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Maryland State Police, Allied Agencies Launch Initiative to Address Excessive Speeding in Prince George's, Montgomery Counties

By OFFICE OF MEDIA COMMUNICATION
Maryland State Police

PIKESVILLE, Md. (March 15, 2021)—The Maryland State Police, along with allied law enforcement partners, launched today the first of six traffic enforcement initiatives aimed at targeting excessive speeding, aggressive and impaired driving, with a goal of reducing vehicle-related fatalities in Prince George's and Montgomery counties.

The traffic enforcement detail will concentrate on I-495 (Capital Beltway) and I-270 and will include 35 law enforcement personnel representing troopers from the Maryland State Police Washington Metro Troop (College Park, Forestville and Rockville barracks), along with members of the Montgomery County Police Department, the Prince George's County Police Department and Virginia State Police.

The Maryland Department of

Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office provided grant funding for the operation. The other five combined initiatives are set to take place once a month between April and August. According to Automated Crash Reporting System data provided by the MDOT MVA's Highway Safety Office, more than 17, 100 crashes were reported in Prince George's County and more than 9,700 crashes were reported in Montgomery County in 2020.

Between 2018 and 2020, the Forestville Barrack responded to 7,645 crashes while the College Park and Rockville barracks responded to 5,365 and 4,791 crashes, respectively. Over that time, the Washington Metro Troop has conducted dozens of initiatives, with the goal of reducing traffic crashes in the area. This is especially true around the

Capital Beltway, which has represented about 50 percent of those reported crashes. These targeted and direct enforcement efforts have yielded significant results in reducing the number of reported crashes.

This includes the following breakdown of crashes within the Washington Metro Troop:

- Forestville Barrack – 2,764 (2018), 2,585 (2019), 2,293 (2020)
- College Park Barrack – 1,916 (2018), 1,827 (2019), 1,622 (2020)
- Rockville Barrack – 1,921 (2018), 1,749 (2019), 1,121 (2020)

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, traffic volume decreased significantly in 2020. However, the speed of the vehicles increased dramatically, leading to concerns of "super speeders" in the region. Troopers have conducted multiple initiatives over the past year to address the issue.

Last fall, troopers from the Rockville Barrack collaborated with allied agencies to combat aggressive driving, street racing and excessive noise caused by modified exhaust systems in Montgomery County. Those efforts over five operations between September and November led to more than 300 traffic stops, 215 citations, 170 warnings, 55 safety equipment repair orders and 15 arrests.

During a focused traffic safety enforcement initiative last May around the Capital Beltway, troopers from the Washington Metro Troop teamed up with troopers from the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division in an effort aimed at reducing crashes, speeding and aggressive driving. That effort yielded almost 400 traffic citations and warnings for a variety of offenses, including speeds that reached 110 mph.

In addition to the combined police department traffic enforcement operations, Maryland State Police in the Washington Metro Troop will be conducting ongoing traffic safety initiatives throughout the coming months. These initiatives are data-driven and will be focused in areas where crash data indicates they are most needed.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY MAURA ROCHE (IMAGINE EXHIBITIONS)

Buckle up for the adventure of a lifetime in this socially-distanced experience.

Dino Safari—A Fun and Educational Dinosaur Drive-Thru Experience—Invades National Harbor From March 18 Through April 11

Tickets on sale now at [Dinosafari.com](https://www.dinosafari.com)

Dino Safari features 40 full-size animatronic museum-quality dinosaurs to experience from the comfort and safety of a vehicle

By PRESS OFFICER
Bendure Communications

More than 40 GIANT moving dinosaurs, including Triceratops, Parasaurolophus, Microraptor, T. rex, and many others, will fill the Plateau parking lot at National Harbor, and transform it into Dino Safari, a fun and educational nearly 60-minute drive-thru dino experience with audio narration for the entire family from Thursday, March 18 through Sunday, April 11.

Tickets are priced per car, beginning at \$49.95 per vehicle of up to seven individuals, and are available through Dino Safari. Demand has been unexpectedly high with sellouts anticipated. Advance purchase is strongly recommended.

Dino Safari takes audience members—in their vehicle—to "Pangea National Park," for an up-close-and-personal journey with the most fascinating prehistoric creatures from the mighty T. rex of North America to the giant amphibious Spinosaurus of Africa.

Dino Safari was created in consultation with paleontologist Dr. Gregory Erickson and features fact-based, educational content in addition to an exciting storyline. Kids and families are guided through the fictional "Pangea National Park" by an audio tour (available in both English and Spanish) that plays through each car's audio system, featuring fun and friendly characters. Each vehicle is given a "Survival Pack" containing your passport to Pangea with a scavenger hunt and other fun surprises for a more interactive experience.

On the Dino Safari adventure, audience members will learn through an audio narrator how dinosaurs evolved, where they called home, and the discoveries paleontologists have made about how they ate, moved, and behaved. Beware: along the journey, earthquakes might erupt, dinosaurs could battle, and audience members may have to

See **DINO SAFARI** Page A5

Commemorative Bricks Offered to Support Local WWI Memorial Restoration

By ANGEL WALDRON
M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (March 15, 2021)—A 40-foot-tall monument standing at the intersections of Bladensburg Road, Baltimore Avenue, and Annapolis Road in Bladensburg, Maryland, serves as a reminder of the 49 residents who died in World War I. This monument, commonly referred to as the Peace Cross, is owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County which has embarked on a mission to restore it.

To support fundraising efforts for the Peace Cross' restoration, the department has developed a commemorative brick program. Through its webpage, www.pgpc.com/peacecross, the public can purchase a custom brick to be inscribed with text of their choice. Many families use the brick in memorial of those who are no longer with us. Peace Cross Commemorative Bricks ensure that loved ones can be honored in an enduring way.

