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Happy Thanksgiving from The Prince George's Post

PHOTO CREDIT MORGUEFILE, LADYHEART

Reading Is Fundamental and State Farm Celebrate Reading

By DWAYNE M. REDD
State Farm

WASHINGTON (Nov. 17, 2021)—Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) and State Farm celebrate the power of reading with So Others Might Eat and Judge Sylvania W Woods Sr. Elementary providing 500 children with RIF Literacy Kits. Delivered by State Farm Agents Itzabel Mayrant (Hyattsville), Nurney Mason (Capitol Heights), Joe Mitchell (Greenbelt), Shanna Stringfield (Bowie), and Nate Thomas (Bowie), every child received a tote bag



Carolina Giraldo (Volunteers Relations Coordinator, Family Housing – SOME), Jennifer Fox-Thomas (SOME), Agent Itzabel Mayrant (State Farm), Giovanni Faisca, Jr. (State Farm)

filled with three brand new, high-quality books and literacy materials to take home and keep as their own.

RIF Literacy Kits provide students with critical access to books and resources. As part of this year's Good Neighbor Citizenship Grant, RIF and State Farm are supporting 1,000 students in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. Thirteen (13) State Farm agents across the District of Columbia and Maryland brought together their offices to assemble 1,000 Literacy Kits each and personally deliver them to schools in their local community. Research has shown that when children have access to books, they enjoy reading and they read more. And when children read more, they become accomplished readers. With 3,000 books and supplemental resources provided to these children and their educators, parents and caregivers, State Farm hopes to create a culture of literacy in the communities in which its employees live and work. Parents and caregivers can continue to encourage reading at home by visiting <https://www.rif.org/literacy-central> to find free reading activities, videos, parent guides, and much more.

"Reading Is Fundamental is committed to creating a culture of literacy in communities nationwide, and reading helps to ensure every child has the fundamental building blocks needed to achieve in life," says Reading Is Fundamental President and CEO, Alicia Levi. "For more than 50 years, Reading Is Fundamental has supported communities with the books and resources needed to impact children. We are excited to partner with State Farm to bring this support to these schools and believe that together we can make a difference."



PHOTOS COURTESY STATE FARM

Agent Joe Mitchell (State Farm), Rosa Fenwick, Parent Engagement Assistant (Judge Sylvania Woods Elementary), Phi Thach, Community School Coordinator (Judge Sylvania Woods Elementary), Dr. Sandra Bunns, Assistant Principal (Judge Sylvania Woods Elementary), Agent Nate Thomas (State Farm), Agent Shanna Stringfield (State Farm), Agent Nurney Mason (State Farm), Barbara Holt Streeter, Partnership Officer (Prince George's County Public Schools).

The mission of State Farm® is to help people manage the risks of everyday life, recover from the unexpected, and realize their dreams. State Farm and its affiliates are the largest providers of auto and home insurance in the United States. Its 19,300 agents and nearly 55,000 employees serve approximately 86 million policies and accounts—which includes auto, fire, life, health, commercial policies and financial services accounts. Commercial auto insurance, along with coverage for renters, business owners, boats and motorcycles, is available. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm

family of companies. State Farm is ranked No. 39 on the 2021 Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, visit <http://www.statefarm.com>.

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) is committed to a literate America by inspiring a passion for reading among all children, providing quality content to create impact, and engaging communities in the solution to give every child the fundamentals for success. As the nation's largest nonprofit organization for children's literacy, RIF has provided more than 420 million books to over 100 million kids in all 50 states, inspiring generations to read, learn and grow. For more information, visit [RIF.org](http://rif.org).

Town of Upper Marlboro Designated as a Main Street Affiliate By Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

"This designation will assist us in our ongoing efforts to further improve the downtown business community."

By RAY FELDMANN
Town of Upper Marlboro

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Nov. 17, 2021)—The Town of Upper Marlboro in Prince George's County has been named a Main Street Affiliate by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Mayor Linda Pennoyer announced today. Additionally, DHCD has approved the boundaries that the Town proposed in its application as the primary area of focus for the Main Street Affiliate Commercial District.

Those approved boundaries are located primarily in the Water Street-Main Street-Church Street section of downtown.

"This is more positive recognition for the Town of Upper Marlboro from the State of Maryland," Mayor Pennoyer said. "This designation will assist us in our ongoing efforts to further improve the downtown business community. We are very appreciative of this designation, and we look forward to working with

DHCD in the coming months to help us meet our ambitious goals.

"We express our sincere thanks and gratitude to DHCD Secretary Kenneth Holt, Community Access and Partnership Director Amy Seitz, and Project Manager Christine McPheron," the Mayor added.

The Town of Upper Marlboro was notified of its Main Street Affiliate designation in a letter from Seitz to Mayor Pennoyer.

"We will work with you to develop your own Affiliate Action Plan," Seitz stated, "that will provide information on resources you can access to meet your specific commercial district goals, as identified in your application.

"The purpose of this program is to assist smaller towns and communities with their economic development strategies," Seitz added, "based on the best practices of the Main Street Maryland Program and the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach."

Mayor Pennoyer recently announced that two new businesses had opened in the down-

town business district within the past six months, despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic and related labor shortages.

"While we were thrilled to welcome these new businesses to our Town," the Mayor said, "we look forward to adding more in the months ahead."

Main Street Maryland is a comprehensive downtown revitalization program created in 1998 by DHCD. The program strives to strengthen the economic potential of Maryland's traditional main streets and neighborhoods. Designated Main Street Maryland communities have made a commitment to improve the economy, appearance, and image of their traditional downtown business districts.

To accomplish Main Street goals, DHCD has partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center, which developed the Main Street Approach for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization.

County Council Adopts Resolution Detailing Special Election

Process in Place to Fill District 8 Vacancy

By ANGELA J. ROUSON
Prince George's County
Council Media

The Prince George's County Council, on Monday, November 15, 2021, adopted CR-135-2021, declaring a vacancy on the County Council created by the November 8, 2021, resignation of District 8 Council Member Monique Anderson-Walker. CR-135-2021 establishes dates for conducting the Special Primary Election and the Special Election to fill the Council vacancy and sets the certification of candidacy deadline.

The Special Primary Election has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 4, 2022. The Special Election will be held on Tuesday, February 1, 2022. Certificate of candidacy must be filed with the Board of Elections by Tuesday, December 7, 2021.

Pursuant to County Charter Section 309, a Special Election must be held to fill a vacancy on the Council, in

this case, defined as the resignation of a Council Member, occurring within the first three years of a term. Section 2-104 of the County Code provides that when there is a vacancy in the office of a Council Member during the first three years of a term, the Council, within seven days, shall adopt a Resolution directing that a special primary election and a special election by the registered voters of the Council District concerned, be held to fill the vacancy.

