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PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The grand prize winner of an HP laptop was Kimberly Perez Toro, a student at Suitland High School in Prince George's County. The winning entry was entitled "Moe Jr."

Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles Honors Student Artists at 20th Annual Rethink Recycling Sculpture Contest

Annual awards promote recycling and creativity among high school students

By JAY APPERSON
Department of the Environment

BALTIMORE (Nov. 19, 2021)—Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles on Friday presented a grand prize and prizes to eight other student winners today at the department's 20th annual "Rethink Recycling" Sculpture Contest at Montgomery Park in Baltimore City.

The grand prize winner of an HP laptop was Kimberly Perez Toro, a student at Suitland High School in Prince George's County. The winning entry was entitled "Moe Jr." and was made from cardboard, paper, wire, and aluminum tabs. Like each of the entries in the competition, all the stu-

dents made their sculptures from reused materials.

Students from Carroll, Montgomery, and Frederick counties won the top prizes in four other categories. This year, 40 entries from 10 high schools in seven counties were on display.

"Maryland's youthful artists inspire us all to reduce, reuse, recycle, and rethink waste so we can keep protecting the environment and fighting climate change well into the future," Maryland Department of the Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles said. "Last year, Marylanders recycled 2.5 million tons of municipal solid waste and diverted more than 42 percent of our waste from landfills and incin-

erators, with the future looking brighter and greener thanks to student-led innovations and creations."

The category winners, who each received Sony Wireless earbuds, were:

Creativity: Griffin Farquhar, Century High School, Carroll County, for "Snake of Depression," made of cardboard, newspaper, and yarn

Workmanship: Abbey Jenkins, Liberty High School, Carroll County, for "Scarlet Dragon," which was made from newspaper, cereal boxes, and popsicle sticks

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The Congressional Black Caucus: Building a Legacy for Half a Century

By GABRIEL PIETRORAZIO
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Nov. 19, 2021)—William Lacy Clay Jr. remembers being 12-years-old and standing beside his father launching his campaign bid one day after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the spring of 1968.

It was a historic race for the House: William Lacy Clay Sr. became Missouri's first Black representative elected to Congress, in part because of redistricting that gave him a seat containing the state's largest concentration of Black voters.

Shortly after the monumental victory, the congressman-elect and his family—his wife, Carol, Clay Jr. and daughters Vicki and Michelle—moved to Washington.

Clay Jr. attended Montgomery County public schools in Silver Spring, Maryland, later enrolling at the University of Maryland, College Park. He took a full-time job where his father, the new congressman, worked.

"My assignment was a doorman in the U.S. House of Representatives, which allowed me to see my dad working Capitol Hill up close, and learning the legislative process," Clay Jr. told Capital News Service.

In 1971, Clay Sr. joined 12 other Black House members to create the Congressional Black Caucus, six years after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed.

The caucus is celebrating its 50th anniversary and remains in the forefront of struggles over civil rights and voting rights. In this Congress, the caucus, now grown to 57 members, has been battling to enact legislation intended to counter voter suppression efforts championed by Repub-

licans in Congress and state legislatures.

The Congressional Black Caucus played an instrumental role in propelling the final passage of President Joe Biden's bipartisan infrastructure bill, a \$1.2 trillion spending package that will funnel federal dollars to bridges, highways, airports, water projects and expanded broadband services, among other projects.

"We believed that most members would want to go back home and say what they delivered," Caucus Chair Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, said on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on Nov. 8.

With six caucus members serving as chairs of committees, the group also has influenced the shaping of the so-called Build Back Better bill, a nearly \$2 trillion investment in social programs Biden also is pressing Congress to pass. The measure passed the House on Friday.

"It's transformational... We have had our fingerprints and footprints are all over this legislation," Beatty said.

Since its founding, the caucus has had relationships with every president—some better than others. As for Donald Trump, there essentially was no relationship. He never officially met with the entire caucus, partly because he "demonstrated significant disrespect for the caucus," House Majority Whip James Clyburn, D-South Carolina, said.

"I don't know any better member to ever serve in the Congress as more lionized than John Lewis, but the former president insulted him in a way that is almost unbelievable," Clyburn told CNS.

Lewis, a Democrat who represented Georgia's 5th District and was a civil rights icon, died last year. Asked about Lewis, Trump said in an



PHOTO CREDIT GABRIEL PIETRORAZIO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON—Rep. Anthony Brown, D-Upper Marlboro, has been a member of the Congressional Black Caucus since 2017.

interview with Axios on HBO that the Georgian "chose not to come to my inauguration," later saying "nobody has done more for Black Americans than I have."

Like father, like son

William Lacy Clay Sr. was at the heart of the civil rights movement as an alderman in St. Louis, Missouri. He became a supporter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and was jailed for 112 days during the 1963 Jefferson Bank demonstrations, a series of civil protests aimed at addressing racial discrimination in workplaces.

Twenty years later, Clay Sr. and his caucus colleagues led the movement to make King's birthday a federally-recognized holiday.

Clay is known for coining the phrase "just permanent interests," his son said, "and it is the model for the Congressional Black Caucus. In politics, Black people have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interests."

In 1992, Clay Sr. authored Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress 1870-1991. The book is "treated like the Bible of Black politics," his son said.

After graduating from college, Clay Jr. got accepted into the Howard University School of Law, but was only there about a month before politics beckoned.

Nathaniel J. "Nat" Rivers, a member of Missouri's state Legislature and close friend of Clay Jr.'s father, was resigning in 1983. Then 27, Clay Jr. entered a special election and won. He served for 17 years in both houses of the state legislature.

Clay Sr. announced his retirement in 2000, opening up an opportunity for his son to run and ultimately succeed him after fending off a competitive bid for Missouri's 1st Congressional District.

The younger Clay was sworn in with the rest of the 107th Congress in 2001. Carol W. Clay, his daughter, stood to one side, while his father, Clay Sr., stood on the other.

"It was a recreation of what I did in January of 1969, when my dad was first sworn in," Clay Jr. remembered.

He said his new job wasn't a drastic adjustment.

Clay Jr. already knew many of the Black lawmakers from his younger days serving

See LEGACY Page A3

Maryland State Bar Association To Host Maryland Gubernatorial Interviews and Debates

MSBA collaborates with Stevenson University to deliver political perspective and engagement to legal profession and the public

By HEATHER KENTON
MSBA

BALTIMORE (Nov. 22, 2021)—The Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) is hosting non-partisan Maryland Gubernatorial Interviews and Debates, giving voters an opportunity to learn candidate positions on the most pressing issues facing the state and legal profession. The Interviews will take place virtually from December 6-10 at Stevenson University, a co-sponsor of the Interviews, and will stream live at msba.org/governor-candidates/. The Debate Series will be held in-person in March, April and June 2022, with the final June debate taking stage at the annual MSBA Legal Summit in Ocean City, MD. Information to follow.

"Presenting the premier interviews and debates to Maryland lawyers and the public is an opportunity we're incredibly honored to spearhead as we offer potential candidates a platform to present their plan on moving our state forward in 2022 and beyond," said Natalie McSherry, President of the Maryland State Bar Association. "We look forward to hearing from the panel of aspiring individuals running for Governor and are pleased to provide increased exposure and educational opportunities to our colleagues in the legal profession."

Former State Senator Robert (Bobby) Zirkin will moderate the interviews and debates, encouraging introspective, fact-based dialogue focused on critical issues impacting Marylanders. The partnership with Stevenson University (Owings Mills, MD)—an educational institution known for its distinctive career focus and commitment to student success—showcases the experience and resources of the University and provides a unique platform for engaging students in the elections process.

"Stevenson is pleased to provide a digital venue through which the citizens of Maryland can learn more about the field of gubernatorial candidates

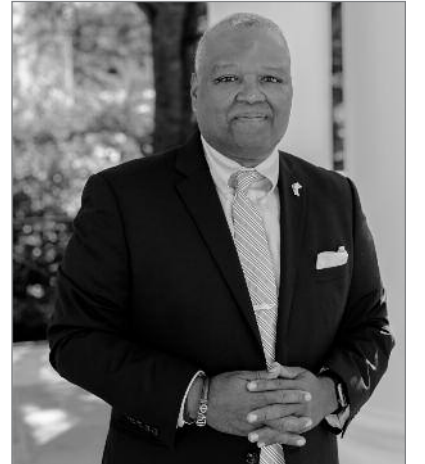


PHOTO COURTESY MSBA

Former Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker

and their views on the many important issues facing the state," said Elliot Hirschman, President of Stevenson University. "We believe the unique opportunity of hosting the Gubernatorial Interviews gives the MSBA, its members, and Maryland's citizens an opportunity to experience a new standard for information exchange in the campaign for the state's top office."

