuts New Book at Book Signing

By FRANCES REIMERS
Firestarter

FT WASHINGTON, MD. (April 10, 2021)—First-time author and Prince George's County Native Sandra Adona-Durham has launched her book "From the Gutter to God's Pulpit," a story that recounts her challenging journey of loss, heartbreak, betrayal, and redemption. The book illustrates how staying anchored in faith was instrumental in her overcoming tremendous hardships and heartbreak.

The book was debuted at an inspirational event held at The Glow Bar in Clinton, MD on Saturday, April 10. Guests were treated to generous gift bags, a poetry reading by Minister Kimberly Petersen, and a reading of the book by the author.

"I pray my story will inspire others, especially in times such as these, to find hope and strength from living a faith-



EVENT IMAGE COURTESY OF STEPHANIE BRAME

Sandra Adona-Durham speaking at The Glow Bar in Clinton, MD on Saturday, April 10.

filled life," said author Sandra Adona-Durham. "I'm so proud to launch my first book and have plans to release two more books soon."

The book is available for purchase on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Fans may follow Adona-Durham on Facebook and Twitter.

WASHINGTON REGIONAL TRANSPLANT COMMUNITY: APRIL IS NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

Organ Donation: The Heart of the Matter

Yvette Jefferson is doing her part to raise awareness about the critical importance of organ donation. Years ago, Yvette's father Junious was in end-stage heart failure and passed away while waiting for a heart transplant. Since her father's lifesaving gift didn't come in time, Yvette has become a Donate Life ambassador to encourage others to register to be a donor to save another person's life.

"I believe in organ donation. If my father had received a new heart, he would probably still be alive today making memories with our family," said Yvette. "My goal is to educate people in my community about donation, and to let them know they can leave a legacy after death by giving the gift of life to someone else."

April is National Donate Life Month, a time to encourage people to register as organ, eye and tissue donors and to celebrate

those who have saved lives through the gift of donation. Washington Regional Transplant Community (WRTC) is the local non-profit organ procurement organization responsible for facilitating the donation process. Despite the pandemic, WRTC continues to recover and allocate organs from deceased donors if they test negative for COVID-19. WRTC is working with its hospital partners and transplant centers to ensure as many patients receive lifesaving transplants as possible during this unprecedented medical crisis.

Currently, there are more than 107,000 patients on the national transplant waiting list who need a kidney, heart, lungs, pancreas, liver, or intestine. More than 2,000 of those people live locally in the metro D.C. area. There is no medicine or magic pill they can take to live. A transplant is the only cure, and that is why the Donate Life mission



PHOTO COURTESY WRTC

Yvette Jefferson

must always continue.

One organ, eye and tissue donor could save up to 8 lives and heal 75 patients so one thing people can do to make a difference during the pandemic is to register to be a donor at RegisterMe.org.

Aisha Braveboy Warns Public to Be Vigilant Against Financial Crimes

By DENISE DOUGLAS
Office of the State's Attorney, PG County

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (April 8, 2021)—During a press conference [last Friday] Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy warned the public about falling victim to financial crimes. Her Special Prosecutions Unit is currently prosecuting a number of cases in which victims lost significant amounts of money.

Recently, Amy Solomon, a former treasurer at the West Lanham Hills Volunteer Fire Department was indicted for embezzling over \$100,000 from that department. From January 1, 2016 to February 28, 2019 she is alleged to have moved money to and from various bank accounts of the Volunteer Fire Department. It is further alleged that Ms. Solomon then wrote checks from the accounts to herself, endorsed them, and cashed them.

In another case, Maria Castro Pico is charged with stealing over \$600,000 from her mother-in-law between 2013 to 2019. The defendant is alleged to have stolen cash, personal and real property from the victim.

"It's important for individuals, businesses and organizations to be aware and keep a good watch over their finances," said State's Attorney Braveboy. "Financial crimes really erode the ability to live well and can affect people emotionally and we encourage anyone who has been wronged to step forward so we can seek justice for them."

Some tips on how businesses and nonprofits can protect their interests are as follows:

- Require more than one person to sign checks
- Establish regular financial reporting requirements to the Board of Directors

See FINANCIAL CRIMES Page A5

Cicadas from A1

Marylanders prepare themselves by learning a little bit more about the bugs in advance, or prepare for another couple of months of isolation.

Raupp also recommended that Marylanders cover their small trees and shrubs from the cicadas with netting gear.