District 8 includes the constituent areas of Andrews Air Force Base, Camp Springs, Clinton, Forest Heights, Fort Washington, Glass Manor, Marlow Heights, Oxon Hill, and Temple Hills.

For election details, please contact the Prince George's County Board of Elections at 301-341-7300 or visit [online at https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/559/Board-of-Elections](https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/559/Board-of-Elections)

Billing Questions Plague Health Providers in Maryland

By TRISHA AHMED
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 17, 2021)—Behavioral health providers, who offered mental health services and substance use treatment during the pandemic, are locked in a dispute with the Maryland Department of Health over how many millions of dollars the

providers must pay back to the state.

The problems began after a new billing management company engaged by the state—touted as a money-saving move—took over reimbursements for behavioral health providers early last year.

The Maryland Department of Health reported it overpaid behavioral health providers through

Medicaid and state programs by more than \$359 million by October 2020, according to a health department presentation to state legislators in November.

But providers and advocates said the state, and its administrative services contractor, have not produced sufficient documentation to prove the overpayments.

Advocates for behavioral

health providers and health department officials met virtually with state legislators on Nov. 4 to give updates on the issue that has lasted nearly two years.

The overpayments happened after UnitedHealth Group/Optum Maryland, a health department ad-

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Morningside celebrates its seniors with a Thanksgiving Luncheon

After last year's virtual lunch, it was good to be back in person (and masked) this year at the Town Hall for the annual Seniors' Luncheon. Now, I don't really live in Morningside, but every year I get an invitation. That's special.

Mayor Benn Cann opened the celebration with welcome and a prayer before inviting us to sit down to a delicious turkey dinner, replete with mashed potatoes & gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, string beans, rolls and beverages. Dessert was a choice of assorted cakes and apple or pumpkin pie. (I chose pumpkin pie.)

Servers were Karen Rooker, Regina Foster, Sharon Fowler, Mike Johnson and Councilman John Anthony.

There was an early drawing, by Mayor Cann, for prizes. Winners were Bonnie Kamenicky, Helen Nichols, Mary Lampson—and me.

I enjoyed visiting with other guests, hoping to drum up news for this column. I didn't get any.

I left after lunch so I could work on the column (which I do every Thursday) but, as I was leaving, Morningside Police Sgt. Szmidi was calling the numbers for bingo. I had given my bingo card to seatmate Marge Trembly and have just learned that it produced one of the wins. They're holding my prize for me.

Thank you, Morningside, for a delightful Thanksgiving.

Neighbors and other good people

Judy Nyers thanked me for Tom Stakem's obit in last week's column. She wrote that her husband grew up across the street from the Stakems and that "the boys were all in Boy Scouts together."

Naomi Gallegos, my granddaughter, passed her national board exam on Nov. 13 and is now a licensed histologist in the pathology lab at the University of North Carolina Hospital, Chapel Hill.

You might wonder what a histologist is. I looked it up: A histologist prepares tissue samples for a pathologist to study. As a histologist, you are specially trained to cut samples from organs or other pieces of tis-

sue and stain them with materials such as dyes, which can aid in microscopic tissue analysis.

Town of Morningside

I talked with Morningside Chief Wesley Stevenson at the Luncheon. He was asked if Morningside has any problem with crime. He said there was nothing special in the town, but in the surrounding area there have been several car-jackings. Also, car thefts sometimes with children left inside. He said you must lock your car, and if you can't take your purse with you, lock it in the trunk.

Breakfast with Santa in Morningside is coming up on December 18. I'll soon have details.

Festival of Lights opening Nov. 26

The Winter Festival of Lights will shine bright this holiday season at Watkins Regional Park with 3 miles of drive-through whimsical lights! Dates are Nov. 26 to Jan. 2, nightly, 5 to 9:30.

For your safety and the safety of our staff, they suggest you purchase tickets online at pgparksdirect.com. Save Time! Save Money! Buy Online! Cars pay \$8 with online purchases or pay \$10 admission at the gate. Face coverings are required if interacting with personnel.

To avoid longer than usual wait times, they encourage the public to attend the Festival on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evenings. On Saturdays and Sundays, please arrive before 6 p.m.

Changing landscape

The U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree will be visiting Andrews on its way to the West Lawn of the Capitol. Festivities during its visit will include food trucks, ornament making, games, music from the Air Force Band Brass Quartet, and banner-signing (to be hung with the tree). Activities are limited to DoD ID holders.

Surratts-Clinton Library has opened a pop-up location at Davies Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 7400 Temple Hill Road, to provide books, computers, browsing, reference, material requests, WIFI, and returns. Hours are Tuesday and Thursday,

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This service provides us with library service until the beautiful new Surratts-Clinton Branch opens in 2022.

CVS will close hundreds of drugstores over the next three years. No word on whether it will involve our CVS stores.

A home at 4104 Skyline Drive, in Morningside, recently sold for \$369,000.

Mary's COVID-19 report: 11 more Marylanders die

Education officials in Maryland are rethinking the state's mask mandate for schools, and how long it needs to continue.

However, there were 781 more COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, Nov. 17, bringing the Maryland total to a whopping 573,835.

And 11 more Marylanders died, bringing that total to 11,086.

Sharon Chalmers, taught reading, loved to discuss books

Sharon Ann Chalmers, 74, La Reine HS graduate, teacher at Thomas Stone, died Oct. 26. She was the daughter of Catherine "Kitty" and Todd Stoffel.

She graduated from Trinity College in Washington and taught English literature for 12 years at Cardinal Gibbons HS in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., before returning to the DC area. She taught for 25 years at Thomas Stone High School in Waldorf.

She met her husband Walter Stoffel on a blind date, and they had 52 happy years together. They enjoyed running and biking together. Sharon raced in many 10Ks and completed a half-marathon.

She's survived by her husband Walt, and many in-laws and cousins. Viewing and Mass were at St. John's in Clinton.

Sharon loved books—her favorite, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Stephanie White and Devin Kane Blade, Nov. 29; Karen Windsor, Alexis R. Paige, Ramona Britt, Patricia Branch and Kimberly White, Nov. 30; Mary Doyle, Susan McKay and Jon Foster, Dec. 1; John Anthony, Jr., Vonn Branch and Tyonda Simms-Taylor, Dec. 2.

Email me at muddmm@aol.com with the date of your birthday or anniversary.

Around the Area

Governor Hogan Announces State of Maryland Joins National Climate Challenge To Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 17, 2021)—Governor Larry Hogan today announced Maryland as the first state in the country to become a partner in the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Better Climate Challenge. The "lead by example" partnership agreement, signed by Secretary Ben Grumbles of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), commits the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in state government operations by at least 50% within 10 years.