Gubernatorial Interview Schedule:

December 6
Rushern Baker
Jon Baron
Peter Franchot

December 7
Mike Rosenbaum

December 8
David Lashar
Ashwani Jain

December 9
Doug Gansler
Wes Moore
Tom Perez

December 10
John King
Robin Ficker

Interviews will be conducted at the Inscape Theatre at the Stevenson University - Greenspring Valley Campus. The event is open to the media, only.

For more information about the Gubernatorial Interviews and Debates and the Maryland State Bar Association, visit [MSBA.org](https://msba.org).

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

With Mary McHale, will return next week

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM

Bowie State University has been one of the dominant defenses in Division II Football all season, and it proved it again on Saturday, November 20, 2021, advancing in DII playoffs by beating Lenoir-Rhyne University. Bowie State CIAA Champion for the third-straight season is back in the NCAA Division II.

BRANDYWINE-NORTH KEYS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Timothy Branch Development Update in Brandywine, Maryland: Mr. Gardiner, Vice President, Gardiner Realty & Development Company discussed the following topics at the September Civic Association Meeting.

Phase 1 of the project is now being completed and all homes will be constructed by the end of October. The clubhouse serving Phases 1, 2 and 3 will be completed in October. Phase 2 of the project has started and the utility work and bass pavement for the streets have already been installed. Phase 2, consisting of a total of 169 homes, is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. Phase 3 of the project is under construction and mass grading of the land will be completed by mid-October. Utility installation will start during the winter of 2021 with home sales commencing in the summer of 2022.

The "Active Adult Section" of the project will be under construction this winter and home sales will start later in the spring of 2022. This section will have a total of 212 homes and half being single-family homes and the other half will consist of duplex homes. This phase will have its own small club house, a dog park, a pickle ball court, and a bocce court. It will also have an outdoor pavilion next to the clubhouse. Homeowners in this section will be restricted to two people who are 55 years in age or older. Ryan Homes will continue to be the builder for the remainder of the homes in the development.

Mattawoman Drive is now complete with the exception of the traffic signal. The MD State Highway Administration will determine when the signal can be installed. The hike and bike trail as well as sidewalks throughout the community were discussed. Councilman Harrison pointed out that many people are using the trail to walk and exercise.

A member of the Association pointed out that the Brandywine Road pavement at the intersection of Brandywine Road and Mattawoman Drive is very rough to drive on.

Mr. Gardiner stated that he will follow up on the concern. Mr. Gardiner thanked the Association and Councilman Harrison for their continued support of the project and the spine road.

Note: September began a new year. Therefore, annual dues

of \$30 are due and payable at the meetings. You can also pay by mail. Make your check payable to the Brandywine-North Keys Civic Association. The address is P.O. Box 321, Brandywine, Maryland 20613.

MAJOR SHOUT OUT

Major Shout Out to BSU's Symphony of Soul who performed live with Master P at the No Limit Reunion Tour on Saturday, November 6 at Constitution Hall. We appreciate Master P showing love to HBCUs and giving SOS an opportunity to shine on the "big stage."

BSU THEATRE

Bowie State University Theatre presented Pipeline by Dominique Morisseau which delves into the all-too-real challenges of students caught in America's broken education system. Marking BSU Theatre's re-emergence of live, in-person performances, this BSU Theatre production places audiences directly into the space, where the drama happens, surrounded by the gates and walls that seem to confine the learner rather than foster growth. Pipeline's directing team is led by graduating senior Sahira Parker.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Digital Tech Credential helps prepare Women and Minorities for today's jobs. Ten BSU students to receive \$2,500 scholarships from Capital CoLAB, a tech-focused initiative of the Greater Washington Partnership of area businesses and institutions.

Bowie State University students now have the opportunity to earn a digital tech credential to better position them to secure career opportunities with companies in the D.C. region and qualify for a \$2,500 scholarship from Capital CoLAB.

TOGETHER LET'S HELP

Westphalia United Methodist Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland has a unique outreach opportunity to partner with a community organization in Prince George's County that develops immediate solutions to assist people experiencing homelessness and other crises. Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Timothy West. If you are interested in finding out how you can help those in need contact us by emailing visitors@westphalia.org or call the church office at 301-735-9373 and leave your name and number. A council member will return your call.

Around the County

COVID-19 Booster Shots of Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson Available For all Prince George's County Adults

Each COVID-19 vaccine in the United States is available for booster doses at Health Department clinics and other health care providers for residents 18 and older

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 23, 2021)—The Prince George's County Health Department's COVID-19 vaccination clinics offer booster shots of Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines to any County resident age 18 and older following the FDA's emergency use authorization, the CDC's official recommendation, and the State of Maryland's approval. Federal and state health regulators expanded the eligibility of booster shots to all adults who have received their initial two doses of Pfizer or Moderna; booster shots for adults who received Johnson & Johnson were approved in October 2021.

"As colder weather arrives and the holiday season begins, staying protected against COVID-19 is important because more activities and gatherings will most likely be indoors," said Prince George's County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Health, Human Services, and Education Dr. George L. Askew. "Adding more layers of protection against the virus will increase our chances of a safe and healthy holiday season, especially for those Prince Georgians who are at highest risk of severe illness or exposure to the virus."

Residents may self-attest at a clinic that they are eligible for a booster dose. Individuals younger than 18 have not yet received federal approval to receive booster shots. Adults may get a booster shot at least six months after the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna, or at least two months after the single dose of Johnson & Johnson. The FDA and the CDC allow for mix and match dosing for booster shots. Eligible individuals who prefer a vaccine brand may choose which one they receive as a booster dose, regardless of the brand they previously received.

"Each of the COVID-19 vaccines available provide great protection against getting very sick or dying from the virus. With booster doses now available for all three vaccines and all adults, every adult in the County has another chance to make that protection even stronger," said Prince George's County Health Officer Dr. Ernest Carter. "Through testing, vaccination, masking, and staying home when sick, Prince Georgians have continually shown that we know how to fight COVID-19. We all need to maintain our defenses to avoid a winter surge in cases and keep each other safe and healthy."

As a reminder, the County and other health care providers are also offering third doses of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to residents who are moderately or severely immunocompromised, based on CDC guidance. A third dose of Pfizer or Moderna is recommended at least 28 days after the second dose for those individuals who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and may not build the same level of immunity to a two-dose vaccine series compared to people who are not immunocompromised.

Visit mypgc.us/COVIDvaccine for more information about COVID-19 vaccinations, including locations and hours of operation for vaccine clinics operated by the County and other public and private organizations.

—George Lettis, Prince George's County Health Department

Council Vice Chair Deni Taveras Welcomes Era Wine Bar to Mount Rainier Community

By ANGELA J. ROUSON

Prince George's County Council Media

Prince George's County Council Vice-Chair Deni Taveras welcomes Era Wine Bar, a family-owned business, to District 2, which she represents. Located in the heart of Mount Rainier on Rhode Island Avenue, Era Wine Bar features curated wines by the glass from underrepresented regions, and a wide range of global small plates.

Vice-Chair Taveras says this new business is an exciting addition to a growing community.

"District 2 continues to experience unprecedented economic development, which means more opportunities for small, local, and minority-owned businesses. Era Wine Bar is the kind of high scale, locally owned venue that our residents have been asking for—a cultured ambiance with an array of beverage and food options. Era is a welcome addition to our community, and I look forward to its success in Prince George's County."

After making Mount Rainier their home in 2018, business owners Michelle and Ka-ton Grant opened Era Wine Bar in November following years of traveling,

studying, and experimenting with food and wine from around the world. Recipes are developed with a culinary team reflective of the owners' heritage and upbringing in South Africa and Southwest India.

Era Wine Bar is in the historic Singer Building and joins the thriving Gateway Arts District along Route 1. Vacant for over 30 years, the Singer Building was restored in 2018 through the collaborative efforts of Council Member Taveras and other partners, including the Redevelopment Authority and the City of Mount Rainier.