"They are going to damage the branches," Raupp said. "The trick here is the netting should have a mesh size of one centimeter or less, that's about three-eighths of an inch."

Raupp stressed that these bugs are a natural phenomenon, so there should be more of an embrace for these bugs than hatred.

"It only happens a few times in your lifetime, so get out and enjoy these things," Raupp said.

Jenna Jadin, Raupp's former student, created "Cicada-Licious: Cooking and Enjoying Periodical Cicadas" a cookbook manual, in 2004, incorpo-

rating cicadas into modern recipes. (https://cicadacrewumd.weebly.com/uploads/1/1/2/5/112598151/cicadalicious_cookbook_cover_jennajandin_umdntm_2004.pdf)

Banana Cicada Bread

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 bananas, mashed
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup dry-roasted cicadas

After combining all the ingredients together, bake them in a greased loaf pan at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about an hour.

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge: A “Seasoned, Experienced and Knowledgeable Leader” Who Will Put Racial Equity at the Forefront of the Nation’s Housing Policies

“We need to make the dream of homeownership—and the security and wealth creation that comes with it—a reality for more Americans. That will require us to end discriminatory practices in the housing market, and ensure that our fair housing rules are doing what they are supposed to do: opening the door for families, especially families of color who have been systematically kept out in the cold across generations, to buy homes and punch their ticket to the middle class. There are so many issues we need to come together to address—everything from bringing capital back to disinvested communities, to increasing energy efficiency in housing, to dealing with the dangers of lead-based paint, to taking on our crisis of homelessness with compassion and resolve. These are only some of the challenges—and I know that many of you have additional priorities as well.

These problems are urgent, but they are not beyond our capacity to solve.”

—U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Marcia Fudge

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge has held many roles in her two decades of public service, from Mayor of Warrensville Heights, Ohio, to Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

But it was a moment of “Black auntie energy” that endeared her to the Twitterverse. When her cheery “Good morning!” was met with silence from the White House press corps, she pointed to her ear and repeated herself more forcefully. Duly chastened, the reporters immediately returned her greeting, along with a good-natured laugh.

Video of the exchange went viral on social me-

dia. Veteran correspondent April Ryan of The Grio, a fellow Delta Sigma Theta sister, wrote, “Soror Madam Secretary @repmarciafudge had me feeling like I was back in church during announcements.”

Aaron Thomas of Raleigh’s WRAL-TV News wrote, “If speak when you’re spoken to were a person ...”

It was an apt introduction to the nation for Secretary Fudge, described by those who know her best as “down-to-earth” and “a straight shooter.”

Immediately following her lighthearted moment in White House Briefing Room, she called on Congress to add up to \$100 billion to her agency’s budget, saying it does not have the resources to serve the more than half a million homeless people in the country, repair crumbling public housing buildings and eliminate lead in subsidized homes.

Most of the housing measures that lawmakers have passed to address the pandemic crisis should be made permanent, she said.

“This past year has reminded us just how important it is to have access to safe and stable housing,” she said. “But too many Americans are struggling to keep or find an affordable home.”

Demonstrating her commitment to racial equity, her first meeting following her confirmation was with myself and other civil rights leaders, where we discussed fair and affordable housing, access to capital for Black and Brown people, and resources for those at risk of being evicted due to the pandemic. The meeting reinforced my confidence that the Department of Housing and Urban Development is in the hands of a seasoned, experienced and knowledgeable leader.

Secretary Fudge and I held the toughest job in

America at the same—she was the first woman and first Black person to serve as Mayor of Warrensville Heights, and I was serving my second term as Mayor of New Orleans. As mayor, she was guided by the same commitment to economic justice that she has brought to President Biden’s cabinet, expanding affordable housing opportunities and confronting the foreclosure crisis with a local partnership that helped residents maintain the financial security they needed to buy or keep a home.

She served as Chief of Staff to U.S. Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones, and was elected to her seat following the congresswoman’s death in 2008. During her 13 years in Congress, she is best known for her role as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus from 2013 to 2015, where she tackled issues such as job creation and protecting voting rights. Lesser known is her role in founding the bipartisan Rock and Roll Caucus. Secretary Fudge’s hometown of Cleveland is known as the birthplace of rock and roll, and her former district is home to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

“So many people look at what they call ‘politicians’ as such a dirty word,” she said during a speech to honor the 100th anniversary of the National Urban League. “I am a public servant. I get up every day, and every morning when I leave my apartment, I say, I am going to do the people’s work. That is my job. That is what I was brought here to do. I hope there is someone out there who recognizes what we do, who understands the significance of who we are, and they will feel the same sense of pride we feel today talking about all of the people on whose shoulders we stand today.”

