

# The Prince George's Post



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## Marietta House Museum Presents: "From Slave Ship to Harvard: Yarrow Mamout and the History of an African American Family", by Author James H. Johnston

By STACEY HAWKINS  
Marietta House Museum

Marietta House Museum is thrilled to present nationally acclaimed author and historian, James H. Johnston, on **Thursday, January 12, 6:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.** to discuss his book, "From Slave Ship to Harvard: Yarrow Mamout and the History of an African American Family". This is a hybrid presentation.

James H. Johnston will discuss the life of Yarrow Mamout, a self-emancipated Muslim man whose story from Africa to Maryland lends insight into understanding the lives of 18th & 19th century free and enslaved people in Prince George's County,

MD. Yarrow Mamout was the first of his family to arrive in America. Hear the true story of an African American family in Maryland over six generations, from their ancestor Yarrow Mamout to the present generations.

To join this fascinating conversation please register online at <https://tinyurl.com/msfbswrz> or call (301) 464-5291 for more information. This is online and in-person. To receive the Microsoft Teams link you must register in advance. Address for in-person presentation is 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD. 20769. Marietta House Museum is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

## Bowie Native Mans the Rails Aboard USS Ronald Reagan Returning From Deployment in Pacific Ocean

YOKOSUKA, Japan (Dec. 16, 2022) Chief Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical), Sandra Djamen, from Bowie, Maryland, mans the rails as the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), returns to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, following its deployment to the western Pacific ocean, Dec. 16. During Ronald Reagan's deployment, the ship conducted joint Carrier Strike Group (CSG) exercises with the Republic of Korea Navy, participated in multinational exercises with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and Royal Australian Navy during Valiant Shield, Keen Sword and Malabar 2022 and visited the Philippines, Singapore, Korea and Guam. Ronald Reagan, the flagship of CSG 5, provides a combat-ready force that protects and defends the United States, and supports Alliances, partnerships and collective maritime interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SEAMAN TIMOTHY DIMAL



## Oaks Are Dying at Record Rates Across Chesapeake Region

By AD CRABLE  
Bay Journal News Service

It's not your imagination. Those beautiful mature oaks are dying, along the road, in forests, perhaps even in your yard—at an accelerating rate.

Reports of mature, seemingly healthy trees suddenly becoming leafless and dropping dead branches are flooding into the offices of local officials and state forestry agencies in Chesapeake Bay drainage states. Forest inventories show the oaks are declining in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland.

In Anne Arundel County, MD, county officials received so many phone calls about dying oaks that they have begun investigating where and why so many are perishing.

The rate of loss worries forest managers and arborists across the region, prompting efforts by state and federal agencies to understand and slow what they have labeled "oak decline"—which appears to have no single or predominant cause. While studies of the die-off are underway, forest managers have launched long-range efforts to nurse survivors and replace the dead.

Their concern is based both on the unsurpassed importance of oaks to wildlife and forest ecosystems, as well as the commercial value of their wood.

With about 20 species in Bay states, oaks are acknowledged as the most beneficial trees for wildlife. Acorns are food for more than 100 species of mammals, including deer, turkeys, squirrels, mice, birds and others. Migrating songbirds rely on them, feeding on insects spread under their broad canopies. Hundreds of species of caterpillars feed on oak leaves.

Even their fallen leaves support more insects than those of other trees, curling on the ground and decomposing more

slowly, offering an umbra of shelter. The leaves of most trees fall flat and are plastered to the ground.

In urban neighborhoods, oak trees are valued for their wide, shading canopies, ability to filter water and, more recently, their absorption of carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas.

### No single culprit

Experts say that oak decline is accelerating and that the causes are complex and cumulative. They include extreme weather from climate change, above-ground and subterranean diseases, insects and the current infrequency of fires that oaks evolved to tolerate, giving them a competitive advantage in post-fire environments.

"People are tired of [vague] answers, but it's not a single insect or disease," said Dave Clement of the University of Maryland Extension.

Then there is the sad reality that many oaks are simply ending their lifespan somewhat in unison.

Oaks became the dominant tree in eastern North American forests after a blight wiped out American chestnut trees in the 1920s and 1930s. Controlled burning and the clear-cutting of forests was common. Oaks, which evolved not only to be tolerant of fire but also to thrive in abundant sunlight, prospered in the new gaps in the forest.

Now, many of those old monarchs



PHOTO CREDIT PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

An oak tree in Pennsylvania suffers from oak anthracnose, a fungus that especially infects trees during cool, wet springs.

are giving up the ghost around the same time. The older trees are more vulnerable to disease, insect infestation and the ravages of extreme weather, noted Lori Chamberlin, forest health manager for the Virginia Department of Forestry. They can be declining for years, even decades, before telltale leaf diebacks are noticed.

"Trees don't live forever," Chamberlin said. "In Virginia, we just have a cohort of trees reaching this advanced age at the same time."

But across the board, experts in Bay states cite more intense weather from climate change as a major cause in the seemingly sudden fatalities.

More heavy rain events drench the roots, cutting off oxygen. Trees weakened that way are more vulnerable to diseases such as root rot and insect infestations—from the two-lined chestnut borer and the fall cankerworm, for instance. Drought, meanwhile, causes trees to lose moisture and invites other

pathogens to invade.

"Climate change is a big factor with the extreme weather events. There's never any middle ground anymore. It just seems feast or famine," said Jill Rose, Pennsylvania's state forest pathologist.

Defoliation from spongy moths, formerly known as gypsy moths, can kill some trees and significantly weaken others.

The insect's up-and-down cycles are again in the buildup phase in many areas.

Another significant threat is oak wilt, a deadly nonnative fungus disease that is killing countless trees in forests and urban areas of the western half of Pennsylvania. The disease is less prevalent so far in Maryland, where roughly 40% of the state is forested, and in Virginia, with approximately 62% forested.

Bacterial leaf scorch is rampant in eastern parts of Pennsylvania, a state with 59% of its land forested. Two common leaf diseases in Maryland are bacterial leaf scorch and oak anthracnose, a fungus typically found during cool and wet springs.

In urban and suburban settings, root systems are compacted and constrained by sidewalks, retaining walls and sewer pipes. Tamping from foot-traffic and mowing can compact the soil, making a tree more vulnerable to insects and disease.

In broader expanses of woods, the regeneration of oaks is inhibited by browsing deer. In many places, seedlings never grow taller than a deer's mouth.

### Rescue attempts

The U.S. Forest Service has just launched the White Oak Initiative, driven in part by the spirits industry, which depends heavily on white oak wood for aging barrels.

Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland will participate in the effort, which aims to nurture oaks in both public and private forests. A related goal is to promote more diverse forests so that oak die-offs don't leave big treeless gaps in the woods.

The Virginia Department of Forestry and partners have begun a Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative—using understory treatments, the removal of invasive plants and trees, and the suppression of deer populations to help new generations of oaks.

The Maryland Forest Service is trying to address overbrowsing by deer and will use more controlled fires to increase oak regeneration.

