

# The Beltsville News

An All Volunteer Newspaper

Vol. 74, Number 2

Beltsville, Maryland

February 2026



Emmanuel United Methodist Church's Mitten Tree was overflowing in December. Thank you to all who donated.

## Emmanuel United Methodist Church Helps Keep Its Neighbors Warm

By Rick Bergmann

Winter is here in full swing, and staying warm is more important than ever. Emmanuel United Methodist Church recently held two winter clothing drives, collecting dozens of coats, hats, scarves, mittens, head wraps, and socks. These items were donated to local schools, helping students in need stay warm throughout the cold months.

In a time when many families are facing financial challenges, providing something as simple as a coat may seem like a small gesture—but to the person receiving it, it can make a huge difference. The church is grateful to everyone who donated and helped make the community warmer with their generosity.

Emmanuel United Methodist Church welcomes ongoing donations of gently used winter clothing, which can be dropped off at 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD, during office hours. Every contribution helps ensure that neighbors of all ages can stay safe and warm this winter.

Thank you to the volunteers and donors whose support brings comfort and care to those in need in our community.

## Pack 1031 Back to Scouting and Celebrating Martin Luther King Day of Service!

By Regina Halper

During the first month of 2026, Cub Pack 1031 held an exercise fun day and partnered with Troop 1033 to participate in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Together, we collected five full bags of trash from the area beside the basketball courts and picked up additional trash around the school. A total of four Cub Scouts and seven Scouts BSA participated.

After the cleanup, we gathered at Regina's house for hot

**PACK 1031**  
continues on page 15



Scouts of Troop 1033 and Pack 1031 after our cleanup!

## Upstage Artists Holds Auditions for American Son

By Rick Bergmann

Upstage Artists is seeking talented local actors for its upcoming production of American Son, a gripping drama by Christopher Demos-Brown that confronts race, bias, and family in contemporary America. The play follows a biracial

couple navigating tensions and hidden truths after their son is detained by police during a traffic stop.

Auditions will be held on Wednesday, March 18 at 7:00 PM, with callbacks scheduled for Thursday, March 19 at 7:00 PM. Actors must be available for

callbacks to be considered. All auditions, rehearsals, and performances will take place at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705.

Actors auditioning should prepare a two-minute contemporary dramatic monologue, grounded in realism and reflective of lived experience. Auditions will also include cold readings from the script, while callbacks will involve longer scene work.

Rehearsals begin Monday, April 13, and will take place Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 7:00–9:00 PM.

Roles available include:

**AUDITIONS**  
continues on page 6



## Update on the Borgwardt Expansion and Crematorium Approval

By Jillian Schweitzer

The last update on the Borgwardt expansion and proposed crematorium addition came from a hearing held on October 8, 2025. I shared those updates in the (newly renamed) *Beltsville Matters* Facebook group, but for those who were unable to see them, I've included a brief excerpt below:

"There were around 10 peo-

ple on the call, including several witnesses who worked as engineers, architects, or attorneys.

Health concerns were definitely raised. One witness stated there would not be any adverse health issues, as the off-gassing would be less than that of a wood stove. A representative from The Matthews Company (the company that would be supplying the equipment and facility com-

ponents) explained that Maryland's environmental laws are stricter than those in many other states. Their product includes secondary chambers to ensure as many particles as possible are burned, as well as opacity alerts in the stacks in case emissions become too dense.

The device that would be

**BORGWARDT**  
continues on page 2

## NEXT ISSUE:

Submissions Due

No Later Than:

February 18

Paper Out:

February 27

## News You Can Use



Karen Coakley

By Karen Coakley

## Governor Proposes Eliminating Single-Family Residential Zoning

While the title may sound like an exaggeration, it really is not. In the interest of advancing affordable housing at any cost, the Governor, many members of the General Assembly, and the Comptroller are proposing legislation that would effectively prohibit local governments from continuing to use traditional zoning regulations.

Senate Bill 36 (SB 36) and its House counterpart, House Bill 239 (HB 239), generally propose the following prohibitions (read the actual bill text for precise language). In much of suburban Prince George's County, especially in Council District 1, there is a significant amount of land zoned for half-acre single-family detached homes (R-R Zone).

As proposed, a legislative body may not establish:

**NEWS YOU CAN USE**  
continues on page 11



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- Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP)
- Recertify—(Redetermination) -Dropoff documents
- Other DSS Emergency Assistance

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## Beltsville News: Blast from the Past

By Ted Ladd

(From the Beltsville News issue of February 2001)

### Women's Community Club

The Women's Community Club of Beltsville's February 12 meeting will feature a demonstration in floral design by Dorothy Wathen. Wathen is well known in this area by many residents who have attended her classes in floral design at the Beltsville Community Center. Ann Alushin and the Publicity Committee will host the meeting and provide refreshments.

### BORGWARDT

continued from page 1

installed, should the permits be approved, is called the Power Pak II. The witness reiterated that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) would have the final say after reviewing all documentation and testimony. Traffic concerns and housing prices were also discussed, though not to the same extent as health issues."

Because I was registered as a person of record, I received the official *Notice of Decision* on January 12. The first twelve pages summarized the October 2025 meeting (and I am happy to share the full 29-page document with anyone who wishes to read it). This was followed by input from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and then the Parks and Planning Department.

I found the MDE's contributions particularly interesting, as they

included information I had not previously been aware of and which I believe the community should know.

The MDE is partnered with several other states through the Mid-Atlantic Regional Air Management Association and "formed a crematory workgroup in October 2023... and is in the process of developing a best practices document for these types of facilities." Their goal was to ensure that EPA data—originally gathered through extensive stack-emissions testing—was applicable both locally and nationally. After reviewing data from the workgroup, "the Department has determined that the EPA emissions factors are still the most conservative estimates." In plain terms, the EPA continues to apply a high threshold for businesses seeking permits.

The MDE focuses on three primary areas:

1. Violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (for fed-

The past Holiday Season was a busy time for Club members who prepared Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets and gifts for the needy families of Beltsville, as they have for the past 68 years. Thanks to the hard work of Jackie Brittingham and Carolyn Scarcia who chaired the programs, and all the volunteers who helped. It was another successful and gratifying effort.

eral criteria pollutants or related regulatory requirements);

2. Adverse effects on public health (for toxic air pollutants); and
3. Nuisance impacts.

The department determined that adding a crematorium to Borgwardt's would not violate any of these standards.

Parks and Planning weighed in beginning on page 19 of the decision. The documents also outlined the applicable zoning ordinances for the funeral home and provided corroboration that the proposal met each of the fifteen stated zoning purposes (including protecting and promoting health, safety, morals, comfort, and conservation).

Approval of the crematorium came at the end of the decision and included several conditions. These included updating paperwork, providing a landscape schedule, adding a note regarding processional vehicles and the timing of funerals, and submitting a copy of an approved *Air Quality Permit to Construct*, which must be issued by the MDE.

I will note that during the first informational meeting in April 2025, we were told that the MDE would host a community meeting regarding this expansion. To my knowledge, that has not yet occurred. Along with the "temporary" fire station, I find it frustrating as a community member that so many projects move forward without broader community input. That said, just before press time, Tom Dernoga's recent newsletter stated: "In the future, there will be a Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) air-quality hearing."

As for next steps, I am not entirely sure. Based on the approval conditions, I believe the funeral home must first update several required items. There was no mention of breaking ground or beginning construction, so at this point we will have to wait and see. I'll continue to keep my ears open and will update the community as I learn more.

## The Beltsville News

An All Volunteer Newspaper

PUBLISHED BY THE BELTSVILLE-VANVILLE DISTRICT  
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#### Circulation

Hard copies may be picked up at more than 50 locations in greater Beltsville, including the Beltsville Library, Wawa, Beltsville Community Center, schools, churches, restaurants and more. Many receive a monthly pdf of the paper via e-mail at no charge. To receive copies by email, go to [www.beltsvillenewstoday.com](http://www.beltsvillenewstoday.com), and enter your e-mail address.

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## Kitty Post



The Volunteers of Beltsville Community Cats at their annual Volunteer Meeting at Emmanuel United Methodist Church on January 11. Learn how you can join this amazing group of people at [www.beltsvillecats.net](http://www.beltsvillecats.net).

## A Serendipitous Journey to Becoming the New President of Beltsville Community Cats

**By Michele Touchet, President of Beltsville Community Cats (BCC)**

I was never a cat person. Growing up, I only had a dog. In fact, I didn't like cats at all. As a child, I heard all the typical stereotypes I'm sure you've heard—that cats are "aloof," "independent," and "unfriendly." They "aren't cuddly," "aren't affectionate," and they only "show love when they are fed." And whenever I did have a chance to meet a cat, I discovered that I was



seriously allergic to them. The stars were not aligned.

Then, twenty-three years ago, the course and purpose of my life unknowingly changed—by complete happenstance.

It was a late autumn evening, one of those nights when the chill really begins to remind you that winter is coming. I loved to walk for exercise after work, so I put on my heavy sweater and headed out. On a whim, I decided to change up my routine and take a different route—one with a sidewalk along a very busy road. I was a bit anxious, but the crunch of fallen leaves under my feet and the cold air on my face gave me the courage to try something new.

Only a quarter of the way into my walk, as I was enjoying the quiet beauty of a pond with cattails and tall grasses, I heard a sound I had never heard before—a truly sad, distressed cry. I searched for its source, pushing grasses and blackberry brambles aside until a small, completely white kitten appeared. Despite the loveliness of the pond, the reality was that we were both only five feet away from that busy road. It wasn't good.

I had no idea what to do. I knew nothing about cats. I was allergic to them. But instinct kicked in. I gen-

tly picked up the kitten and placed her inside my sweater, close to my heart. That poor, sad cry instantly stopped. I hurried home, slightly bewildered. What was I going to do with this kitten? I called a friend, who walked me through the basics, and I scheduled a vet visit for the next day.