"Our administration continues to set an example by identifying energy efficiency opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our state buildings," said Governor Hogan. "Maryland has one of the nation's most comprehensive, detailed, and balanced plans to address and mitigate climate change, and this partnership only strengthens our efforts."

Maryland is already a partner to DOE's Better Building Challenge, in which the Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) Office of Energy and Sustainability tracked a 20% energy consumption reduction across a state agency building portfolio of 9 million square feet from a 2008 baseline in 2015, five years ahead of its 2020 goal. In 2020, Maryland set a second Better Climate Challenge goal of a 15% reduction in energy use from a 2018 baseline by 2029 across a broader portfolio of 90.7 million square feet, which includes the University System of Maryland campuses.

"Our commitment to climate progress in the built environment means robust partnerships to shrink greenhouse gas emissions, while growing the economy and strengthening community resilience," said Secretary Grumbles of MDE.

The new Better Climate Challenge energy savings goal is a complement to Governor Hogan's 2019 executive order, "Energy Savings Goals for State Government," which seeks to produce positive environmental, fiscal, and health benefits for all Marylanders by reducing energy use and carbon emissions across the entire portfolio of state-owned buildings. DGS coordinates with other state agencies in the effort to achieve the goal in the executive order, and DGS will take the lead on coordinating with DOE to accomplish the carbon reduction goal in the Better Climate Challenge.

"Our Office of Energy and Sustainability works diligently to ensure that purchases of equipment and commodities, and the consumption of energy in state operations minimizes costs, enhances sustainability, and achieves the state's climate goals," said Secretary Ellington E. Churchill, Jr. of DGS. "DGS looks forward to working with other state agencies to bring this 50% greenhouse gas reduction goal to fruition."

Maryland has long been a leader in the fight against climate change, with recent actions, laws, and partnerships to strengthen our efforts. In 2020, the World Resources Institute ranked Maryland first among 50 states at reducing greenhouse gas emissions while growing their economy. Maryland's partnership with DOE in the Better Climate Challenge dovetails well with the state's comprehensive greenhouse gas reduction plan, which has a goal of a 50% reduction from 2006 levels by 2030.

—Shareese Churchill, Office of the Governor

BGE Warns Customers to Be Aware of Scams During the Holiday Season

BALTIMORE (Nov. 17, 2021)—With the holiday season quickly approaching, BGE is supporting International Fraud Awareness Week and recognizing the sixth annual Utility Scam Awareness Day by reminding customers to be on the lookout for imposters using energy-related scams to steal money and personal information. This year utility companies across the country are asking customers to "End the Call. End the Scam."

While scams occur throughout the year, the company sees an increase in scam reports during the holiday season. Additionally, imposters are taking advantage of the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and pressuring families and businesses who may be struggling with past-due balances.

Since January, BGE has received over 7,700 scam complaints with customers reporting losing close to \$237,000 to utility scammers and imposters. This is a dramatic increase in the amount of money paid to scammers compared to the same time last year. In 2020, the company received roughly the same number of scam complaints during the same timeframe, close to 7,800, but customers reported losing around \$166,000 to utility scammers, nearly \$72,000 less than this year. Any success helps fuel scammers to make more attempts, so customers are urged to please be vigilant in stopping every attempt.

"Utilities United Against Scams day continues to be a very important opportunity for BGE to reach out to remind our customers to stay vigilant because these scammers are constantly changing their tactics," said Chima Chijioko, vice president of customer operations for BGE. "It is so disappointing that these scammers continue to use this time of health and financial uncertainty to attempt to deceive our customers. We also want to remind customers that disconnection is a last resort, and we want to help customers who may be behind. Any customer who is experiencing a hardship or difficulty with their bill should call BGE immediately at 1-800-685-0123."

Currently the most prevalent scam calls are automated "robo" calls asking customers to pay immediately in order avoid disconnection. Also, a number of customers have reported receiving text messages with payment demands followed by receiving a QR code to be used for payment at a cryptocurrency machine. As a reminder, BGE will never send a single notification to a customer within one hour of a service interruption for nonpayment and will never ask customers to make payments with a pre-paid debit card, gift card, or any form of cryptocurrency.

"Customers shouldn't be fooled by payment pressure tactics," said BGE Security Manager Todd Powell. "Almost of all the victims

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Last week Wednesday, November 10, 2021, Office of Alumni Engagement celebrated our Bowie State Alumni Educators with Shinzira Shomade ('16). BSU College of professional Studies Retention Specialist discussed how her research is aiding to increase student success.

Follow the virtual conversation on all social media platforms! Facebook: [@bsuoa](https://www.facebook.com/bsuoa), Twitter: [@BSUALumniOffice](https://twitter.com/BSUALumniOffice), Instagram: [@Bowiealum](https://www.instagram.com/Bowiealum).

Want to stay in the loop with BSU? Make sure you check your inbox every Saturday at 7 a.m. for the latest issue of BSU At a Glance. Highlighting BSU news, events, and alumni profiles. BSU At a Glance is a quick read to keep yourself up to date with your alma mater.

KUDOS TO BSU ALUMNI

Bowie State Head Football Coach Damon Wilson ('00 & '21) was voted CIAA Coach of the Year for the second straight session by league media and coaches. Wilson led Bowie State to a 9-1 regular season, including 9-0 against Division II competition, and a third consecutive CIAA Northern Division crown with a 7-0 record in conference play. Wilson and Bowie State have been in the Division II Top 25 all season, ranking as high as no. 8 nationally in one poll, and will play for their third straight poll, and played for their third straight CIAA championship November 13, 2021.

The 2022 CIAA Basketball tournament will be held February 22-26, 2022, at Royal Farms Arena in Baltimore. #TheLegacyLive-on. Stay connected. Website: [bsubulldogs.com](https://www.bsubulldogs.com), Facebook: [@BSUBulldogs](https://www.facebook.com/BSUBulldogs), Twitter: [@BSU_Sports_Info](https://twitter.com/BSU_Sports_Info), Instagram: [@BowieStateBulldogs](https://www.instagram.com/BowieStateBulldogs).

CALLING ALL BSU ALUMNI

If you have moved or changed your email or mailing address, please let us know. By keeping your information current, you will continue to receive BSU news and updates. Update your current information. For questions and support, send an email to the Advancement Services Office at advancementservices@bowiestate.edu or call 301-860-4301.

JAMES E. PROCTOR, JR. FORUM

The Bowie State University College of Education presented the Fourth Annual James E. Proctor Jr. Forum on Education, Leadership & Innovation Wednesday, November 17, 2021, at 7 p.m. This lively discussion with fellow educators and supporters of the Bowie State University College of Education focused on the future of education post pandemic. The event was livestreamed. Area Superintendents headlined the 2021 Proctor Forum. The featured Panel Discussion was Moving Forward after COVID-19.