One of the problems with combatting oak decline is that most oak stands are on private land. "We need to get [the landowners'] attention and give them solutions to favor oaks," said Daniel Dey, a research forester with the U.S. Forest Service, who has spent his career trying to save oaks.

He said that he intends to be buried in an oak coffin.

Ad Crable ([acrable@bayjournal.com](mailto:acrable@bayjournal.com)) is a Bay Journal staff writer based in Pennsylvania. This article first appeared in the December 2022 Bay Journal and was distributed by the Bay Journal News Service.

## The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour Presents Acoustic Rooster's Barnyard Boogie Starring Indigo Blume

Find your voice in this feathery adventure.

Adapted from the books by Kwame Alexander; By Kwame Alexander and Mary Rand Hess

Music by Randy Preston, Directed by Lili-Anne Brown

By ANGIE LOCKHART  
Montgomery College

New York Times best-selling author KWAME ALEXANDER brings two of his beloved children's books—Acoustic Rooster and Indigo Blume—to the stage in a world premiere Kennedy Center commission.

Alexander teams up with his writing partner MARY RAND HESS and long-time musical collaborator RANDY PRESTON to tell a story about being scared, being brave, and believing in yourself. With special guests like Duck Ellington and Ms. Dairy Parton—this musical adaptation will have children (and families) dancing in their seats. Dive into a

book to keep the fun going: Kwame's NEW picture book of the same name is based on our musical!

For tickets and information, call the Box Office at 240-567-5301, Monday–Friday, 10

See THEATER Page A6

**Who:** Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center 2022–2023 Saturday Morning Children's Series  
**What:** The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour Presents ACOUSTIC ROOSTER'S BARNYARD BOOGIE STARRING INDIGO BLUME  
**When:** Saturday, January 21, 2023, 11 a.m.  
**Where:** Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD 20850  
**Tickets:** Tickets are \$10 Adults and \$5 Children and Students General Admission  
Box Office: 240-567-5301  
[www.montgomerycollege.edu/pac](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/pac)  
• Recommended for ages 5 and up! •  
**Please note: This performance contains haze effects.**

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#### ChildWatch: "The Work of Christmas"

...the beginning of 2023 should be a new chance to rededicate ourselves to welcoming and caring for the poor children in our midst today

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#### Tobacco-Free '23: 3 Reasons Why This Is the Year for Maryland Residents to Quit Tobacco for Good

The American Lung Association encourages people who use tobacco to make a New Year's resolution to quit in 2023, provides tips and resources.

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# TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

## In & Around Morningside-Skyline

### Donald Young, WWII vet and Census Bureau Statistician, dies at 100

Donald Eugene Young, of Camp Springs, died December 19, five years to the day his wife Carmina died in 2017. They had been married 57 years.

Don was born in Newton, Massachusetts, May 5, 1922, a descendant of Jonas Sanderson who was a beacon tender during Paul Revere's ride. He graduated from Malden High (founded in 1857).

By the time he finished high school, World War II was warming up and Don was in the Army. He served first with a military police escort, guarding German prisoners of war in a POW camp in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. In 1944, his unit retrained as medics, and he was assigned to the 191st General Hospital. They shipped out on a converted luxury liner, the USS WestPoint which, without a convoy, made a record ocean crossing in four days. They were bound for Verdun but, because of the Battle of the Bulge, they set up a 1000-bed general hospital in Paris.

After the war, Don graduated from Boston University College of Business Administration and went to work for the Census Bureau. His 35 years with Census took him on many adventures—as foreign advisor on loan to the International Cooperation Administration and AID, on assignment to the Philippines 1956–1958 and 1961–1963 as statistical advisor for Economic Census and Economic Surveys, twice to China as lecturer, to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Paraguay to advise on their economic censuses. He retired in 1985 with 41 years of government service.

But the best thing that happened to him during his Census years was meeting a fellow Census worker, Carmina Fernández Cruz, a native of Puerto Rico with a PhD in math. They were married June 8, 1960, in a nuptial Mass at San José Church in Villa Caparra, Puerto Rico. They moved to Camp Springs in 1966 and became active parishioners at St. Philip the Apostle Parish.

Over the years Don received a number of awards, among them the Silver Medal for Meritorious Service and the Bronze Medal from the Department of Commerce. He was a member of the American Statistical Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars Clinton Post #9376, American Legion, and Clinton Post #259 and Prior Post Adjutant of Post 45 DC Department of Commerce of the American Legion.

Don is survived by daughter Donna Marie Young and son Paul Eugene Young

and wife Mary Ann, grandchildren Ashley, Kyle and Matthew, and many nieces and nephews. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at St. Philip's by Fr. Patrick Lewis with Fr. Charles McCann and Fr. Jaime Hernandez. Burial followed at Resurrection Cemetery.

Don enjoyed historical researching, the daily newspaper, travel to Florida and Puerto Rico, fishing, Boston baked beans, spumoni, and sunflowers. As he said, "No matter how old, always Young."

### Town of Morningside

With a new year underway, Morningside will be getting ready for the annual May election. This year, I think, two Council seats need to be filled. There'll be a lot more about this in the coming months.

Morningside meetings coming up in January will be the work session on Tuesday, Jan. 10, and the Town Meeting on Jan. 17, both at 7 p.m. For information, call 301-736-2300.

### Neighbors & other good people

Qadence Samuels, Bishop McNamara HS basketball star, has been recruited by the University of Connecticut. According to the Washington Post report, she said "I wanted a family culture. I wanted winning. I wanted a good education. And I wanted a really great coach. That's what U-Conn offered." By the way, she's 6-foot-2 and comes from a basketball-playing family. Her brother Qwanzi is on the team at G.W.

Dave Williams answered a question I posed recently in my column. He emailed that most of the time Ernie Bayne played Santa on the Morningside Sportsmen's annual ride through the community, collecting canned goods for the needy. Ernie was a great Santa! Dave added that sometimes Carolyn Williams played Mrs. Claus, along with Susan Stimson.

Russell Butler, former Morningsider Town Councilman, emailed a kind comment. "You and the column are both blessings. You have tied the past and the present together in a way that makes us smile. Thank you for being you." Thank you, Russell!

Grandson Conor McHale, of Clinton, was visiting family in Michigan recently and went shopping at Meijer's (a sort of Walmart) when he was in line with a guy who had a Maryland flag on his coat. (Conor said to me, "Since I'm your grandson, I asked him why.") Turns out he was a military brat who grew up at Andrews

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

AFB. He attended elementary school at Mount Calvary and his brothers went to McNamara. Now he's a contractor for the military. Conor apologized to me because he failed to get the man's name.

### Changing landscape

PGC311 is a one-stop call center that residents may call to get answers to questions and receive assistance with resolving non-emergency issues. This system makes it easier to reach County departments/services and greatly expands information available online. PGC311 allows citizens to have a quick, easy-to-remember, single point of access for non-emergency government information and services.

I've been reading about the public pay phones. (Remember them?) Some people are working to get them back in use. Why?

There's also a movement to make the Chesapeake Bay a part of the National Park Service system. The Bay has many problems; perhaps this would help solve some of them.