Prince George's County Animal Services Facility and Adoption Center Receives New Shed Donation and Cat Equipment

By JUDITH HALL

PGC Department of the Environment

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 23, 2021)—The Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE) announced that the Animal Services Facility and Adoption Center (ASFAC) in Upper Marlboro has received a new shed donation equipped with pet supplies. The new shed will house humane traps and equipment donated by Alley Cat Rescue (ACR) and Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Return (TNVR) organizations.

DoE Director Andrea L. Crooms thanked the organizations for their commitment to using a humane way to trap feral cats through the TNVR program. "The donation of the shed allows our Animal Services Facility and its TNVR partners to store additional humane traps and equipment and allows us to be more proactive and effective," said Director

Crooms. "We are grateful for the partnerships and the donation."

Through TNVR, cats are humanely trapped, spayed, or neutered, and vaccinated. The tip of one ear is painlessly removed to indicate the cats are part of a TNVR program. The cats are then returned to the communities where they live, ending the cycle of producing kittens.

Marsha Dabolt, a member of the ACR board of directors, spoke about the community cat partnership. "We are successful because of the County's support, and we are thrilled to donate the shed."

"The donation of the shed is significant because it allows for growth and stronger partnership," said Cynthia Sharpley, founder of Last Chance Rescue, operator of the County's Spay Spot Clinic at the ASFAC. "This is the start of an epic effort that puts Prince George's County as one of the most progressive counties in the United States concerning animal welfare."

Other groups supporting the ASD Community Cats programs include:

- Alley Cat Rescue: Alley Cat Rescue Inc., 301-277-5595
- Laurel Cats: Laurel Cats Inc., 301-886-0161
- Outlaw Kitties: Outlaw Kitties, 301-807-9238 or 202-803-0054
- Beltsville Cats: Beltsville Cats
- A Cat's Life Rescue: A Cat's Life Rescue, 202-431-0788
- Bowie Claw: Bowie Claw, 301-254-8151
- Puddy Cat Rescue: Puddy Cat Rescue, 301-485-6518
- Last Chance Animal Rescue: Last Chance Animal Rescue
- PG County SPCA: PG Ferals, 301-262-6452

For more information about the TNVR program, call the Animal Services Division at 301-780-7201.

Watershed Recreation Areas to Remain Open During Winter Months

Second Straight Year Maryland's Largest Water Utility Keeps Areas Open in Winter to Provide Outdoor Enjoyment During COVID-19 Pandemic

All Watershed Visitors Must Have a Valid Permit

LAUREL, Md. (Nov. 22, 2021)—For the second year in a row, WSSC Water will keep all eight Patuxent River Watershed Recreation Areas open this winter to promote physical and mental health during the continued COVID-19 pandemic. Typically, the watershed recreation areas close on December 1 and reopen on March 15.

WSSC Water strongly encourages all visitors to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

Residents must have a valid permit to enjoy the following outdoor activities in designated areas:

- Birdwatching
- Shoreline fishing
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Picnicking

Season permits for 2021 are valid through December 31, 2021. After January 1, 2022, a new permit will be available for the 2022 season. Permits are also available for daily use. All permits can be purchased online or in person at the Brighton Dam Visitor Center located at 2 Brighton Dam Road, Brookville, Maryland 20833.

All eight areas will remain open weather permitting. This extension does not include boating, which will end as scheduled on December 1, 2021, and reopen mid-March 2022. Current boat mooring permit holders need to have a winter mooring permit by November 30, 2021, to keep their boats on the watershed over the winter.

A dredging project at Triadelphia Reservoir is expected to begin later this winter. The work will require the water levels on the reservoir to be lowered and may impact access to the Greenbridge Recreation Area. Project updates will be provided on WSSC Water's website or by signing up for Customer Connect and selecting Outdoor Recreation.

Watershed users are encouraged to call 301-206-4FUN (4386) or email Watershedrec@WSSCWater.com for daily updates or weather-related issues. To learn more about WSSC Water and watershed recreation area regulations, please visit wsscwater.com/watershed.

WSSC Water is the proud provider of safe, seamless and satisfying water services, making the essential possible every day for our neighbors in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. We work to deliver our best because it's what our customers expect and deserve.

—Luis Maya, WSSC Water

COMMUNITY

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County Announces the 35th Annual Winter Festival of Lights

By ANGEL WALDRON

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (Nov. 18, 2021)—The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County announces the 2021 Winter Festival of Lights. Now in its 35th year, the festival is a staple in local holiday traditions. With more lights, displays, and entertainment, it is the biggest of its kind in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area.

New this year, the entrance of the Festival will be located on Route 202/Largo Road, across the street from the Riverdale Baptist Church, located at 1133 Largo Road, in Upper Marlboro. Please note that the entrance on Route 193 will be closed.

Directions to the NEW Festival entrance are as follows:

From the Capital Beltway, I-495 — take Exit 17A on to Route 202/South towards Upper Marlboro and continue for approximately 5 miles. The park entrance is on the left, prior to the traffic light at Route 193. You can make the left from the turn lane.

From Route 301, turn onto Marlboro Pike/Route 725 and then right onto Route 202, for approximately 4.5 miles. The park entrance is on the right, just past the traffic light at Route 193.

"We know it's the holiday season when the Winter Festival of Lights begins. The Festival of Lights gets better every year. There's always something new to see," exclaims Bill Tyler, Director of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation. "This year we are making an adjustment to create a better experience for the community by utilizing the park entrance on Route 202. We are also offering discounts for online ticket purchases. We want to ensure the best possible experience for visitors and their families this holiday," says Tyler.

Drive through three miles of whimsical lights and celebrate the magic of the season from the comfort of your vehicle. This year's spectacular drive-through event features dazzling displays with more than 2.5 million LED lights throughout the park and a giant, 54-foot LED musical tree. Please bring a canned good to donate to local food banks.

WHAT: 35th Annual Winter Festival of Lights

WHEN: Friday, November 26, 2021—Sunday, January 2, 2022, daily from 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

WHERE: Watkins Regional Park, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20774

COST: Admission fees based on vehicle type and method of payment

Face coverings are required when interacting with M-NCPPC staff. Online registration is encouraged. Purchase tickets in advance online and pay only \$8 for cars (\$10 standard admission). Visit pgparksdirect.com and search keyword "Festival" under "Ticketing." Please check the ticket code and fees listed.

Bring a little twinkle to your holidays at this spectacular drive-through event. Come celebrate the season with the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation delivers an award-winning park system through progressive, innovative leadership and a commitment to the community and the environment in Prince George's County. For more on the Department of Parks and Recreation, visit www.pgpc.com and stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, PhotoShelter, and Instagram. The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities in all programs and services. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation.

Legacy from A1

as a doorkeeper: Georgia's Lewis, Reps. Charles Rangel, D-New York, Ronald Vernie Dellums, D-California, and Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, a former neighbor in Silver Spring whose lawn he used to cut. "My job description was to know all 435 members of Congress by name and state and to inform them on what the votes were, and for me to come back 17 years later, as a member, it was just the thrill of my life," Clay Jr. explained.

He also made new friends among fresh faces in the caucus, too.

Clay Jr. said he and then-Sen. Barack Obama, a junior Democrat from Illinois, "quickly became close friends and worked on legislation together." Clay and Obama spearheaded legislation to fund the construction of the Stan Musial Veterans Memorial Bridge, which connects St. Louis, Missouri, to St. Clair County, Illinois.

Neither Clay nor his father believed they would ever witness the election of a Black president during their lifetimes. But in 2009, Clay Jr. was on the inauguration platform on the West Front of the

United States Capitol watching his friend Obama take the oath of office as president.

The seemingly impossible happened once again in 2020, when a CBC alumna, Sen. Kamala Harris, D-California, battled her way to the vice presidency, breaking racial and gender barriers in the process.

"It's amazing the progress that has been made through the CBC over fifty years," Clay Jr. added.

After serving two decades, he lost his seat in a contentious primary in 2020 against Cori Bush, a nurse and Black Lives Matter activist.

Still permanent interests: 50 years later

Harris acknowledged her ties to the caucus while speaking at the 10th anniversary of the MLK Memorial alongside President Joe Biden in late October.

"Chairwoman Joyce Beatty and my—I will call you, still, my colleagues at the Congressional Black Caucus. Thank you all for your leadership," Harris said at the podium while standing in front of the towering 30-foot tall white granite statue.