Superintendent Darryl Williams, Baltimore County Public Schools, Interim Superintendent Monifa McKnight ('04) Mont-

gomery County Public Schools and Superintendent Monica Goldson ('00) Prince George's County Public Schools were on the panel.

From its very founding mission to educate the state's newly emancipated citizens, Bowie State University continues to prepare teachers to meet the needs of today's students.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY WINTER COMMENCEMENT

Bowie State 2021 Winter Commencement will be held on Wednesday, December 22, 2021, at 10 a.m. in the AC Jordan Arena, Leonidas S. James Physical Complex. The live ceremony can be viewed online at bowiestate.edu/commencement.

Global Leader and SHRM President Johnny C. Taylor, Jr. to address Bowie State University Graduates. About six hundred students to receive their degrees at Winter Commencement. Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., President and CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) will address six hundred Bowie State University graduates at the winter Commencement. An honorary Doctor of Humane letters degree will also be awarded to Mr. Taylor.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Festival of Lights will be held nightly from 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Friday, November 26, 2021–Sunday, January 2, 2022. Free admission November 29 & December 25 in appreciation to the residents of Prince George's County for their year-round support of the Department of Parks and Recreation programs. Make a difference this season! Please bring canned goods for donation to local Food Banks.

WATKINS REGIONAL PARK: NEW ENTRANCE THIS YEAR. To enter: Please enter along Route 202/Largo Road. (NO ENTRY ACCESS ON ROUTE 193. YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ROUTE 202). Entrance Location: Across the street from Riverdale Baptist School, 1133 Largo Road, Upper Marlboro 20774. Phone: 301-699-2456; Maryland Relay 7-1-1 for customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability.

Overview: The Winter Festival of Lights will shine bright this holiday season with three miles of drive-through whimsical lights. Experience dazzling scenes that celebrate the magic of the holiday season from the comfort of your own car.

For your safety and the safety of our staff, please purchase tickets online at pgparksdirect.com. Save time, save money, buy online. Cars pay \$8 with online purchases or \$10 admission at the gate. Van/Limo pays \$20. Bus pays \$30. Face coverings are required if interacting with personnel.

To avoid longer than usual wait times, we encourage the public to attend the Festival on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday evenings. On Saturdays and Sundays, please arrive before 6 p.m.

*Happy Thanksgiving
To All My Readers!*

See BE AWARE OF SCAMS Page A5

COMMUNITY

Live and Virtual Winter Tour Presentations at Marietta House Museum

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

Please join us this season as we present two options for our winter tour at Marietta House Museum.

Virtual: On Thursday, **December 2**, 6:30–8 p.m. We present Marietta's Virtual Winter Tour, a wintertime virtual tour of the fabulously decorated Marietta House. This season we will present historian Marvin-Alonzo Greer as he discusses Marietta's original kitchen and recipes and foodways of the enslaved once at Marietta.

Enjoy the lavishly dressed dessert tables and Victorian decorations. Hear about traditions of the families, free and enslaved, who lived here and other traditions of the winter season from Marietta staff. We will email a collection of recipes of foods depicted on the tour

before the presentation to registered virtual attendees. Especially live-recorded seasonal music will be performed before and after the tour by the Prince George's Philharmonic. All ages: \$5/person. Please register on Parks Direct or email stacey.hawkins@pgparks.com.

In-Person: On Saturday, **December 4**, 6:30–8:30 p.m., come for an in-person tour inside the wonderfully decorated Marietta House Museum for the annual Winter Open House event.

Visitors will meet historian Marvin-Alonzo Greer in the historic kitchen. He will be sharing stories and explanations about winter foodways of the free and enslaved population once at Marietta. Visitors will travel through the historic house meeting trained staff who will share stories about the Victorian Parlor and richly decorated dining

room with cakes, sugared fruits, and an array of marvelous desserts. Staff will also share information about the actual enslaved families and individuals who made such holiday meals and decorations possible for the Duvall family at Marietta in the nineteenth century. Enjoy the rich sounds of the Celtic harp music that will be played during the open house. A packet will be given to visitors that includes some of the recipes of foods depicted on the tour.

Space will be limited to 5 persons per room at any time. All ages: \$10/person, (12 & under free). Please register on Parks Direct or email stacey.hawkins@pgparks.com.

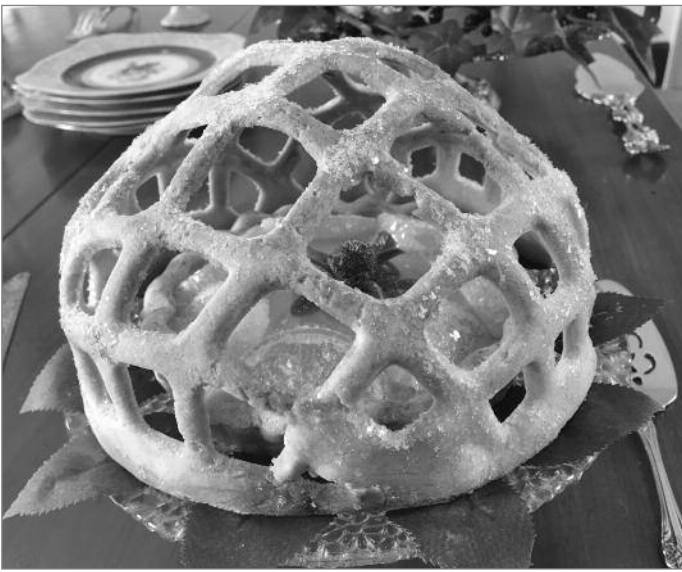
Marietta is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD 20769 and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.



PHOTOS COURTESY MARIETTA HOUSE MUSEUM

Above, Julie Rose, director of Marietta House.

Below, desserts made by Marietta's Curator, Sue Allyn.



This is more than health care. It's a movement.
A commitment to changeUP your health
and the health of this community.

As part of University of Maryland Medical System, we're fulfilling our promise to step up health care in this region. We have more leading specialists and more of what you need including women's health, a Heart & Vascular Institute and a new primary and specialty care center in National Harbor. And, this summer, we're opening a state-of-the-art hospital in Largo and a health and wellness campus is on the horizon in Laurel.

It's time to changeUP how you feel about health care ... because a new era is here.

See how we are changing up health care for you at UMcapitalregion.org/changeUP.

We are here to
changeUP
your health.