### Wordle-mania

I have been doing Wordle now for 309 days. I've had twelve 2's and seventy-five 3's, but mostly I do 4's, a few 5's and very few 6's. I've only failed to get the word twice. I rely heavily on my Official Scrabble Players Dictionary, 5th edition. How are you doing?

### Remembering Wynona

Wynona Lewis Skinner was born January 10, 1914, in Angelina County, East Texas. I don't know how she ended up in Maryland. She had been a journalism student and began writing a column for The Enquirer Gazette in 1961. The column, about her Croom community, also ran in the Prince George's Post and was occasionally published in the Baltimore Sun magazine. She died August 17, 2001, and is buried at Little Oak Methodist Church Cemetery in Goshen.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Suitland historian Darlie Norton, Ariel Thomas, Sarah Vilky and Terry Foster, Jan. 6; Eva Hugings and Charles Boxley, Jan. 8; Patty Gallatin, Jan. 11; Martin Miller, Frank Binsted and Roc Wheeler, Jan. 13.

Happy Anniversary to former Morningside Councilman James and Yvonne Ealey, their sixth anniversary on Jan. 6; and Diane and Steve Zirkle, Jan. 9.

## Curb Your Live Christmas Tree

*Reduce your holiday footprint by recycling your Christmas tree*

By LINDA LOWE

Prince George's County Department of the Environment

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 29, 2022)—The Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE) offers a free curbside tree recycling program that helps residents compost their live Christmas trees. Beginning January 2 through January 30, 2023, residents can place their live, undecorated Christmas tree at the curb for pickup. No artificial trees are accepted.

To participate, residents receiving County-provided yard trim collection on Mondays should place their tinsel-free, unbagged, and undecorated live tree curbside by 6 a.m. Trees can also be dropped off at the Brown Station Road Public Container Pad & Recycling Center located at 3501 Brown Station Road in Upper Marlboro, Monday through Saturday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. at no charge.

"I encourage residents to do their part in keeping valuable resources out of our landfill and take advantage of this free resource," said DoE Director Andrea Crooms. "When you recycle your live tree, you give back to the environment."

Trees collected will be chipped into mulch and made available to the public during the County's annual spring Mulch Madness giveaway in April.

For more information, contact PGC311 at [pgc311.com](http://pgc311.com).

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty:

## Should I Claim

## Social Security Now?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,

National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

**Dear Rusty:** I am 68 years old, born in July 1954. I have the credits necessary to qualify for benefits. The Social Security website says that if I continue to work to age 70 with yearly earnings of \$206,000, my monthly benefit would be \$4,245. If I stop working now, and start taking benefits in January 2023, my benefit would be \$3778. The number of months between January 2023 and July 2024 is 19. Nineteen months of benefits for that period would be \$71,782. It looks like it would take about 17 years to make up the difference between taking the money in January vs. waiting until age 70, which would put me at age 85. I don't think that I would live much past that age, given my family history. Do you think it wise on my part to begin taking benefits in January 2023, and are my calculations correct? **Signed: Trying to Decide**

**Dear Trying:** Well, the difference between your monthly payment at age 70 vs. your benefit amount in January 2023 is \$467, so it would take you about 154 months (just under 13 years) to recover that \$71,782. But that doesn't take future cost of living adjustments (COLA) into account. Average annual COLA over the last 20 years was about 2%, and if you factor average future COLA into the equation you would likely break even at about age 81 (if you wait until age 70 to claim). And this is where your life expectancy comes in.

According to Social Security, the average life expectancy for a man your age is 85, which means that if you claim at 70 and enjoy average longevity, you'll collect that higher benefit for an extra 4 years. That would mean more than \$22,000 in additional benefits over your lifetime. Of course, no one knows how long they will live, but if you'd like to get a more personal estimate of your life expectancy, I suggest you try this tool: [www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/](http://www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/). This tool takes your lifestyle and current health status, as well as your family history, into account.

When to claim is always a personal choice, but in your specific circumstances—since you apparently don't need the money right now and have a family history which suggests longevity—waiting until age 70 to claim could not only give you a substantially higher monthly benefit but also the most in cumulative lifetime benefits. And if you're married, it will also mean the maximum possible survivor benefit for your wife if you predeceased her because, as your widow, your wife would get the benefit you are receiving at your death instead of her own smaller amount. Thus, when you claim your benefit will also affect your wife's benefit as your surviving widow. In the end, it's your personal decision to make, after considering all of the above factors, especially your life expectancy.

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://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](http://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](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

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## Brandywine-Aquasco

### HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Assistant Director Brandon Felder used the performance Handel's Messiah as a chance to add a few wrinkles to the traditional winter concert formula, by making the performance a community event and invited local choirs to collaborate and sing alongside the University Choir. Holiday Cheer came to campus as Bowie State University hosted the Community Messiah Sing Along at the Fine and Performing Arts Center on Dec. 14.

They invited the entire community, not only Prince George's County but (also) Washington, DC and beyond to join and sing with them. Felder invited choirs from Metropolitan Baptist Church, Shiloh Baptist Church, Suitland High School, DuVal High School, and Reid Temple AME, along with a host of other local ensembles.

In addition to local choirs, Felder extended the invitation to any individuals who wanted to sing along with the University Choir, even if they did not have formal choir training. Felder also switched things up with the musical selection by trading the traditional Christmas carols for Handel's Messiah, which he noticed doesn't get a lot of attention from local university choirs.

"In my research, that particular piece of musical work is rarely done in Prince George's County," said Felder. "I said wouldn't it be wonderful if Bowie State became a staple for that in our area."

The choir worked hard learning the four choruses that they performed at the concert, but it's been an exciting challenge that they all embraced. They were excited about showing what they had been working on and combining their voices with the community.

"It's something new, but it keeps you on your toes," said senior soprano Jamari Blagmon. "It will really be cool to be the first choir to do Messiah. I think it's a really good way to have an outreach of the performing art's specifically with classical music."

Felder was excited for the performance. "We hope to make this an annual thing, he said. "We have to create these moments. MEDIA CONTACT: David Thompson, 301-860-4311 [dthompson@bowiestate.edu](mailto:dthompson@bowiestate.edu).

### DANCE TEACHER KARON JOHNSON

Gwynn Park High School in Brandywine, Maryland dance teacher Karon Johnson received a grant through the Wolf Trap High School Performing Arts Teachers program for her project: Makerspaces for Dancers/Movement Exploration!

### JANUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Steven Carter, Dr. Sandra Jones, Davion Dorsett, Veronica Quarm, Khadija Hakim-Hinton, Nurbert Hughes, Jr. Walter Joiner, Ian Williams, Bernestine Byran, Mwezi Nsimba

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

Mbakwe, Okezie Nzuzi Mbakwe, Nicole Falby, Beatrice Chapman, Abu Davies, Judanne Thomas, Brandon Holmes, Lawrence Omoregbe, Joseph Jordon, Marian Thomas, Rachelle Jackson, Roseline Omoregbe, Yannick Bourne, William Terry, Donovan Cain, Anne Kauffman, Florella Wallace who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating their birthdays in January.