Up until that point in my life, I had never felt like I truly fit in anywhere or with any group of people. I never really felt that I belonged. But the moment I walked through the doors of the veterinary hospital, that feeling instantly changed. Sitting in the waiting room with my kitten, surrounded by other people and their pets, I said to myself, "Oh! This is where I belong!"

It was "game over" from there. I named that little white kitten after my favorite flower—Lily. She was with me through the hardest part of my life, which was still yet to come. Lily, my constant companion, helped me heal parts of myself that were hurt and broken. I never knew I was capable of so much love.

And the biggest surprise of adopting Lily? Somehow, I was no longer allergic to cats—not even a little bit. A miracle? I don't know. But it certainly felt miraculous to me.

I went on to learn everything I could about cats and kittens. I borrowed library books and studied feline behavior. I attended community college to earn my veterinary assistant certificate. I volunteered at my local shelter, began fostering, and eventually found my calling in caring for neonatal kittens. My world began to revolve around cats.

Never did I imagine, on that cool autumn evening when I pulled a tiny kitten from the brambles, that I would one day become president of an amazing rescue group—a group of people who welcomed me with open arms, accepted me as I am, and love cats and kittens at least as much as I do. Thank you, Beltsville Community Cats.

Twenty-three years ago, fate giggled at me. The universe chuckled. The Cat Distribution System worked its magic.



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UpStage Artists Brings A Classic into the Modern Age!

By Rick Bergmann

Beltsville’s resident theater troupe, UpStage Artists, is hard at work on their first production of 2026: a modern update of Oscar Wilde’s classic *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Wilde’s sharp-witted comedy will come alive in this contemporary production, bringing timeless humor into the present. The play follows the charming but mischievous Jack Worthing, who has invented a fictitious brother, “Ernest,” as a convenient excuse to escape his social obligations and enjoy city life. Complications arise when he falls for the spirited Gwendolen Fairfax, who insists she could only love a man named Ernest. Meanwhile, Jack’s friend Algernon faces his own romantic entanglements and the chaos of mistaken identities. Wilde’s signature satire skewers social conventions, romantic ideals, and the absurdities of etiquette, all while delivering laughter that resonates across centuries. This contemporary setting gives new life to Wilde’s sparkling dialogue, proving that the pursuit of love—and the occasional deception—is always hilariously relevant.

*The Importance of Being Earnest* is being directed by Anna Fitzmaurice, who previously directed two of UpStage’s



The Cast of UpStage Artists *The Importance of Being Earnest*!

biggest and best-loved productions: *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* in 2023 and *Much Ado About Nothing* in 2024. Fitzmaurice has assembled a wonderful cast of returning veterans and talented newcomers. The cast includes:

**Dylan Hernandez** as Jack Worthing  
**Trenor Gould** as Algernon Moncrieff  
**Becky Goldberg** as Gwendolen Fairfax  
**Beatrice Ieronimo** as Cecily Cardew  
**Jeanne Louise** as Lady Bracknell  
**Nancy Somers** as Miss Prism  
**Peter Rouleau** as Rev. Chasuble

**Peter Schultz** as Lane/Merriman

This promises to be an evening of hilarious theater that UpStage Artists is very excited to bring to the community. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased online or at the door. A note of caution: performances may sell out, so advance purchase is recommended.

Show dates are:  
March 6, 7, 13, and 14 at 7:30 p.m.  
March 8 and 15 at 2:00 p.m.

All performances are held at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705. Come out and see a show!

Learning Opportunities on Aging for Professionals and Older Adults

By Patricia (Pat) Farmer, National Active and Retired Employees /MD Rep to Maryland Gerontological Association

As the Maryland Federation of the National Active and Retired Employees (NARFE) representative to the Maryland Gerontological Association (MGA), I currently serve as a board member and a member of the Membership Committee. I am the only layperson on the board (aging, but not professionally in the field of aging). Appointed to this position in 2013 by then NARFE/MD President Ted Jensen, I was featured in a Member Spotlight in the November 2025 MGA newsletter as the longest-standing member of MGA.

As a result of that article, I hope you will consider attending some of the very informative events on aging listed below, joining MGA, and sharing this information with friends and relatives who are professionals in the field of aging.

MGA’s mission is to help professionals improve the quality of life of older adults and their families.

**MGA Accomplishments for 2025:**

In 2025, MGA hosted eight virtual programs delivering free Continuing Education Unit (CEU) social work credits; eight

members-only Coffee Breaks for networking and discussion; and two in-person networking events, including one Mega Networking Mixer. The mixer brought together professionals from across Maryland for a one-of-a-kind program featuring 12 leading provider networks.

MGA also celebrated its 45th year at an expanded Annual Conference, which offered 10 educational sessions, an expanded exhibit hall, a networking happy hour, and four CEU credits. Additionally, MGA was approved to begin providing CEU credits for Certified Care Managers.

**Events in 2026**

(To review additional details and to register, go to <https://maryland-mga.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php>)

- 1. Parkinson’s Disease - An In-Depth Review**, a discussion of Parkinson’s Disease and various treatment options, presented by Suzanne Hewes, a physician assistant and a medical researcher, with over 30 years of experience in medicine, will be held virtually Feb. 4, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- 2. Breaking the Silence: Suicide Risk in Older Adults**, a program that explores the elevated risk of suicide among older adults, with a focus on identifying age-specific warning signs and risk factors. will be held virtually on March 18, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Presenter Mary Ann Buckley, LCSW-C, has 30 years in her social work career, supporting older adults and their family members as a Care Manager.
- 3. The Truth about Hospice: Facts, Fears and Philosophy** will be held virtually on March 25, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. This presentation guides the audience through the history and application of hospice care. Presenter Shawn Brast, MSN, RN, CHPN, started at Gilchrist Hospice in 2015 and is currently Clinical Education Manager there.
- Also, an in-person meeting on **Slam the Scam** with speakers and exhibitors is in the planning stage. If you are interested, use the link to the events page,
- <https://maryland-mga.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php>. It will be populated in real time as this, and other events are scheduled.

MGA is also excited to announce its 2026 Conference, “Enthusiasm for Empowerment,” which will focus on advances in the field of aging that empower older adults to live their best lives. The conference will be held in person on May 13, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Maritime Confer-



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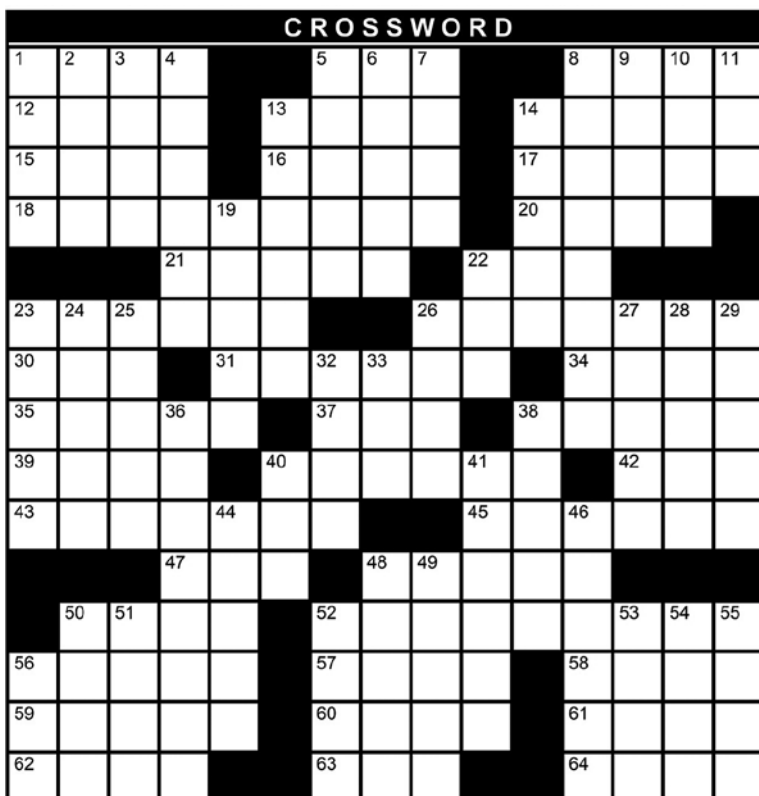
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1. Biology lab supply
5. Aldous Huxley's drug of choice
8. \*Certain Courtney
12. Tear violently
13. Color of a bruise
14. Al Roker's show
15. Pupil control
16. Any minute, to Shakespeare
17. Sheep-like
18. \*H. P. of science fiction fame
20. Hibernation stations
21. Boat station
22. Tennis shot
23. Packed in container
26. User-friendly interface, acr.
30. Genetic info carrier, acr.
31. \*Love unquestioningly
34. Equal to 1.3 ounces in Asia
35. Not a minor
37. Poem addressed to certain subject
38. Hundred, in Italian
39. Nothing
40. Relating to clone
42. Division, abbr.
43. Sloughed off skin
45. Fluffy dessert
47. All good things come to

this?