BOWIE • CHEVERLY • LAUREL • NATIONAL HARBOR • SUITLAND



COMMENTARY

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

Honoring Sherrilyn Ifill

Sherrilyn Ifill, the wonderful President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF), just announced she will step down from LDF next spring. As the head of the nation's premier civil rights legal organization fighting for equal justice under the law, she has been an extraordinary voice in the struggle for racial justice and equality. Sherrilyn Ifill is a nationally recognized expert on voting rights and judicial selection and a scholar, teacher, author, and pioneer in so many areas, and she embodies the values of tolerance, respect, and appreciation of all differences

combined with an extraordinary intellect. Ifill has said when she was a child, Congresswomen Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan were her role models because she admired their moral power and the way they "commanded a room with just the force of their voices": "Because of them, I knew I wanted to speak truth to power. And they let me know that it was possible for an ordinary Black woman to do it." That is precisely what she has done at LDF.

As LDF's seventh Director-Counsel, she carried on a long legacy that started when Thurgood Marshall founded LDF in 1940. When I graduated from law school I went to work at LDF in New York City, where Julius Chambers and I were the first two Earl Warren fellows—a program designed to

train and support young lawyers seeking to practice civil rights law in the South—and then served as an LDF legal intern in Mississippi. I have cheered on her leadership of LDF during another critical time that has required fierce determination and vigilance against every new attempt to push our progress backwards.

Sherrilyn Ifill grew up listening to social and political commentary in family conversations in her living room (the same family that produced the late pioneering journalist Gwen Ifill, her first cousin), and knew she wanted to be a civil rights lawyer when she was nine or 10 years old. After graduating from law school she served first as a fellow at the American Civil Liberties Union and then for five years as an assistant counsel in LDF's New York office, where she litigated voting rights cases. She then spent twenty years as a tenured professor at the University of Maryland School of Law, continuing to litigate and consult on civil rights cases; establishing one of the first legal clinics in the nation focused on removing legal barriers for former prisoners preparing to reenter society; and publishing the searing book *On the Courthouse Lawn: Confronting the*

Legacy of Lynching in the 21st Century. In 2013, she returned to lead LDF.

Under her leadership LDF intensified its litigation challenging voter suppression, racial discrimination in the criminal justice system, and housing discrimination, and took a leadership role resisting federal efforts to roll back civil rights gains in affirmative action, employment discrimination, school discipline policies and more. LDF is also at the forefront of civil rights organizations challenging unconstitutional policing practices in cities around the country. Sherrilyn Ifill has been at the helm of LDF during a historical moment fraught with new 21st century threats and assaults on many fronts, and LDF's work under her tenure has been essential.

In January 2020 I had the pleasure of introducing her when she received the Choral Arts Society of Washington's Humanitarian Award at the annual choral tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a beloved tradition at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. That evening she agreed our nation

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COMMUNITY

Never Mind the Honeybee: Maryland Researchers Want More Buzz Over Saving Native Bee Species

By SHAUNEEN MIRANDA
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Nov. 17, 2021)—Although honeybees have captured national attention in an effort to "save the bees," some Maryland entomologists want to shift the focus toward native bee species that are in graver danger.

Bees are the most important pollinators on Earth, critical to populating native plants and fundamental to ensuring the abundance and variety of agricultural crops.

Misguided information on which bee species to save has created a media frenzy over protecting the honeybee despite research pointing to steady honeybee populations, experts say.

"The honeybee is not the bee we need to save because it's not endangered," said Dr. Nathalie Steinhauer, science coordinator for the Bee Informed Partnership Inc. and a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Maryland's Department of Entomology.

The honeybee is native to Europe, Africa and Asia. Early colonists brought these insects to the United States, where they now dominate research and general understanding of bees.

Beekeepers have managed to keep the overall number of honeybee colonies in North America stable over the last two decades, according to the Bee Informed Partnership, a coalition of researchers and labs established to improve the health and survival of honeybee colonies.

To be sure, pesticides, stress and diseases still hinder the health of honeybees nationwide.

But some native bee species, such as the rusty patched bumblebee, are truly endangered and often compete with honeybees to pollinate natural environments.

Part of the reason honeybees get so much attention stems from constant societal reinforcement of their importance.

"Culturally, other bees don't exist," said Sam Droegge, wildlife biologist for the U.S. Geological Survey's Eastern Ecological Science Center in Laurel, Maryland.

"That's why we don't know anything about (native bee species), and then when someone puts out a media report, a lot of it's really short," he said.

The Eastern Ecological Science Center houses the Native Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab, which develops tools and

The sweat bee, often found in a metallic green color, nests in soil. The bee is one of the Maryland native species scientists say needs more study.

COURTESY OF PHILLIP MOORE/U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY'S NATIVE BEE INVENTORY AND MONITORING LAB



surveys to identify native bee species.

Roughly 4,000 native bee species reside in North America and approximately 430 of those species inhabit Maryland, including at least 80 kinds of ground-dwelling mining bees, 20 species of leaf cutting bees, 10 types of bumblebees, plus carpenter bees, mason bees (they make mud nests) and squash bees (which live in the ground near pumpkins or squash plants).

But researching native bee species can be a daunting task, according to Jennifer Selfridge, the invertebrate ecologist for the Wildlife Heritage Program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Many native bee species are tiny and solitary, and bee sampling is a relatively new development in entomology.

"The desire is to want to lump them into one big study so you can understand them all, but they're very different," Selfridge said.

Selfridge said the Native Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab's location in Maryland has led to more data and research on native bee species compared to other states.

Even so, research on Maryland's native bee species lags behind research on other insects and invertebrates due to the limited funding and lack of long-term datasets.

"The funding that we have available to us is generally more geared toward rare, threatened and endangered things, so things that are really in trouble," Selfridge said.

Droegge said researchers often have to make crude inferences about native bee species in Maryland.

"You can't find them anymore" is not a great, very nuanced survey program," Droegge said.

"That's where we are. But worse is, things that are not bumblebees are so tiny, so obscure, we don't even know if they were there to begin with because we are describing entirely new species that weren't described before," he said.

Efforts to "save the bees"

grew out of human actions, including urbanization that destroys natural insect habitats, including harming bee populations.

"I really want to emphasize: we do know that nature is changing," Droegge said. "You don't put hoses on the ground and have positive benefits to nature."

Maryland plays a role in endangering native bee species as urbanization also decreases flower populations, which bees need for pollination and survival.

"And the fact that we're losing landscape to urbanization is something that's going to actually increase the impacts of climate change," Steinhauer said.

Droegge said increasing the diversity and number of flowers on Maryland's landscape could help native bee species survive.

"The state...is a big property owner, manager and a regulator, so you have regulations that surround a lot of things that would impact the number of flowers in the area, essentially," he said.

At the individual level, people can also make a positive impact on the future of bees.

As consumers, people can choose to support companies that make the effort to reduce the environmental impacts affecting bee populations, Steinhauer said.

Although commercial beekeeping helps with pollination and honey production, personal beekeeping can drive down the population of native bee species that compete with honeybees for pollination.