Rep. Barbara Lee, D-California, remembers serving as the

Governor Hogan Honors Victims of Impaired Driving At 18th Annual Maryland Remembers Ceremony

Announces New Grant To Offer \$10 Rideshare Credits to Marylanders During Holiday Season

By SHAREESE CHURCHILL
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 22, 2021)—Governor Larry Hogan today joined state officials, transportation leaders, safety advocates, law enforcement, and families for the 18th annual Maryland Remembers ceremony, which honors Marylanders who lost their lives to impaired driving.

During the ceremony, the governor announced that Maryland is one of five states to receive a grant from the Governors Highway Safety Association to encourage safe alternatives to impaired driving by providing \$10 rideshare credits to Marylanders during the holiday season. The Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA) will provide more information on this initiative later this week.

"No one should ever get behind the wheel of a car and drive impaired, and we hope that this creative new initiative will encourage more Marylanders to make better choices," said Governor Hogan. "Even one death is one too many, which is why we must continue working together, we must continue to tell the stories of those we have lost, and we must continue doing everything in our power to save lives and to prevent future tragedies."

The governor was joined by Secretary Greg Slater of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), MDOT MVA Administrator Chrissy Nizer, and Superintendent Colonel Woodrow Jones III of the Maryland State Police, as well as highway safety advocates and families of victims.

Maryland Remembers is held annually at the beginning of the holiday season, when impaired driving crashes tend to increase. In 2020, 120 people died and more than 2,600 were injured on Maryland roadways due to impaired



PHOTO CREDIT MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

"Each time you get behind the wheel, please remember these faces. Your loved ones are counting on you to make the right choice so that everyone can get home safely."

driving. More than 14,170 people were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs—with approximately 1,345 of the arrests occurring from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day.

During today's ceremony, the governor presented Officer Jayme Derbyshire of the Montgomery County Police Department with the annual Kevin Quinlan Award for her work and advocacy in preventing impaired driving. The award is named for the late Kevin Quinlan, a longtime traffic safety professional with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Officer Derbyshire currently serves as the coordinator for the Chemical Test for Alcohol Unit and has spoken, both locally and nationally, on impaired driving.

The Hogan administration remains committed to preventing impaired driving crashes and fatalities. In 2016, the governor signed Noah's

Law, a measure that expanded Maryland's Ignition Interlock Program to mandate that interlock devices be installed in vehicles of convicted drunk drivers, even for the first conviction. In 2019, the governor signed House Bill 707, which increased the maximum jail time for those convicted of vehicular homicide while under the influence.

"Today, we saw the photos of the mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, partners, and friends who are no longer with us," said Secretary Slater. "Each time you get behind the wheel, please remember these faces. Your loved ones are counting on you to make the right choice so that everyone can get home safely."

Maryland Remembers partners with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) to help organize this annual event.

Contest from A1

Use of Materials: Gage Osborne, Northwest High School, Montgomery County, for "The Hurdler," which was made from a broken hurdle, scrap metal, Gatorade bottles, newspaper, newspaper bags, a paint brush, wire, and cardboard

Use of Materials: Gage Osborne, Northwest High School, Montgomery County, for "The Hurdler," which was made from a broken hurdle, scrap metal, Gatorade bottles, newspaper, newspaper bags, a paint brush, wire, and cardboard

The second-place winners in each category, who received \$100 Amazon gift cards, were:

Creativity: Nigel Hafiz, Glenelg Country School, Howard County, for "American Imperialism," which was made from hangers and a pool noodle

Workmanship: Lacey Dustin, South Carroll High School, Carroll County, for "Maurice," which was made from bottles, cans, forks, magazines, jewelry, batteries, and decorations

Use of Materials: Kierstan Lang, Century

High School, Carroll County, for "Guardian," which was made from soda cans, paper mache, peacock feathers, toothpicks, foam, tree braces, push pins and plywood

People's Choice: Oumou Gningue, Suitland High School, Prince George's County, for "Antique Jackalope," which was made brown paper and wooden sticks

Sponsors of the event were the American Cleaning Institute; Maryland Recycling Network; Maryland, Delaware, D.C. Beverage Association; and Waste Management. Sponsors donated prizes, funding and refreshments for this year's contest.

"Improving recycling across all walks of life is very important to the cleaning product supply chain," said Nathan Sell, Senior Director of Sustainability at the American Cleaning Institute. "ACI and our members are proud to support the creative artwork of students throughout Maryland to help keep recycling front-and-center on a daily basis."

Contest judges were: John Lewis, curator, writer and former teacher at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA); Chelsea

Anspach, communications manager for the Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore; Amanda Smit-Peters, manager of Highlandtown Main Street and the Highlandtown Arts Districts; Deirdre Ford-Aikin, owner of York and Penn Public Art Gallery and Triple Crown Towson; and Kaley Laleker, director of the Maryland Department of the Environment's Land and Materials Administration.

Since 2001, the Department of the Environment has celebrated America Recycles Day by hosting the annual "Rethink Recycling" Sculpture Contest. High school students from across Maryland are invited to participate by creating sculptures made of recycled and reusable materials. "Rethink Recycling" is just one way MDE educates and empowers the public to reuse and recycle materials that would have otherwise gone into landfills.

To find out what you can do to reduce, reuse, recycle and buy recycled products, visit MDE's recycling web page. It is the mission of the department to protect and restore the environment for the health and well-being of all Marylanders.

chairwoman of the caucus during

Obama's presidency, a time when the memorial was just constructed. Lee told CNS the caucus still plays a crucial role in "fighting constantly for justice, not only for African Americans, but for the entire country."

"Fifty years later, we're championing many of the issues that we were championing back then," Lee added.

The legacy built in part by Clay's father is being expanded by the 57 Black caucus members serving in the House and Senate. They represent 27 states as well as the Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia. Sens. Cory Booker, D-New Jersey, and Raphael Warnock, D-Georgia, are only two of a total of 11 Black senators who have served since 1870.

Black representation in Congress had a brief flowering after the Civil War. In 1870, Hiram Revels, a Republican from Mississippi, became the first Black senator in U.S. history. The election the same year of Rep. Joseph Rainey, R-South Carolina, the first Black member to serve in the House, also gave hope for Black communities that sought to become a part of the political

process.

Other Black lawmakers followed in their footsteps, but by the start of the 20th century, a resurgence of white racism and racial violence—buttressed by segregation, voter suppression and Jim Crow laws in the South—extinguished Black ambitions for a role in national political life.

"The people who founded the new caucus reminded me that no matter how long I stayed in Congress, or how many stories were written, I owe it to myself to talk about the original African American members of the Congress, who by 1901, had completely disappeared as a result of Jim Crow, and redistricting and gerrymandering," Rep. Kweisi Mfume, D-Baltimore, told CNS.

Fifty years ago, the original 13 founding Black caucus members made up only two percent of the Congress. Today, the caucus is 10 percent of the Congress.

Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League, said the caucus has evolved "where it's a far more diverse body, because its members represent mixed districts."

"Some represent predominantly white districts, some represent predominantly Black districts,"

Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, told CNS.

Not only is the CBC a representation of "Black America on Capitol Hill," Morial said, it also serves as "the conscience of Congress."

Parren Mitchell was Maryland's first Black House member, representing the 7th District from 1971 until 1987.

Mfume was first elected to Congress from Maryland's 7th District in 1986, succeeding Mitchell in the same district. He served until 1996, when he left to become president and CEO of the NAACP.

Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Baltimore, succeeded Mfume. Cummings died in office in 2019. Mfume won a special election in May 2020 to return to the House, again representing the 7th District.

In Maryland's 4th District, Democrat Albert Wynn served from 1993 until 2008. Democrat Donna Edwards succeeded him, serving until 2017.

Rep. Anthony Brown, D-Upper Marlboro, succeeded Edwards, and is now running for Maryland attorney general.

Mitchell, Mfume and Cummings all served at different times

as chairmen of the CBC—the most chairmen to come from the same House district.

"I can simply say that caucus, and the opportunity that you get to represent issues and people beyond where you are elected from is significant, and it's humbling," Mfume said.

The caucus chairmanship also means wielding power—the ability to focus some attention in Washington toward the interests of Black constituents—a responsibility Mfume said he carried very seriously.

"It was an opportunity to put together a plan that would move the agenda forward," the veteran Baltimore lawmaker said. "For me, it meant having 40 votes in your back pocket on any given day."