48. Between Octs and Novs
50. \_\_\_\_ Verde National Park
52. \*B-52s' "little old place" (2 words)
56. Singing femme fatale
57. Deed hearing
58. Reverberated sound
59. Blue-Green scum, pl.
60. Misery cause
61. Actress Perlman
62. Scheme
63. Right coast time
64. Made by tailor

**DOWN**

1. Seed cover
2. Biking helmet manufacturer
3. Tel \_\_\_\_, Israel
4. #64 Across, redone
5. Like 1969 landing
6. Laugh with contempt
7. Fender-bender damage
8. \*a.k.a. hickey (2 words)
9. Norse deity
10. "Off The Wall" shoe
11. Needle hole
13. Macy's Thanksgiving offering
14. Commotions
19. Silica variety

22. NaOH
23. Solder together
24. Dewey Decimal Classification, a.k.a. Relative \_\_\_\_
25. Pleasant Island
26. Small songbird
27. Harry's and Hermione's magic tools
28. Bigfoot's cousins
29. \*Hand cover, with love
32. \*Lemming relative, or anagram of love
33. Tokyo, formerly
36. \*Couch for two
38. Lumps in liquid
40. Knave
41. Unit of electric current flow
44. Absurd
46. Theater guides
48. Nutritious beans
49. Black tie one
50. Grain grinder
51. "Cogito, \_\_\_\_ sum"
52. Stud site
53. Occasional heart condition
54. Prepare to swallow
55. Riddle without solution
56. Tree juice

**See Solution on page 6**



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AUDITIONS

continued from page 1

**Kendra Ellis-Connor** – African American female, 40s–early 50s. Psychology professor, mother, emotionally raw yet composed.

**Scott Connor** – White male, late 40s–50s. FBI agent, devoted father, rigid but with emotional depth.

**Officer Paul Larkin** – White male, mid-20s–30s. Ambitious young police officer, intelligent but inexperienced.

**Lieutenant John Stokes** –

African American male, 50s–mid-60s. Veteran police officer, authoritative and no-nonsense.

This is an unpaid opportunity for actors eager to tackle powerful, intimate storytelling that resonates with today’s social issues.

For questions, email the director, Rick Bergmann, at [rick.bergmann@upstageartists.com](mailto:rick.bergmann@upstageartists.com).

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[editor@beltsvillenewstoday.com](mailto:editor@beltsvillenewstoday.com)

**Crossword Solution from page 5**

A	G	A	R			L	S	D			L	O	V	E						
R	I	V	E			P	U	C	E		T	O	D	A	Y					
I	R	I	S			A	N	O	N		O	V	I	N	E					
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From the Office of Council Member Tom Dernoga

Governor Proposes Eliminating Single-Family Residential Zoning

While the title may sound like an exaggeration, it really is not. In the interest of advancing affordable housing at any cost, the Governor, many members of the General Assembly and the Comptroller are proposing legislation that literally prohibits local governments from continuing to use traditional zoning regulations.

One Senate bill (SB 36) and its House bill counterpart (HB 239) generally propose the following prohibitions. Go to [mgaleg.maryland.gov](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov) to read the actual bill text for the precise language. In much of the suburban parts of the County, especially in Council District 1, there is a lot of land zoned for 1/2 acre single-family detached homes (R-R Zone).

As proposed, a legislative body may not establish:

- 1. Minimum lot size greater than 5,000 square feet.** This translates into as many as 8 single-family detached homes per acre. The County zoning ordinance has single-family zones with densities ranging from 1 per acre to 6 per acre.
- 2. Minimum square footage or exterior dimension requirements for a single-family home.** Prince George’s County has a high percentage of very small single-family residences, which are affordable. While this has made much of the County affordable compared to neighboring jurisdictions, it also means that the County has a lower assessable tax base, which is why we have the highest property tax rates. At times, to balance out the housing inventory, the County Council approved some developments subject to minimum-square-footage requirements.
- 3. Lot coverage maximums.** Depending on density, the County zoning ordinance has lot coverage maximums for residential development ranging from 20% to 35%. Many communities already experience flooding, and increasing impervious surfaces will exacerbate the situation.
- 4. Minimum building setbacks.** The proposed legislation provides for front and rear setbacks of only 10 feet and 5 feet for side yards.

In addition, construction of town houses is permitted in any single-family residential zone. This is what developers really want to build.

Further, in an area zoned for single-family residential use, an owner may subdivide an improved lot into three or fewer smaller lots.

While exploring options to advance housing affordability is very important, these proposed rules would have some negative

fiscal impacts on Prince George’s County. Because the County is so reliant on residential property taxes and we have so many affordable homes already, we collect less property taxes than our neighbors. For example, the Montgomery County per capita tax base is almost double that of Prince George’s County, and Howard County is almost 60% greater.

To address our tax base imbalance, the County needs more employment development and higher-value residential development (at least a mix). The county has a subpar jobs-to-housing ratio, which means that most of our residents work outside of the county.

But what about affordability? Prince George’s County has 15 Metro stations, 8 Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) stations, and 11 proposed Purple Line stations that are inadequately developed. Rather than undermine the imbalanced tax base, we need the State to help subsidize housing at or near all of these rail transit stations.

As drafted, the Governor’s SB 36 is a sprawl multiplier which will worsen congestion, pollution, school overcrowding, and strain public safety resources. Because the proposal incentivizes overdevelopment of lower-density suburban land, it runs directly counter to Smart Growth principles of concentrating development near mass transit. Smart Growth principles are intended to allow growth and minimize the negative impacts by promoting less vehicular traffic and focusing development where underutilized public facilities exist. The proposal would eviscerate the County’s current Plan 2035 (and its predecessors) and would make the County violate the development policies it agreed to with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Last, the Comptroller of Maryland issued a report (State of the Economy Series: Housing & the Economy) (October 2025) that does a good job of detailing many reasons for the cost of housing. However, it also places disproportionate blame on zoning standards and processes. Among other things, it criticizes the public’s right to object to development, parking requirements, and forest conservation, and it suggests that impact fees that projects currently pay to address the costs of such projects be spread to the broader public by means of increased property taxes. “In Maryland, these regulations reflect a policy decision by local governments to place the financial burden of expanding infrastructure on developers and new residents, rather than the entire tax base.

If SB 36 concerns you, now is the time to write to your State Senator and Delegates.

Accessory Dwelling Units Coming to Your Community

Last year, Governor Moore and the General Assembly decided that one way to address the housing shortage is to allow homeowners to build an additional dwelling on their property. These extra houses are called Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Counties are required to allow them to be constructed with few restrictions. This is the result of the “Accessory Dwelling Unit Policy Task Force” (May 31, 2024). Counties have until this October to adopt legislation authorizing ADUs.

An ADU is defined as a secondary dwelling unit that is on the same lot as a primary single-family detached dwelling unit, and is not greater than 75% of the size of and subordinate in use to the primary single-family detached dwelling unit. The ADU may be separate from or attached to the primary single-family detached dwelling unit (Md. Land Use Code Ann. Title 4, Subtitle 5).

In enacting a local law, the County shall exclude the development of an accessory dwelling unit from the calculation of density and the application of any measures limiting residential growth that pertain to the lot, parcel, or tract proposed for the development of the accessory dwelling unit. In addition, the local law may not establish setback requirements that exceed the existing accessory structure setback requirements from the side and rear lot lines.

A local law may establish additional off-street parking requirements that consider: the cost to construct off-street parking spaces; whether sufficient curb area exists along the front line of the property to accommodate on street parking; the increase in impervious surface due to the creation of new off-street parking and the relation to any applicable storm-water management plans; and variability due to the size of the lot, parcel, or tract on which the accessory dwelling unit or primary dwelling is located. The local law must provide for a waiver process from the parking requirements.

In order to comply with the State law, the County Council set up the Accessory Dwelling Units Task Force, which has a District 1 representative. There have been two meetings so far. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

If you are interested in how this may affect your community, please look at the Task Force page on the County Council website ([pgccouncil.us](http://pgccouncil.us)) and express your opinion.

**Contact Us**

Please keep in touch by emailing us at [councildistrict1@co.pg.md.us](mailto:councildistrict1@co.pg.md.us) or call 301-952-3887.



# Rosapepe's Report to Beltsville

## Do you want to appeal your property tax assessment? Here's how.

The State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) mailed assessment notices to most Beltsville homeowners on or about December 30, 2025. Any property owner wishing to appeal has 45 days to do so (i.e., until February 13, 2026).

Appeals may be made by writing to the Prince George's County Office, 14735 Main Street, Suite 354B, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3014, or online at [assessmentappeals.dat.maryland.gov](https://assessmentappeals.dat.maryland.gov).

The new assessed value is phased in over the next three years. The Homestead Property Tax Credit, which I helped create in state law, limits the maximum percentage increase each year for the County property tax if you have registered your principal residence. For Fiscal Year 2027, the assessment increase cap for the County property tax is three percent (3%).

Information about the appeal process is on the back of the assessment form. There are three levels of appeal:

1. Supervisor Level.
2. Property Tax Assessment Appeal Board
3. Maryland Tax Court.

The Supervisor Level provides an opportunity for the property owner to learn as much as possible about how the appraisal was made.

There are four options for having your appeal heard at the Supervisor Level. You may:

1. Make a written appeal
2. Appear in person before an assessor
3. Have a video meeting; or
4. Have a telephone hearing

Generally, an in-person appeal is held at the assessment office (i.e., the courthouse in Upper Marlboro), although you may be able to request an alternate location. A written appeal is the simplest option; however, it does not

allow you to interact with the assessor to present your case.

To assist with your appeal, SDAT will send you the worksheet used to calculate your assessment and a sales listing for the comparable properties they relied upon. For \$1 per property, you can request worksheets for other properties that you believe are comparable to yours.

SDAT advises that, to be most effective, you should:

1. Focus on points that affect the value of your property.
2. Explain why the total new market value does not reflect the market value of the property.
3. Identify any mathematical errors on the property worksheet or inaccurate information describing the property's characteristics (such as the number of bathrooms or fireplaces).
4. Provide sales of comparable properties that support your findings regarding the value of the property.
5. Avoid the following issues, as they are not relevant to the value under appeal: comparisons to past values, percentage of increase, additional metropolitan costs, the amount of the tax bill, and services rendered or not rendered.

The second level of appeal is the Property Tax Assessment Appeal Board. You have 30 days to file an appeal at this level. The Appeal Board is comprised of local citizens. The third level of appeal is the Maryland Tax Court.

For more information on the appeal process, visit [dat.maryland.gov](https://dat.maryland.gov) or call 888-246-5941.