### JANUARY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Elvin and Joan Falby, Oiuwa and Assiatu (Lilly Jalloh) Adeyemo, George and Mildred Rucker, Nurbert and Carol Hughes, Buddy and Betty King, Walter and Theresa Lindsay Joiner who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating wedding anniversaries in January.

### VISION FOR 2023

As 2022 comes to a close, Nottingham Myers' vision for 2023 "Our time for everything"—Our time to Build, Our time to Heal, Our time to Plant, Our time to Serve, and Our time to Keep. By sowing the break-in of offering \$123 we praise God now for all that is to come in 2023.

South Care Series: January 2023 each Wednesday at 7 p.m. Information is listed: Meeting ID: 888-7355-0469, Passcode: 528672, Dial 301-715-8592

Upcoming Events: January 11 Nutrition Wellness (Patricia Newman, RN), January 18 Signs of Dementia and Alzheimer's (Dr. Flavia Walton, Lead for South County Dementia Friendly America Prince George's County), January 25 How to Budget (Rohan Pinkney). Reverend Shemaiah Strickland, Pastor Nottingham Myers and Christ United Methodist Parish.

### SUBURBAN MARYLAND SPRING HOME SHOW

The Suburban Maryland Spring Home Show will be held Saturday, January 14, 2023, event hours 10 a.m.–8 p.m., Sunday, January 15, hours 10 a.m.–5 p.m. at Show Place Arena, Prince George's Equestrian Center. Address is 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772.

At the Home Show, their goal is to inspire, motivate and excite you for your upcoming home improvement, whether it's a minor renovation or a major remodel. Suburban Maryland Spring Home Show events feature a wide selection of home improvement professionals in a fun, interactive environment. After meeting with and comparing their expert exhibitors, we know you'll be inspired and motivated to start planning with confidence. More importantly, they want you to be excited about all the fantastic possibilities that come with your project.



# COMMUNITY

## Volunteer Maryland Opens 2023–2024 Service Site Application Period

*Nonprofits, Government Agencies, and Schools Encouraged to Apply to Host AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinators During Next Service Year*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Governor's Office of Community Initiatives

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 19, 2022)—Volunteer Maryland opened its 2023–2024 service site application period. The program—which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary—is encouraging nonprofits, government agencies, and schools to apply to host AmeriCorps volunteer coordinators during the next service year to help support education, economic opportunity, and environmental stewardship statewide.

“Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps members can help enhance volunteer programs that are working to meet evolving community needs,” said Governor's Office of Community Initiatives Executive Director Steven J. McAdams. “Partnering with Volunteer Maryland is an excellent opportunity for organizations who are already doing great work to increase their capacity to serve.”

During each service year, Volunteer Maryland assigns AmeriCorps volunteer coordinators to a partner service site, where they work closely with staff to help improve volunteer program capacity through training sessions, recruitment drives, and developing community partnerships. Up to thirty AmeriCorps volunteer coordinators will be eligible for placement with participating service sites for an eleven month period, beginning in Sept. 2023.

Prior to submitting an application, interested organizations are encouraged to attend one of five free virtual workshop sessions on Jan. 17, Jan. 24, Jan. 31, Feb. 7, or Feb. 14. Each session is from 10 a.m. to noon. Workshop attendees will learn about the benefits of hosting an AmeriCorps member and partnering with Volunteer Maryland to upgrade their volunteer programs, in addition to hearing about select grant opportunities.

“For thirty years, Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps members, service sites, and volunteers have worked every day to help make a positive impact in communities across Maryland,” said Volunteer Maryland Director Sharon Lewis. “When we expand our partnerships, we expand that legacy of impact.”

Currently, 18 Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps volunteer coordinators and service sites are working together in myriad ways to help build stronger communities statewide. Since Volunteer Maryland's inception in 1992, more than 750 individuals have served as AmeriCorps members in Maryland, successfully recruiting more than 130,000 volunteers who served more than 2 million hours at more than 350 organizations across the state.

To learn more and to register to attend an informational session about becoming a Volunteer Maryland partner service site, visit <https://volunteer.maryland.gov/servicesites>. The application period will end on March 3, 2023.

## Governor Hogan Announces \$20 Million Water Assistance Relief Program

By MICHAEL RICCI  
Executive Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 28, 2022)—Governor Larry Hogan today announced a \$20 million Water Assistance Relief Program that will support residents with water bill debt related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We continue to provide ways—especially during the winter months—to help residents who may have difficulty with their water or heating bills,” said Governor Hogan. “Water systems are encouraged to apply for this funding to ensure savings for customers in the coming months.”

As a condition of receiving program funding, water systems must agree to allocate payments as bill credits to customer accounts within a specific number of days after receiving payment, and waive late fees

and interest penalties. The credits will cover outstanding water debt from residential customers that was accrued between January 2020 and September 2022.

The application period for water systems to apply for funding will begin Monday, January 2, 2023, and will remain open until Tuesday, January 31, 2023.

In addition, programs are available year-round through the Maryland Department of Human Services' Office of Home Energy Programs to help with utility bills and prevent any loss of service, including the Maryland Energy Assistance Program, the Electric Universal Service Program, and the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program.

The funding for this program will be allocated from federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF.)

## Marietta House Presents: “Children’s Hour With Yoruba Language”

By STACEY HAWKINS  
Marietta House Museum

Please join us on Monday, January 16, 10 a.m.–11 a.m. “Children’s Hour with Yoruba Language”. Dr. Taiye Ayoola-Adedeji is the author of “The Yoruba Sound Book for Children” and will engage children in word activities to learn Yoruba words for colors, num-

bers, and seasons. Dr. Ayoola-Adedeji is on a quest to ensure that the beautiful African tonal language is passed on from one generation to the next.

Ideal for children ages 4–12 with an accompanying adult. All children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Free event, however, registration is requested at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/vm4cz7ar>. For more

information, call 301-464-5291 or email [mariettahouse@pgparks.com](mailto:mariettahouse@pgparks.com). Snow date is January 22.

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

## Hospice of the Chesapeake Gala Returns to Live! Hotel and Casino in April 2023

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Nov. 30, 2022)—Hospice of the Chesapeake is pleased to announce that its annual Caring for Life Gala will be held on the evening of Saturday, April 22, 2023, at Live! Hotel and Casino Maryland in Hanover, Maryland.

The gala is the organization’s signature black tie event and features an open bar, fine cuisine, a silent and live auction, a band, and dancing. Its largest fundraiser of the year, the gala draws close to 500 attendees and directly supports the mission and programs of Hospice of the Chesapeake.

The nonprofit is celebrating more than 43 years serving the community. It continues to celebrate its status as a leader in hospice and palliative care as well as grief support and now serves four Maryland counties including Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and Prince George’s.

For sponsorship opportunities, contact our events team at 443-837-1531 or [events@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:events@hospicechesapeake.org).

*Caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is the mission of Hospice of the Chesapeake. For more information, please visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org).*

## Profiles in Professionalism: Lt. Dominique Pope

Story by Petty Officer 2nd Class  
TYRA CAMPBELL,  
Commander, Navy Reserve Force

Newly-promoted Navy Reserve Lt. Dominique Pope learned much about service from her father, a Retired Air Force Senior Master Sergeant who spent most of his career serving as a Reserve Airman.

