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## Van Hollen, Activists Push Policy Priorities for Black Women

By HANNAH ZIEGLER  
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (March 16, 2023)—Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Maryland, [last] Thursday urged congressional action to protect voting rights and commended the participation of Black women in politics as he welcomed dozens of activists from the Black Women's Roundtable to Capitol Hill.

Members of the Black Women's Roundtable, an empowerment program that works to mobilize Black participation in American democracy, gathered in Washington to advocate for criminal justice reform, voting rights protections and a slew of other national issues.

"Black women have been at the forefront of the fight for justice and liberty since the earliest days of our country," Van Hollen said at a press conference outside the

United States Capitol. "When it comes to casting your votes and calling for change, you are the ones who have moved our country forward."

Van Hollen called on Congress to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, which would identify states with a history of voting discrimination and require them to obtain permission before changing their voting procedures.

So far this year, state legislatures have introduced 150 restrictive voting bills and 27 election interference bills, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University Law School. Since 2020, dozens of states have enacted laws that make it harder for voters of color to cast their ballots.

"Every citizen should be able to have access to the ballot box without having to jump over a lot of hoops or standing in long, long lines specifically designed to get

people to get tired of voting," Van Hollen said.

Advocates from the group also called on Congress to take action on criminal justice reform.

Through her work as CEO of the Clean Slate Initiative, Sheena Meade has spent her time advocating for so-called "clean slate" laws, which can seal arrest records for people convicted of low-level, nonviolent drug offenses who complete their sentences. Nationwide, Black people comprise 62 percent of drug offenders admitted to state prisons, according to Human Rights Watch.

During the press conference, Meade asked activists to raise their hands if they had a friend or family member in jail or with a criminal record. A flurry of hands shot up in the crowd at the press conference.

"We're about civic engagement, bringing people to the table, bringing people to the voting



PHOTO: HANNAH ZIEGLER/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON—Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Maryland, addresses activists from the Black Women's Roundtable outside the U.S. Capitol [last] Thursday.

booth. But what happens when they're shut out? How do we ask them to show up for our community when they can't?" Meade said.

Roughly 4.6 million Americans cannot vote because of felony disenfranchisement con-

victions, according to The Sentencing Project. One in 19 Black Americans is excluded from voting in some way.

Advocates emphasized how criminal justice issues facing Black people across America connect to injustices associated with over-

policing in Black communities.

Criminal justice reform is of paramount importance to the lives of Black Americans, said Melanie Campbell, the president of the Na-

See **PRIORITIES** Page A3

## Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Join Members from Around the State to Advocate for Local Communities

By RACINE TUCKER-HAMILTON  
Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter  
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (March 16, 2023)—Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® (AKA) members gathered to reach greater heights of service and sisterhood at their annual "AKA Day at the Capitol" held on Feb. 28, 2023. More than 100 members from across Maryland visited the state Capitol for a day and evening of activities focused on advocating for critical issues impacting our communities. The event highlighted the work and legislative initiatives of 10 Alpha Kappa Alpha members serving in the Maryland House of Delegates:

- Speaker Pro-tempore Sheree Sample-Hughes-District 37A (Dorchester and Wicomico Counties)
- Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary-District 13(Howard County)
- Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett-District 32 (Anne Arundel County)
- Delegate Pamela Queen-District 14 (Montgomery County)
- Delegate Kym Taylor-District 23 (Prince George's County)
- Delegate Karen Toles-District 25 (Prince George's County)
- Delegate Terri Hill-District 12 (Baltimore County)
- Delegate Edith Patterson-District 28



PHOTO COURTESY PSI EPSILON OMEGA CHAPTER ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.

Members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® at annual "AKA Day at the Capitol" event.

- (Charles County)
- Delegate Jennifer White-District 10 (Baltimore County)
- Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins-District 20 (Montgomery County)

"This is an important event for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. because it allows us to support the communities we serve throughout the state through advocacy," said Benita A. Swindell, president of Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of AKA. "This annual advocacy day began three decades ago under the leadership of our 27th North Atlantic Regional Director, Erma W. Barron. Service and sisterhood have been the organization's cornerstone throughout our 115-year history."

While at the capitol, participants met with their district representatives and focused on legislation addressing maternal mental health, youth suicide prevention, and Legislative Black Caucus priorities. Participants also advocated on behalf of 11 bills under consideration for state law. The event ended with an evening reception spotlighting AKA members currently serving in the legislature.

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

## Council Chair Thomas Dernoga Addresses Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

Council Receives County Executive's FY 2024 Proposed Spending Plan; Begins Budget Review Process

By KAREN D. CAMPBELL  
Prince George's County  
Council Media

LARGO, Md. (March 15, 2023)—The Prince George's County Council today received County Executive Angela Alsobrooks' Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024, which begins on July 1, 2023.

Council Chair Tom Dernoga (District 1) commented on the proposed spending plan, "We are pleased with the County Executive's focus on investing in education and public safety, and to see strong investments in the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement and in storm water management as well. We will spend the next two months digging in and ensuring that Council priorities are considered."

Over the next three months, the Council will engage in a careful and deliberative Budget Review Process, which will be guided by the core tenets of the People's Agenda, and conducted through the Council's standing

committees, staff reviews and important public engagement.

The People's Council is committed to an open, inclusive and participatory budget process, and looks forward to working collaboratively with County Executive Alsobrooks and her budget team, County residents and all stakeholders to produce a final spending plan that reflects its commitment to the People's Agenda priorities.

Pursuant to the County Charter, the County Council, in its role as the fiscal steward over taxpayer dollars, must adopt a new and balanced spending plan for Prince George's County on or before June 1.

Budget meeting schedules are subject to change. All Council meetings, including budget sessions, are live streamed and available via the Council's website for on-demand viewing. For updated information on the Council budget process, committee work sessions and public hearings, visit the Council's FY 24 Budget Portal.

## National Harbor Celebrates Cherry Blossom Season With a Festival From March 20 to April 16

Special classes and offers throughout the month and Sakura Sunday celebration on April 2

By PRESS OFFICER  
National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (March 14, 2023)—National Harbor has become a prime location for its cherry tree celebration each year. This year's festivities take place from March 20 to April 16 with National Harbor also serving as an official participant of the

National Cherry Blossom Festival. In addition to National Harbor's breathtaking waterfront views, this year's celebration will be filled with entertainment, hotel room packages, food and drink specials, classes and more.

The annual Sakura Sunday festival, an official participating event of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, will be held on Sun-

day, April 2 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and will feature free cultural activities including Japanese inspired art, music, dance, culinary delights, and a Japanese market.

Throughout the month, National Harbor will host classes and events. Origami, the Japanese classic art of paper folding will take place on March 25 and 26, 3-4 p.m. Register via Eventbrite.