Bill Clinton. Rosa Parks. Nelson Mandela. Mfume met many prominent public figures during his tenure as chairman. During the Clinton administration, Mfume recalled, he pressed caucus members not to sign off on any initiatives unless they "fell in line" with their expectations.

"That was the most rewarding

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Elevation of Minority Business Development Agency to Permanent Status Represents an Unprecedented Commitment to Addressing Historic Economic Inequities

“President Biden has made clear his commitment to not just rebuilding to how things were before COVID-19, but to building back better and more equitably. The Minority Business Development Agency is ready to step into this historic moment and build on its success—because we recognize that America’s road to recovery runs through our minority business community. Making MBDA a statutory Agency provides MBDA with the authorities, workforce and resources needed to help level the playing field on behalf of minority businesses and minority entrepreneurs.”

—U.S. Secretary of Commerce
Gina Raimondo

After more than 50 years, the Minority Business Development Agency has been made permanent, its Director has been elevated to Under Secretary of Commerce, and new tools and authority will allow the agency to address the longstanding economic inequities that face our nation’s 9 million business owners of color.

These long-awaited historic provisions are part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed by President Biden earlier this month.

The expansion and elevation of MBDA is of special interest to the National Urban League, not only because Black entrepreneurship and business ownership are at the heart of our mission. Robert J. Brown, Vice Chair of the National Urban League Board of Trustees, created and developed the agency—then known as Office of Minority Business Enterprise—while serving as Special Assistant to President Richard Nixon in 1969.

“We must also provide an expanded opportunity to participate in the free enterprise system at all levels—not only to share the economic benefits of the free enterprise system more broadly, but also to encourage pride, dignity, and a sense of independence,” President Nixon said upon signing the Executive Order creating the agency. “In order to do this, we need to remove commercial obstacles which have too often stood in the way of minority group members—obstacles such as the unavailability of credit, insurance, and technical assistance.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Black-owned businesses shuttered at twice the rate of white-owned businesses, and were largely excluded from relief that was distributed as part of Congress’s stimulus bills.

Even before the pandemic, Black and Latino Americans owned fewer than 10 percent of small businesses with employees, despite making up 30 percent of the nation’s population.

The landmark Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes the following provisions:

Expands the geographic reach of the MBDA by authorizing the creation of regional MBDA offices, rural business centers, and increasing the number and scope of existing programs.

Creates a presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed Under Secretary of Commerce for Minority Business Development to lead the agency.

Increases the MBDA’s grant-making capacity to partner with community and national nonprofits engaged in private and public sector development as well as research.

Mandates the creation of the Parren J. Mitchell Entrepreneurship Education Grants Program to cultivate the next generation of minority entrepreneurs on the campuses HBCUs and MSIs across the Nation.

Creates a council to advise the Under Secretary on supporting MBEs; and Authorizes the Under Secretary to coordinate federal MBE programs.

“This legislation is transformative and signifies a new era in minority business development and progress toward addressing the long-standing racial disparities in access to capital, contracts, and business ecosystems,” U.S. Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Don Graves said.

The National Urban League and our network of 91 affiliates have counseled, mentored, and trained more than 60,000 business owners over the last decade and a half; we look forward to expanding and enhancing our work with the partnership of the revitalized MBDA.

COMMUNITY



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

L to R: MDoA Secretary Rona Kramer, MDP Secretary Robert McCord, MDoA’s DME Program Director Ian Edwards, MDH Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing and Medicaid Steve Schuh, and MDH Secretary Dennis R. Schrader discuss the DME program’s capabilities.

Secretaries From Maryland Departments of Health, Aging, and Planning Visit New Durable Medical Equipment Program Headquarters in Cheltenham

By PRESS OFFICERS
Maryland Department of Health

BALTIMORE (Nov. 22, 2021)—Executives from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA), and the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) today visited the new headquarters of the Durable Medical Equipment Reuse Program (DME) in Cheltenham, Maryland.

DME was developed by MDoA to repair and sanitize durable medical equipment—including walkers, wheelchairs, and other reusable equipment—before it is provided in like-new condition to Marylanders in need, at no cost, when insurance does not provide coverage.

“Our equipment is available to Marylanders who have any illness, injury, or disability, regardless of age,” said MDoA Secretary Rona Kramer. “The DME program allows thousands

of Marylanders to enjoy much fuller lives by enabling them to participate in employment and social activities that they would not otherwise have the ability to enjoy.”

“I encourage anyone who has unused durable medical equipment to donate it to this program,” said MDH Secretary Dennis R. Schrader. “A piece of equipment you no longer need can provide a direct benefit to a fellow Marylander in need.”

The Cheltenham facility opened in March of 2021 to serve as the headquarters and primary warehouse for DME. It encompasses 55,000 sq. ft. and has the capacity to process tens of thousands of pieces of equipment each year. Maryland is the first state in the nation to develop a medical equipment reuse program of this magnitude.

In addition to the Cheltenham facility, there are DME sites in 11 counties across the

state. Those wishing to make a donation or pickup equipment can use MDoA’s site locator to find a facility near them.

“In this DME program, we are able to keep hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of materials out of landfills,” said MDP Secretary Rob McCord. “DME is a showcase for the exponential benefits that reuse programs like this provide to communities throughout the state. This program is improving lives while it’s also improving the environment.”

The Maryland Department of Health is dedicated to protecting and improving the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management and community engagement. Follow us on Twitter @MDHealthDept and at Facebook.com/MDHealthDept.

Legacy from A3

aspect of my term as caucus chair, to be able to parlay votes in a way that had not been done before,” Mfume added. “But in a way now, that is sort of kind of second nature to how we operate.”

Still challenges

But even with 55 votes in the House, the power of the Black caucus alone has limits: the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, a bill that passed the House in 2020 and again in March, has stalled because of Senate Republican opposition.

“It’s heartbreaking for families across this country, who wanted to believe that their Congress would in fact find a way to deal with this issue of police, excessive use of force,” Mfume said. “The Senate had no stomach for it and eventually found a way to walk away from it.”

Much like the police accountability legislation, the Senate doesn’t have a stomach for addressing threats to voting rights either, advocates like Morial say.

Brown believes passing legislation like the Freedom to Vote Act and John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act are possible ways of addressing “one of the most fundamental issues” the nation faces.

“Without the right to vote and the unencumbered access to the ballot, then everything that we fight for becomes that much more difficult,” Brown told CNS.

“We shoulder a responsibility to not only champion the aspirations, the dreams, the goals and the pursuits of the Black community, and frankly, the Black diaspora,” he added. “Our work goes beyond domestic policy... to protect and defend the interests and the rights that continue to be under assault and attacked in this country, even today, in 2021.”

Reparations for slavery is an integral part of that conversation for the caucus.

Mfume remembers cosponsoring a reparations bill by former Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Michigan. The measure was introduced consecutively for a decade and Mfume said it’s frustrating to return to Congress without any progress on that front.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, now is sponsoring House Resolution 40, a bill aimed to es-

tablish a commission to determine possible paths forward for slavery reparations.

“If you’re going to get real reparations on behalf of the Afro-American community, there has to be a federal commitment,” Brown added. “It’s difficult for that to happen without first having a commission.”

Clyburn, another former CBC caucus chair who now serves as the Democratic majority whip, says the agenda shifts from time to time, depending on which issue “ought to be at the front of the line.”

“There are times when I think things like HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) should be at the front of the line. Other times, I think that closing the wealth gap should be at the front and closing the healthcare gap. These gaps are all there... we know they’re there,” Clyburn told CNS. “It all depends on what’s taking place in the Congress and the country as to how we ought to be prioritizing.”

Even though Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-District of Columbia, is one of the most senior members from the caucus, sharing that title with Rep. Maxine Waters, D-California, she said she still feels largely left out of the legislative process.

“Even when I came, we’re un-

der-represented,” Norton said in an interview with CNS. “The Congressional Black Caucus took the role of Congress, men and women at large, recognizing that many African Americans were in districts where they had no hope of representation and somebody needed to speak for them.”

That was especially true for the District of Columbia, an under-served constituency, even to this today.

“We need all the help we can get,” she added. “I think the most important issue facing the Congressional Black Caucus is statehood for the District of Columbia.”

For Norton, having full voting powers representing the new “State of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth,” as House-passed bills would rename the District, could be crucial in a narrow House Democratic majority like the one now.

But prospects for getting statehood for the District through the current Senate, divided evenly between Republicans and Democrats, are very poor.