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,
Children’s Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

This Is Not Normal

On April 8 President Biden announced a series of executive actions to curb America’s gun violence epidemic that kills a child or teen every 2 hours and 36 minutes in our nation. These are critical lifesaving reforms and more must follow. Vice President Harris correctly said during the administration’s announcement, “Time and again, as progress has stalled, we have all asked, ‘What are we waiting for?’ Because we aren’t waiting for a tragedy; I know that. We’ve had more tragedy than we can bear.” As our nation continues to allow more and more guns than people—over 393 million in civilian hands and only 5.5 million in law enforcement and military hands—the tragic loss of life and heartbreak never ends. It must!!

When news broke March 22 of a mass shooting in a Boulder, Colorado grocery store, we were still reeling from March 16th domestic terrorism gun violence attacks in Georgia. That day a hate-filled mass killer walked into a sporting goods store in the morning, bought a gun, and immediately used it to target and murder Asian women at the spas where they worked. The shooter killed eight people, including six Asian women, leaving behind heartbroken children, grandchildren, families, and friends.

The Georgia murders were a clarion call to take action against hate, misogyny, violence, and easy access to guns in our nation. Last March, as COVID-19’s impact was beginning to be widely felt, CDF issued early calls to state and local governments to counteract racism, xenophobia, fear of, and violence towards the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities by denouncing all forms of bullying and discrimination. Instead, then-President Trump repeatedly did the exact opposite, deliberately referring to the COVID-19 virus and its origins in racist and unscientific terms. He set an example as bully-in-chief followed by millions around the country. The group Stop AAPI Hate, which tracks incidents of violence and harassment against Asian Americans and Pacific Is-

landers in the U.S., has reported nearly 3,800 hate incidents since the pandemic began.

Cherokee County, Georgia Sheriff’s Office Captain Jay Baker used his social media to promote racist t-shirts calling COVID-19 an “imported virus from Chy-na,” and in his official role after the shootings described the gunman as a person who had “a really bad day.” Georgia State Representative Bee Nguyen quickly and correctly responded: “It wasn’t a bad day. It was a brutal and violent crime in which racism, misogyny, gender-based violence, and lax gun laws intersect.” It must stop!

Guns lethally hate, anger, domestic disputes, mental illness, and despair. Easy access to guns makes expressions of hate and violence devastating. Six days after Georgia’s murders, a Boulder shooter walked into a grocery store with a semi-automatic rifle and within minutes killed ten people, including a Boulder police officer who left behind seven children. Both the Georgia and Colorado suspects were 21-year-old men who became mass killers thanks to readily accessible and often unregulated guns.

After the 1999 Littleton, Colorado Columbine High School massacre, CDF published a series of Protect Children Not Guns campaign ads with brilliant pro bono help from Minneapolis ad agency Fallon McElligott Rice (now Fallon Worldwide), featuring searing images like the student falling from a window into the waiting arms of police officers in riot gear with the caption “Remember when the only thing kids were afraid of at school was a pop quiz?” Every poster said: It is time we protect children instead of guns. But instead children and all of us have learned over and over again there are no guaranteed safe spaces while hate, bigotry, and terrorism continue to collide with unfettered access to weapons of war. Former Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, a survivor of a 2011 mass shooting outside a Tucson grocery store, said after the Boulder grocery

store shooting: “This is not normal, and it doesn’t have to be this way. It’s beyond time for our leaders to take action.”

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed legislation requiring background checks for all gun buyers and lengthening the time to complete them from three days to 20, closing the “Charleston loophole” that allowed a white supremacist to purchase a gun and kill nine Black Bible study worshippers at Charleston’s Mother Emanuel AME Church in 2015. A completed background check would have shown his ineligibility to own a gun. The Senate must act quickly to do the same. It’s long past time to curb the relentless power of gun lobbyists and manufacturers and to disarm hate.

Following the Georgia attacks, CDF signed a letter by Asian Americans Advancing Justice and the Atlanta and Georgia NAACP that says: “We are heartbroken by these murders, which come at a time when Asian American communities are already grappling with the traumatic violence against Asian Americans nationwide, fueled by the United States’ long history of white supremacy, systemic racism, and gender-based violence. . . . In this time of crisis, let’s come together and build just communities, where we are all safe, where all workers are treated with dignity and respect, and where all our loved ones thrive.” Those are the communities all of our children and grandchildren deserve. When are we going to get there?