On April 8, in the Capital Canopy at National Harbor, Katsucon Entertainment, Inc., a Japanese entertainment and educational organization will provide an authentic Japanese tabletop experience. Games include Riichi Mahjong; Karuta card game flash cards to help teach Japanese to children ages five and older; Hanabi, a collaborative game where

players have to give each other hints on the cards in order to make a firework display together (ages 10-15.) Games will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on April 8. Register Here. Also on April 8, National Harbor, the Embassy of Japan will host a film day Lu Over the Wall and MIRAI. The films will be shown on National Harbor's waterfront screen (150 National Plaza) starting at 2 p.m.

Restaurants throughout National Harbor will celebrate with food specials and will join National Harbor hotels and retailers in having a variety of special of-

fers and displays. MGM National Harbor has its beautiful conservatory installation that includes cherry blossoms.

One noteworthy seasonal package is Spring it On at the Gaylord National Resort. The package includes overnight accommodations, a springtime cookie decorating kit for two and one Spring-A-Long Scavenger Hunt book. Bookings start at \$339.

For more information on National Harbor and cherry blossom activities and offerings, go to <https://www.nationalharbor.com/cherryblossom/>.

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**To Be Equal: Deregulation Leads to Crashed Trains and Crashed Economies**

While we cannot point to the repeal of a specific regulation that could have prevented the disaster, it's clear that underregulation was a major fact.

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

## In & Around Morningside-Skyline

### It's almost spring—consider a bog hike, with carnivorous plants

As you travel Suitland Road, near Suitland Parkway, you may have noticed a sign, "Suitland Bog." For some years that road has been blocked; however, you can still visit the bog during daylight hours using the trail off Recency Parkway, across the street from the Suitland Community Center, 3600 Regency Parkway. You can park in the Center's lot.

As you enter the trail, look for the map showing where to find the bog. The hike is about a mile long over uneven terrain. So, wear good walking shoes and don't go alone.

Once you arrive at the bog, which is surrounded by a high chain-link fence, follow the brand-new boardwalk as it loops around the wetland.

Check along the side of the boardwalk for the fascinating, rare, reddish-purple pitcher plants, a tubular carnivorous species. Peek inside (but don't touch!) the tubes to see trapped insects.

Also, you might spot the round-leaf sundew and other carnivorous plants.

If you prefer to take a guided tour with a Park Ranger, call 301-627-7755 for upcoming dates. More information may be found at <https://www.pgprks.com/3237/Suitland-Bog>.

My daughter Therese, her children Naomi and Michael, and Kiedis the dog just did the bog hike. They were amazed something so extraordinary is so close to home.

### Town of Morningside: Yard Sale

Morningside is hosting a Yard Sale Saturday, April 15, at the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. To participate, it's \$15 for the first table or space, and \$10 for each additional table/space. Cash only—must be prepaid, no refunds. To reserve your table/space, call 301-736-2301 no later than Wednesday, April 12, 4 p.m. First come first served; space is limited, so reserve now. Rain date, April 22.

The Easter Bunny is coming to Morningside for Bingo Bunny Breakfast & Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 8, 9 a.m. to noon at the Morningside Municipal Center. Breakfast includes pancakes, fruit, water and juice. And there'll be 5 fun games of Bingo and door prizes. For the Egg Hunt, bring a basket to collect your eggs. The Egg Hunt is for walkers (toddlers who can walk) through children up to age 12. Admission, \$5 per person.

Tickets can be purchased Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 6901 Ames St. (Town Hall). They must be pre-purchased. Seating limited. For info, 301-736-2301.

### Neighbors & other good people

Jean Ihrig, formerly of Skyline Drive, Facebooked me a photo of architecture and food in Bologna, northern Italy, and adds "off to Parma and Modena in the morning."

Carol DeGraba, former Morningside Councilwoman, emailed news that her new granddaughter, Diana Grace Walsh, was baptized March 12 at St. Raphael Catholic Church in Rockville. Diana's parents are Maria and Tyler Walsh. Godmother is Maggie McIntyre, Maria's college roommate and maid-of-honor; godfather is Nicholas DeGraba, baby Diana's uncle.

Madisen McDaniel, Washington Catholic Athletic Conference Player of the Year, helped lead Bishop McNamara to 7th place in the state as it went undefeated in regular season conference play. McNamara boys, #6 in the standings, fell from 6th when they lost to DeMatha in the Alhambra championship.

Dr. Barbara Everitt Bryant, a market researcher who was tapped by President George H.W. Bush to be the first woman to head the Census Bureau, died March 3. She was 96.

Rosie Nickodemus, my sister in Saginaw, Mich., is getting ready to give blood again. She has already done this 144 times. That means she's given 18 gallons to Michigan Blood.

### Changing landscape

A recent assessment of my county: "Just outside of our nation's capital, Prince George's County, Maryland, is one such community that has undergone significant transformation in recent years, making it a great place to start and grow a tech business."

To help keep affiliated minor league baseball, the Maryland Stadium Authority and Maryland General Assembly set aside \$200 million to bring stadiums in the state up to par. This week, Prince George's stadium, home of the Bowie Baysox, and Arthur W. Perdue Stadium, home of the Delmarva Shorebirds, reached deals with the Stadium Authority to become the first Maryland minor league stadiums to go after a portion of that money.

C-Crab Restaurant has opened in the Andrews Manor Shopping Center. "C-Crab is known for revolutionizing the way people eat and enjoy Cajun seafood." I don't know when it opens, but it closes at 9 p.m. For information: 240-619-5063.

A home two blocks down the hill from my house on Skyline Drive, just sold for \$378,000.

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

### Squirrels

Washington Post John Kelly's 13th annual Squirrel Week is coming up. He seeks photos of squirrels. He'll post his favorites, and the grand prize winner will receive a \$100 gift card. To check the rules, go to [wapo.st/squirrelphototutorials](http://wapo.st/squirrelphototutorials).

### Places to go & things to do

Oxon Run Pinknic & Kite Fly is coming up Sunday, April 2, noon to 3 p.m. at Oxon Run Park. Enjoy free food, free kite kits, activities, entertainment, a Ward 8 Vendor Market, a special appearance by Wendy Water Drop, and more, in coordination with the Blossom Kite Festival.

### Wordle report

Daughter Therese Gallegos got it in 1 on March 12; she used BIRTH just because it was my birthday. It took me 5 moves despite her hints that I use a word relevant to the day.

### Sandy Snead dies at "42"

Sandra Woodman "Sandy" Snead died Feb. 23 at her home on Akron Street in Marlow Heights, just two days before her 42nd birthday. (She refused to acknowledge her age and wouldn't accept being any older than 42, even though she was born in 1943.)