## Need help filing your income taxes? AARP can help.

The AARP Foundation provides free tax assistance to moderate- and low-income seniors at Laurel Armory, 422 Montgomery Street, Laurel. Assistance is available onsite on Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., from Feb-

ruary through April 15.

Call to reserve an appointment at (240) 473-2955.

## Food assistance in Beltsville for those in need

Over the past year, the federal government's chaotic tariff policies and attacks on immigrant workers have raised grocery prices for fruits and vegetables, coffee, beef, soft drinks, and much more. As a result, the number of Beltsville neighbors who need help with food costs has grown. The following local organizations are ready to help:

- **LindaBen Foundation Community Food Hub**, 10739 Tucker Street, Suite 222, Beltsville, MD 20705. Open Tuesdays (4:30–6:00 p.m.), Wednesdays (4:30–6:00 p.m.), and Saturdays (10:00–11:30 a.m.).
- **Beltsville Adventist Community Center (BACC)**: Offers free bread, produce, and pantry items. Check their website for current hours and needs.
- **UCAP Market**, 11700 Beltsville Drive, Beltsville, MD. Open by appointment on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays (8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.) for food and basic needs.
- **Emmanuel United Methodist Church**, 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705. Open the fourth Saturday of every month from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. You do not need to be a member of the church; it is open to everyone. The February distribution will be held on February 28.

Please share this information with neighbors who may need assistance.

## Contact Me

Please let me know if there are other issues you have questions or thoughts about. And, of course, reach out if I can help you. Email [21stDistrictDelegation@gmail.com](mailto:21stDistrictDelegation@gmail.com) or call 410-841-3141.

## M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department Announces Opening of Spring Application Process for the Neighborhood Planning Academy

LARGO, MD – The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announces that applications for the next Neighborhood Planning Academy are now open. The program offers a unique opportunity for community-minded individuals to learn about urban planning and actively shape the future of Prince George's County. The curriculum covers essential topics in urban planning, community engagement, and sustainable

development. The program also aims to empower residents to actively engage in planning and decision-making processes in their communities.

The free, seven-week course offered by the M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department supports residents, municipalities, non-profit organizations, and the business community in understanding how the development process works, how to better engage, and how to advocate for community goals and visions.

"I am excited about how the

Neighborhood Planning Academy is transforming Prince George's County, educating residents, and empowering community advocates," said Darryl Barnes, Chairman of the M-NCPPC Prince George's Planning Board. "Past participants have introduced some amazing ideas and suggestions to help improve our communities and elevate our County."

"We are proud of the 250 alumni who are active in their

## ACADEMY

continues on page 11

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# Fresh, Modern Updates Coming to Village Square Clubhouse at Riderwood

Silver Spring, MD - Exciting updates are coming to the Village Square Clubhouse at Riderwood, an Erickson Senior Living community in Silver Spring, Md., this year!

First, renovations will begin in the Fireside Restaurant, with service maintained throughout the process. An expansion of the medical center and a mail room refresh will follow. Final phases of the project will include a new outdoor patio and renovations to the creative arts studio and library.

Village Square is the fourth and final clubhouse at Riderwood to undergo renovation.

“With a focus on wellness, dining, outdoor living, and social connection, the project reflects our commitment to providing the vibrant lifestyle that makes Riderwood such a special place to call home,” says Sales Director Josh Runkles.

And all of the improvements were planned with valuable resident input in mind.

### Powerful partnership

The Design Input Group, comprising 16 residents and staff members, worked closely to shape the project’s plans.

“The renovation has created many opportunities, not only for a refresh, but to rethink how the clubhouse and outdoor space can better meet residents’ needs,” says



As secretary of the Design Input Group, resident Suzan Wynne has helped ensure that residents can provide input on the planning and development of renovations at the Village Square Clubhouse.

resident Suzan Wynne, who serves as secretary of the Design Input Group. “The design phase of the renovation involved brainstorming sessions and targeted input from residents.”

Through a series of Town Halls, surveys, and open forums, residents took advantage of the opportunity to share their ideas and see their feedback come to life.

That input has been crucial to the success of the effort. “It is our goal to continue to meet and

exceed the needs of current and future residents, and the updates at Village Square--Riderwood’s first clubhouse--help us do that,” says Runkles.

### Modernizing wellness

Perhaps the most impactful renovation of Village Square will be the expansion of the on-site medical center.

The new medical center will feature additional exam rooms, an improved layout, and a comfortable waiting area. Specialists who were previously located in the Park View residence building will now be located under the same roof, ensuring seamless access to care.

“It’s a really exciting addition,” says Runkles. “The medical center will be a central focus of Village Square, offering modernized spaces and easier access to physicians and specialists.”

For residents, these enhancements represent peace of mind, knowing world-class care will be even more convenient.

“The larger exam rooms, more logical layout, and clustering of specialists across the hall will be a great improvement,” notes resident Winne Coggins.

### Tasteful additions

Restaurants inside the clubhouse will also receive a refresh. The fast-casual Potomac Cafe will

feature additional seating and an improved layout, while the Fireside Restaurant will be modernized.

Thanks to resident feedback, dining at Village Square will evolve into a more intimate experience. The addition of a new bar inside the Fireside Restaurant means residents can enjoy a pre-dinner cocktail and catch up with neighbors.

“It is our goal to make each Riderwood restaurant beautiful, distinctive, and inviting,” explains Runkles.

Village Square will also add a brand-new coffee bar, adjacent to the CVS Pharmacy® and entrance into the clubroom and outdoor patio. This bright, inviting addition will create the perfect spot for a morning cappuccino, afternoon pick-me-up, and meeting with friends.

### Gathering spaces

Another facet of the Village Square redesign is the creation of a new outdoor gathering space. The space, which previously housed the community pool before it was relocated to the Wellness Center in 2020, will be transformed to include seating areas for social gatherings and games.

At the heart of the design will be a dual-sided fireplace, connecting the outdoor patio to the indoor clubroom and creating a warm,

welcoming atmosphere all year round.

“We’re being very intentional about making this space a destination for residents,” Runkles notes. “It’s about bringing people together.”

The renovations at Village Square will also include updates to the popular library. The space, with modern new shelving and fixtures, will continue to serve as the hub of Riderwood’s library network.

### ‘Good decisions’

Most importantly, “We want to keep daily life at Riderwood running smoothly while delivering positive, long-lasting improvements,” says Runkles. “Residents can maintain their social, active calendars while these changes are implemented.”

“Repositioning will greatly benefit current and future residents,” adds Winnie. “I feel Erickson and Riderwood management are making good decisions for the continued success of Riderwood.”

To learn more about senior living at this vibrant community, request your free brochure (<https://www.ericksonseniorliving.com/riderwood/request-form>) to get the scoop on amenities, floor plans, and so much more.

## The United States Needs More Afterschool Programs, New Study Finds

(StatePoint) Ninety-five percent of parents with a child enrolled in an afterschool program are satisfied with that program, and there is overwhelming support for more government funding for afterschool, according to a new study. But unmet demand for these programs is high in all 50 states, and majorities of middle- and low-income families who want afterschool programs are being shut out.

The parents of 29.6 million children, more than half the school-age students in the United States, want afterschool programs for their children – but just 7 million children are currently enrolled. Another 22.6 million children would attend afterschool programs if they were available. That means three in four of the children (77%) whose parents want to enroll them in an afterschool program are being left behind. Cost, avail-



Sunrise of Philadelphia

ability, and accessibility are the barriers families cannot overcome.

Those are among the findings of “America After 3PM 2025,” a report released in October by the Afterschool Alliance. The survey of 30,515 U.S. parents

of school-age children finds a wide, and widening, opportunity gap, with children in low- and middle-income families more likely to be without the afterschool programs their parents want for them than children in high-income families. Families

in the highest income bracket now spend approximately nine times as much on out-of-school time activities as families in the lowest income bracket, up sharply from five years ago.

“Afterschool programs give students a safe place to go after the school day ends, boost their academic achievement, help address the youth mental health and chronic absenteeism crises, provide alternatives to screen time, give working parents peace of mind that their children are safe and supervised, and more,” said Afterschool Alliance executive director Jodi Grant. “But there aren’t nearly enough afterschool programs to meet the need.”

More than 8 in 10 parents agree that afterschool programs provide opportunities for children to learn life skills like interacting with peers and responsible decision making, and help

them develop teamwork, critical thinking, and leadership skills. Eighty-four percent say afterschool programs allow working parents to keep their jobs or work more hours, and 92% of parents with a child in a program say they are less stressed knowing their child is safe. To learn more about the study, visit [afterschoolalliance.org](https://afterschoolalliance.org).

“Our country will be stronger and more successful when all children can take advantage of what afterschool programs offer – but, sadly, this study shows we’re nowhere near reaching that goal,” Grant added. “We need greater support from federal, state and local governments, businesses, and philanthropy. Every child deserves access to a quality afterschool program.”

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# They're fighting for us.



BY AUTHORITY, TEAM 21 SLATE

21st District Democratic Team

**Rosapepe**  
**Joseline Peña-Melnyk**  
**Ben Barnes**  
**Mary Lehman**



## Cracking down on utility rate hikes

The utilities are jacking up their rates to subsidize **Big Tech** data centers and pad their profits. With the **Next Generation Energy Act** of 2025, we passed tougher new regulations, boosted low cost renewables, and provided rebates to consumers.

## Capping prescription drug costs

We led the fight against **Big Pharma** to make Maryland the first state to regulate prices for critical, life-saving medication through establishment of the independent **Prescription Drug Affordability Board** in 2019 and its expansion in 2025.



## Protecting affordable health insurance

While the Republicans try to take away **Medicare** and **Medicaid**, we're working everyday to keep down health insurance costs for working and retired families.