His experience enabled him to prepare her for a rewarding career.

According to Pope, a Silver Spring, Maryland native, the only higher education military institution she was familiar with was the Naval Academy, until her father presented her with another option.

“My dad introduced me to the Merchant Marine Academy,” said Pope. “After learning more about it, I liked the idea of having the option to join any branch as a Reserve service member or to go on active duty.”

Pope attended the Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) in Kings Point, New York, where she majored in Maritime Logistics and Security and, in 2018, received an automatic commission through the Strategic Sealift Officer (SSO) Program.

In her Navy Reserve role, Pope belongs to the Strategic Sealift Readiness Group (SSRG), a team of SSOs made up of actively sailing officers in the U.S. Merchant Marine who are uniquely qualified to operate merchant ships as naval auxiliaries in cases of national emergency. Pope and her fellow SSOs also provide officer crewing for ships in the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Maritime Administration (MARAD) Ready Reserve Force (RRF) and Military Sealift Command’s (MSC) Sealift Fleet.

Currently on Active Duty Operational Support (ADOS) orders to Commander

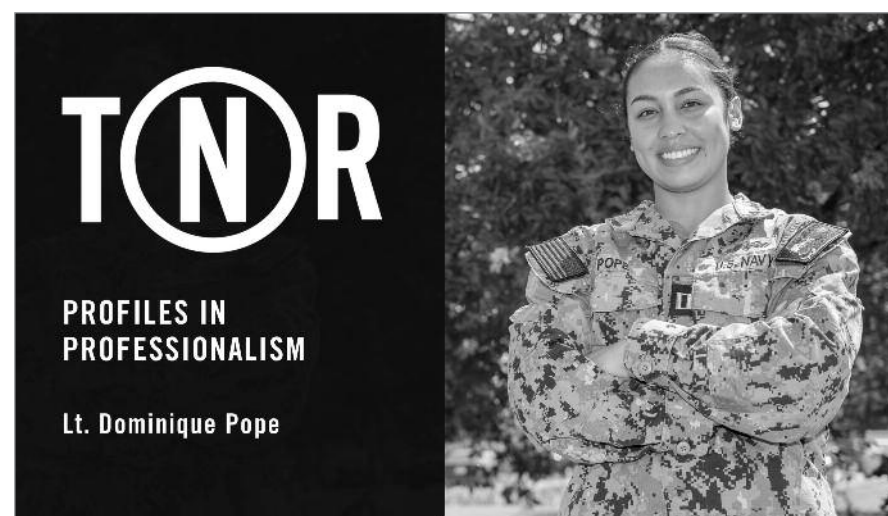


PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS RAYMOND MADDOCKS (U.S. NAVY GRAPHIC BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS RAYMOND MADDOCKS)

**Lt. Dominique Pope poses for a photograph.**

Naval Reserve Forces Command (CN-RFC), Pope serves as an Action Officer in the N15 Force Activation and Deactivation department. It is a role she relishes, as many SSOs occupy a place in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) where opportunities to gain significant operational experience and day-to-day continuity of operations are difficult to come by.

“As an SSO, I do not have a lot of opportunity to put significant time towards my Navy career,” said Pope. “So, when the opportunity presented itself to come to CNRFC on long-term orders, I took them, with the intent to build myself as an officer and get some real experience working in uniform.”

Pope’s current duty has afforded her that opportunity.

“I believe my newly gained knowledge of the Navy Reserve has pushed me to grow both personally and professionally,” said Pope. “I have seen myself grow as an officer and as a leader, and it has shown in my personal life, as well. I

have more confidence in myself, and I feel better equipped to take on difficult situations that may be thrown my way.”

Pope’s main duty in N15 is assisting Sailors across the Force transition from Active Duty to Reserve and back again.

Pope said she values her ability to contribute to the efforts outlined in the 2022 Navy Reserve Fighting Instruction, which highlights four lines of effort: Design, Train, Mobilize and Develop, and which calls on Reserve Sailors to focus their efforts on consistent warfighting readiness.

Knowing that she is helping real people with potentially life-changing issues, and creating a smoother and more efficient process for future Reserve Sailors, is Pope’s favorite part of her job. “The progress the N15 team has made has required force-wide training and has already resulted in the mobilization of hundreds of Sailors,” stated Pope. This has contributed to achieving strategic depth and staying ready on day one.

## Earth TALK™ Supreme Court and the Environment

Dear EarthTalk:

*What’s on the Supreme Court’s docket in terms of cases with any bearing on nature, wildlife or the environment? Historically has the Court tended to be friend or foe to the environment?*

—S. Jackson, Miami, FL

There has been little consistency in Supreme Court rulings on environmental protection over the years, mainly because such protections are not directly addressed in the Constitution. That said, all of the Court’s recent decisions have leaned conservative. In June of 2022, the Court ruled 6-3 in *West Virginia v. EPA* that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) did not have the ability to regulate carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. This decision gutted many regulations designed to fight climate change. However, Congress’ subsequent passage of the Inflation Reduction Act in Novem-

ber 2022 circumvented the contentious ruling by specifically earmarking funding for domestic energy production and renewable energy. The bill defines CO2 as a pollutant, which puts these emissions back under the EPA’s purview.

Several cases on the Court’s docket with environmental tie-ins are likely to be decided in 2023. To wit, in *Sackett v. EPA*, Chantell and Michael Sackett are suing the EPA for ordering them to cease building an unpermitted house on a lot which contains wetlands. The Sacketts argue that this is “overreach” since their proposed home, although next to a tributary of Idaho’s Priest Lake, is intended to be a few hundred feet from the lake itself. The EPA says that the wetlands are under its jurisdiction because of the “significant nexus” test to determine how federal waters would be impacted by development. This test can be hard to define and understand because hydrology varies in different locations. The Court seems likely to

try to create a new measurement, which could have consequences far beyond rural Idaho.

Another as yet undecided case is *National Pork Producers v. Ross*, concerning California’s Animal Farm Confinement Initiative, which prohibits the knowing sale of pork from facilities that confine sows in less than 24 square feet. The initiative is designed to prevent animal cruelty and decrease the risk of zoonotic (animal to human) diseases. The National Pork Producers Council argues that this is, in effect, regulation of pork production outside the state, in violation of the Constitution’s “dormant commerce” clause. The 2023 ruling will have ramifications for animal welfare, but it may also open up challenges to states’ environmental regulations depending on the Court’s interpretation.

Several historic cases have had significant impacts on environmental policy. One was 1920’s *Missouri v. Holland*, in which the Court ruled that an international treaty protecting some migratory birds did not violate the 10th amendment, overruling states’ rights in the process. Another landmark environmental case is 1972’s *Sierra Club v. Morton* in which the Court rejected a Sierra Club lawsuit to block the development of a ski resort at

Mineral King in the Sierra Nevada mountains as the plaintiff did not allege any direct injury. Justice William O. Douglas wrote a famous dissent which still inspires environmental and animal rights advocates to this day arguing that ecological features should be given the protection of legal personhood.