We must get there now! We must teach all of our children to reject bigoted and hateful violence and rhetoric. We must continue fighting against the violence of xenophobia and misogyny and confront and teach the full spectrum of our history so that a new generation does not carry forth the poison of racial supremacy and white privilege. And we must stop unfettered access to guns that makes hate and violence uniquely lethal in our nation. Please ask your members of Congress to act now.

Maryland Business Roundtable for Education Hosts Second Annual Youth Congress Day

More than 100 Maryland high school students logged into event from the safety of their homes

By JEN RAIDER

Maryland Business Roundtable for Education

BALTIMORE (April 7, 2021)—On Wednesday, March 3, 2021, the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT) virtually welcomed more than 100 high school students from Allegany, Caroline, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George’s and Wicomico counties to its second annual Youth Congress Day in Annapolis. This group of students included representatives from MBRT’s programs, including Next Generation Scholars, Student Ambassador and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). The goal of the day was to teach students about the legislative process and inspire students to become active in their communities.

“After a successful launch of our Youth Congress Day initiative in 2020, I’m incredibly proud of the team who worked so creatively together to ensure we could once again deliver a meaningful and engaging learning experience for Maryland students,” said Brian Dulay, executive director of MBRT.

Following warm greetings from Senate President Bill Ferguson (Baltimore City) and House Speaker Adrienne Jones (Baltimore County) who touted the benefits of such an event to the students, the Maryland Visitors Bureau showed a video that took students on a virtual tour of the Maryland State Capitol, including the Senate and House Office Buildings. In lieu of participating in a General Session viewing, MBRT arranged for the students to hold a mock legislative meeting during which the students reviewed and debated Senate Bill 127, Institutions of Higher Education—Use of Criminal History in Admission—Modifications, originally introduced January 13, 2021, by Senators Patterson and Augustine.

Ten of MBRT’s student ambassadors held significant roles at Youth Congress Day. **Gabriela Holzer (Prince George’s County)** presided over the legislative meeting as Speaker of the House, and Sriya Sogal (Montgomery County) served as President of the Senate. Together, Holzer and Sogal introduced the bill, and Abigail Spangler (Allegany County) and Rip T. Cornish (Dorchester County) read the bill to the entire student group. The group then split into two breakout rooms with Jenna Dameus (Wicomico County), **Ryan Lassiter (Prince George’s County)**, Sincere Turner (Caroline County), and Heath Hutchinson (Harford County) serving as group leaders to moderate discussion and promote healthy debate among student participants. Gianna Athavale (Howard County) and Ronald Parker III (Kent County) served as secretaries to take notes for their respective groups.

Following a lunch break featuring DJ Heir Raid and a trivia based on legislative questions, students reconvened and each group presented their argument for or

against the bill. After Athavale and Parker called for the vote, the students promptly cast their ballots resulting in the resolution being adopted with 89% who voted for and 10% who voted against the bill.

“Through today’s experience, I recognized the potential that my voice has, along with that of my peers, to make a difference and truly change this world for the better,” said **Dyanara Daprozaa, a sophomore at Oxon Hill High School.** “I learned the entire process of how laws are passed and it made me want to be a part of the process even more,” added **Triniti Holt, a junior at Suitland High School.** “It takes a lot of patience and guidance to provide for the people.”

For 30 years, MBRT has been connecting the business community with local schools through its Maryland Scholars Speakers Bureau and STEM Specialists in the Classroom programs. In 2017, MBRT added the Next Generation Scholars program, which provides funding through the Howard P. Rawlings Maryland Guaranteed Access Grant, administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), to enhance education and career awareness as well as college completion for high school students with a demonstrated financial need. The Guaranteed Access Grant provides an award that will help cover the cost of full-time study at a Maryland college or university for low-income families.

MBRT currently serves nearly 1,900 students in six high schools across five counties. The organization is one of several that partner with leadership and school counselors at select schools throughout the state to provide grade-specific services to ensure that students who are part of Next Generation Scholars graduate ready for their next steps in college, career and life. MBRT coordinators help students and parents understand that college is an option for everyone while bridging the knowledge gap that exists for many families about college and their chosen career paths. Learn more at www.mbrt.org.

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