## Holding down property taxes

We support the County caps on property tax rates and have **expanded tax credits** for homeowners and seniors.



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# Maryland's New Privacy Laws

If you have followed me over the past years, you know that much of my work relates to security and privacy. I am glad to share that the State of Maryland has passed a new set of laws protecting the privacy of Marylanders. The *Maryland Online Data Privacy Act* (MODPA) became effective on October 1, 2025.

I believe awareness of these new privacy protections is important for all of us. Please note that I am not an attorney, nor do I play one on TV.

## Some Terms

It helps to understand a few key terms when discussing privacy and data.

- 1. Consumer:** The consumer is the person who uses the services provided by a controller.
- 2. Personal Data:** Personal data is any information that can be associated with a specific person. In this context, a person may be referred to as either a person or a consumer.
- 3. Sensitive Data:** Sensitive data includes racial or ethnic origin; religious beliefs; consumer health data; sex life; sexual orientation; status as transgender or non-binary; national origin; citizenship or immigration status; genetic data; and consumer health data. It also includes any personal data of a known child (under 13 years of age) with-

out parental consent. Additionally, geolocation data accurate within 1,750 feet is considered sensitive data.

- 4. Controller:** A controller is a person, group, or business that determines the purpose for processing personal data and how it is processed. In general, they control and are responsible for the data provided by the consumer.
- 5. Processor:** A processor processes data on behalf of the controller. Processors typically have an obligation to the controller to enforce the rules needed for the controller to meet its obligations to the consumer.
- 6. Consumer Rights:** The new law provides a series of rights for consumers. These rights reflect similar privacy protections adopted by several other states and countries.

## The new law allows Consumers to:

1. Verify whether a business is using their personal data and access that data.
2. Review and correct any errors and inconsistencies in the data
3. Request deletion of their personal data, provided the business is not required by law to retain it.
4. Obtain a copy of their personal data in a portable and usable

format.

5. Opt out of the use of personal data for targeted advertising.
6. Opt out of the sale of personal data to other companies.
7. Opt out of the use of data for profiling related to automated decision-making.
8. Receive a response from the business within 45 days. Consumers may also request a free copy of the response at any time within the year.

## Controller Responsibilities

The controller has a number of responsibilities and obligations.

1. Publish and make their privacy policies easily accessible.
2. Assess their data protection capabilities for adequacy.
3. Collect only data that is reasonably necessary to provide the product or service requested by the consumer.
4. Establish and maintain adequate

security safeguards within the business.

5. Provide a mechanism for consumers to withdraw consent, which must be as easy to use as the method for giving consent.
6. Establish contracts with processors and service providers that limit how consumer data may be used.

## What's good?

Consumers in Maryland should welcome this law because, for the first time, there are meaningful tools to help protect our privacy. We are finally asserting that data belongs to us—the consumers—and not solely to the companies collecting it. In this regard, we are better off than we were last year.

Perhaps this law can help curb apps that track your phone's location (shame on you, McDonald's) and sell that location history to companies that resell it to others. Where a person goes, or how they get there, is no one else's business.

## What's not so good?

The law does not give consumers a direct role in enforcement. Instead, enforcement authority rests with the Office of the Maryland Attorney General. Consumers do not have a private right of action against companies that fail to comply with the law.

## Call to Action

I am excited that this new law is in place, but I am concerned that enforcement may not be as effective as hoped. Still, it is a good start. I encourage everyone to begin exercising these new rights. Verify which companies have your data. Request a list of third-party companies with whom your data has been shared. Tell companies they may not sell your data. Opt out of targeted advertising.

## Ending the Story

Just a reminder, this column is intended as a summary of the new law and how it helps protect our privacy. I have read extensively about MODPA to better understand what it means for us as consumers and for my customers as businesses.

I expect that over the next few months I will write additional columns offering practical advice on how to protect your privacy.

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# Outwit Scammers With These Smart Tips

(StatePoint) Scammers don't take days off. From phishing emails to package theft, fraudsters and scammers can cost you money. Fortunately, you can stay one step ahead of them with these simple tips to help protect yourself.

1. Strengthen your online security: Safeguard your accounts by using unique, 12-character passwords and enabling multi-factor authentication whenever possible. Avoid using public Wi-Fi, such as free internet connectivity in coffee shops or libraries, where cyber criminals might be lurking to access your information. Instead, it's safer to use your phone's mobile hotspot. Be cautious of unsolicited emails or messages promising prizes or freebies — if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Block and report anything suspicious before deleting it. And ask your provider what services they offer for safe browsing, such as Safe Browsing from T-Mobile 5G Home Internet to block malicious links.

2. Donate only to trusted charities: Before making charitable donations, check online reviews



(c) Thitima Uthaibuum / iStock via Getty Images Plus

by looking up the organization and "complaint" or "scam," or use trusted resources like Charity Navigator. Be cautious with AI-generated content where fraudsters may use AI tools to create convincing emails, websites and fundraising messages. Use a credit card instead of a debit card as they offer stronger fraud protections and don't give scammers direct access to your bank account.


3. Use your wireless provider's scam protection: Scammers often rely on robocalls and spoofed

numbers to make calls look inviting to answer. Most providers have protection from robocalling and spoofing, including T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile, which give customers Scam Shield, a free feature that labels scam calls as "Scam Likely." These calls can be blocked by dialing #662# or turning on Scam Block in the T-Life app, giving users peace of mind. Lastly, forward suspicious texts to 7726.

## SCAMMERS

continues on page 11

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NEWS YOU CAN USE
continued from page 1

- 1. Minimum lot size greater than 5,000 square feet. This allows as many as eight single-family detached homes per acre. Currently, County zoning has single-family zones with densities ranging from one to six homes per acre.
- 2. Minimum square footage or exterior dimension requirements for single-family homes. Prince George's County has a high percentage of small single-family residences, which are more affordable than neighboring jurisdictions. While this has helped make housing more accessible, it also results in a lower assessable tax base, contributing to the County's high property tax rates. In some cases, the County Council has approved developments with minimum-square-footage requirements to balance the housing inventory.
- 3. Lot coverage maximums. County zoning currently limits residential lot coverage to between 20% and 35%, depending on density. Increasing impervious surfaces could worsen flooding in areas already prone to it.
- 4. Minimum building setbacks. The proposed legislation allows front and rear setbacks of only 10 feet and side setbacks of just 5 feet.

In addition, townhouses would be permitted in any single-family residential zone—exactly what many developers want to build. Property owners in single-family zones would also be allowed to subdivide an improved lot into three or fewer smaller lots. While exploring options to increase housing affordability is important, these proposed rules could have negative fiscal impacts on Prince George's County.

Maryland Counties	Per Capita Tax Base	Rank
Montgomery	\$222,854	4
Howard	\$204,417	6
Anne Arundel	\$177,576	8
Frederick	\$162,147	9
Calvert	\$157,551	11
Charles	\$146,166	13
Prince George's	\$139,689	14

This table shows a ranking of several Maryland counties by their per capita tax base. Montgomery County has the highest per capita tax base among those listed at over \$222,000, while Prince George's has the lowest at just under \$140,000.

Because the County relies heavily on residential property taxes and already has many affordable homes, its tax revenues are lower than those of neighboring counties. To illustrate, here is a comparison of per-capita tax bases across nearby counties (see photo).

To address this imbalance, the County needs more employment development and higher-value residential development—or at least a mix. Currently, the county has a subpar jobs-to-housing ratio, meaning most residents commute outside the county for work.

What about affordability? Prince George's County has 15 Metro stations, eight Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) stations, and 11 proposed Purple Line stations that are still underdeveloped. Rather than undermining the tax base, the state should subsidize housing near all of these rail transit stations.

As drafted, SB 36 could increase sprawl, worsen congestion and pollution, strain public safety resources, and exacerbate school overcrowding. Because the proposal encourages overdevelopment of lower-density suburban land, it runs counter to Smart Growth principles, which aim to concentrate development near

mass transit, reduce traffic, and make use of underutilized public facilities. The legislation would effectively nullify the County's current Plan 2035 and violate development policies agreed upon with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Additionally, the Comptroller of Maryland's State of the Economy Series: Housing & the Economy (October 2025) details the high cost of housing but places disproportionate blame on zoning standards and processes. The report criticizes the public's right to object to development, parking requirements, and forest conservation policies, and suggests that impact fees currently paid by developers be shifted to the broader public through higher property taxes. In Maryland, these regulations reflect a policy choice to place the financial burden of infrastructure expansion on developers and new residents rather than the entire tax base.

If SB 36 concerns you, now is the time to contact your State Senator and Delegates.

Accessory Dwelling Units Coming to Your Community

Last year, Governor Moore and the General Assembly decided to

allow homeowners to build additional dwellings on their property to address the housing shortage. These extra houses, called Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), must be allowed with few restrictions under state law. Counties have until October 2026 to adopt legislation authorizing ADUs.

An ADU is defined as a secondary dwelling unit on the same lot as a primary single-family detached home. It must not exceed 75% of the size of the primary dwelling and must be subordinate in use. ADUs may be attached to or separate from the primary home (Md. Land Use Code Ann., Title 4, Subtitle 5).

Local laws may not count ADUs toward density limits or other restrictions on residential growth. Setback requirements for ADUs cannot exceed existing accessory structure setbacks for side and rear yards.

- Counties may establish off-street parking requirements for ADUs, considering:
- The cost to construct off-street parking,
- Availability of curb space for on-street parking,
- Increase in impervious surface and stormwater impacts, and
- Lot size and configuration.

Local laws must also provide a waiver process for parking requirements.

To comply, the County Council

created the Accessory Dwelling Units Task Force, which includes a District 1 representative. Two meetings have been held so far, and the next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

If you are interested in how ADUs may affect your community, visit the Task Force website and share your opinion.