Maryland State Senator Malcolm Augustine stated, "As we honor our local heroes memorialized on the Bladensburg Peace Cross, we now have the opportunity to demonstrate our thanks by contributing to the restoration of the structure. I am pleased to purchase a brick that will be a permanent fixture of this historic memorial, in honor of the four African American soldiers listed on the Peace Cross."

The Peace Cross Memorial was constructed in 1919 in honor of World War I servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. On June 19, 2019, in a landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court voted 7-2 to allow a Veteran's memorial cross to continue to stand on public land in Maryland. Over the years, the monument has fallen into disrepair and is in need of maintenance. Help restore this historic landmark and give to a noble cause by purchasing a commemorative brick today. Every donation will go directly towards the memorial's restoration. To participate in the campaign, visit www.pgpc.com/peacecross.



PHOTOGRAPH CREDIT M-NCPPC

Bill to Rebuild Trust Between Immigrants and Law Enforcement

By AUDREY DECKER
Capital News Service Annapolis Bureau

A bill that would prohibit law enforcement from inquiring about immigration status and end police cooperation with ICE in Maryland drew emotional testimony from immigrants, advocacy groups and lawmakers on Wednesday [March 3].

Referred to as the Trust Act by some, SB0088 and HB0304 would end the federal 287(g) Criminal Alien Program in participating jurisdictions, prevent law enforcement from asking about immigration status and protect immigrants from ICE in sensitive locations, such as schools, courthouses and hospitals.

The 287(g) Criminal Alien Program allows ICE to enter into agreements with state and local law enforcement to deputize officers as federal immigration agents.

This bill, which would end those agreements in Maryland, is extremely important to build trust between the police and community. Immigrants shouldn't be afraid to report a crime, said Del. Wanika Fisher, D-Prince George's, a sponsor of the bill.

"When one community doesn't feel safe with law enforcement and participating, it affects everyone," Fisher said.

Three Maryland jurisdictions participate in the 287(g) program: Cecil, Frederick and Harford counties.

These jurisdictions argue that this bill poses a threat to public safety. Asking for someone's location of birth is a routine part of processing information, Harford County Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler, R, said.

"Part of public safety is identifying who you're bringing into custody and whether other jurisdictions want them and what kind of criminal history they have," Gahler said in an interview with Capital News Service.

There's no reason law enforcement officers shouldn't be allowed to notify ICE if someone is here illegally, Gahler said.

People call it the Trust Act for a reason, said Cathryn Paul, research and policy analyst at CASA, the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland. Immigrant families do not trust the police or the government, Paul said.

The 287(g) program allows local officers to turn into ICE agents when they have im-

inal training, almost no oversight or accountability and many aren't bilingual, Paul said.

"The police should not be playing ICE. The police should not be acting as ICE agents in any way," Paul said.

Policies like this will lower crime rates because it establishes trust and encourages immigrants to report crimes, Paul said. Immigrants have been keeping the country afloat during the pandemic; lawmakers must take action to support them, Paul said.

However, Richard Jurgena, a retired Navy officer and resident of Darnestown, Maryland, said in his written testimony last year that the Constitution is the law of the land. He pointed to the bill's fiscal and policy note under "Current Law" that begins with "While immigration is controlled by federal law," to prove that immigration cannot be separated from the federal government.

The law is the law, those opposed to the bill have said.

Much of the testimony, however, argued that undocumented immigrants are anything but criminals.

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S.A.S.S. Inc. Is Looking to Honor One Mother With a Full Makeover

Good Trouble & DC Tutor Mentor Virtual Volunteer Fair

Prince George's Soil Conservation District Supervisor to Be Appointed Community, Page A3

ChildWatch: The American Rescue Plan: Giant Strides Forward on Child Poverty

The next step will be making these changes permanent and acknowledging that there should never be poor children in our wealthy nation.

Commentary, Page A4

Bill Would Replace Columbus Day With Indigenous Peoples' Day

By AUDREY DECKER
Capital News Service Annapolis Bureau

Indigenous Peoples' Day would replace Columbus Day in Maryland if a bill in the General Assembly is passed this legislative session.

At a hearing on Thursday [March 11], members of different advocacy groups testified for and against the bill, which would take effect on Oct. 1, 2021.

Columbus Day is celebrated on the second Monday of October. The bill, SB0421 and its cross-file, HB0157, would replace references in state education, commercial law, financial institutions and general provisions.

When Columbus came to the Americas, a way of life was destroyed, said Natalie Proctor, tribal chair of the Cedarville Wild Turkey Clan of Piscataway Tribe.

Many Europeans were excited to come to the "New World" and get access to food, land and education, Proctor said in written testimony shared with Capital News Service.

However, this "American Dream" was not created by Columbus, Proctor said.

"Instead, it was all because of the sacrifices of the Indigenous human," she said.

This bill is important to show

that Indigenous people are not a thing of the past and do not only live in history books, Jennifer Folan testified on Thursday [March 11]. Folan is of Cherokee, Pueblo and Aztec descent and serves on the Board of Directors for the Baltimore American Indian Center.

"Too often our history is erased," Folan said.

However, opponents of the bill argue that it would erase a different side of history.

There were some great things Columbus did, said Bill Martin, chairman of the Associated Italian American Charities of Maryland. He was an inspiration for Italians to come to America in the '30s and '40s, Martin testified on Thursday.