She attended Calvert High School but did not graduate with her peers. She married William "Bud" Snead in Washington in 1961 and eventually earned her high school diploma from Crossland at the age of 63.

Over the years, she was a bank teller and branch manager at First National Bank in Washington, and later at First Union Bank, an interior decorator with Home Interiors & Gifts, and secretary at the Seafarer's International Union.

She was a devoted mother and a good friend to many. Survivors include daughter Lisa Ingold, son Tim Snead, grand- and great-grandchildren, and sisters Christine and Dorothy Jo. Services were at Kalas in Oxon Hill.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Gina Foster, March 26; Walter Dimes, March 27; Robert Hay, Jr. and David Righter, March 28; Ben Surratt and Kimberly Smith, March 29; Akwete Bedewi, March 30; Sylvia Barbour and Mark Cummings, March 31.

Happy Anniversary to Terry and Gina Foster on March 26; and to Antoinette and Charles Mattison, March 29.

## Around the County

### M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County Announces 2023 Summer Camps

RIVERDALE, Md. (March 14, 2023)—The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County looks forward to welcoming children back to a summer of safe, fun programming. We offer assorted summer camps that fit the imagination of children and their parents' needs. The Department offers structured, full-day and half-day programs for children and teens ages 3 through 17. Registration opens March 15 through [www.pgprks.com/629/Day-Camps-Summer-Playgrounds](http://www.pgprks.com/629/Day-Camps-Summer-Playgrounds).

"This summer the Department is working diligently to provide something for everyone!" states Director Bill Tyler of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation. "Something for every interest and every personality and ability, both in-person and virtually. We are taking steps to maximize fun, imagination, activity, and learning this summer. We want parents to feel secure and youth to enjoy." Tyler concludes.

Most sessions are two weeks long and operate Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. After Care is available at many Summer Day Camp locations. Children must be signed in and out by authorized parents or guardians. Register your child for as many summer day camp sessions as you wish, while still planning summer vacations. Before registering for summer programs, you must first create a free ParksDirect account. In-person programs have limited capacity, so early registration is strongly suggested.

—Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

### FCC Awards Library \$500,000 for Affordable Connectivity Outreach Program

LARGO, Md. (March 15, 2023)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is the only public educational institution that serves the internet and technology access needs of Prince George's County residents of all ages. The Library is pleased to announce a significant new investment in its digital equity work by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which awarded PGCMLS a \$500,000 grant on March 15, 2023, as part of the Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program.

"PGCMLS is honored to be entrusted with this investment from the FCC, which will help countless Prince Georgians access affordable home internet," said John Pfeifer, Donor Engagement and Grants Officer. "This grant will enable the Library to hire a team of program and outreach specialists, and technology assistants to offer programs and support to help customers—in all portions of the county—take advantage of the ACP over the next two years."

The Affordable Connectivity Outreach Program is a critical component of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), "which provides qualifying low-income households with discounts on broadband services and connected devices." It was established under the auspices of the 117th Congress' Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, offering households that meet eligibility criteria up to \$30 off their home internet bills per month, and up to \$75 off per month if the household is located on Tribal lands.

Community partners, like PGCMLS, are engaged to help connect local residents with the ACP and access more affordable home internet. PGCMLS is one of four libraries in the country, including the New York Public Library, and four organizations in Maryland to receive this grant from the FCC, a testament to the PGCMLS' national leadership in digital equity, literacy, and inclusion.

"The Affordable Connectivity Program is the nation's largest-ever broadband affordability effort, supporting internet connections in more than 16 million households," stated FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel. "These outreach grants will help us expand awareness in more communities, so we can continue the work to close the digital divide."

The Library's existing digital equity, literacy, and inclusion programs and services are accessible via PGCMLS' Technology Corner and at neighborhood branch libraries. Since the 1990s, PGCMLS has been Prince George's County's primary provider of free public computer and internet access. With a significant digital divide, including over 116,000 residents who lack access to home broadband internet (per the 2020 U.S. Census), the evolution of the Library's technology and internet access programs continues to be an important factor in the County's growth. Customers use in-branch and borrowable technology and internet resources to advance their education, access tutoring services, and apply for jobs. PGCMLS offers extensive in-branch resources, as well as borrowable Online 2Go Chromebooks with built-in unlimited internet data, Kajet mobile WiFi hotspots, Playaway tablets for children, and a plethora of programs and digital literacy skills development resources, including LinkedIn Learning and NorthStar Digital Literacy.

The ongoing expansion of PGCMLS' digital equity, literacy, and inclusion programs and services is made possible by the FCC, Pull Up Fund, Capital One, PGCMLS Foundation, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Maryland State Library Agency, and City of Laurel. The FCC has previously invested in PGCMLS' internet access programs through the E-Rate and Emergency Connective Fund programs.

—Nicholas Brown, PGCMLS

### Students Honored on the Dean's Academic Honor List at Baylor University

WACO, Texas (March 13, 2023)—More than 5,100 Baylor University students have been named to the Fall 2022 Dean's Academic Honor List, which recognizes Baylor undergraduates for their outstanding academic work during each semester.

Beltsville, MD: **Elijah Nahandast**, College of Arts & Sciences

Students honored on the Dean's List earned a minimum semester grade-point average of 3.70 with no grade lower than a "C" while enrolled in at least 12 graded semester hours.

—Baylor Media and Public Relations

## Brandywine-Aquasco

### HBCU JOURNALISM MAJORS RECEIVE WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING

Student funding, loan forgiveness, mental health, racial inequalities and resources for universities were some of the topics discussed at a White House press briefing with Vice President Kamala Harris, Senior Advisor for Public Engagement Keisha Lance Bottoms and journalism students from Bowie State University and 41 other HBCUs.

Harris and Bottoms answered questions posed by the students on issues that are of major concern on HBCU campuses. Angelica Tyler, a Bowie State graduate student pursuing a master's degree in Organizational Communications, believes the White House briefing was an eye-opening experience for all of the students who attended the session.

"Vice President Harris spoke about how important it is for journalism students at HBCUs to be aware of the problems and issues facing many people of color and address them when we become working journalists," said Tyler. "Everyone who attended the briefing learned a lot about why HBCUs need more funding and the importance of making it less difficult financially for students to earn a degree." MEDIA CONTACT: David Thompson, [dthompson@bowiestate.edu](mailto:dthompson@bowiestate.edu), 301-860-4311.

### BSU OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Carla Henry Hopkins is the Director of the Office of Alumni Engagement and Stewardship. She manages the overall operation of alumni engagement, donor and stewardship management and constituent communications. She is the primary manager for alumni events, volunteerism and is the host of Virtual Alumni House on the BSU alumni social media platforms. She can be reached at [chopkins@bowiestate.edu](mailto:chopkins@bowiestate.edu).