Contact Your Legislators

Maryland State Senators and Delegates will consider voting on Governor Moore's zoning proposals. The information in this column is part of Councilmember Dernoga's newsletter. I encourage everyone to consider how these proposals could impact your community and to voice your opinion.

- Senator Jim Rosapepe – jim.rosapepe@senate.maryland.gov; 1-800-492-7122 ext. 3141
- Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk – joseline.pena.melnyk@house.maryland.gov; 1-800-492-7122 ext. 3800 (toll free)
- Delegate Ben Barnes – ben.barnes@house.maryland.gov; 1-800-492-7122 ext. 3046 (toll free)
- Delegate Mary Lehman – mary.lehman@house.maryland.gov; 1-800-492-7122 ext. 3114 (toll free)

Let your representatives know how you feel.

ACADEMY

continued from page 7

communities and look forward to welcoming the new cohort," said James Hunt, Acting Director of the M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department. "This award-winning program helps to promote environmental sustainability, design excellence, and quality development while encouraging healthy lifestyles in Prince George's County neighbor-

hoods."

Applicants will be selected from each councilmanic district for geographic diversity. The spring session runs on Wednesdays from March 4, 2026 – April 15, 2026, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. The first six sessions will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. The final session includes an in-person graduation with capstone project presentations that highlight newly acquired skills and planning knowledge. The

application deadline is January 31, 2026.

Since the launch of the program in the fall of 2023, the Neighborhood Planning Academy has received nearly 1,200 applications from interested Prince George's County residents and stakeholders. Spaces are limited! To apply and learn more about the NPA program visit <http://academy.pgplanning.com>. For any questions, please email [PGCNPA@ppd.mnccpc.org](mailto:PGCNPA@ppd.mnccpc.org).

SCAMMERS

continued from page 10

4. Monitor deliveries and protect packages: Mail and package theft happen all year round, especially as online shopping continues to grow. Track your shipments in real-time using delivery notifications and apps. Consider installing a smart door camera

to monitor activity on your front porch. Many models offer live video feeds and motion detection, sending real-time alerts so you can quickly contact authorities if needed.

5. Stay informed and report suspicious activity: Stay updated on more tips and protections you can take with resources like

T-Mobile's Privacy Center and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). If you encounter suspicious or fraudulent activity, report it to the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](http://ftc.gov/complaint) and the National Center for Disaster Fraud. By reporting scams, you can help protect others and reduce the spread of fraudulent schemes.



*Karen M. Coakley*  
*You know me . . .*  
*I know Real Estate!*

RECENT HOME SALES IN BELTSVILLE

- 11621 34th Place \$365,000
- 10500 Lime Tree Way \$403,000
- 11407 Allview Drive \$455,000
- 4306 Maple Place \$460,000
- 12503 Rustic Rock Lane \$515,000
- 4305 Elmwood Road \$524,000
- 3021 Chapel View Drive \$545,000
- 11715 Heartwood Drive \$595,000

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## AREA EVENTS

### COLLEGE PARK AVIATION MUSEUM

Address: 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Dr., College Park, MD 20740. Phone: 301.864.6029. Fax: 301.927.6472. E-mail: collegeparkaviation@pgparks.com. Regular hours of operation: Open Tuesday – Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Closed Mondays and some holidays (double-check with the museum regarding the specific holidays). Special events may have different costs and hours of operation. General admission: Adults/\$5; Seniors/\$4; Children and Students with ID/\$2 (1-year-old and under, free). The museum exhibit area highlights 10 unique aircraft and objects relating the history of early aviation at the College Park Airport. For special events see [www.pgparks.com/facilities/college-park-aviation-museum](http://www.pgparks.com/facilities/college-park-aviation-museum).

### BERLINER HELICOPTER FAMILY DAY

Sat., Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Berliner Helicopter Family Day:** Discover the thrill of vertical flight and how it started right here at College Park Airport! Explore the new exhibition, *The Berliner Helicopter: America's Forgotten Helicopter*, get hands-on with interactives, and explore the wonders of vertical flight technology. All ages. Cost: FREE with museum admission.

### RUNWAY RHYTHMS CONCERT

Sun., Feb. 22 from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Step into the golden age of flight with the Salon Trio in this one-of-a-kind concert blending historic aviation film footage and live classical music. Performed in the gallery alongside the new Berliner exhibition, the program features live classical scores, including music from original Victrola records, an invention of Emile Berliner himself. Enjoy refreshments and meet the musicians after the performance. Register in advance to secure your spot! Walk-in spaces will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Cost: FREE with museum admission.

### NATIONAL WILDLIFE VISITOR CENTER

Main phone: 301.497.5772. Website: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/patuxent-research/events>  
Address: 10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD 20708. The entrance is accessed from Powder Mill Rd. between the Baltimore–Washington Pkwy. and Rt. 197. The grounds are open from sunrise to sunset daily, except Tuesdays when they close at 4 p.m. Regular business hours for the building are Wed. – Sat. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., except for Federal holidays.  
• **Free admission, parking, exhibits, and programs.**  
• **Miles of walking trails.**  
• **Great for birdwatching and photography.**  
• **All dogs must be kept on a leash** (no longer than 6 feet) for their own safety as well as that of other visitors and wildlife.

• **Weather closures:** Hours of access may be altered as needed to clear roads and grounds.

### SCHOOLS AND YOUTH GROUPS

Invitation to enjoy educational species exhibits, the grounds and trails, bird blind, and pollinator gardens. There is a patio for picnics. Send your questions to Jason at [michael\\_cangelosi@fws.gov](mailto:michael_cangelosi@fws.gov).

### AGENTS OF DISCOVERY

Sunrise to sunset daily, except only until 4 p.m. on Tuesdays. All ages. This is an outdoor self-guided nature-challenge game on the grounds. Download free phone app at home first. Complete challenges and earn a patch. Play: <https://fws.gov/media/agents-discovery-patuxent-research-refuge>.

### KIDS DISCOVERY CENTER

10 a.m. to 12 noon (35-minute time slots, on the hour). Free. Ages 3 – 10, w/adult. Crafts, puzzles, games, nature exploration.

• **February theme:** Field mice and voles—Do they differ?  
• **March theme:** Frogs and Toads—Amazing amphibians!  
Registration is strongly recommended: Call 301.497.5772 during regular business hours. For large groups contact [michael\\_cangelosi@fws.gov](mailto:michael_cangelosi@fws.gov).

### HOLLINGSWORTH WILDLIFE ART GALLERY

Free. All ages. Open when the building is open. The art gallery is next to the bookstore.  
• February artist: Marine biologist and photographer William Michaels. Mr. Michaels specializes in wildlife and habitats.

### WINGSPAN GAME DAY

Friday, Feb. 13 and Sat., Feb. 28 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. both days. Ages 12+. No experience needed. Play the award-winning board game and learn more about birds! Use our game or bring yours and sign in at the Front Desk to play.

### LAUREL–BELTSVILLE SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER

Masks are optional. Contact the center for updates. Membership is free for Beltsville residents who are 60 years old or older. Regular hours of operation are Mon. – Thur. from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Fri. from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sat. from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Closed on Sundays and most major holidays. Address: 7120 Contee Rd., Laurel, MD 20707, next to the University of Maryland Laurel Medical Center. Phone: 301.206.3350. Fax: 301.206.3387. Maryland Relay 7-1-1 for customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability.

### NARFE MEETING

Wed., Feb. 4 at 1 p.m. The Laurel Chapter 422 of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) will

have a presentation by President Ann Marie Miller and her members of the Laurel Chapter of the American Rosie the Riveter Association. They will focus on the history of Rosie the Riveter, highlighting the late Rosies from the Laurel ARRA Chapter who worked during World War II. There will also be an exhibit table and a patriotic sing-along. Wear something red, white, and/or blue. For more information contact Pat Farmer at 240.762.3895.

### LAUREL SENIOR FRIENDSHIP CLUB (LSFC)

Wed., Feb. 4. Pary Harris is the current president of the LSFC and the club now meets on the first Wednesday of the month. Reservations for our monthly luncheon are due two weeks before the meeting. **Contact the LSFC office for reservations and information about events planned for 2026.** The office is open Mon. – Fri. from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; call 301.206.3380.  
• Every Tuesday Bingo starts at 12 noon (doors open at 11 a.m.); fee for cards, NO admission fee. If any doubt about Bingo being held, call 240.788.2290.

## BELTSVILLE EVENTS

### NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY (NAL)

Address: 10301 Baltimore Ave. in Beltsville. Main phone number: 301.504.5755. We continue to serve our customers remotely during regular business hours. Website: <https://www.nal.usda.gov/>; online information products are always available. NAL is on X at [https://x.com/National\\_Ag\\_Lib](https://x.com/National_Ag_Lib) The National Agricultural Library (NAL) is one of five national libraries of the United States. It houses one of the world's largest collections devoted to agriculture and its related sciences. See nutrition information for every stage of life at <https://www.nutrition.gov/>. Get *MyPlate* nutrition information for babies and toddlers via the free Amazon Alexa app. To learn more, visit [www.myplate.gov/myplateassistant](http://www.myplate.gov/myplateassistant).

### YOUNG AT HEART CLUB

Thur., Feb. 19 at 10:30 a.m. Address: the Beltsville Community Center, 3900 Sellman Rd., Beltsville. The Beltsville Young at Heart Club meets on the third Thursday of each month (weather permitting) and is for residents who are 55 years of age and older. Contact Lois at 301.498.9736 for more information.

### BELTSVILLE LIBRARY EVENTS

**Closures: Sun., Feb. 15 and Mon., Feb. 16 in observance of Presidents Day.** Address: 4319 Sellman Rd., Beltsville, next door to the police station. The main phone number is 301.937.0294. TTY: 301.808.2061. Ask a Librarian telephone reference is available when the library is open;

call 240.455.5451. Regular hours of operation are Mon., Thur., and Fri. from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tue. and Wed. from 12 noon to 8 p.m.; Sat. from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sun. 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; closed on most major holidays. See [www.pgcmls.info/location/Beltsville](http://www.pgcmls.info/location/Beltsville) for online services and information about other county library branches and programs.

### PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

#### KIDS ACHIEVE CLUB

Meets every Tuesday at 4 p.m. Volunteers provide homework help for 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Please register online at <https://www1.pgcmls.info/events>.

#### TAIL WAGGIN' TUTORS

Two dates: Sat., Feb. 14 and Fri., Feb. 20 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Boost your child's confidence by reading to a friendly, trained therapy dog! Bring a book or choose one from the library. Each child will read for 15 minutes. First come, first served.

### PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

#### READY 2 READ STORYTIME

Mondays at 10:30 a.m. Bring your toddler and enjoy stories, songs, fingerplays, and more! Ages 2 – 3.

#### SPANISH–ENGLISH READY 2 READ STORYTIME

Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Ages 3 – 5.

### AFRICAN AMERICAN INVENTORS AND INNOVATORS

Sat., Feb. 14 at 1 p.m. Explore African American inventors and innovators who influenced our way of life in the workforce as we know it today. Discover how these inventors were able to innovate in communication, technology, transportation, science, and much more!

### CHILDREN'S AUTHOR ALLEN WELLS

Sat., Feb. 14 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Join celebrated children's author Allen Wells for a lively reading of his books, including *Yvonne Clark and Her Engineering Spark* and *Danté Plays His Blues*. After the reading, kids will enjoy a fun, hands-on activity inspired by the stories—designed to spark curiosity and creativity. Celebrate Black voices, music, and imagination in this engaging experience for children ages 4 – 8.

### STEM-TASTIC!: DNA MODELS

Thur., Feb. 19 at 4 p.m. Dive into the world of science, technology, engineering, and math with fun, hands-on experiments and activities! For Black History Month, learn about the extraordinary life of Henrietta Lacks and her contributions to the medical field while building your own DNA model. Ages 8 – 12.

### MOVIE AND A CRAFT

Sat., Feb. 24 at 2 p.m. Enjoy a free

showing of the *Princess and the Frog* and a special craft! Closed Captioning will be available.

## PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

### NEEDLEWORK SOCIAL

Mon., Feb. 9 at 4 p.m. Are you interested in getting to know more people in your community with similar interests? Join us for Needlework Social where you can bring in any needlecraft you are working on while getting to know those around you.

### ENGLISH CLASS: BEGINNER / CLASES BÁSICAS DE INGLÉS

Wed., Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. Are you starting your journey to learn English? This class is designed for beginner-level learners who want to practice and improve their skills. Registration is required.

### PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS SERIES,

Feb. 3 at 5:30 p.m. KEYS 2 Elevation: Foundations for Professional Success (Session 1). Participants will explore essential soft skills and workplace expectations through interactive activities and guided instruction. This session builds a strong foundation of confidence, communication, and self-awareness to prepare young adults for today's competitive job market. **Registration is required.**

• Wed., Feb. 4 at 5:30 p.m. BOSS: Business Owners Success Series information session. Prince George's Community College's certificate program! Learn how expert-led online courses can help you Be Your Own BOSS, develop key entrepreneurial skills, and launch your business.

• Sat., Feb. 7 at 1 p.m. Grant Writing 101. An interactive workshop designed to help participants acquire practical skills for developing, writing, and managing grant proposals. Participants will learn how to identify funding opportunities, craft compelling narratives, build realistic budgets, and meet funder requirements within a supportive, hands-on learning environment.

• Tue., Feb. 10 at 5:30 p.m. KEYS 2 Elevation: Career Branding & Resume Building (Session 2). Participants will translate their skills and experiences into compelling career documents and online profiles. Through hands-on coaching, they will build resumes, craft elevator pitches, and establish their professional identity.

• Tue., Feb. 17 at 5:30 p.m. KEYS 2 Elevation: Interview Mastery & Workplace Success (Session 3). Participants will build practical interviewing skills, learn how to navigate real workplace challenges, and strengthen the professional habits needed for long-term success. This final session integrates all skills to prepare participants for real opportunities.

• Wed., Feb. 18 at 5:30 p.m. New Year, New Career. Start the New Year with a new professional look. Get a free LinkedIn Profile Professional Headshot photo at the Beltsville Branch Library. **Registration is required.**

**Share Your News!** Send your article submissions to News Director Rick Bergmann at [editor@beltsvillenewstoday.com](mailto:editor@beltsvillenewstoday.com)

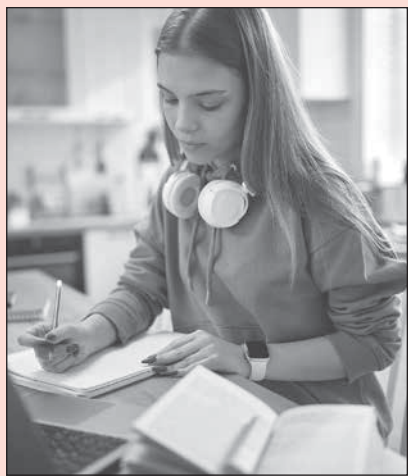


## SAT Prep Tips for College-Bound Students

(StatePoint) While every college admissions department evaluates applicants a bit differently, standardized test scores are a big piece of the equation at most schools. This means you'll want to be as prepared as possible for your upcoming SAT. Here's how to get ready for this crucial exam:

**Get equipped:** A user-friendly calculator can save you precious time when every second counts, so gear up with a calculator like the fx-9750GIII from Casio. Its Natural Textbook Display and intuitive icon menu make it easy to use. The perfect companion for both the classroom and test day, it features graph plotting, probability distribution, vector arithmetic and spreadsheets, and has programming capabilities. It is also approved for the SAT, PSAT, ACT and AP tests, and includes an exam mode setting to lock specific functionality for testing purposes.

**Practice:** Familiarizing yourself with the types of test questions you'll encounter on the SAT is essential. When it comes to the Math section of the exam, you can lean on free online resources, like the sample exams found on casio-education.com, to get prepared. The added bonus is that working through these sample questions will help you get comfortable with the calculator you'll be using on test day. SAT prep courses are also a great option. Once out of reach for many



(c) Drazen Zigic / iStock via Getty Images Plus

families, today, a number of educational organizations offer them for free, leveling the playing field for all students. Be sure to leverage this resource to maximize your test readiness.

**Read, a lot:** From novels to biographies to the newspaper, read everything you can get your hands on. It's one of the best ways to build your vocabulary and hone your reading comprehension. Building these skills can improve your chances of acing the Reading and Writing section of the SAT. Though there are many SAT vocabulary word lists out there, encountering these words in real contexts can be a more effective way to absorb definitions and usages than trying to memorize them.

The SAT can cause a lot of stress and anxiety, but it doesn't have to. With the right tools and preparation strategies, you can walk into the SAT with confidence and achieve your best score possible.

## How to Live to Be 100 Years Old

(StatePoint) Living to 100 may sound extraordinary, but research suggests it's more achievable—and enjoyable—than many people think. Studies show the majority of centenarians rate their health as good, and large numbers of people in this age group are mobile, active and optimistic.

According to the American Medical Association, adopting these seven habits can improve longevity and quality of life:

**1. Eat healthy.** Think of food as medicine. Choose nutritious, whole foods. Eat more fruits that are dark in color — blue, purple and red — to get the most nutrients, as well as fiber-rich vegetables, especially non-starchy vegetables such as broccoli, carrots and leafy greens. Incorporate whole grains, nuts, seeds, lean meats and fish. Drink more water, or as an alternative, flavored or sparkling water with no added sugar.

Reduce your intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy ultra-processed foods, especially those with added sodium and sugar. Drinking sugary beverages, even 100% fruit juices, is associated with a higher mortality risk, according to a study published in JAMA Network Open. Eat fewer processed meats, which tend to be high in fat and heavy on added salt and preservatives. Limit your intake of refined grains, such as breads, crackers, baked goods and white rice. Drink less alcohol.

**2. Exercise.** Adults should aim

for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity weekly. A recent study published in JAMA found that putting down the television remote and walking can improve healthy aging — highlighting the importance of small everyday habits.

**3. Get enough sleep.** Adequate sleep improves memory, reduces stress, improves mood, and primes the body's natural defenses against disease. But sleep quality decreases with age. Improve your sleep quality by setting a regular bedtime and wake-up time, insulating your bedroom against noise, avoiding exercise within an hour of bedtime, maintaining a cool and dark bedroom, and limiting fluids within two hours of bedtime. Also avoid alcohol before bedtime and make your bedroom a tech-free zone as screen-time can impact your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.

**4. Live with purpose.** A sense of purpose can lead to increased energy, motivation, emotional stability and resilience. Take time for self-reflection and try meditation or yoga. Prioritize your values and beliefs and put them into action toward a goal that's meaningful to you and benefits others.

**5. Stay positive.** To bust stress, take a break from decisions, connect with others, pet your dog or cat, write a to-do list (stick to three items), take time to recharge, laugh, sing, curb clutter, set bound-

aries, perform mindfulness exercises, practice gratitude, and seek help from a professional when stress becomes overwhelming.

**6. Stay connected.** Research shows that having social connections is a significant predictor of longevity and better physical, cognitive and mental health, while social isolation and loneliness are significant predictors of premature death and poor health. Unfortunately, there is a nationwide loneliness epidemic that medical experts consider a major public health concern. Combat loneliness with social clubs and community groups, or by taking up a hobby, learning something new or volunteering. If you're struggling with loneliness, reach out to a professional, your doctor, family member or friend. You can also call the 988 crisis helpline for support.