"By changing this, it's all positive making this Indigenous Peoples' Day, but what's happening is you're hurting a whole other ethnic group," Martin said. The bill takes away a holiday where Italian Americans celebrate their heritage, said former state Sen. John Pica, president of Columbus Celebrations, which organizes the Columbus Day parade in Baltimore.

There should be an Indigenous human," she said.

See **INDIGENOUS DAY** Page A4

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

My cousin Roger Mudd, TV journalist and news anchor, dies at 93.

Roger Harrison Mudd, who covered politics and government from Washington for CBS and then NBC, winner of five Emmy Awards, died March 9 at his home in McLean, Va. He was 93.

When this news broke, I had several ask if I was related to Roger Mudd. I tell them (and this is true!) that we are 7th cousins, twice removed.

Our common ancestor is Thomas Mudd who came from England about 1665. He settled in Charles County, married (three times) and had nine children. His first son was Thomas (born 1679/80) and the second son was Henry (born 1685). Roger Mudd is descended from Thomas. I'm descended from Henry.

Roger was a member of the Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House Museum in Waldorf. Dr. Mudd was his 5th cousin, twice removed.

Roger Mudd was born in Washington, graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1945 and Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Va. He earned a master's in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and began working at the Richmond New Leader.

That was just the beginning of a distinguished career in investigative journalism and TV news, including news hours at CBS and NBC, Meet the Press, and much more. His last jobs were as correspondent for the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour on PBS and as host of the History Channel.

In 2010, he donated \$4 million to Washington & Lee University to endow a center for ethics that bears his name.

His wife Emma Jeanne "E.J." died in 2011. Survivors include four children, grand- and great-grandchildren.

I met my distant cousin Roger only once. It was at Ford's Theatre where he recited a tribute to President Lincoln, set to music. At intermission I introduced myself and told him how beautiful his presentation was. He thanked me graciously and introduced me to E.J. and a couple of their children.

Neighbors & other good people

Prayers, please, for former Morningsider Jim Peyton (Maple Road) who was diag-

nosed with Covid-19 on March 3 and is now hospitalized. His wife Judy was tested but so far shows no signs of being affected.

I had a call from Elaine (Zemites) Richardson who graduated from Suitland HS in 1961. She is retired from the Census Bureau after 24 years. She was a member of the Lunch Bunch (someone will have to tell me more about that group), enjoyed taking tours with the Surratt House and other groups. I enjoyed hearing from her.

Condolences to the Rohan family on the death of Roseann Rohan, of Camp Springs. I'll pay tribute to her in a future column.

Applause

St. Philip's School in Camp Springs held a ceremony for new members of the National Junior Honor Society on March 8. To be accepted, a student must have give witness to the five qualities required for membership: Citizenship, Scholarship, Service, Leadership and Character.

Only first names of the children can be publicized. Eighth-graders honored are: Alexis, Alexander, Mya, Peyton, Mackenzie and McKenzie. And seventh-graders: Alexandra, Cameron, Joseph, Max, Selah and Wesley. Miss April King is moderator for St. Philip's Junior Honor Society.

By the way, St. Philip's School (where all seven of my kids graduated) is enrolling for the upcoming year. Go to email: jtrujillo@stpamd.org; website www.stpamd.org; or call 301-423-4740.

Changing landscape

The Smithsonian is turning 175. To celebrate, they're featuring the future. Opening in November and running through July 2022 at their Arts & Industries Building, "Futures" will include a wetlands exhibit, a flying car and, of course, robots.

MahoganyBooks, which recently hosted President Obama at its Good Hope Road store, is opening a second shop in National Harbor on June 19, also known as June-teenth, a holiday celebrating the emancipation of slaves in the U.S.

National Harbor Cherry Blossom Celebration is coming up March 20 through April 11. More than 200 flowering cherry trees bloom at the Harbor each spring. Through-

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

out the festival, they'll host Sakura Sundays, with both virtual and in-person art and cooking classes, while restaurants and shops offer cherry blossom-themed specials. The Capital Wheel Ferris wheel will be lit with pink lights.

The Starburst is now open in Penn-Mar Forestville, with a drive-thru window.

Rollins Avenue Park in Capital Heights has a huge, new playground with swings and slides, lots of parking and a few gazebos for cooking and eating. And there's more to come—tennis court, full basketball court, dog-park, community garden, drinking fountains and a walking loop.

Two new 7-Elevens have opened, one on Walker Mill Road at Addison Road and another on Marlboro Pike at Walker Mill Road. Both have gas stations.

I am concerned about my little Christmas cactus—it is blooming! I guess everything is whacky these days.

Mary's coronavirus report

Gov. Larry Hogan surprised us by announcing plans to reopen businesses and public venues. However he is having each county decide what's best for them. Gov. Hogan still asks everyone to mask.

Through 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 10, Maryland has had 389,566 cases, including 900 the previous day. As for deaths, Maryland has had 8,002 (!) Covid deaths with 14 more the day before.

Prince George's County held a Covid-19 Day of Remembrance on March 5 at National Harbor to honor Prince Georgians who have lost their lives to the disease.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Russ Kyser, Matthew Curcio Bobbitt and to Dejuh Bedewi, March 21; Ruth Anthony, my great-grandson Jack McHale and Hudson Murphy Glaubitz, March 23; Lewis Woods, March 24; Ken Kyser and Jay Rollins, March 25; and Gina Foster, March 26.

Happy anniversary to Morrine and Harold Wilson, March 22; and to Terry and Gina Foster, March 26.

Happy Daylight Savings Time!

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

PARENT SUPPORT CENTERS (PGCPS)

Beginning Monday, March 1, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) distance learning Parent Support Centers will operate on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5–8 p.m. Appointments may be scheduled online or by calling 240-696-3315.