### Donor Engagement and Stewardship Manager

Raymond "Ray" McCree recently joined the OAES team as the Donor Engagement and Stewardship Manager at Bowie State University. He is responsible for cultivating and maintaining relationships with donors, prospective donors, alumni, and friends. He brings over 25 years of higher education experience to Bowie State University. He can be reached at [rmccree@bowiestate.edu](mailto:rmccree@bowiestate.edu).

### Communications Specialist

LeAmber Malcolm is a communications specialist who strives to keep all BSU constituents informed about what's going on at Bowie State University. She is the editor and publisher of BSU AT A GLANCE, a weekly newsletter that provides a snapshot of BSU news, events, athletics, fundraising campaigns and initiatives,

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

as well as profiles of students, faculty and alumni. She can be reached at [lmalcom@bowiestate.edu](mailto:lmalcom@bowiestate.edu).

### Administrative Assistant

Alexis Herbert is a recent graduate from Howard University with a degree in sports medicine. She chose to work at Bowie State University because she wanted to give back to the HBCU community. As an administrative assistant, Alexis provides support to the director of OAES. Her goal is to build a strong relationship with alumni and to help make Bowie State a place where alumni are happy to return and proud to call home. She can be reached at [aherbert@bowiestate.edu](mailto:aherbert@bowiestate.edu).

### BSU WINNING WOMEN

Dr. Andrea (Allen) Wiggins assists in safeguarding the Homeland from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) terrorism through projects to enhance and implement capabilities to prepare, prevent, mitigate and respond to WMD threats.

### BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University Women's Forum will celebrate our five years of service on the Campus and the Community Monday, March 27, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. We will be holding the Expo with some dynamic speakers and professional development. Location: Student Center, Wiseman Ballroom 14000 Jericho Park Road, Bowie, Maryland 20715. Contact: Angela Morton at 301-860-4363. Email: [amorton@bowiestate.edu](mailto:amorton@bowiestate.edu). Cost is \$0-\$55 and you must register. Categories featured Women's History Month, Workshop/Training.

### CONCERT

Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes will be in concert Saturday, April 8, 2023, 8 P.M. at Harmony Arts Center. The address is 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744. Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes was one of the most popular Philadelphia soul groups of the 1970s. The group is most noted for several hits on Gamble and Huff's Philadelphia International label between 1972 and 1976. The group scored several major R&B and popular hits including million-selling singles and albums. Among the Blue Notes most important and successful recordings are love songs such as "If You Don't Know Me By Now" (#1 Billboard R&B), their breakout single, "I Miss You," "The Love I Lost" (#1 R & B Billboard), and socially-conscious songs such as "Wake Up Everybody" ((#1 Billboard R&B), and "Bad Luck". Come see a performance by one of Philadelphia's finest. All ages. Tickets: \$40/adult; \$35 seniors and students. Purchase tickets through PARKS DIRECT.

# COMMUNITY

## Upcoming Events at Marietta House Museum

By STACEY HAWKINS  
Marietta House Museum

### Marietta House Museum's Lunchtime Lecture Series presents: M-NCPPC's Sankofa Mobile Museum

Please join Marvin-Alonzo Greer, director of M-NCPPC's Sankofa Mobile Museum on **Wednesday, April 5**, 12 noon–1 p.m., when he discusses the launch of the new museum on wheels! This fall, the Sankofa Mobile Museum, the first of its kind, "history-as-advocacy" mobile museum will travel to schools, festivals, and communities across Prince George's County and beyond to introduce visitors to untold stories and unsung heroes from 10,000 years ago to today.

Guests are welcome to bring their lunch and enjoy conversation and new friends. Tours of the house are optional following the free lecture.

Self-guided walking tour packets are also available in kiosks by the parking lot.

Please call 301-464-5291 to register or email mariettahouse@pgparks.com. We look forward to seeing you.

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.

### Marietta House Museum's Annual Giving Voice Initiative: Slavery's Human Trafficking Legacies Then and Now

Join us for an important discussion on **Thursday, April 13**, 6:30–8 p.m., for Marietta House Museum's Annual Giving Voice Initiative: "Slavery's Human Trafficking Legacies Then and Now" in partnership with the Office of Human Rights of Prince George's County and Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force.

This will be a hybrid presentation. Panelists and poet will discuss with the audience the ties among the historic Atlantic Slave trade, 18th c. Prince George's County and 21st c. Prince George's County. Featured speakers are human rights activist Renée Battle-Brooks, historian David Armenti, and poet Marcia E. Cole.

Ages 12 & up (ages under 18 must be accompanied by an adult). Walk-ins welcome. Free admission. Registration is recommended but not required, however, online participants must register. Direct link for registration: <https://tinyurl.com/5e2vynjd>

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.

### Priorities from A1

tional Coalition on Black Civic Participation and convener of the Black Women's Roundtable.

"We have been brutalized by the criminal justice system. We have been the victims of poor policing. We've been victims of aggressive policing," Campbell said.

After Minneapolis police mur-

dered George Floyd in 2020, advocates hoped Congress would take swift action to improve the nation's policing. But the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act—a law that aimed to prevent and remedy racial profiling by law enforcement across the country—stalled in 2021.

While acknowledging the progress made in Congress on other issues facing Black Ameri-

cans, Van Hollen agreed with advocates that lawmakers must prioritize passage of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

"We need to make sure that we have criminal justice reform and end the national scandal of mass incarceration in the United States of America and have constitutional policing," Van Hollen said. "We have a lot of work to do."

## Spring Grief Workshops Include Smash and Mend, Yoga, Walks and More

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (March 17, 2023)—From spending a day with horses to combining yoga and art to express new beginnings, Chesapeake Life Center is offering creative programs for adults to find a path to healing from grief this spring.

- **Golden Healing Retreat**—For many, grief leaves us feeling shattered and broken. Through grief work and healing after a significant loss, grievers can begin to rebuild and redefine themselves. During this nurturing yoga and expressive arts retreat, participants will engage in yin yoga followed by the cathartic process of smashing ceramics and using the broken pieces to create something new in the form of a mosaic project. The retreat will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 1 beginning at the Yoga

Barn, 44 W. Earleigh Heights Road, Severna Park and then moving on to the center's campus at 90 Ritchie Highway in Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is \$50.

- **Pet Loss Workshop**—This is a free virtual program for adults mourning the loss of a beloved pet. It will include a welcome, a time to share individual stories, an introduction to the grief process, an art activity to honor your beloved pet, brainstorming and suggestions for healthy coping. This workshop is sponsored by Perfect Pet Resort and will be held via Zoom from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, April 13. Registration for this program is required and can be completed at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pet-loss-workshop-tickets-571007768607>.