**CONTACTS:** Supreme Court curbs EPA’s power to regulate carbon emissions from power plants, [www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/the-supreme-court-curbed-epas-power-to-regulate-carbon-emissions-from-power-plants-what-comes-next](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/features/the-supreme-court-curbed-epas-power-to-regulate-carbon-emissions-from-power-plants-what-comes-next); Supreme Court Poised to Scrap U.S. Waters Test, [bna.com/news/bna.com/environment-and-energy/supreme-court-poised-to-scrap-us-waters-test-attorneys-say](http://bna.com/news/bna.com/environment-and-energy/supreme-court-poised-to-scrap-us-waters-test-attorneys-say); Giving Bodies of Water their Day in Court, [studentorgs.kentlaw.iit.edu/cjjeel/2021/04/05/legal-personhood-the-growing-movement-to-give-bodies-of-water-their-day-in-court/](http://studentorgs.kentlaw.iit.edu/cjjeel/2021/04/05/legal-personhood-the-growing-movement-to-give-bodies-of-water-their-day-in-court/).

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# COMMENTARY

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,  
Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## “The Work of Christmas”

As the holidays are winding to a close, for some people the end of this joyous and busy season can feel like a letdown. But for others, this is a time to look ahead and embrace the lessons that can be taken from this season with us into the New Year.

For the millions of Christians in our nation who have just celebrated the birth of the most famous poor baby in history, the end of the holiday season and the beginning of 2023 should be a new chance to rededicate ourselves to welcoming and caring for the poor children in our midst today. A few weeks ago I shared some of beloved theologian Howard Thurman's meditations from his book *The Mood of Christmas*. Thurman speaks to this moment too in “The Work of Christmas”:

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among the people,  
To make music in the heart.

Let's embrace this work with joyful hearts and hands as we enter the New Year.

—December 30, 2022

## Benjamin L. Cardin

United States Senator for Maryland



## Cardin, Van Hollen Celebrate Presidential Approval of Bill to Add Bust of Distinguished Marylander Thurgood Marshall to the U.S. Capitol, Remove Bust of Dred Scott Author

WASHINGTON (Dec. 28, 2022)—U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) today applauded President Joe Biden's final approval of legislation that would remove the bust of the author of the infamous Dred Scott decision from public display in the U.S. Capitol and add a bust of Thurgood Marshall, the first African American to serve on our nation's highest court.

As noted in their bill, S. 5229. “While the removal of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney's bust from the Capitol does not relieve the Congress of the historical wrongs it committed to protect the institution of slavery, it expresses Congress's recognition of one of the most notorious wrongs to have ever taken place in one of its rooms, that of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney's *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision.”

The Dred Scott decision, written by Taney in 1857, “declared that African Americans were not citizens of the United States and could not sue in Federal courts. This decision further declared that Congress did not have the authority to prohibit slavery in the territories.” The effects of Dred Scott would be overturned years later by the ratification of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

“Thurgood Marshall was an inspiration who helped tear down the walls of segregation in America. It is wholly appropriate that such a civil rights and legal icon displace Roger Taney in the U.S. Capitol,” said Senator Cardin. “Both hailed from Maryland, but Marshall was a beacon of hope for racial equality. His uplifting voice of equality and opportunity is exactly what our

nation needs at this moment.”

“Justice Thurgood Marshall dedicated his life to the pursuit of justice and civil rights for all. We should be elevating leaders like him in our Capitol—those who broke down barriers on the path to shape the United States into the more perfect union we strive to create—not those like Roger Taney who fought to hold us back,” said Senator Van Hollen. “As we continue the fight to build a more just and equal America, I'm grateful to President Biden for signing our bill to memorialize Justice Marshall's work in the halls of Congress and honor his legacy of propelling our nation towards justice.”

Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) also co-sponsored this legislation.

## Pondering the Journey of ‘X’ ... the Journey of Us

By TOM HORTON, for the Bay Journal News Service

Ashes have been on my mind of late—the scattering of them, farewells to loved ones, both electing cremation.

In our Chesapeake Bay-centric, water-rich landscape with tens of thousands of miles of magical land-water edges, the default idea seems to be spreading one's remains in or near the water.

That is technically illegal under the federal Clean Water Act, though I'm unaware of any arrests or fines. Nor does our murky and eutrophic estuary really need more nutrients, though I'm intrigued by a suggestion novelist John Barth, born in Cambridge, MD, on the Bay's Eastern Shore, made for himself years ago. Feed him to the crabs, Barth mused. It was only fair payback because he'd had many a go at consuming those beautiful swimmers.

I've been rethinking cremation, which I'd always thought I'd opt for. While it saves space and bucks, and forgoes chemicals used in embalming, it uses roughly the same amount of energy it takes to power a U.S. household for a month, something to consider in this era of struggling to minimize carbon emissions.

Better alternatives might be composting one's body in special chambers, now operating successfully in Washington state. You end up as rich soil. We're already doing as much with poultry remains around the Chesapeake.

There's also the “green” burial, where your body, sans chemicals or caskets or tombstones, is placed in wild natural landscapes, whose preservation is enabled by your interment fees. These operate in Georgia and California—but none I'm aware of in the Chesapeake states.

But if I end up ashes, I'm directing my scatterers to go high, not low—go upslope, on the ridgeline, anywhere but down by the water.

My thinking is ecological, not sentimental, cued by a remarkable essay, “Odyssey,” written nearly a century ago by Aldo Leopold and published

in Sand County Almanac. (Still in print. Read it!)

Leopold, a forester by training, was one of the first to articulate the need for humans to develop an ethical relationship with land. “Quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem,” he wrote. “[Also] think in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right.... A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”

Odyssey lyrically and scientifically traces the many paths of one atom of matter through the author's native Midwestern prairie ecosystem, showing how the original prairie evolved to fiercely retain its minerals and nutrients and soils against the inexorable push of gravity—of water always flowing downslope, seeking the sea, eroding away the wealth of the land if unchecked.

A sampling: The atom, dubbed ‘X’ in Odyssey, is pulled from a crack in a rock, pried open in the “flash of a century” by the persistent roots of an oak. Freed from its prison, X “helped build a flower, which became an acorn, which fattened a deer, which fed an Indian, all in a single year.”

From human bones, X decays to live again “on a second trip through the bloodstream of the land. [This time] a rootlet of bluestem sucked him up and lodged him in a leaf that rode the green billows of the prairie June ... hoarding sunlight.”

And then, so enchanting: “To this leaf also fell an uncommon task, flicking shadows across a plover's eggs. The ecstatic plover hovering overhead poured praises on something perfect, perhaps the eggs, perhaps the shadows, or perhaps the haze of pink phlox that lay on the prairie.”

Imagining a more local journey of X, I like to think of him being sucked up by a rootlet of eelgrass, lodged in a leaf that shades and sequesters copulating blue crabs, olive and ivory conjoined.