MEDSTAR

"MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center receives get with the Guidelines-Stroke Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award. MedStar Southern Maryland earned the award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients at a set level for a designated period."

"MedStar Southern Maryland additionally received the Association's Target: StrokeSM Honor Roll Award. To qualify for this recognition, hospitals must meet quality measures developed to reduce the time between the patients' arrival at the hospital and treatment with the clot-buster tissue plasminogen activator, or tPA, the only drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat ischemic stroke." MedStar Health! Read us online! MedStarSouthernMaryland.org/Health

ANNAPOLIS COMES TO BSU

The Office of Alumni Engagement is celebrating the tremendous and extraordinary accomplishments of our phenomenal alumnae throughout the month of March. Virtual Alumni House on the Office of Alumni Engagement's Facebook Page Wednesday, March 10 at 5 p.m. brought Bowie State University Night in Annapolis to us. Senator Joanne C. Benson, Delegate Susie Proctor, Delegate Edith Patterson, Delegate Andrea Harrison appeared with our President Dr. Aminta Breaux. Contact webmaster@bowiestate.edu.

CONGRATULATIONS

"Congratulations to Prince George's County's own Jermaine Fowler! This Hyattsville native and Northwestern High School graduate is currently starring in Eddie Murphy's sequel, Coming 2 America." #PrinceGeorgesRising, #PrinceGeorge'sProud. Councilman Mel Franklin.

PRAISE PARTY

Bowie State's midterm week with unity during Sunday's Praise Party with special guest artist Kierra Sheard>bit.ly/3e7BRW2 was held Sunday, March 7, 2021 from 3–6 p.m. in the Martin Luther King Communication Arts Center, Myers Auditorium at Bowie State University. Information received from webmaster@bowiestate.edu.

SUMMER INSTITUTE

Bowie State University's Summer Institute supports Conditional License Teachers' move toward standard professional Licensure. Intensive weekly sessions held in June–August, are designed to meet the specific needs of enrolled CLTs.

Login on Zoom for a virtual information session March 24, 2021 at 5 p.m. to learn more about this opportunity to receive valuable con-

tinuing education. Additional sessions will be held on April 28, 2021 5 p.m. and May 26, 2021 5 p.m. Join Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 865 0402 3990. Questions? Visit bit.ly/BSU-CLT for more information, Email Dr. Akeda Pearson at apearsonstenbar@bowiestate.edu. Location: Zoom, categories are academics, featured. Contact: webmaster@bowiestate.edu.

PGPROUD: IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations to PGCPS Career Art Educators of the year, Alisha Johnson, Fatima Esparza and Melvin Twine. PGCPS Novice Art Educators of the year, Katrina Connelley, Admore Elementary School, Karen Thomas, Isaac J. Gouridine, Middle School and Rebecca Bailey, Bladensburg High School. PGCPS Emeritus Art Educators of the year, Al Spekis, Bladensburg High School (retired).

ELECTRONIC BOOKS

Electronic Books are available around the clock. The Professional Library has a variety of new eBooks available just for you. For more information, contact cathe.francoeur@pgcps.org.

WHERE TO TURN FOR CARE

"University of Maryland Medical System provides several ways for patients to get the care they need based on the urgency of the situation. Doctor's Office, your primary care physician knows you best, so turn here first unless your need is urgent. Telemedicine Visit, remote visits are convenient and provide social distancing. Patient Health Portal, a secure online portal supplements telemedicine or doctor's office visit by providing access to health information anywhere with an internet connection. Urgent Care Center turn here if you have an urgent but not life-threatening need for care when your doctor's office is closed, your doctor is unavailable, or you do not have a primary care physician. Seek emergency care immediately in a potentially life-threatening situation." To find out how to access care near you, including telemedicine virtual visits with a doctor, visit umms.org. Information from UMCAPITALREGION.ORG.

MARCH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Elizabeth Davis, Brewer Clark, Marquis Wallace, Shirley Brown, Dezmood Wood, Anthony Oghogho, Elena Gatling, Safiya Terry-Joseph, Brittany Baker, Denise Reid Bourne, Mildred Edwards, Vedall Grant, Lloyd Brown, Patricia Stephens, Tina Fields, Niccia Tay, Aja LayLonie, Henry Thomas, Jalayah Brooks, Bonnie Droxter, Shirley Jackson, Judy Jones-Terry, Shonnel Noel, Amiah Knight, Daniel Jones, and Daniel Glee who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in March.

MARCH WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Wedding Anniversary to Emmanuel and Claudette Oghogho who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating their Wedding Anniversary in March.

Around the County

Maryland Chapter of International Sorority Receives Prestigious Community Service Awards

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (March 8, 2021)—Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter (PEO), Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority, Incorporated® receives recognition at the 90th North Atlantic Regional Conference (NARC) held virtually in Philadelphia, Pa. on March 4–7, 2021. The chapter won first place 'Chapter of the Year' for large chapters and the 'Virtual Programming & Chapter Ops' awards.

"It is an honor to win these two very competitive awards that highlight our chapter's community service in Laurel, Bowie, and Greenbelt," said Benita A. Swindell, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter President. "Despite being a pandemic and having to execute nearly all of our programs virtually, we continued to serve the community."

The 'Chapter of the Year' is an award that recognizes the best of the best chapters in the region. The criteria included chapter operations, sisterly relations, visibility and external recognition, implementation of international and local sorority programs, and chapter growth. The 'Virtual Programming & Chapter Ops' award recognizes chapters for creatively and efficiently transitioning from traditional operations, programming, and fundraising to a virtual environment. This is the inaugural year of this award.