- **Walking Through Grief**—Join other grievers

See GRIEF WORKSHOPS Page A4

## There There by Tommy Orange Is 2023 One Maryland One Book Selection

Maryland Humanities' statewide reading and discussion program marks sixteen years

By SARAH WEISSMAN  
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (March 14, 2023)—Maryland Humanities is pleased to announce the selection of *There There* by Tommy Orange for the 2023 One Maryland One Book program. Released in 2018, the novel tells the interconnected stories of a cast of twelve Native characters from across generational lines, as they converge toward the Big Oakland Powwow. Together, the stories give a riveting portrait of the urban Indian experience. *There There* was one of *The New York Times Book Review's* 10 Best Books of the Year, and won the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize, as well as the PEN/Hemingway Award.

*There There* was chosen as this year's One Maryland One Book by a selection committee of twenty Marylanders, including teachers, scholars, librarians, writers, booksellers, and community workers representing ten counties and Baltimore City. A public call for books under the theme of "Connection" garnered nearly 300 titles, from which the committee then made their selection.

"*There There* provides us an opportunity to connect with several Native American lives that feel immediate and relevant to the world today," says Lindsey Baker, Executive Director of Maryland Humanities. "These characters are deeply rooted in their rich, often traumatic histories, yet are instantly recognizable to any reader. Tommy Orange shares with us their triumphs and their struggles, creating fully-



PHOTO CREDIT ELENA SEIBERT

### Tommy Orange

rounded characters and journeys to follow."

In the fall, Maryland Humanities will collaborate with partners across the state, including libraries, schools, universities, book clubs, and local Native/Indian organizations to conduct programs where readers can connect with each other and discuss the book's themes. Maryland Humanities will distribute free copies of *There There* to partners. Tommy Orange will also visit Maryland for an in-person author event where he will discuss the book with an audience. All events are free.

### About the Author

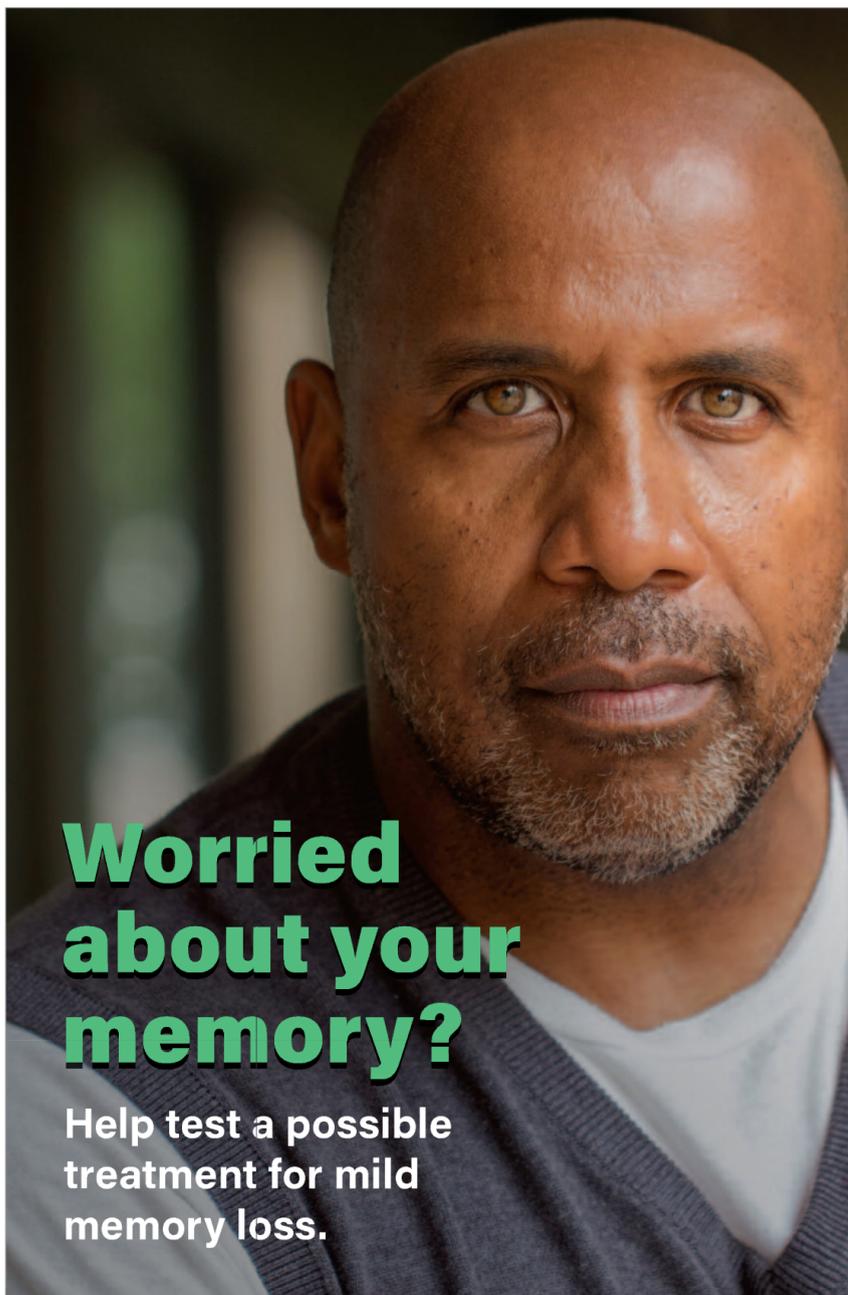
Tommy Orange is the author of the *New York Times* best-selling novel *There There*, a multigenerational, relentlessly paced story about a side of America few of us have ever seen: the lives of urban Native Americans. *There There* was one of *The New York Times Book Review's* 10 Best Books of the Year, and won the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize and the PEN/Hem-

ingway Award. *There There* was also longlisted for the National Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Orange graduated from the MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts, and was a 2014 MacDowell Fellow and a 2016 Writing by Writers Fellow. He is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. He was born and raised in Oakland, California.

### "Wandering Books": Where will you find *There There*?

Copies of the 2023 One Maryland One Book selection will be dropped off in public spaces in counties across the state as part of "Wandering Books," a fun campaign that introduces readers to *There There* and the One Maryland One Book program. Anyone can receive clues about where to find books via Maryland Humanities' Maryland Center for the Book Facebook page or by following @MDHumanities on

See ONE BOOK Page A4



# Worried about your memory?

Help test a possible treatment for mild memory loss.