“I have all of the powers of any other member of the House except that final vote in the House of Representatives,” Norton said. “Now when we control the House by only three votes, you can see how that would matter.”

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Paddock Pointe Receives Industry Award of Excellence in Community Development

The Maryland Building Industry Association Recognizes Achievements

By PRESS OFFICER
Paddock Pointe

LAUREL, Md. (Nov. 22, 2021)— Paddock Pointe, a transit-oriented development in the heart of the Baltimore-Washington Corridor, has been recently recognized with a 2021 Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA) Land Development Council Award of Excellence in Community Development. The MBIA Land Development Council award, a gold standard of achievement in the state, lauds excellence in residential and mixed-use land development.

Paddock Pointe, adjacent to the Maryland Jockey Club at Laurel Park, is revitalizing a section of Route 1 into a thriving corridor for work, life, and leisure. The community is being

developed by 1/ST Properties with homes built by Ryan Homes. While Phase One is close to completion, the 63-acre community will eventually include 1,000 homes, along with the potential for 650,000-square-foot of commercial space, and 127,000-square-foot of retail space.

“Our ultimate goal is to create a connected community; not just a development,” said Mark Thompson, 1/ST Properties Senior Vice President of Development. “We strive every day to create a community where people are linked to opportunities, amenities, and each other. We’re honored that the MBIA has recognized our community impact in such a meaningful way.”

Paddock Pointe features a strong amenity package, includ-

ing access to nearly 25 acres of recreational space, a community garden, nature trails, a dog park, a family FIT Park, a kayak/canoe launch, and a one-acre Community Common. Paddock Pointe is served by a MARC commuter rail station and is steps from The Maryland Jockey Club at Laurel Park, offering year-round entertainment opportunities.

Since breaking ground in 2019, Paddock Pointe has become a cornerstone of revitalization along the Route 1 corridor. Prioritizing environmental stewardship, pedestrian safety, beautification, and community investment, Paddock Pointe is bringing new vibrancy to North Laurel.

For more information about Paddock Pointe, please visit their website: <https://experience.paddockpointe.com/>



PHOTO COURTESY Paddock Pointe

Paddock Pointe, adjacent to the Maryland Jockey Club at Laurel Park

Paddock Pointe at the Maryland Jockey Club is a mixed-use, transit-oriented community located in

North Laurel, Maryland. Residents of Paddock Pointe can experience unique, close-by amenities such as dining and shopping,

trails near the Patuxent River, easy access to the MARC train services, and a wide variety of public recreational activities.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

About Computing COLA and Congressional Pay Increases

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

Dear Rusty: What determines the amount of the cost of living increase for Social Security as compared to the cost of living increase for Congress? Last year Social Security got less than 2 percent, while Congress got a 10 percent cost of living increase. Why the double standard? What items are used to determine the cost of living increase?
Signed: Inquiring Mind

Dear Inquiring Mind: I’m happy to explain how the annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Social Security is computed and, although it’s outside the realm of Social Security I usually deal with, how members of Congress get raises in their pay.

The normal COLA formula affecting Social Security uses the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, known simply as the “CPI-W.” The CPI-W measures changes to consumer prices in several categories such as food, housing, transportation, etc., as computed monthly by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The formula to compute COLA each year compares the average CPI-W for the third quarter of the current year to the average CPI-W for the third quarter of the previous year. If there is a sufficient difference, that difference (expressed as a percentage) becomes the COLA increase percentage for next year. If there is no difference (or only a tiny difference) no COLA increase is awarded because no inflation has occurred from one year to the next, but there have only been 3 years since 1975 that no COLA has been given. The 2021 COLA increase was 1.3% and the 2022 COLA increase will be 5.9%, the latter reflecting high inflation we’ve experienced this year.

Increases to Congressional salaries are different. Although there is a statute allowing for automatic salary increases for members of Congress, that law can be overruled by legislation which suspends those automatic increases. Through such superseding legislation, Congressional pay has been frozen since 2009. The last salary increase received by members of Congress was 2.8% in January 2009, when each general member’s annual salary became \$174,000. Congressional salaries have not increased since that time so, with dollar amounts adjusted for inflation, pay for members of Congress effectively declined by 17% between 2009 and 2020. But don’t feel sorry for them. They have plenty of other perks to sustain them, and Representatives who already collect Social Security get the standard COLA increase to their SS benefit (as we all do).

While Congressional salaries have been frozen for years, there has been much recent debate about whether the CPI-W is an accurate measure of inflation for elderly Americans who rely on Social Security benefits. A commonly heard argument is that instead of the CPI-W, a separate Consumer Price Index known as the “CPI-E” (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly) would more accurately measure inflation for seniors and, thus, should be used to compute COLA for Social Security beneficiaries. Studies have shown that the CPI-E would provide a slightly improved COLA for SS beneficiaries, but there are other formulae being considered too. It remains to be seen whether future legislation will change how COLA is computed.

The 2.4 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.

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Marylanders Say They Are Feeling the Pinch of Inflation

By BRITTANY N. GADDY
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Nov. 19, 2021)—Some Marylanders say they are changing their budgets as they pay more for basic necessities like groceries and gas due to inflation.

“My husband keeps saying as the prices keep going up he’s not going to be able to retire,” Donna Rhodes, a 62-year-old retiree from Owings, told Capital News Service as she put groceries into a car. “You would like prices to go down instead of the prices going up.”

The Consumer Price Index, which is a common measure of inflation, climbed 6.2% in October compared to last year—the largest yearly increase in more than 30 years, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reported Nov. 10.

The index rose 0.9% last month following a 0.4% increase in September, the report said. Elevated prices in October were wide-ranging, with prices rising in energy, shelter, food, used cars and trucks as well as new vehicles.

One factor driving inflation, which is the rate at which prices increase over time, is too much government spending, said Dr. Antonio Saravia, an associate professor of economics at Mercer University, citing in part the stimulus checks that were issued to millions of Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Now you have all of this spending, all of this money in the economy, and people are using that to go purchase things,” he said. “And as we go to the stores and purchase things, prices go up.”

Another reason inflation is rising is because the Federal Reserve, the country’s central banking system, printed too much money so people could continue to make purchases during the pandemic, Saravia said.

Dr. Erica Groshen, senior economics advisor at Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations and former commissioner of the BLS, noted contributing factors to rising prices include some prices returning to normal from prices that were lower during the pandemic. Prices also have been pushed up by supply chain disruptions, she said.

Those delays have “meant increases in prices for things that have been slow to arrive at our ports to get to our stores,” Groshen said.

Saravia said supply chain disruptions



PHOTO CREDIT: BRITTANY N. GADDY/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Prince George’s County resident Shahid Allah said he doesn’t do as much long-distance driving anymore because of higher gas prices.

wouldn’t have changed prices so much if the Federal Reserve and government did not print and spend so much money.

Food prices increased 0.9% last month, according to the CPI, and supermarket customers are noticing the higher prices.

“Everything is like double the price, and it’s very difficult,” said Juanita Sherman, a 53-year-old Upper Marlboro resident and Metro employee. “I’ve been shopping for the last two weeks for Thanksgiving over pay periods so I can get everything.”

Gas prices are rising too, according to the CPI, increasing 6.1% last month, which is the fifth consecutive monthly increase.

Justin Hawkins from Chesapeake Beach owns a landscaping company. The 31-year-old said he increased the cost of his services because gas prices rose.

“So it’s been an impact to (businesses) like mine because that’s what I rely on,” he said. “The mowers take gas, any trimmers or anything like that—all that stuff takes gas. So I feel like the business I’m in, it’s definitely been impacted being that I rely on fuel.”

How inflation impacts average consumers depends on what they buy, Groshen said. When inflation is higher, consumers either have to save less or spend more than they planned.

For Kate Palermo, 38, who goes grocery shopping at least once a week, she plans more about what she’s going to buy from the grocery store because of its higher prices.

“I was never much of a meal prepper,”

the stay-at-home mom and Dunkirk resident said. “When we lived in Washington, I would daily walk to the market there, and I would see what I’d want to cook that night. But now...it’s easier and more sufficient to kind of prepare for the week.”

Keith Chapman, 69, of Upper Marlboro, said rising gas prices have caused him to cut back on visiting his grandkids and going out.

“It’s ridiculous now,” the retiree said. “(Everything’s) going up except your paycheck.”