"PEO did not miss a beat in 2020. All our chapter meetings, operations, and fundraising were successfully executed virtually. Our chapter has grown by 12 percent in 2020 and executed numerous community service programs," added Swindell. "I am very proud of the hard work of our members and our unwavering support to the communities we serve in Prince George's County, Md."

The North Atlantic region of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® includes 140 graduate and undergraduate chapters in Massachusetts, Eastern New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut, Maryland, Washington, D.C., Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated®, Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter was chartered in 2007. *Since its founding, the chapter has been aggressively implementing its programs of service in the communities of Laurel, Bowie, and Greenbelt, Maryland.*

—Racine Tucker-Hamilton, Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter

Community in the Courthouse 2021— Save These Dates!

Please join Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha N. Braveboy and #TeamPGSAO for the first Community in the Courthouse of 2021! This program provides residents an opportunity to learn more about the justice system here in Prince George's County. In addition, they will hear about State's Attorney Braveboy's initiatives and programs. During the monthly sessions attendees can ask questions, voice their concerns and engage with Ms. Braveboy and her team. Our first courthouse session in 2021 will be **March 30**. This will be a virtual event via Zoom and streamed live on Facebook.

Other dates are April 27, May 25, June 29, July 30, August 31, September 28 and October 26.

If you would like to attend, please visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-in-the-courthouse-2021tickets144517671245?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery#.

For more information, contact: Karen Toles, 240-508-2018 or kt@co.pg.md.us.

—State's Attorney's Office, Prince George's County

Register Now for "The Woods in Your Backyard" Online Course Monday, March 22, 2021 to June 1, 2021

Registration is now open for the spring 2021 session of "The Woods in Your Backyard" online course. Our self-directed, non-credit course runs 10 weeks from March 22 to June 1, 2021. The course will help landowners convert lawn to natural areas and enhance stewardship of existing natural areas. The course provides strategies to landowners of small parcels of land (1–10 acres) that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property. Activities include how to map habitat areas, understand basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choose and implement a few habitat management projects, and how to set a timetable and record your progress. Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

The course costs \$95.00 per person, which includes the 108-page "Woods in Your Backyard" guide, workbook, and a tree identification guide. The course is limited to 25 participants, so sign up now! Registration closes March 22, 2021 or when filled. Registration is through Eventbrite; go to <https://wiyb-online-s10.eventbrite.com>.

For more information, go to <https://go.umd.edu/WIYB-Spring-2021>, or contact course coordinator Andrew Kling, University of Maryland Extension, akling1@umd.edu, 301-432-2767, extension 307.

"University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class."

—Pamela K Thomas, University of Maryland Extension

COMMUNITY

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Does Paying FICA Tax Now Increase My Benefit?

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

Dear Rusty: If a person retires at age sixty-six and continues to work full time, Social Security taxes are still taken out of his weekly paycheck. Will this taxation for Social Security contribute more to the person's Social Security benefit, even if already retired? **Signed: Curious Retiree**

Dear Curious Retiree: Since its inception in 1935, Social Security has been a "pay as you go" program where contributions from those who are working are used to pay benefits to those who are collecting Social Security benefits. That remains true even if, after you start collecting Social Security, you work and pay payroll taxes into the system.

Those Social Security (SS) payroll taxes you are contributing now aren't deposited into a personal account for you, they're used to help pay benefits to all recipients. So, paying SS FICA payroll taxes after you start collecting benefits doesn't affect your benefit payment. However, what might affect your benefit amount is if your current earnings from working are more than any of those in the 35 years used to originally compute your Social Security benefit when you filed.

When you apply for SS benefits, Social Security adjusts every year in your lifetime earnings record for inflation to bring those earlier earnings up to today's dollar values. They then select the 35 highest-earning years over your entire lifetime, and from those 35 highest-earning years they develop your "Average Indexed Monthly Earnings" (AIME). Your AIME, in turn, is used to compute your Social Security benefit at your full retirement age (FRA).

Social Security examines your earnings every year after your earnings for the previous year are reported to Social Security by the IRS. After your benefits have started, and if your current earnings are higher, Social Security will replace an earlier year's earnings with your more recent earnings and recompute your benefit, resulting in a small benefit increase ("small" because it would represent only 1/35th of the average lifetime earnings used to compute your benefit).

A key thing to remember is that each of your past year's earnings (up until you are 60) are adjusted for inflation before computing your benefit amount. So, for example, \$25,000 earned in 1990 is worth more than \$60,000 in today's dollars, and it is the inflation-adjusted amount that your current earnings would need to exceed increase in your benefit. I recently published an article on this topic which you may find helpful: www.socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-does-paying-social-security-payroll-tax-increase-my-benefit.

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

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

Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc. Is Looking for One Mother From the DMV to Honor With a Full Makeover in Collaboration With Local Small Businesses

One mother from the DMV, will receive the royal treatment with a full makeover featuring services from local small businesses including a new hairdo, makeup, clothing, accessories and a mini photo shoot.

By JERRE' SMITH
Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc.

TEMPLE HILLS, Md. (March 10, 2021)—It's Women HerStory Month at Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc. The team at S.A.S.S. Inc. is pleased to announce that as a kickoff to our new year we are celebrating by hosting a Makeover-A-Mom Contest. We hope to honor one lucky mother from the DMV with a head-to-toe makeover including hair, makeup, clothing accessories, and photography services from local small businesses. Every woman deserves to feel and look her best even if it is to get dressed up to take selfies on the couch to practice good social distancing.