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866-MIND-150 | [MINDstudy.org](http://MINDstudy.org)

In partnership with the NIH



## Maryland State Police Warn Citizens About Possible Phone Scam Fraud by Police Impersonators

By OFFICE OF MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS  
Maryland State Police

PIKESVILLE, Md. (March 15, 2023)—Maryland State Police warn citizens to be aware of a phone scam involving police impersonators that is currently active in Maryland.

Maryland State Police have received reports from citizens advising that callers contact them claiming to be state troopers or police officers. The reports are attempts to gain financial information or money from citizens. The impersonator states they need to obtain information from the caller due to a police investigation or they are asking for a donation to support law enforcement and their families.

In some instances, the impersonator will use a real name of a law enforcement officer in an attempt to gain trust of the victim. The Maryland State Police does not call individuals and request money from citizens under any circumstances. Citizens are urged to be cautious of unsolicited phone calls.

- Never provide any personal identifying information over the telephone unless you have verified the source.
- Never provide any payment information over the telephone unless you have verified the source.
- The police will never call you

and request money for fines, arrest warrants, fundraisers or any other reason.

- If you do not trust the source and want to verify, look up the unit/group/barrack they said they are from on the internet and call the listed number directly.
- If you believe you have provided information to a scam, please immediately notify your financial institutions.

Citizens who believe they have been the victim of a scam are encouraged to contact their local police department or the Maryland State Police barrack that serves your area. If you believe you have fallen victim to any type of online crime, file a complaint at [ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov).

# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## Deregulation Leads to Crashed Trains and Crashed Economies

*“Powerful lobbying by regulated industries for decades have delayed, weakened, or rolled back public safety and environmental protection regulations that have taken a toll on our communities, health, and environment. But the lesson bears repeating: Government regulations save lives and boost economic innovation—if elected officials stand up for them.”*

—Margo Oge

The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank last week didn't unleash hundreds of thousands of pounds

of toxic chemicals into the water, soil, and air, the way the freight train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, did last month.

But the two events have one important element in common: Deregulation.

Before Silicon Valley Bank collapsed last week, the image most Americans associated with the term “bank run” was the scene in *It's a Wonderful Life* when George Bailey doles out his honeymoon fund to the panicked clients of Bailey Brothers Building and Loan.

Bank runs—triggered by the losses banks in-

curred through speculation in stocks—caused much of the economic damage of the Great Depression. To stabilize and restore public confidence in the nation's banks, Congress enacted the Glass-Steagall Act, which insured deposits and prohibited commercial banks from speculative investments.

The Glass-Steagall Act worked so well for nearly seven decades that Congress decided to gut it in 1999, allowing banks to originate fraudulent loans and sell them to their customers as securities. The financial collapse of 2008, also known as the Great Recession, was the result.

Once again, Congress stepped in to restore stability to the financial services industry, enacting the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. And once again, Congress ignored the lessons of history and gutted key provisions of the law in 2018, exempting banks like SVB from regulations and requirements that could have prevented its collapse.

It's not hard to see the parallels between SVB's collapse and the East Palestine train derailment. While we cannot point to the repeal of a specific regulation that could have prevented the disaster, it's clear that underregulation was a major fact. According to Railroad Workers United, the de-

railed train was excessively long and heavy and the cars were arranged in a dangerous fashion. The train was not inspected properly “due to car inspectors being laid-off” and “time allowed per car inspection being dramatically reduced by the industry.”

History is rife with examples of lax regulation resulting in calamity—for the economy, for the environment, and for the health and lives of workers. The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, which took the lives of 146 garment workers, inspired dozens of regulations improving fire safety, factory inspection, and sanitation and employment policies for women and children, and other labor protections.

But even child labor protections are not safe. Arkansas last week weakened its law to allow children as young as 14 to work up to 28 hours per week, even without the permission of their parents. At least 10 states have introduced or passed laws rolling back child labor protections in the past two years.

Let us hope it does not take another deadly tragedy to persuade the nation of the error of its ways.

—March 16, 2023

## D.C. Guardian Angels Return to the City to Patrol Metro Following Increase in Crime

By YESENIA MONTENEGRO  
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON—The D.C. Guardian Angels, unarmed volunteer safety patrols dedicated to helping prevent crime in public spaces, are making their return to the Washington area's Metro system after an increase in reported crimes.

The group is led by John Ayala, who started the Washington chapter in 1989 after previously being a member of the New York City group.

The Guardian Angels are a New York City-based nonprofit, started in 1979 by Curtis Sliwa. Since then, thousands of volunteers have joined the organization in cities across the country and around the world.

Ayala moved to Washington from New York City when he was 19 to bring the Guardian Angels to the nation's capital. During the 1990s, both the New York and Washington groups were focused on the “crack cocaine era,” Ayala said.

“We were involved with the open-air drug market, trying to get a hold on it. So people in D.C. saw it and said, ‘you know what, we have that same issue here in D.C.’,” Ayala said in an interview with Capital News Service.

Ayala grew the group to about 100 members in the early 1990s, with the average age around 18. Today, the group is working on trying to keep the Metro safe while recruiting new members with a goal of returning to a core of about 100 people. There are currently 40 members signed up, averaging around 40 years old.

“Now it's going to get to the point...where history is starting to repeat itself. It's not the gang violence, it's not the drugs, but

it's the young people going out there hurting so many people in the community, and people are saying ‘enough is enough,’” Ayala said.

While people in their 40s and 50s may remember the Guardian Angels from the 1990s and early 2000s, younger people are less familiar with the group, Ayala said. So part of the Guardian Angels' efforts is telling the younger

Ayala said “there are not enough police officers out there.”

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser announced a partnership between MTDP and the Metropolitan Police Department early last month, aiming to increase police presence at Metro stations.

While police are patrolling the stations, there are not enough officers to also patrol trains, Ayala said. After hearing about the in-



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE D.C. GUARDIAN ANGELS

WASHINGTON—The D.C. Guardian Angels, volunteers dedicated to keeping public spaces in the city safe, have started patrolling the Metro's Green Line in an effort to serve as a crime deterrent.

generation about the group's activities and mission, he said.

The Guardian Angels are currently concentrating their efforts on patrolling the Green Line, focusing specifically on the Anacostia and Congress Heights stations. Their goal is to be a deterrent, to observe and to report to Metro Transit Police Department, Ayala said.

Although the MTPD does not directly endorse the Guardian Angels, it “appreciates eyes and ears on the system,” Sherri Ly, Metro media relations manager, said in a statement to CNS.

Despite the MTPD's efforts,

increased police presence, the Guardian Angels are focusing on what is happening on the trains, while also monitoring the station platforms.