But almighty gravity, and water's way—always seaward, downslope—inexorably move X closer to the sea, where a bit

of the watershed's fertility would be lost for all meaningful time.

But life rebels: “living plants retarded the wash by impounding atoms; dead plants by locking them to their decayed tissues. Animals ate the plants and carried them briefly uphill or downhill.... no animal was aware that the altitude of his death was more important than his manner of dying.”

What a magnificently humbling notion! And even better: “An Indian, having inherited an eagle's plumes [X's latest lodging], with them propitiated the Fates, whom he assumed had a special interest in Indians. ... It did not occur to him they might be busy casting dice against gravity, that mice and men, soils and songs, might be merely ways to retard the march of atoms to the sea.”

We Bay dwellers have been drawn to the water's edge forever: for seafood, transportation, drinking water, diluting our sewage, cooling our nuclear plants; for admiring birds and killing ducks, for kick-ass sunsets, propping for oysters, watching ospreys swoop on fish; for making love at the dark end of the dock.

So maybe take a half-pinch of ashes and sprinkle it on the ebb tide, among the marshes and the meanders of the creeks. But the bulk, take it high, up gradient, to where the watershed can essay more odysseys, where the marvelous predilection of nature in all its diversity can resist gravity and water's way, greenly, boisterously, resolutely shouting “LIFE”!

This piece is in memory of Niamh Shortt and Anne Horton Kelly, and inspired by Nick and Margaret Carter.

Tom Horton, a Bay Journal columnist, has written many articles and books about the Chesapeake Bay, including *Turning the Tide and Island Out of Time*. He currently teaches writing and environmental topics at Salisbury University. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the Bay Journal. This article first appeared in the November 2022 issue of the Bay Journal and was distributed by the Bay Journal News Service.

## Report: High Levels of Dangerous Radon Gas Detected in 21% of Maryland Homes

During Radon Action Month in January, the American Lung Association urges everyone to test their home for radon

By PRESS OFFICER  
American Lung Association

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Jan. 3, 2023)—Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and the “State of Lung Cancer” report (<https://www.lung.org/research/state-of-lung-cancer>) reveals that it is detected at high levels in about 21% of homes in Maryland. During January for Radon Action Month, the American Lung Association in Maryland is urging everyone to test their home for radon.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas emitted from the ground. Radon can enter a home through cracks in floors, basement walls, foundations and other openings. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and is the leading cause of lung cancer in people who have never smoked.

Here in Maryland, about 21% of radon test results equal or exceed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level of 4 pCi/L, according to the Lung Association's “State of Lung Cancer” report.

“Radon is responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year and is the leading cause of lung cancer in people



who have never smoked. Since radon is odorless, tasteless and colorless, the only way to detect radon in your home is to test the air. This is why it is critical for everyone to test their home,” said Kevin Stewart, Director, Environmental Health for the Lung Association. “Radon Action Month is the perfect time to learn more about this dangerous gas and take action to protect yourself and your loved ones.”

Do-it-yourself radon test kits are simple to use and inexpensive. EPA urges anyone with radon levels at or above 4 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) to take action to install a mitigation system in their homes. Both the EPA and the American Lung Association recommend that mitigation be considered if levels are greater than 2 pCi/L. After high levels are detected, a radon mitigation system should be installed by a radon professional.

A typical radon mitigation system consists of a vent pipe, fan, and properly sealing cracks and other openings. This system collects radon gas from underneath the foundation and vents it to the outside of your home. If you need to have a radon mitigation system installed, contact your state radon program for a list of certified radon mitigation professionals.

Learn more about radon testing and mitigation at [www.Lung.org/Radon](http://www.Lung.org/Radon).

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, which has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and is a Platinum-Level GuideStar Member, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-586-4872 or visit: [www.Lung.org](http://www.Lung.org)

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# HEALTH *and* WELLNESS

## Tobacco-Free '23: 3 Reasons Why This Is the Year for Maryland Residents to Quit Tobacco for Good

The American Lung Association encourages people who use tobacco to make a New Year's resolution to quit in 2023, provides tips and resources

By PRESS OFFICER  
American Lung Association

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 27, 2022)—While tobacco use has been declining for decades, 10.9% of Maryland residents still smoke and tobacco is the leading cause of death and disease in the state. Through the new "Tobacco-Free '23" campaign, the American Lung Association in Maryland is sharing key reasons why 2023 is the year to quit tobacco, as well as sharing tips and resources.

"Each year, quitting smoking is listed as one of the top New Year's resolutions. While quitting smoking is extremely difficult, it is possible. In fact, it typically takes a person 8–10 attempts to quit smoking for good, which is why we call it a journey," said Deborah Brown, Chief Mission Officer for the American Lung Association. "It is important to have support during this process, including family, friends and your doctor, to help keep you on the right path."

Here are three important reasons why 2023 is the year to start your journey to become tobacco-free:

- **Your Health:** Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable

death and disease in Maryland, killing 7,490 people each year. Currently, 16 million Americans live with a tobacco-related disease. While it's best to quit as early as possible, quitting tobacco use at any age will enhance the length and quality of your life.

**\*Bonus: If your New Year's resolution is to save money, quitting smoking can save you between \$2,230–\$4,360 annually.**

Here are some of the tips and resources the American Lung Association recommends to successfully quit tobacco:

- **FDA is Preparing to End Sales of Menthol Cigarettes:** Currently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is in the process of finalizing rules to end the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars in the U.S. If you use one of these tobacco products, this is an optimal time to begin your quit journey. In fact, after Canada stopped selling menthol cigarettes in 2017, the country saw an increase in quit attempts and cessation among people who smoked menthols.
- **Be An Inspiration!** Last year, the American Lung Association relaunched the "Super Stoppers Club" with award-winning journalist Bob Levey to celebrate people who have quit smoking for good and inspire those who are trying to quit. Read inspiring quit stories and submit your own at Lung.org/Super-Stoppers.
- **Lung Helpline:** Not sure where to start? Call the Lung Association's free Lung Helpline and Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-LUNGUSA, which is staffed with licensed registered nurses, respiratory therapists and certified tobacco treatment specialists.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider:** Talking to a healthcare provider about your plan to quit smoking is an important step. With your doctor's help, you can include cessation medication into your tobacco treatment plan, which can double your chances of quitting successfully. There are seven FDA-approved medications that are proven to help you quit.
- **Get help from a proven resource:** The American Lung Association offers resources to help adults and teens to quit all tobacco products, including:



PHOTO COURTESY AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION

2023 is the year to quit tobacco.

- **Freedom From Smoking®** helps individuals create their own unique quit plan, as well as tips and techniques to stay successful in the long run. Freedom From Smoking can be accessed online, at a group class and through a self-guided workbook. Those looking to quit smoking are encouraged to use the method that works best for their learning style, schedule and unique quit tobacco use plan.
- **Not-On-Tobacco® (N-O-T)** is a teen smoking/chewing/vaping cessation program for teens who want to quit. The 10-session program provides the tools, information, and support for teens to end their addiction to tobacco. Teens can participate in NOT in-person, virtually or online at NOTforMe.org.
- **Quit. Don't Switch.** E-cigarettes are tobacco products, and the FDA has not found any e-cigarette to be safe and effective in helping smokers quit. Switching to e-cigarettes does not mean quitting. Quitting means ending your addiction to nicotine. For more information about quitting tobacco for "Tobacco-Free '23," visit the American Lung Association website at Lung.org or call the Lung Helpline at 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872).