To enter the contest one must complete

a registration form on our website explaining why they should win the contest, follow @thesassmovement on IG and like us on Facebook at Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc. Share the information on their social media platform, tag @thesassmovement, and tag three other mothers who must follow the same instructions. Answers are reviewed by the S.A.S.S. Inc. team and a winner will be announced on our Instagram and Facebook. Visit www.sassinc.org/ contact to complete the registration form.

We can't meet our goal without the help of those in our community, we are asking for the support of our community in raising the funds needed to give our lucky contest winner this unforgettable experience. Alternatively, there are more ways for you

and your organization to be involved. We are looking forward to providing the winner of our contest with a care package featuring small business products or coupons for services. If your company is interested in being our official contest sponsor, please reach out to our Executive Director, Jerre' Smith at jsmith@sassinc.org and 302-241-4322. Donations can be made via PayPal.

Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc. is a new grassroots 501(c) non-profit in Prince George's County, MD. S.A.S.S. Inc. is committed to empowering black single mothers by connecting new mothers to essential community resources and providing motherhood insight about managing one's motherhood journey.

Good Trouble & DC Tutor Mentor Virtual Volunteer Fair

March 22, 2021, 7-8:30 p.m.

By RENEE CLARKE
Good Trouble

LARGO, Md. (March 12, 2020)—Good Trouble and dcTutorMentor.org are bringing together tutoring, mentoring, and other youth development programs for a Virtual Volunteer Fair on Monday, March 22, from 7-8:30 pm via Zoom. Please register at dcTutormentor.org.

Fewer than 1 out of 3 Prince George's County students are reading at grade level. Many more have other academic and non-academic needs—especially with virtual learning over the past year. DC Tutoring & Mentoring Initiative and Prince George's County-based Good Trouble are partnering to change that.

If you would like more information about Good Trouble and the volunteer fair, please contact Renee Clarke at (240-838-6653) or email (Getn2goodtrouble@yahoo.com)

Prince George's County
Virtual Tutoring & Mentoring Volunteer Fair

MARCH 22, 2021
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



dcTutorMentor.org

WE NEED YOUR HELP



getn2goodtrouble.com

Register at dcTutorMentor.org

State Soil Conservation Committee: Prince George's Soil Conservation District Supervisor to Be Appointed

Nominations for an appointment to the Prince George's Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors are being accepted by the Maryland State Soil Conservation Committee.

The appointment will be for a term to expire April 15, 2026 and will fill the expired term of Raymond Watson. Nominations should be sent to: State Soil Conservation Committee, Department of Agriculture, 50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Room 306, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

Any interested individual or organization may submit a recommendation. Nomination forms are available at the office of Prince George's Soil Conservation District Office, 5301 Marlboro Race

Track Road, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. **Nominations should be received by the State Soil Conservation Committee by April 8, 2021.** The form is now available online at www.mda.maryland.gov (click on Conservation, then committees).

A supervisor must be a resident of the district. District boundaries are the same as county boundaries. Anyone recommended should be able to attend monthly meetings of the Board of Supervisors and have a knowledge of, and a sincere interest, in proper land use and the conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

—Prince George's Soil Conservation District

Bill to Repeal Maryland State Song Advancing in Legislature

By CALLAN TANSILL-SUDDATH
Capital News Service

A bill that would repeal Maryland's state song "Maryland, My Maryland!" on the grounds it contains offensive and outdated language is advancing in the Legislature this week.

The song, penned in 1891, labels President Abraham Lincoln as a "despot," poses a call to action to defend the state from the Union, and personifies the state as "not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb," among other provocative lyrics.

"It's way past time to eliminate this outdated and offensive tune from our law books," Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan, D-Montgomery, SB08's Senate sponsor, told Capital News Service.

Kagan says now is the proper time to repeal the song as Confederate-era imagery incorporated into state symbols is being removed nationwide; she believes the legislative repeal process can be quick, allowing for more time to be directed toward pressing issues such as COVID-19 recovery initiatives.

"Repealing the state song should be accomplished in five minutes so we can go back to the people's business, really pressing business," Kagan said.

During a Feb. 24 House hearing on the bill's counterpart HB0667, Comptroller Peter Franchot, D, offered testimony in support of the bill.

"There was only one correct 'side' to be on during the Civil War, and I think it's time our state song recognizes that," Franchot said.

In testimony opposing the bill, John T. Barringer II of Eldersburg, Maryland, wrote that he worries about the precedent set by removing something so crucial to the state's identity.

"This legislation is not in Maryland's past, present, or future interests. It censors our state's distinctive story, condemns the state song on the gallows of a national culture cleansing frenzy, and deprives future generations of learning some tough truth of a cataclysmic epoch in our federal and state history," Barringer said.

A number of institutions have removed the state song from their repertoires in recent years.

The University of Maryland announced in 2017 its marching band the Mighty Sound of Maryland would abstain from playing the song on campus going forward; The Preakness Stakes followed suit in 2020 announcing they would no longer play the song during the annual race at Pimlico Race Course.

In 2017, days after violence erupted at a white supremacist protest against the removal of a Gen. Robert E. Lee monument in Charlottesville, Va., then-mayor Catherine Pugh arranged the removal of four Confederate monuments in Baltimore; in 2016, a seven-member panel formally suggested

the removal of two of the statues.

Officials have attempted to repeal "Maryland, My Maryland" on multiple occasions; Kagan has sponsored the effort twice previously but believes this is the year it will be successful.

"I think George Floyd's murder and the subsequent focus on equity and Black Lives Matter has shone a spotlight on Confederate-themed symbols...the attempt to repeal it, or repeal and replace it has been around for decades and I'm very hopeful that with new leadership in the House and new leadership in the Senate, as well as increased sensitivity to the issues this will be the year we finally get it done," Kagan said.