“We're tired of hearing everybody blaming the mayor, blaming the police chief, blaming the councilman,” Ayala said. “Those people are not the ones out...robbing people, they're not telling people to rob people. They're doing the best that they can, but they can't do it alone. It takes a village.”

The safety patrols are recognizable by their red berets and white shirts.

“Prevention is the best cure... so if wearing a recognizable pseudo-uniform can help deter people from getting froggy on public transport, that's the right way for a civilian to help, I think,” said Christopher Dailey, a Washington resident interested in potentially volunteering with the Guardian Angels.

Dailey rides the Metro about once a week. He heard of the Guardian Angels recently through social media and saw that they were looking for volunteers.

“I've seen increasing reports of violence and harassment on the Metro, particularly against women, and I'm a pretty strong and tall guy, so I'd like to think I'd step in and stop some acts like that, but it's easy to vigilante yourself thinking about it in confrontational terms like that,” Dailey said.

In February, there were a total of 195 arrests at various Metro facilities, including buses, Metro rail and parking lots, compared to 121 arrests in February a year ago, according to data released by the Metro Transit Police Department.

The MTPD reported 569 total crimes in February, an increase of 125 percent over the previous February. Sixty-five percent of the reported crimes in February happened on the Metro rail system.

Overall crime on Washington's transit system decreased during 2020 and 2021, reflecting the height of the COVID pandemic. Over the past year, crime rates have started rising again.

A Guardian Angels patrol usually lasts two-and-a-half hours and volunteers are asked to put in eight hours a month.

The D.C. Guardian Angels' goal is to have 100 volunteers by spring. Those interested in volunteering can contact the Guardian Angels at 202-359-0601.

### One Book from A3

Instagram. This year, libraries in Maryland will distribute books throughout their communities. After finding a copy of *There There*, readers can log on to [www.bookcrossing.com](http://www.bookcrossing.com) and register their book's ID number. Then, they can post a comment or review when they've finished reading. Following that, readers can then leave the book somewhere public for another reader to find and enjoy. Instructions are located inside the book cover. Participation is free. Those who register books will be automatically entered to win a \$25 gift certificate to Bookshop.org and must include their name and email to be eligible.

### About One Maryland One Book

When we read a great book, we can't wait to share the experience and talk about it with others. That's one of the joys of reading.

In that spirit, through our Maryland Center for the Book program, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book (OMOB) to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book. We invite readers to participate in book-centered discussions and related programs at public libraries, high schools, colleges, museums, bookstores, and community and senior centers the state.

OMOB programs, including an author tour, take place each year in the fall. A calendar of free public events will be available online beginning this summer.

One Maryland One Book is presented in partnership with Howard County Library System and is sponsored by The Institute of Museum and Library Services via the Maryland State Library Agency, with additional support from PNC Foundation, M&T Bank, and the Citizens of Baltimore County. Events in Baltimore City are supported in part by the Creative Baltimore Award. The Creative Baltimore Award is provided by the Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts on behalf of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore.

### About Maryland Center for the Book

The Maryland Center for the Book (MCFB)—an affiliate of the national Center for the Book in the Library of Congress—develops and supports literary programs and outreach activities that engage citizens across Maryland in literature and reading. As a program of Maryland Humanities, MCFB highlights our region's literary heritage and calls attention to the importance of books, reading, literacy, and libraries.

Want to discuss the book now or get updates on upcoming events? Join the conversation on the Maryland Center for the Book page.

### About Maryland Humanities

Maryland Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates and supports educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. For more information, visit [www.mdhumanities.org](http://www.mdhumanities.org). Maryland Humanities is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities; the State of Maryland; the Citizens of Baltimore County; private foundations; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

### Grief Workshops from A3

as we take a springtime “slow walk” through parks in Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties. The walks will focus on developing awareness of our natural surroundings and how this can help in coping with loss. Time for discussion and reflection will be available. This free walk is for all fitness levels on an easy trail. The first walk will take place at Lake Artemesia Park, 8200 55th Ave., College Park, Maryland, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday, April 17. The second walk will take place at Quiet Waters Park, 600 Quiet Waters Park Road, Annapolis, Maryland, from 10:30 a.m. to noon Friday, April 21.

• **Calling All Authors Workshop**—No writing experience is necessary for this workshop. You are invited to share your story of how you navigated through the first special life tradition that you once celebrated with your lost loved one. Your story may bring hope to others with similar experiences, and giving words to your experience may help you find an outlet for your grief. This free workshop will take place virtually via Zoom from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Thursday, April 20.

• **Maryland Therapeutic Riding Workshop: Family Edition**—Families are welcome to explore their grief in collaboration with Maryland Therapeutic Riding and their equine friends. Minimum age for children is 8. All activities will take place with feet on the ground, as there will be no riding of horses. No experience with

horses necessary. It will take place from 3 to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 29 at MTR's equestrian center, 1141 Sunrise Beach Road, Crownsville, Maryland. The cost is \$25 per person, with a maximum of \$50 max per family.

• **Smash and Mend Workshop**—In this expressive arts workshop, we will engage in the cathartic process of smashing ceramics and using the broken pieces to create something new in the form of a mosaic project. It will take place from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Mary 6, at Burnett Calvert Hospice House, 4559 Sixes Road, Prince Frederick, Maryland. The cost is \$25 per person.

Attendance restrictions and requirements will be updated using the most recent Centers for Disease Control guidelines and organizational policies prior to each event.

Registration is required. Except for the Pet Loss Workshop, people can register by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing [griefinfo@chesapeakecenter.org](mailto:griefinfo@chesapeakecenter.org). Visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org/events](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org/events) for a complete listing of in-person and virtual groups and workshops for adults and children.

*Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For details, visit [www.chesapeakecenter.org](http://www.chesapeakecenter.org).*

## The Prince George's Post

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Director Andree Green Checkley, Esq. Announces Retirement as of May 1, 2023

By CALISTA BLACK  
Prince George's County Planning Board

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 10, 2023)—Today, Prince George's County Planning Director Andree Green Checkley, Esq. announced her retirement effective May 1, 2023, after 17 years with The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). Appointed planning director in January 2017 by the Prince George's County Planning Board, Ms. Checkley has led the professional staff charged with advising and working with the Planning Board, elected officials, and the community to shape land use planning, zoning, and economic development plans for the County.

"It has been an honor to serve the residents of Prince

George's County," stated Checkley. "I have had the privilege to lead a dynamic, forward-thinking team that has maintained the preservation of environmental resources and historic properties while also propelling growth and development forward in Prince George's County—even through a pandemic."