"If you're getting into honeybees because you want to save the environment, you're not—you're doing the opposite," Droegge said.

"Your hives are...not saving honeybees because honeybees have disease problems and your hive is probably a disease vector, if anything," he said.

The decline in populations of native bee species points to a larger biodiversity crisis facing the United States and the world, according to scientists.

"We are losing species at a rate that is faster than we've ever recorded in history," Steinhauer said. "Bees are not an exception."

Questions from A1

ministrative services contractor, failed to process claims shortly after taking over the billing system for behavioral health providers in January 2020.

In response to the system failure, the health department "directed Optum to make weekly estimated payments to the approximately 2,200 behavioral health providers in the state beginning on Jan. 23, 2020 and continuing through August 3, 2020," according to a report from the department last year.

Those weekly payments were calculated for each provider based on their 2019 historical payment average, the report said.

"This crash of the system was occurring during a pandemic, when the providers ... were essential workers providing essential services," Del. Heather Bagnall, D-Anne Arundel, said at the meeting.

The weekly payments in 2020 were based on historical volumes, but health care services were underutilized during that period and resulted in overpayments, said Steven Schuh, deputy secretary of health care financing and Medicaid director at the Maryland Department of Health.

"Maryland has a legal and moral responsibility to our federal and state taxpayers" to get money from overpayments back, Schuh said.

As of October, the outstanding balance for overpayments was about \$230 million, Schuh said, as some providers already paid money back, and more are expected to pay in the spring.

"As things stand today, we frankly are pleased with the progress that is being made," Optum executive Chad Burkholder said during the meeting. "We believe that the system is functioning ... on a very consistent basis (now)."

Additionally, Schuh said that certain providers who owe \$10,000 or less will not have to pay any money back, as the health department hopes to "eliminate the burden on small, community-based providers."

Other providers—including hospitals, laboratories and out-of-state providers—must still pay money back, even if they owe less than \$10,000, Schuh said.

Providers Disputed The Numbers

Providers at the meeting questioned the accuracy of Optum and the health department's numbers for overpayment amounts.

"We have to be able to check

Optum's math. Unfortunately, their system is a mess," said Lori Doyle, public policy director at Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland, an advocacy organization for providers.

The health department's outstanding balance for overpayments included claims that were marked paid though the provider did not receive payment, claims that Optum denied in error, and retracted claims from 2019, according to Doyle's presentation on Nov. 4.

"Our numbers are pretty far apart—what Optum thinks we owe and what providers think they owe," Doyle said.

Nearly 40% of surveyed providers said their repayment numbers differ from Optum's by 60% or more, according to Doyle's presentation.

"In a time where there is a workforce shortage ... (providers) are being faced with the administrative burden of having to go through all these claims," said Michael Oliver, who represented the Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence at the meeting.

For months, Oliver said, providers have asked for their full claims processing history. This could help them to more easily verify the amounts they must pay the state, advocates said.

At the meeting, Del. Geraldine Valentino-Smith, D-Prince George's, asked whether the health department has insisted on getting this full claims history from Optum.

Schuh replied, "We have asked for that information, and the system is apparently incapable of providing it."

In April, state legislators had requested the health department provide behavioral health providers their full claims history by August, according to a state budget report.

"There has been an admission from the department that the system is not able to provide the full claims history," Del. Kirill Reznik, D-Montgomery, chair of one of the House subcommittees that held the meeting.

Reznik said that he may talk with the state's attorney general about bringing an independent auditor—at Optum's expense—to do the full reconciliation, outside of the health department and behavioral health providers.

"This whole thing is not gonna be resolved until the next governor is in office. ... We may have a new secretary of health. It may be a long time," Reznik said.

"We're not there, but it is my hope that 2022 is the year we get there," Reznik said, ending the meeting.

Optum Behavioral Health spokesperson Christine Hauser wrote in an email to Capital News Service, "As Optum and MDH have made clear, providers currently have the claims information necessary to balance their books and begin repayment of overpayments."

"We will continue to offer one-on-one technical support and explore additional requests to assist them," Hauser wrote.

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Earth TALK™ Greener Dishwashing: Is Handwashing or the Dishwasher Better?

Dear EarthTalk:

My husband thinks it's better for the planet to hand-wash dishes in the sink, but it seems to me using the dishwasher is more eco-friendly. Can you settle this debate for us?

—Chris B., Bowie, MD

Hands-down, the dishwasher is the way to go, not only from the standpoint of water waste and energy use but also to preserve your own sanity. Who needs to be scrubbing, rinsing and drying dishes all day when an efficient machine can do the work? Modern dishwashers use much less water and energy than their forebears, so you can clean up after your meals and snacks quickly and without guilt just by filling up the dishwasher and hitting the “start” button.

It's not surprising that many of us still think handwashing is better, given that the dishwashers of yesteryear used 10–15 gallons of water per cycle. But dishwashers sold today in the United States can only use a maximum of five gallons per cycle per the mandate of the U.S. Department of Energy. And to qualify for one of the federal government's EnergySTAR labels identifying especially efficient appliances, dishwashers must max out their water use at 3.5 gallons per cycle.

Meanwhile, handwashing the same number of dishes, pots and pans as you can fit in the dishwasher typically “consumes” some 27 gallons of water, according to a study by researchers at Germany's University of Bonn. (They also found that some people can handwash a load of dishes with as little as 8.7 gallons of water while others use as many as 116 gallons!)

“The average kitchen faucet has a flow rate of 2.2 gallons per minute, meaning that you'd only have two minutes to wash an entire dishwasher's worth of dishes to match a dishwasher's water efficiency,” reports Savannah Sher on BobVila.com. “It would be nearly impossible to use less than five gallons of water to hand wash a full load of dishes.”

And if you're going to use the dishwasher anyway, save yourself even more hot water by skipping the sink pre-rinse and just loading those dirty dishes right into the bottom rack.



IMAGE CREDIT: WENDELIN, PEXELS.COM

Running a full load of dishes in the dishwasher is much greener when it comes to energy and water usage than handwashing the same amount of dishes.

“Scrape big chunks of leftover food into the trash, but pre-rinsing isn't necessary with modern dishwashers because they have sensors that adjust the wash cycle based on how dirty the dishes are,” says Consumer Reports' Perry Santanachote. In fact, unnecessary pre-rinsing can waste about 6,000 gallons of water per household per year.

These efficiency gains only apply to running your dishwasher when it's full. Rather than running the dishwasher with a half-load, wait until it fills up before hitting start. (Some units have a “rinse and hold” feature that pre-rinses what's in there so it's easier to clean when it does fill up later.) Of course, some items—cutting boards, silver flatware, cast iron cookware, non-stick pans—will still require handwashing, but you can always try to minimize your use of them accordingly.