Kagan has not suggested a replacement for the state song and says the issue can be addressed at a later date.

"In the future, if someone wants to propose a new state song, that's a conversation for another time. But I think what we need to do this year is just kill it, take it out of our law books, and prepare to move forward without that stain on our state's reputation," Kagan said.

The House bill advanced on Thursday [March 11] and is expected to come up for a final vote in that chamber soon.

If SB0008/HB0667 passes, the song would be removed on July 1.

Two other bills—HB0389 (cross-filed with SB0087) and HB0347—that aim to repeal and replace the state song are also going through the state Legislature.



VOTE for your favorite **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY** restaurant to help them win **CASH** Prizes.

Voting starts at on Monday, March 15th at PGCEDC.com/DinePrinceGeorges

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COMMENTARY

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

The American Rescue Plan: Giant Strides Forward on Child Poverty

The “seed experiment” is a favorite science project from preschool on up: A child plants identical seeds in two pots. She places the first pot inside a dark closet and leaves it there. She then puts the second one in a sunny spot and waters it every day, and waits to see what will happen. It's very easy for even the youngest children to figure out that their seedlings need the basics—sunlight and water—if they are going to survive and thrive.

The same is true for children. The past year has been filled with heartbreak and uncertainty for millions of Americans and left many children without critical basics, struggling with everything from isolation from school, teachers, and friends

to knowing their families were having trouble buying enough food or paying rent. Now President Biden has signed the American Rescue Plan. This crucial bill, which has been called the most ambitious anti-poverty legislation passed in more than 50 years, will provide help with basics like food and housing assistance, unemployment insurance benefits, expanding affordable health care, funding for COVID-19 testing, vaccines, and supplies, child care assistance, and safe school and child care reopening. It takes giant strides forward on child poverty with a set of critical temporary provisions projected to cut child poverty in half and lift more than 5 million children out of poverty in

2021. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) has advocated for many of these anti-poverty provisions since our founding.

The most monumental victory is the expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC), which creates a universal child allowance for the first time in our nation. Through the one-year CTC expansion families will receive \$3,600 for young children under 6 and \$3,000 for children ages 6 to 17. The bill also makes the credit fully refundable, extending eligibility to 23 million children previously left behind or denied the full value of the credit because their families earned too little. The temporary CTC expansion accounts for the bulk of the bill's impact on child poverty: this provision alone will cut overall child poverty 45 percent and cut poverty 52 percent for Black children, 45 percent for Hispanic children, and 61 percent for Indigenous children, bringing help to children whose communities and families have been disproportionately hard-hit during the pandemic and who most urgently need the basics right now. It needs to be made permanent.

Other anti-poverty measures in the rescue bill that CDF has long championed include expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and housing and cash assistance. We lifted up these solu-

tions in our 1994 report *Wasting America's Future*, in both editions of *Ending Child Poverty Now* (2015 and 2019), and in many other publications. The next step will be making these changes permanent and acknowledging that there should never be poor children in our wealthy nation.

The first year of the pandemic has pushed many people to reevaluate what is most important. This is an opportunity also for our nation to reset and do the same. The American Rescue Plan's provisions are a down payment on a new set of priorities: Helping unemployed and low-income workers is important. Providing access to affordable health care is important. Helping women who are pregnant, caregivers who care for young children, older adults, and family members with disabilities, and grandparents who care for grandchildren is important. Supporting families, preventing child abuse, and lifting children out of poverty are crucial.

Child poverty is economically costly and was a moral blight on our nation long before the pandemic began. Child poverty is higher than for American adults and children in competitor nations and higher than a country with the world's largest economy should ever tolerate. Right now is the time to ensure every child in our rich nation has access to the basics needed to survive and thrive. This rescue plan must become permanent roots for America's children.

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

National Urban League Poll Shows Strong Majority of Black Americans Want a Covid Vaccine

Challenge Remains to Counteract Misinformation and Build Trust in Vaccine's Safety for the Minority who are Hesitant

“They've read all this stuff online, from different news sources, which is confusing. But then they meet me, as someone who has had the shot, and I can give them some real answers.”

—Armando Mateos of Working Partnerships USA, a Silicon Valley-based community organization working to help dispel misinformation about the pandemic and vaccines

A strong majority of Black Americans are con-

fidant in the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine and are ready to take it, according to a new poll commissioned by the National Urban League and The Alliance of National Psychological Associations for Racial and Ethnic Equity.

These findings run counter to a “blame-the-victim” media narrative that pins the appalling racial disparity in vaccination rates on Black hesitancy to take the vaccine.

Only 14 percent of Black Americans polled said they “definitely” would not get the vaccine, and 15 percent said they “probably” would not. Yet the Black share of the vaccinated population is lower than the Black general population in every state that has reported demographic data. According to an analysis by The New York Times, the Black vaccination rate is half the white rate.

Access, not hesitancy, is the reason for this disparity, as U.S. Rep. Karen Bass, psychologist and professor Cheryl Grills and I discussed in an op-ed published this week in the *Washington Post*.

Among those who are hesitant, however, information is key: Overall, more than a fifth of Blacks said they have heard, seen or read something that made them less likely to take the vaccine. Among those who said they definitely or probably would not take the vaccine, 55 percent had consumed negative information about it.

Negative information about the vaccine mostly centered on safety concerns, side effects, and skepticism about how quickly the vaccine was developed and approved.

This corresponds with recent reporting that Black and Hispanic communities are confronting vaccine conspiracy theories, rumors and misleading news reports on social media. YouTube revealed this week it has taken down more than 30,000 videos that made

misleading or false claims about COVID-19 vaccines over the last six months.