Groshen thinks the rise in prices is likely temporary, explaining that slowing bond purchases, which the Federal Reserve earlier announced, and increasing interest rates will help cool off inflation.

“Now we don’t know exactly how long temporary is,” she added.

Saravia said he doesn’t think inflation will slow down for at least the next two years because he doesn’t see the Federal Reserve raising interest rates any time soon or slowing the printing of money. He also said he doesn’t see the government slowing its spending.

“I’ve been waiting, thinking this is gonna subside,” said Torey Milton, a 26-year old Millersville resident who works at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, talking about rising gas prices.

“Normally as soon as the fall hits the prices kind of fluctuate, but I thought things would have kind of gone back to normal now,” he said. “So I will have to adjust my budget now.”

Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC) Welcomes Antoine M. Thompson as the New Executive Director

By PRESS OFFICER
Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition

WASHINGTON (Nov. 16, 2021)—After an extensive search, The Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC) is happy to announce Antoine M. Thompson as our new Executive Director.

Antoine is the former Executive Director of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) the oldest as-

sociation of African-American real estate professionals in the United States. Antoine led efforts to increase advocacy on Capitol Hill on closing the racial wealth gap through increasing the rate of Black homeownership.

A nationally recognized leader for environmental justice, green business, housing, diversity, and urban policy, An-

toine had a significant public service career in his hometown of Buffalo, New York. His positions have included election to Buffalo Common Council where he authored the Buffalo’s Fair Housing Law, the Minority and Women Business Enterprise Inclusion Law and secured over \$75 million for community development projects. In



PHOTO COURTESY GWRCCC

Antoine M. Thompson is the New Executive Director of GWRCCC.

See GWRCCC Page A7

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Lessons for Maryland in Wake of COVID-19

By ALEX ARGIRIS
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 18, 2021)—More than 20 months since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the environmental impact of the virus has illuminated existing inequities in Maryland, while also offering a blueprint for the future.

Here are a few environmental takeaways from the pandemic in Maryland:

Marylanders reconnected with the outdoors

After Gov. Larry Hogan, R, instituted stay-at-home orders at the onset of the pandemic, many Marylanders turned to the outdoors in record numbers.

"I think early on people recognized the health benefits and therapy associated with being outdoors," Maryland Secretary of the Environment Ben Grumbles said in an interview with Capital News Service.

In 2020, state parks welcomed about 21.5 million visitors, a 45% increase from 2019, according to data from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

"More and more, we know that it's important for our health, just generally being outdoors. And it's important for our mental health to be outside. It's such a stress reducer," Deborah Landau, a conservation ecologist at The Nature Conservancy, told Capital News Service.

Landau noted that throughout her own hiking experiences on trails in Maryland over the last year and a half, there has been a marked increase in foot traffic.

The reconnection with nature might give Marylanders a fresh perspective on the environmental challenges facing the state, as populous coastal cities like Annapolis continue to feel the impact of severe flooding.

"I'm hoping that the result is that more people will reach out to their legislators and say 'Hey, you need to protect more open space for us' ... so that there's more places where they can go safely," Landau said.

Medical waste from hospitals may have increased

As hospitals dealt with surges in patients at the height of the pandemic, medical supplies were cycled through in higher numbers.

The increased use of disposable masks alone has become a significant environmental challenge.

Over 1.5 billion face masks ended up in the oceans worldwide in 2020, according to research from OceansAsia, a nonprofit marine advocacy organization.

In addition to masks, other disposable medical supplies like syringes affected the waste stream.

"There's been an introduction of high-magnitude material into the waste stream," Sacoby Wilson, an environmental health scientist and associate professor at the University of Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health, told Capital News Service in an interview.

There have been 51,502 hospitalizations from COVID-19 in Maryland as of Nov. 17, according to data from Maryland's health department.

Maryland has also administered nearly 9 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, with each dose requiring the use of a new syringe.

"We have a medical waste incinerator in Baltimore," Wilson said. "So think about the amounts of medical waste that have been produced and the fact that now you have potentially virus-related materials that have been incinerated."

However, Trey Krell, vice president of Biomedical Waste Services in Maryland, said the processing of medical waste has been a bit of a roller coaster

throughout the pandemic.

Even though there have been times when he has noticed a slight increase in medical waste, Krell said, that bump has often been offset by the lack of elective surgeries that were taking place in hospitals.

Maryland is very likely experiencing increased air pollution from the increased incineration of medical waste, according to Megan Latshaw, an associate scientist in Environmental Health and Engineering at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

There are also environmental justice concerns associated with the increase in waste streams, as lower income neighborhoods and communities of color tend to experience the brunt of the waste, according to Wilson.

Lowered emissions offer vision for the future

One benefit amidst the public health crisis and economic closures in 2020 was lowered emissions.

With increased teleworking leading to fewer cars on the road, air pollution dropped substantially in Maryland, according to air quality data from the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Nitrogen oxide decreased about 15%, and carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide each saw a 30% reduction from roughly mid-February to late May 2020.

Emission levels have nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021 despite the significant dip last year, according to Russell Dickerson, a professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science at the University of Maryland.

"Early on, it was like an unintended experiment where we got excellent data through our department and our air monitors and our meteorologists and also through the University of Maryland and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA," Grumbles said.

As of Oct. 25, statewide weekly traffic remained 6.5% below 2019 levels, according to data from the Maryland Department of Transportation.

However, statewide weekly truck volume had in-

creased by 13% compared to 2019 levels as of Oct. 25, likely a result of the increase in deliveries as consumers continue to shop online in higher numbers during the pandemic.

Grumbles said he hopes that the data gathered during the pandemic will offer a framework for reducing emissions long term.

"We really need to focus on zero-emission vehicles for the future," he said.

Hogan previously announced plans to widen I-495 and I-270 through a public-private partnership, and has also pushed for an increase in use of electric cars, buses and trucks across the state.

In addition to increasing zero-emission vehicles on the road, another policy objective Grumbles suggested is to simply limit the number of cars altogether.

Grumbles said that many companies could consider teleworking as a permanent option for employees, and improving broadband internet access across the state might serve as a vehicle for driving that change.

"I think a lot of people are recognizing that maybe they don't need multiple cars," Landau said.

The push from the Hogan administration for reducing emissions from cars comes amid the Nov. 5 passage in Congress of a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package, which includes nearly \$8 billion for Maryland to improve its transit systems, railways, clean water systems, roads, bridges and tunnels.

Increasing accessibility to mass transit also presents an opportunity to lower emissions in Maryland, as construction of the Purple Line light rail across Montgomery and Prince George's counties continues, according to Wilson.

Wilson argued that such investments in mass transit should be prioritized.

Hogan has argued that the plan to expand the highways in Maryland via a private partnership is a model for improving infrastructure without raising taxes.

"That's not the future," said Wilson. "That's the past."

The Twilight Estuary Film: A Mystery Solved

By TOM HORTON
for the Bay Journal News Service

The Chesapeake Bay has long inspired notable films, dating at least to 1965, when avid sailor and CBS news icon Walter Cronkite produced The Sailing Oystermen aboard the skip-jack Ruby Ford with legendary Smith Island Capt. Daniel Harrison and his brother Edward.

David Harp, Sandy Cannon Brown and I have made a few films ourselves for the Bay Journal, dealing with more current topics like sea level rise and beavers' potential to restore water quality. (Take a look on the Chesapeake Bay Journal YouTube Channel.)

But if I had to suggest only one film to watch, it might be Michael Fincham's little gem, The Twilight Estuary, which debuted in 1985. It's an environmental mystery tale, a scientific detective saga, a gripping story finely told, that stands the test of time.

I showed the 40-minute film to seventh graders in the 1980s when I taught at Smith Island for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. I show it now to most of my college classes at Salisbury University.

Fincham, a prolific science writer, documentary producer and Emmy-winning videographer, scavenged funds from sports videos he did for teams at the University of Maryland and produced it for the university's Sea Grant College.

The Chesapeake's seagrasses were dying, from Havre de Grace to Norfolk, up rivers and down. Meadows of underwater vegetation, which nurture crabs and fish, provide oxygen and sequester carbon, had decreased from an estimated half a million acres to around 40,000 by the mid-1980s.

No one knew why. But losing an immensely productive ecosystem that had persisted throughout the Chesapeake for thousands of years signaled something ominous.

The film begins in beauty: Deep summer, Smith Island, sun rising on graceful crabbing boats that underpin a whole culture, harvesting soft crabs in the grassy shallows where they go to shed their shells.