CONTACTS: A European Comparison of Cleaning Dishes by Hand, <https://www.tempurl4.unibonn.de/forschung/haushaltstechnik/publikationen/edal-manualdishwashing-ht1>; Dishwasher vs. Hand Washing: When to Use Each Cleaning Method, <https://www.bobvila.com/articles/dishwasher-vs-handwashing/>; 9 Tricks That Save Tons of Water, <https://www.nrde.org/stories/9-tricks-save-tons-water>.

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Special Primary and General Election for Council District 8

The Prince George's County Board of Elections will conduct a Vote-By-Mail Special Election to fill the vacancy in County Council District 8. Ballots will be mailed to every eligible voter that resides in County Council District 8. Ballots will be mailed including postage-paid return envelopes in mid-December 2021 for the Special Primary Election and in mid-January 2022 for the Special General Election.

NOTE: Only Democrats and Republicans that reside in Council District 8 are eligible to vote in the Special Primary Election.

In-person voting will also be offered at the Southern Regional Technical Center located at:

7007 Bock Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744.

The dates and times are as follows:

SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

- Special Primary Election Day is Tuesday, January 4, 2022. The in-person voting center will be open from 7am-8pm.
- Early voting will be conducted on December 27- December 30, 2021 and January 3, 2022 (from 10am-8pm each day), and on Sunday, January 2, 2022 (from 12pm – 6pm).
- The Early Voting Center will be closed on Friday, December 31st and Saturday, January 1st in observance of the New Year's Holiday.

SPECIAL GENERAL ELECTION

- Special General Election Day is Tuesday, February 1, 2022. The in-person voting center will be open from 7am – 8pm.
- Early voting will be conducted on January 26–January 29, 2022 and January 31, 2022 (from 10am-8pm each day), and on Sunday, January 30, 2022 (from 12pm – 6pm).

The Candidate Filing Deadline is Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 9pm.

NOTE: In addition to the filing documents, candidates must prepare a maximum of 500-word statement that will be included in the ballot packet to voters.

The Voter Registration/Party Affiliation Deadline for County Council District 8 residents only is Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 5pm for the Special Primary Election.

Three ballot drop boxes will be available in County Council District 8 (locations will be posted on our website as soon as they have been determined).

Please contact The Prince George's County Board of Elections on 301-341-7300 or visit our website at elections.mypgc.us for additional information.

National Harbor Celebrates Small Businesses on Saturday, November 27

Free parking from noon to 6 p.m. on Shop Small Business Saturday

By VICKI BENDURE
National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Nov. 16, 2021)—National Harbor has become known for its unique, boutique shops. It also has a large number of women and minority owned small businesses. On Shop Small Business Saturday, National Harbor will celebrate these entrepreneurs by offering free parking in the garages and parking lots to the public from noon to 6 p.m.

“National Harbor has long been known for its great mix of unique boutiques and national brands,” said Deborah Topcik, director of marketing at National Harbor. “We love small businesses and our location has become a great spot for many entrepreneurs to launch highly successful retail and business concepts.”

The Waterfront District at National Harbor has more than 70 retailers and restaurants. Convenient parking and walkable streets make it an ideal destination for easy access to restaurants and holiday shopping. Here are some highlights of some of the unique shops, please visit www.nationalharbor.com/shopping/ to see the larger list of shopping options.

Brackish Waters (178 Waterfront St.) is a locally owned surf lifestyle store focusing on everyday apparel, accessories and footwear in addition to skate and surf boards.

BrookieGirl Bath + Body Care (145 Waterfront St.) is owned by veterans Shawn and Bobby Hand who created their own skincare products when they learned that their daughter was allergic to some skin care brands.

Corinto Gallery (131 American Way) is an art gallery and boutique in one, featuring unique DMV inspired creations from Artist, Josue Martinez, a multi-media artist who has made his art accessible for all by creating a Corinto Gallery clothing and accessory line as well. You can find clothing for and accessories for the whole family including the family pets!

Crystal Café by Faith 2 Fidelity (164 Waterfront St.) is a bracelet boutique with the motto, “feel good, do good.” It offers a wide array of bracelets for men and women including some with daily inspiration. The store allows customers to hand select from a vast collection of crystal beads and natural gem stones to design their own custom jewelry.

MahoganyBooks (121 American Way) Opened this year at National Harbor, this is the second location for this bookstore in the D.C. region. The store specializes in books written for, by or about people of the African Diaspora. It was featured last February on the Today Show after being surprised by President Barack Obama during the store's virtual book club meeting.

Messy Treatz (185 Waterfront St.) Started as way for the owner to spend more quality time with her daughters doing something they love—baking. They offer a wide variety of desserts from cupcakes to pie sticks.

The Furlough Cheesecake (170 American Way) was started by two sisters after the federal government shutdown of 2019 when they found themselves furloughed. They started baking cheesecakes out of their

homes and their customer base exploded. In 2020 (during the pandemic,) they opened a store in National Harbor and gave more than 5,000 cheesecakes away to area healthcare workers.

ZAAF (189 Waterfront St.) is a premium lifestyle brand with goods made entirely in Africa. Items include beautiful high-end handbags, scarves, shoes and other accessories. It's a store that is truly unique and is helping artisans across Africa in a demonstration of social responsibility.

Abai Schulze is the Founder and Creative Director of ZAAF. Her life journey has taken her from an orphanage in Addis Ababa to the United States and the rest of the world. Abai is committed to using her academic background in economics and fine arts from her alma mater George Washington University to create unique and practical expressions of beauty.

These stores join other popular locations including Muse Paintbar, America!, Alex and Ani, A Beautiful Closet, Ben & Jerry's, Build-A-Bear Workshop, Carhartt, Cariloha Bamboo, Comfort One Shoes, Community Love, Corinto Gallery, Del Sol Color Change, Georgetown Olive Oil, Girlkin Lashes, House of Jonlei Atelier, Miguel Wilson, New York New York, Panda Tea House, Pepper Palace, Potomac Gourmet Market, Roll by Goodyear, Savannah's Candy Kitchen, plus another 85 brand names at Tanger Outlets and more boutique shops at MGM National Harbor. And, there are more than 30 restaurants!

For more information on National Harbor, visit www.nationalharbor.com.

Retailers Predicting Highest Sales on Record for 2021 Holiday Season

By SARAH PRICE
Maryland Retailers Association

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 12, 2021)—Retail holiday sales in 2021 are expected to increase between 8.5–10% over the 2020 holiday season according to the National Retail Federation. Since 2009, sales in the industry have grown each year with the high reaching 8.2% in 2020 over 2019. Despite the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and many factors influencing economic unease such as supply chain issues, rising inflation, workforce shortages, and rising costs, consumer demand will be at the highest level ever. This is largely impacted by consumers spending less on travel, experiences, and dining out during the pandemic. Online sales are also projected to increase between 11–15% again as consumers are growing more accustomed to digital channels.