Our poll found that concerns about the safety of the vaccine, are the primary barrier among Blacks who don't intend to vaccinate. Of that group, nearly 60 percent agreed that “the vaccine is too new, I want to wait and see how it works for others.” More than a third agreed that “I am worried that people of color are being used as test subjects.”

Our challenge, then, is to employ trusted messengers such as public health professionals, community leaders and friends and neighbors to address those concerns attesting to the vaccine's safety. I was proud to join a group of trusted clergy in my own community who received the vaccine publicly in an effort to build trust.

These efforts are working. Hairstylist Katrina Randolph is part of the Health In-Reach and Research Initiative—or HAIR—a network of barbershops and beauty salons working with the Maryland Center for Health Equity at the University of Maryland School of Public Health.

“At first, 75% of my clients were saying, ‘I'm not going to get the vaccination.’ But as we had these conversations and I told them things that I was being educated about, they began to do research and then they felt more comfortable with the vaccination,” Randolph said. “Now I hear from 90% of my clients, ‘I can't wait to get vaccinated.’”

Chris Van Hollen

United States Senator for Maryland



Van Hollen, Cardin, Klobuchar Reintroduce Legislation To Bring Harriet Tubman Statue to U.S. Capitol

Bill Reintroduction Coincides with Harriet Tubman Day

WASHINGTON (March 10, 2021)—In recognition of Harriet Tubman Day, U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin (both D-Md.) and Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) are announcing the reintroduction of their legislation to honor Harriet Tubman with a statue in the United States Capitol.

“Harriet Tubman is an American hero and Mary-

land is proud to call her a daughter of our great state. Every American should know her name—and her conviction and courage in fighting the evil of slavery. During the Civil War, she served as a Union nurse and spy, and later in life, she was a strong advocate for women's suffrage. Bringing this statue to the United States Capitol will help honor her heroic fight for freedom and equality and ensure more

Americans know her role in our history,” said Senator Van Hollen. “I'm proud to reintroduce this legislation today, in recognition of Harriet Tubman Day, and I will keep pushing until the Harriet Tubman statue is placed in the Capitol.”

“Harriet Tubman is an iconic figure in our nation's history, for whom liberty and freedom were not just ideas. Her courageous story is one that must be told in the halls of Congress and with every visitor to the U.S. Capitol from across the country and around the globe,” said Senator Cardin. “I can think of few greater examples of bravery and valor about which to teach our future generations. Harriet Tubman's legacy is an essential part of American history that recognizes the importance of African Americans and women in creating the fabric of our nation.”

“We'd also like to recognize the loss of a great Marylander, Linda Mahoney, who long championed the fight to properly recognize Harriet Tubman in our nation's capital. Linda passed away just this week, and we know her passion and commitment to service will be deeply missed. Our thoughts are with

her friends, family, and loved ones at this difficult time. We will move forward on this effort in her memory,” Senators Van Hollen and Cardin added.

“Harriet Tubman spent her life fighting for liberty and equality. She repeatedly risked her life for the freedom of others and to bend the arc of our moral universe towards justice. The images that we present in the Capitol reflect who we are and who we hold to be the most important figures in our country's history. There is no question that a statue of Harriet Tubman should be in the Capitol,” said Senator Klobuchar.

In 2012, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation creating the Harriet Tubman Statue Commission to fundraise and commission an artist to sculpt a statue to donate for display in the U.S. Capitol Building. Congress must pass legislation in order to accept the donation, and this bill is the critical next step in the process. It will direct the Joint Committee on the Libraries, which manages art in the U.S. Capitol Building, to enter into an agreement to accept the statue after it is completed.

Hoyer Announces Greater Baden Community Medical Services Will Join Equitable Vaccination Program

WASHINGTON (March 11, 2021)—Today, Congressman Steny Hoyer (MD-05) announced that Greater Baden Community Medical Services has been selected to join the Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program. Launched by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program distributes COVID-19 vaccines directly to HRSA-support health centers to ensure vaccines are distributed to underserved communities and those most affected by the ongoing pandemic.

“I am thrilled that the Greater Baden Community Medical Services in Prince George's County has been selected to participate in HRSA's COVID-19 Vaccination Program,” said Congressman Hoyer. “Throughout this pandemic, residents in Prince George's County have been disproportionately impacted by this virus, suffering from

greater loss of life and infections than other parts of Maryland and our country.”

“Even now as our state struggles to ensure vaccine access is equitable, Black and Latino residents in Prince George's County are being left behind, with roughly 10 percent of residents having received their first shot compared to 18 percent of the rest of the state,” continued Congressman Hoyer. “This program will address these widening disparities and get Maryland on a stronger path to defeating this virus and save lives.”

Greater Baden Medical Services is one of 700 health centers around the nation invited to participate in the Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program. Great Baden is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) serving nearly 20,000 insured and uninsured Marylanders in our communities.

Indigenous Day from A1

nous Peoples' Day, but in having one, Maryland shouldn't take away something from another group of people, Pica said.

Protestors toppled Baltimore's Christopher Columbus statue last year on July 4, signaling to the state that many people believe this man shouldn't be celebrated at all.

If people are going to start changing holidays and statues, remember that it will continue and there will always be a holiday or figure that people will find a reason to come after, Martin said in the hearing.

Sponsor of the bill Sen. Obie Patterson, D-Prince George's, said that 15 other states have a combined celebration day in October, and asked what the witnesses think about

this as a possible solution.

While she would support a day celebrating Italian American heritage, Folan said a combined day is problematic because of the continued association with Columbus.

A House of Delegates committee [was] scheduled to hear that chamber's bill on Tuesday [March 16].

The Prince George's Post

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