"We got a goldmine down here," waterman Denny Bradshaw says to the camera, adding, "long as everybody takes care of everything"—which clearly was not the case.

Was the culprit the thousands of factories and power plants that discharged their wastes into the Bay? The scientists quickly rule out these obvious suspects; they have their issues but aren't causing such widespread decline.

Next up is the "killer" that the scientists are betting on: farm chemicals. Indeed, Fincham said he spent so much of his time and budget on the topic that he had to scramble to film what turned out to be the real answer.

But at the moment, many were convinced it was herbicides, which farmers across the Bay region had been doubling and tripling their use of during the 1970s and '80s. More weedkillers on the land, running off into the water, coincided seamlessly with the "weeds" (aquatic grasses) dying in the Bay.

I wrote an article that led the Baltimore Sun's front page on Aug. 8, 1977, about research indicating herbicides were possibly the problem.

The agriculture industry and its supporters in the University of Maryland's farm research college were so rattled that they worked to obstruct and deny the research. The interference got bad enough that some of the seagrass scientists said privately that they "really hoped" the gathering evidence would indict big agriculture.

But it didn't—not the way everyone expected.

Painstaking measurements that looked for farm chemicals running off in high enough concentrations to kill seagrasses found that yes, locally, like in a farm drainage ditch after a rainstorm, the stuff was killing off some underwater grasses. But in creeks, seldom. In larger rivers, never. In the Bay's mainstem, not even close. It added stress maybe, but no smoking gun.

What remained was sunlight, which all green plants need to grow. In Virginia a young Bob Orth and Dick Wetzel, and in Maryland a young Walter Boynton, Michael Kemp and Court Stevenson began developing a new storyline—that the once-clear Chesapeake had become murkier, a twilight estuary.

All of those researchers would make distinguished careers on the Chesapeake and beyond. Their new culprit for what was killing the grasses turned out to be all of us, or at least most everything humans did across a

huge watershed some 16 times as large as the Bay itself.

The problem, they learned, is nutrients: nitrogen and phosphorus from sewage, from farm fertilizers and manure, from developments and from air pollution (though the air's importance was not understood until later). Also sediment, running from fields and housing developments and clear-cut forests, measurable in tons per acre.

It was all clouding the water, cutting the light that the grasses needed for growth. The coup de grace came from something that cut light even further. And though it was right in front of their eyes, for a while the scientists didn't see it.

It was "epiphytic growth," essentially slime, fueled by excess nutrients, that was coating the leaves of the seagrasses. Fincham recalled: "We were all sitting in a room screening footage that showed extreme epiphytic fouling [and] not one of us remarked on it or wondered what effect that might have on the grass demise."

The young scientists, smart as they were, had little experience with the healthy, clean-leaved grasses that had existed decades and centuries before. The fouling looked normal. A lowly grad student, Ken Staver, finally drew attention to it.

The scientists featured in The Twilight Estuary did their jobs well. Society has done its job of controlling nutrients and sediment less well. The Bay grasses have rebounded to about 70,000 to 108,000 acres, varying year to year, but further progress seems stalled.

Other factors like climate change, scarcely an issue in the 1980s, are complicating the situation now. I'm talking with Fincham and others about an update film on the grasses.

But The Twilight Estuary remains a classic primer on how the Chesapeake ecosystem works and on the importance of science—science pursued Baywide—for restoring this estuary.

Maryland Sea Grant has made the film available free via YouTube through the end of 2021. Watch it here: <https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/chesapeake-twilight-estuary>.

Tom Horton, a Bay Journal columnist, has written many articles and books about the Chesapeake Bay. He currently teaches writing and environmental topics at Salisbury University. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Bay Journal. This commentary first appeared in the October 2021 issue of the Bay Journal and was distributed by the Bay Journal News Service.



"Pips" of Rogue Detection Teams was able to find larvae and larval poop of the endangered checkerspot butterfly for the Forest Service in Washington State in 2019.

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Earth TALK™ Conservation Dogs To the Rescue

Dear EarthTalk:

What are conservation dogs?

—Jon Gretcham, Portland, OR

Simply put, conservation dogs are canines specially trained in sniffing out evidence of specific wildlife species that scientists are seeking to learn more about for one reason or another. Most commonly these dogs are used to help biologists understand where and how threatened or endangered wildlife species are hanging on—or if they are still around at all.

At the forefront of this burgeoning field is Rogue Detection Teams (RDT), a Washington State based non-profit that sends their specially trained dogs around North America and beyond to help scientific researchers, government agencies and non-profit groups gather field evidence in order to further their conservation work.

It's no wonder that conservationists have started using detection dogs, a standard practice in the military and law enforcement since the 1940s when U.S. troops first employed canines to detect German land mines in North Africa. By pairing human handlers well-versed in ecology and biology (the "bounders") with detection dogs trained on a specific scent, conservationists can monitor the density, distribution and overall health of certain species of concern.

To wit, Rogue's dogs have worked all over the world helping conservation groups bolster their cases with hard data collected in the field. The majority of the Rogue's work so far has been in the American West, but teams are scattered as far afield as Brazil, Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East in search of everything from sea turtles to grasshoppers to pygmy rabbits, big cats, red foxes and bumblebees.

What makes for a perfect conservation dog? The best detection dogs wouldn't necessarily make a great pet, as they tend to be obsessed with reward accumulation.

"Our dogs are typically considered unadoptable due to their high energy and obsessive desire to play fetch," says Rogue's Jennifer Hartman. "This obsessive energy is quite perfect for us because we pair this with detecting an odor and reward our dogs with their ball for locating the odor." Rogue's dogs can cover up to 15 miles a day in survey work, and still have energy left over for more playtime after the search.

And it doesn't take a specific breed or size dog—it's all about the dog's so-called "high ball drive". "We have quite a few Labrador mixes as well as heeler mixes because these seem to be high drive dogs that end up in shelters, but we also have a chihuahua mix and what might be a papillon mix in our program," reports Hartman. "We love all dogs though, and don't discriminate as long as they like to play fetch!"

Currently Rogue runs 19 dogs out of its Washington State headquarters. The organization, founded in 2019 by a group of conservation-oriented dog handlers who had been doing this sort of work on their own for more than a decade, also runs programs to train others' dogs (and their owners) in these canine "detection" practices. Through its training work, Rogue hopes to develop the next generation of bounders to carry on the innovative work of the conservation dogs in helping other species hang on in this warming-compromised world.

CONTACTS: Rogue Detection Teams, roguedogs.org; "A Nose for Science: Conservation Dogs May Help in Search for Endangered Franklin's Bumblebee," <https://therevelator.org/conservation-dogs-bumblebee/>.

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GWRCCC from A5

2006, he was elected to the New York State Senate and served as the Senate Deputy Majority Whip and Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation and Co-Chair of the Senate Minority and Woman Business Enterprise Task Force. He authored the NYS MWBE Mentor/Protégé Law. He was a key architect of the Green Jobs/Green New York law.

"The executive search for my successor produced some very qualified candidates but none provide the combination of executive, political and subject matter experience of Antoine Thompson. GWRCCC is most fortunate to have Antoine as its new Executive Director" stated Ira Dorfman, former Executive Director and current Senior Advisor to GWRCCC.

"With the nation very focused on alternative fuels, green businesses, and green jobs, Antoine's experience managing organizations, building coalitions, and leadership in government and advocacy is critically important to GWRCCC members and the clients, customers, and communities that they serve," stated Anne Steckel, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of GWRCCC.

As Executive Director, Antoine will work closely with staff and the GWRCCC board increasing member and community engagement, growing investments in alternative fuels, technologies, and infrastructure for transportation by local, state, and the federal governments. He will also champion GWRCCC's efforts for racial and gender equity in climate solutions, green businesses, and green jobs.

GWRCCC is a 501(c)3 non-profit public-private partnership in the Greater Washington Region promoting the use of clean, American transportation fuels for homeland security and improved air quality. GWRCCC celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2018, one of approximately 80 coalitions around the country that receives support from the US Department of Energy. GWRCCC stakeholders include government jurisdictions, the Council of Governments and regional planning authorities, trade associations, private companies and concerned citizens. All have a common interest to encourage the expanded use of new automotive technology to replace gasoline and diesel fuel for a cleaner transportation future and to promote racial equity, diversity and inclusion too.

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