## 10 Health Resolutions Doctors Encourage You to Make Today

(StatePoint) The New Year represents a fresh start and is the perfect time to invest in your health. However, you may be unsure what resolutions will have the biggest impact. Doctors say that the easy, tangible actions you take are some of the most important.

"Many people kick off the start of each new year with big-picture health resolutions," says Jack Resneck, Jr., M.D., president of the American Medical Association (AMA). "The good news is that small, positive health choices made right now can have long-lasting effects."

Want to get started today? Here are the 10 resolutions the AMA recommends top your list this year:

**1. Exercise is essential** for your physical and mental health, so get moving today. A good rule of thumb for adults is at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity.

**2. Vaccination is the best protection against a number of serious illnesses.** To protect yourself and your family, get up to date on your vaccines, including the annual flu shot and the COVID-19 vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. Your doctor can let you know if you're due for a COVID booster. If you have questions, speak with your physician and review trusted resources, including [getvaccineanswers.org](https://www.getvaccineanswers.org).

**3. Get screened.** Estimates based on statistical models show that since April 2020, millions of screenings for breast, colorectal, and prostate cancer diagnoses may have been missed due to pandemic-related care disruptions. Check in with your physician. If you're due for preventive care, tests or screenings, make an appointment. These measures are designed to keep you healthy and help your doctor spot certain conditions before they become more serious.

**4. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, can increase your risk of heart attack or stroke, and it affects millions of Americans.** Visit [ManageYourBP.org](https://www.ManageYourBP.org) to understand what your blood pressure numbers mean and what you can do to get your blood pressure under control.

**5. One in 3 American adults has prediabetes, a condition that can lead to type 2 diabetes if left unmanaged.** However, there are steps you can take that can help delay or even prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. **Learn your risk by taking a simple 2-minute self-screening test at [DoIHavePrediabetes.org](https://www.DoIHavePrediabetes.org).** This resource also features helpful lifestyle tips that can help you reverse prediabetes.

**6. Whenever possible, drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages and replace processed foods—especially those with added**



PHOTO SOURCE: © MONKEYBUSINESSIMAGES / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

**A good rule of thumb for adults is at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity activity.**

sodium and sugar—with nutritious, whole foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, herbs and spices.

**7. If consuming alcohol, drink only in moderation.** The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans defines that as up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men, and only by adults of legal drinking age.

**8. Speak with your doctor or health care professional about quitting tobacco and nicotine use.** Declare your home and car smokefree to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure.

**9. Follow your doctor's instructions when taking prescription drugs—especially opioids.** Always store and dispose of these medications safely to prevent misuse. Whenever prescribed antibiotics, take them exactly as directed. Not taking the full course can lead to antibiotic resistance, a serious public health problem, and will not make you feel better if you have a virus, such as a cold or flu.

**10. Invest in your mental health** by managing stress, getting sufficient sleep, exercising and seeking help from a mental health professional when you need it.

If you don't have health insurance, the AMA encourages you to sign up for coverage at [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov), which has new, affordable options. The enrollment deadline for 2023 coverage is Jan. 15, 2023. Find more health resources at [ama-assn.org](https://www.ama-assn.org). For a healthy 2023 and beyond, invest in your wellness with these doctor-recommended New Year's resolutions.

## Major New Financial Relief for Insulin Users Arrives January 1

Federal and State action will mean significantly reduced costs for Marylanders with diabetes, allowing many more to afford insulin

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland Health Care for All

New federal and state provisions going into effect January 1 will bring down the cost of the lifesaving drug insulin for many Marylanders, providing a major financial benefit as the new year begins.

As calendars turn to 2023, key provisions of the federal Inflation Reduction Act will go into effect to benefit for Marylanders enrolled in Medicare. A key provision will limit copay costs for insulin to \$35 per month for Medicare recipients. The new law also improves coverage of certain adult vaccines and requires drug companies to offer rebates if prices rise faster than inflation. The cost of insulin has been a major challenge for many especially in these COVID times, with one in four Americans with diabetes having reported rationing their insulin during the pandemic.

January 1 also marks the launch of a similar Maryland policy change that will cap copayments and coinsurance costs for insulin at \$30 for a 30-day supply for those in state-regulated commercial health insurance plans. The Insulin Cost Reduction Act (HB 1397), sponsored by House Health and Government Operations Committee Chair Josefine Peña-Melnyk and Senator Clarence Lam, was enacted during the 2022 Maryland General Assembly Session.

"Right now, too many Americans cannot afford the price of insulin. That is why I

was pleased to support this important change to Medicare that will help reduce the costs of insulin for Maryland seniors," said Sen. Ben Cardin.

"Building on the great work the State of Maryland has been doing to address the high cost of prescription drugs, more seniors and families across Maryland will now be able to make ends meet and avoid having to choose between taking care of their health and other essentials. Still, there is more work to do, so I will continue to fight to lower drug costs for all Americans."

"While the biggest drug companies rake in record profits as they hike prescription drug prices, Americans are forced to stretch their pocketbooks thin and make tough choices about what essentials they can afford," said Sen. Chris Van Hollen. "But starting in the New Year, tens of thousands of Marylanders on Medicare will finally get relief from rising insulin costs through the Inflation Reduction Act's \$35 insulin price cap that I fought to pass through Congress. This was an important step to help seniors save money on health care, and in 2023 I will continue working to build on this progress to lower costs and increase access to quality health care across the board."

"The new year is bringing important new financial relief for Marylanders who use insulin," said Chair Josefine Peña-Melnyk. "Even one instance of insulin rationing can have devastating effects, and we look forward to this law

going into effect on January 1 so that many Marylanders are able to ensure they have access to the life-saving medications they need."

"The new year means some great new drug benefits go in to effect for tens of thousands of Marylanders," said Vincent DeMarco, president of the Maryland HealthCare for All! Coalition. "Maryland is fortunate to have representatives in Congress and the General Assembly who made it a priority to cap insulin prices and bring down other drug costs. Thanks to their actions, more Marylanders will be able to afford their prescriptions."

"Maryland seniors are getting important financial relief to help them pay for prescription drugs beginning January 1st," said Hank Greenberg, state director for AARP Maryland, which advocated for the policy changes. "We are grateful to both Congress and the Maryland General Assembly for standing with seniors and all consumers to bring down drug costs. This is a great way to start a new year!"

"We are excited that so many Marylanders will have to pay less for insulin and other drugs they need to sustain healthy lives," said the Rev. Dr. Sandra Conner, president of the Baptist Ministers' Night Conference of Baltimore & Vicinity. "At this time of the year, we are committed to helping our fellow Marylanders, and this is a great new year's present for so many people who may have struggled to pay for insulin in the past."

### Mental Health Symposium

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