Under Ms. Checkley's leadership, the M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department accomplished numerous major initiatives including:

- **Adoption of the Zoning Ordinance Rewrite in 2018**—a comprehensive rewrite of the County's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to modernize zoning code and to align with the County's vision for smart growth, economic development, and improved quality of life for residents

- **Adoption of the County-wide Map Amendment** to implement the new zones outlined in the new Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations
- **Approval of the 2022 Economic Development Strategic Action Plan** for Prince George's County to identify real estate trends and best practices to increase the County's share of regional economic growth
- **Approval of the 2022 Cultural Arts Study** to establish a vision and recommendations on how the County can build upon, strengthen, and invest in the creativity of its people and develop ideas that define the cultural future of the County
- **Adoption of updates to sev-**

See RETIREMENT Page A6

## Nonprofit Organization Takes Youth to Africa for Free

By PRESS OFFICER  
Kazi za Wahenga

WASHINGTON (March 13, 2023)—Kazi za Wahenga, (Swahili for "Work of the Ancestors") a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Greenbelt, Maryland, works to bridge the gap between the continent of Africa and people of African descent born in the United States.

Kazi za Wahenga institutes a variety of programs, which focuses on educating the community on the law, expunging criminal records, teaching Kiswahili, and both personal and professional mentorship, but its seminal program is the

free Kazi Birthright Tour.

Participants, juniors and seniors in high school, will begin with an 8-week course of Kiswahili that will not only prepare them to speak the local language but also to introduce them to a native African language distinct to the area that they will visit. Thereafter, they will embark upon a 10-day guided cultural immersion tour of Zanzibar, Tanzania, home to one of the world most diverse species of spices, in East Africa.

While there, the participants will visit the beautiful sandy beaches, local villages, former slave castles, spice forests, and much more that Zanzibar has to

offer. This will provide an opportunity for the young people to experience different cultures, expand their network, and gain a global perspective that will aid in their understanding of their African roots and their placement in the world.

Upon return, the participants will submit a report of their travel experience, as well as receive a free African Ancestry DNA test to trace their ancestral lineage.

For more information about the Kazi Birthright Tour or Kazi za Wahenga, Inc., please contact Executive Director Taalib Saber, Esq: (240) 483-4678 or email: kazizawahenga@gmail.com.

## Governor Moore Announces Nearly \$9 Million in 2022 Tax Credits to Help Maryland Residents Pay Off Student Loan Debt

By BRITTANY MARSHALL  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (March 10, 2023)—Governor Wes Moore today announced that the Maryland Higher Education Commission has awarded nearly \$9 million in 2022 tax credits to more than 9,000 Maryland residents who have incurred student loan debt.

"This program offers Maryland residents a critical advantage when looking for options to pay off student loan debt," said Governor Moore. "These tax credits support student success through less debt."

Nearly \$50 million in tax credits have been awarded since the program originated in 2017. This year, more than 9,300 Maryland residents were awarded the tax credit in the amount of \$966 each, totaling \$8,996,358 in tax credits statewide.

Maryland taxpayers who have incurred at least \$20,000 in undergraduate and/or graduate student loan debt and have at least \$5,000 in outstanding student loan debt are eligible to apply for the Student Loan Debt Relief Tax Credit.

The tax credit will be claimed on the recipient's Maryland income tax return when they file their Maryland taxes this year. If the credit is more than the taxes owed, they will receive a tax refund for the difference.

Under Maryland law, the recipient must submit proof of payment to the Maryland Higher Education Commission documenting that the tax credit was used for the purpose of paying down the qualifying student loan debt.

To learn more about the program, go to <https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/StudentLoanDebtReliefTaxCredit.aspx>.

### CITY OF SEAT PLEASANT NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Mayor and City Council of Seat Pleasant propose to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2023, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 4.8% from \$347,092,973 to \$363,839,966.
2. If the City of Seat Pleasant maintains the current tax rate of \$.58 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 4.8% resulting in \$97,133 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$.5533, the constant yield rate.
4. The City is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$.58 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 4.8 % higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$97,133 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 7:00 pm on Monday April 10, 2023, via Zoom meeting link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89170063652?pwd=SGY0SzNQZGRvamFZYmtCdjQ0aUJsQT09>

Participants who join the video/audio conference will be enabled to speak by the meeting chair. Speakers will be allowed to address the Council for five (5) minutes. Public Comment may be submitted in writing to [CitizenComment.PublicSession@seatpleasantmd.gov](mailto:CitizenComment.PublicSession@seatpleasantmd.gov). All electronic comments must be submitted by 5:00PM on April 10, 2023. Comments received will be read by City Clerk during the public comment portion of the meeting.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged. Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call the City Manager or City Clerk at (301) 336-2600 for further information.

### Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

#### How Do I Withdraw My Application for Social Security?

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 will be 67 next month and reached my full retirement age in July 2022. My wife and I are discussing whether we should take Social Security now or wait until we are age 70 to get a higher benefit. I remember reading that you can start Social Security and, if not needed, pay it back within a year and then "reset" to get a higher benefit by waiting longer. Please describe the steps of this process to take now and repay the year's benefits if we do not need them. **Signed: Uncertain**

**Dear Uncertain:** Well, to exercise the so-called "do over option" (which is essentially withdrawing your application for benefits), you need to contact Social Security (1.800.772.1213 or your local SS field office) and request that your application for benefits be withdrawn. You can also download and complete form SSA-521 and deliver the same to your local Social Security office. You can get that form at this link: [www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-521.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-521.pdf).

This "do-over option" is only available within 12 months of the date you submit your application and can only be done once in your lifetime. If you use it, you will be required to repay Social Security for all payments made on your behalf, including not only your monthly payments but also any income taxes you had withheld, and any Medicare premiums which were withheld from your monthly payments (Social Security will inform you how much you must repay). Once the repayment is made, it will be as though you never applied for benefits, meaning your benefit amount will be higher when you later re-apply (which would also be the case if you simply didn't apply—your benefit entitlement continues to grow until you claim, up to age 70 when your maximum SS benefit is attained). This process would be the same for both you and your wife.

However, I suggest you consider whether you really need to withdraw your application. Be aware that since you've already reached your full retirement age (FRA) you can claim

now and, if you later decide you don't need the monthly SS money, you can simply temporarily suspend your benefit payments to avoid repaying Social Security everything they've already paid to you and on your behalf (you don't need to formally withdraw your application). By simply suspending (and not withdrawing), your benefit amount will start growing again with each month your benefits are suspended (about .67% more for each month you do not get benefits) and you can keep everything you've already received to the point you suspend your payments. To suspend your payments just call Social Security at the number provided above and tell them you wish to suspend your benefits and grow your payment amount. While you can only use the withdrawal process once in your lifetime, you can temporarily suspend your benefit payments multiple times if necessary.

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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