“Although online sales continue to boom and are a huge part of holiday shopping, brick

and mortar is doing well,” said Cailey Locklair, President of the Maryland Retailers Association. “Consumers should be reminded to support local stores as much as possible as they impact our communities with jobs and tax revenue to support the things we all care about.”

Consumer spending will continue to increase with a projected average of \$1,463 spent on holiday gifts, décor, and other items. Clothing and accessories, electronics, and gift cards are slated to be the highest spend categories this holiday season. Additionally, data from NRF's consumer survey showed that a majority of consumers plan to spend for the holidays online and with mass merchants. Independent stores followed with off-price stores closely behind.

For the past couple of years, businesses across Maryland were cautiously optimistic about the holiday season. However, the majority of our members felt they would have strong holiday seasons this

year when surveyed. Many retailers are banking on higher consumer traffic on exclusive sales and options to buy online and ship to their stores for pick-up as well as personalized, in-store experiences that cannot be replicated via online shopping. Top concerns cited by our members included supply chain issues and weather.

“Digital shopping is undoubtedly here to stay, but in-store shopping will regain some lost ground this season,” said Ms. Locklair. “As concerns with the pandemic have eased, the seven-year low we saw at brick-and-mortar stores during the season last year will reverse. However, consumers prefer delivery to all shopping methods and will look to the internet for inspiration and research.”

MRA's holiday forecast is based on member surveys in conjunction with a review of the National Retail Federation's holiday forecast, consumer trends, and historical retail sales data.

Be Aware of Scams from A2

we've heard from say the urgency of the call kept them from trusting their instincts. These types of forceful calls are never legitimate, and customers should disengage immediately and call BGE at 1-800-685-0123.”

BGE customers also continue to receive calls where scammers claim the meter needs to be switched out immediately or power will be turned off. These claims are followed by a demand for immediate payment that includes Cashapp, Bitcoin, Zelle or Green Dot payment methods. Some

of these calls end with the scammers texting a barcode to the customer for immediate payment.

It is important to remind our customers that they can easily check their current bill information by going to BGE My Account online, downloading BGE's Mobile App, or by calling Paymentus to check on their account balance at 1-833-209-5245. We also encourage customers to learn more about energy assistance currently available to help meet their energy needs. BGE's Customer Care Center received nearly 442,000 calls related to

Keep Healthy for the Holidays

FAMILY FEATURES

During this year's holidays, many families are looking forward to celebrating a closer-to-normal season. However, that means staying healthy and keeping all kinds of germs at bay, including seasonal cold and flu bugs.

"With life getting back to normal, we are expecting a more severe cold and flu season than we encountered last year," said Dr. Jennifer Caudle, family physician. "It's important to both take preventative measures and stay prepared for keeping symptoms at bay. I recommend looking for over-the-counter medicines with active ingredients like dextromethorphan and guaifenesin, which help relieve both cough and chest congestion."

Practice good hygiene. Washing your hands has become a common refrain throughout the pandemic because it's a simple and effective way to keep germs away, whether they're of the global pandemic variety or a common cold. As you're out shopping and mingling this holiday season, you're likely to come into contact with more germ-laden surfaces than usual. Shopping carts, doors and public restrooms are major culprits, so carry sanitizer and be sure to give your hands a thorough wash when you get home.

Treat symptoms. While addressing the symptoms of an illness won't necessarily make it go away, it can ease your discomfort while it runs its course. An option like Mucinex 12 HR Extended Release Tablets provides relief for 12 hours by helping thin and loosen mucus to relieve chest congestion. The tablets are also available in a DM formula, which provides relief for both wet and dry coughs.



Photos courtesy of Getty Images



Protect your immune system. A healthy immune system helps your body fight off germs so you don't get sick, or if you do come down with a cold or the flu, you may have a milder, shorter illness. Getting plenty of rest, staying well hydrated, eating well-balanced and nutrient-rich meals and getting plenty of regular physical activity can all help keep your body in good condition to fight off seasonal germs.

Keep your medicine cabinet stocked. There's hardly anything worse than waking in the middle of the night with a cough or sinus trouble and discovering your medicine cabinet is empty. Be proactive by restocking on over-the-counter basics to help keep your symptoms in check. It's also a good idea to check the expiration dates of any medications you do have on hand and replace anything that is out of date.

Be mindful of spreading germs. If you do get sick, you can take steps to protect your loved ones. If possible, stay home

until your symptoms have passed and you're less likely to be contagious. Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneezing into your elbow if you don't have a tissue, can be effective in preventing the spread of germs.

Know when to consult a doctor. In most cases, minor cold symptoms don't require a visit to the doctor (unless you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and need to arrange for testing). However, if symptoms don't resolve within a week, grow worse in a short period of time or aren't responding to over-the-counter medicines to ease your symptoms, it's a good idea to schedule an appointment with your doctor or at least speak with a triage nurse for advice.

Find more resources to help you prepare stay healthy for the holidays at Mucinex.com.

Make the Holidays COLORFUL

Creative gift ideas for children

FAMILY FEATURES

Seeing a child's face light up with excitement during the holiday season is a sight that can bring feelings of joy to everyone gathered around to celebrate.

Though many wish lists are filled with tech gadgets and gizmos, gifts that allow kids to explore their artistic sides and foster imaginative play are still popular picks as well. For example, options like these from the Crayola Scribble Scrubbie line can spark young imaginations and encourage children to express themselves creatively and colorfully. A perfect option for animal lovers, these themed playsets allow girls and boys to unlock endless hours of playful fun as they color, wash and color their pets again.

Find more inspiration for presents that allow kids to create colorful memories this holiday season at crayola.com/product-feature/scrabble-scrubbie-pets.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Scan to Learn More



Colorful Pet Fun in the Clouds

With colored pets for added fun and excitement, kids can take imaginative play to new environments this holiday season with an option like the Scribble Scrubbie Peculiar Pets Cloud Clubhouse. The set includes Crayola's most recent innovation: colored pets. Featuring a Uni-Owl and Uni-Koala as well as a rainbow slide, a rainwater shower, three washable markers and a cloud environment that doubles as a storage solution, the entire collection is washable so children can color and customize then wash and color again.



Reimagine Underwater Animals

Take your gift giving off the beaten bath this year and help kids dive into adventure with an award-winning present like the Crayola Scribble Scrubbie Ocean Pets Lagoon Playset. Young explorers can add bright, fun designs to shark, octopus, whale and clownfish pets. Using the six included washable markers, children can color and customize the ocean pets for nearly endless underwater imagination. Then simply dip the pets in the kid-powered lagoon shower to wash in style before recoloring and playing again and again.