**7. Get screened.** Schedule preventive care, tests and health screenings to help your doctor spot certain conditions before they become more serious. Your doctor can recommend needed tests based on your age, gender and health conditions — including colonoscopies, mammograms, gynecological and prostate exams, and vision screenings.

Today, there are many at-home screening options available. Some are more effective than others, and all work best — and minimize stress around results — when taken in

**100**

continues on page 14

## Club News

### The Beltsville Young at Heart Club

By Lois Hamilton

Our December meeting with Santa's Bingo was a great success. Everyone had fun and won a prize. I think we will do it again.

On January 15, we'll have Johnny Seaton sing for us. The February 19 meeting will feature a Beltsville attorney speaking on "Wills and Trusts." I think that in March we'll play Bingo again, but this time the winners will receive money as their prize.

We did lose a long-time member—Delores Deutsch. She lived in Laurel but belonged to both the Laurel club and our club, where she was the 50/50 lady/seller. She will be greatly missed by those of

us who knew her well.

We'll continue to have light refreshments, trip sign-ups, a New to You table, and the 50/50 chance to win some money.

If you have any suggestions for singers or speakers on topics for our club, please call me at 301-498-9736. If you leave a message, I will get back to you. I already had one suggestion to find a speaker on Type 2 diabetes. We are a senior group—you need only be 55 years old—and our dues are \$15.00 a year. If you have any questions, please call me.

"Friends are God's way of smoothing out the bumps on the road of life." —C. S. Lewis

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Fantastic floor plan on this immaculate 3 BDR, 2 BA home, spacious laundry with main level exercise room. Minutes to Greenbelt Metro, University of Maryland, MARC train, I-95, 495, rte 29, B-W Parkway, ICC and great shopping areas. Updated kitchen and baths, level entrance back yard with large storage garage. A must see!!!

**\$493,000**



# Beltsville News CHURCH DIRECTORY



Rev. Dr. Andrea Middleton King, Pastor  
11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705  
(301)937-7114 † office@eumcbeltsville.com  
www.eumcbeltsville.com

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Follow us on Instagram @eumc\_beltsville

Sunday Morning Worship 10 AM  
You can watch the live broadcast on our website  
[www.eumcbeltsville.com](http://www.eumcbeltsville.com)

*"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them"*



**February 8: following service "Souper"** Lunch and Potluck! Bring a desert to share, soup, chili, cornbread, crackers and drinks will be provided!

**February 28: 8am-11am** Free Food Distribution

*"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done." ~PROVERBS 19:17*

## First Baptist Church of Beltsville (SBC)

**4700 Odell Road  
Beltsville, MD 20705  
301-937-7771**

[www.fbcbeltsville.org](http://www.fbcbeltsville.org)

**Keith Holland, Pastor**

**Abundant Grace;  
Abundant Life;  
Abundant God!**

### Sundays:

Sunday School for all ages	9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship	11:00 a.m.
Children's Church (4yr -4th gr)	11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship	6:00 p.m.

### Wednesdays:

Adult Bible Study & Prayer	7:00 p.m.
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*\*Childcare available for children up to 3 years old*

A Mission Parish of the  
Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia  
Located in Twin Chimneys Office Park  
10760 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville, MD

Evening Vigil: Sat. 5:00 PM  
Hours & Divine Liturgy: Sun. 9:40 AM

All Services in English

Fr. George Johnson, Rector  
301-572-5738  
[www.holyapostlesorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.holyapostlesorthodoxchurch.org)

**Holy Apostles  
Orthodox Church**  
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## Abiding Presence Lutheran Church

10774 Rhode Island Avenue  
301-937-7646



Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Rev. Jongkil Na

[www.APLChurch.org](http://www.APLChurch.org)

***Come and Join Us***

*Located in the Beltsville Professional Center*

**St. Joseph Catholic Church**  
[www.stjosephbeltsville.org](http://www.stjosephbeltsville.org)

**Pastor:** Rev. Shaun T. Foggo  
**Deacon:** Rev. Mr. Armando Jimenez

**Adult, Youth and Children Faith Formation**  
[reled@stjosephbeltsville.org](mailto:reled@stjosephbeltsville.org)

**Director:** Mrs. Helene H. Stever  
**St. Joseph's Regional Catholic School**  
[www.stjosrcs.org](http://www.stjosrcs.org)  
**Principal:** Mrs. Erin Meunier

11007 Montgomery Road  
Beltsville, MD 20705  
301-937-7183

Masses: Sat Vigil 5:00pm, Sun's 8:30am\*, 10:30am, and 12:15pm (Spanish)  
Monday-Friday 8:00am; Wed 9:30am; and 1st Sat's 8:00am

\*The Mass on Sunday 8:30am is also live streamed, connect with us on Flocknote for the link. \*\* The Mass on Wednesday is only when School is open.

## St. John's Episcopal/Anglican Church

11040 Baltimore Avenue Beltsville, MD 20704  
301-937-4292 • [www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org](http://www.saintjohnsbeltsville.org)  
The Reverend Joseph M. Constant, Rector

**Join us for In Person Worship every Sunday at 10 AM**  
**Youth Sunday School 11:15 AM**

To view services online:

Go to <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsZionParish/Live/>

Other services online via Zoom: Wednesday Noonday;  
Thursday Bible Study and Compline 7 PM via Zoom

**Contact the Church office if you  
are interested in any of these  
resources**

*Our Mission: To Share God's  
love with everyone to bring  
hope and change lives.*



## MGA

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ence Center, 692 Maritime Boulevard, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090.

## MGA Membership

MGA membership is primarily intended for professionals in the field of aging. If you are one of those professionals, consider joining MGA to gain access to valuable information and networking opportunities with social workers, care managers, and other specialists.

If you are not in the field, as is the case with me, I can attest to the value of MGA membership and board service. During my second career writing a seniors' column, I gained invaluable information that I shared with older adult readers. On a personal level, I have used what I learned to help a close friend with Alzheimer's disease, to serve as a caregiver for my older sister, and in countless other ways as I age myself.

If you are interested in joining MGA, visit [maryland-mga.org](http://maryland-mga.org). Click on the Join menu on the left side of the homepage, then select Join MGA and follow the instructions. Annual dues are \$75 for professionals and \$25 for retirees and students.

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consultation with a doctor.

For more resources on staying healthy, visit <http://www.ama-assn.org>.

"Everyone strives to live longer, but the goal should be to live as healthy as possible for as long as we live," says AMA CEO John Whyte, MD, MPH. "Simple steps today – eating well, staying active, sleeping enough, and seeing your doctor – can add quality years, or even decades, to your life."

## A WINTER PLEA

This season earth cries out in thirst  
for moisture from above,  
But freezing rains are not the answer,  
they are not enough.

What every childlike heart desires  
is a covering,  
A comforter of splendid whiteness  
from clouds hovering.

There're populations, once again,  
will find birth and arise  
When snowflakes in a hurry fall  
in flurries from the skies.

O bury us deep 'neath the wonder  
ev'ry Winter brings,  
At least one time, Lord,  
'ere we entertain  
he voice of Spring.

Beckie Hutchings  
1/09/2026



**Check us out on Facebook! The Beltsville News**



Happy New Year. As I sit down to write this piece, Dallas is preparing for its first major snowstorm of the year. Temperatures are expected to range between 10 and 14 degrees, and the entire area is in a state of concern. The roads are especially unsafe because even a little ice can make driving very dangerous. Many roads here are made of concrete, and when they freeze, they become extremely slippery.

The sad part is that there is always a category of road users who try to defy nature and drive as if conditions are normal—or take on the challenge of pushing their pickup trucks to see how they handle the roads. Quite naturally, many end up crashing and endangering other road users. Hopefully, we will get through this storm without much drama.

Recently, I returned to a childhood activity that brought back a flood of memories. I am sure many of you did this in your younger years as well. I started squeezing limes and other citrus fruits to make lemonade. Do not laugh at me—I used to squeeze everything by hand, and trust me when I say that sometimes the lime is so tough that it feels impossible to get any juice out of it.

Toward the end of last month, I volunteered to make lemonade for a New Year's lunch my family

was attending at a friend's home. I was having a rough time with the limes and quickly began to regret my offer. It was late at night, and the household was asleep. I wanted to text a friend in Beltsville who had once told me that if you wet a lime, cover it with a paper towel, and microwave it, it becomes much easier to squeeze. Since it was too late to text him, I considered banging the limes with a skillet to soften them—not a good idea if you don't want to wake everyone in the house.

I opened the drawer where we keep kitchen utensils, hoping to find a rolling pin to press the limes. Instead, I spotted a green item I did not recognize. I took it out and decided to use it to roll over the limes. Then I noticed it had two handles. I soon realized it was a handheld lime juicer. Once I figured out how to use it, I felt like a child in a candy store, excitedly squeezing limes with ease. It was a complete game changer.

Now I make regular trips to international stores to stock up on limes, lemons, and sometimes oranges and grapefruit. The last two still require hand squeezing, but I make lemonade much more often now. It is healthier, and it doesn't have to be overly sweet.

How does this relate to my childhood? I have two memories. In the late 1970s and early 1980s,

we lived in Kingston, Jamaica, and behind our house were two old but very productive lime trees. Every day we picked soft, yellow limes off the ground. One squeeze would release a generous amount of juice. We kept some for ourselves and placed the excess in a bowl by the side of the road for neighbors to take.

Another memory comes from a different time in my childhood. We would take a bucket, climb the orange tree, and fill it to the top. The next task was washing the fruit and then sitting for hours squeezing oranges to make juice. Sodas were banned by my mother, though we occasionally found ways to sneak them in. At the time, we did not realize we were being protected from the damage sodas can do to the body.

Now that I am older, I am paying the price for some of those habits. So my final words to you are this: please encourage your younger relatives to establish healthy lifestyles early. Your body will thank you later.

I'll leave you with one last thought. During the recent NFL playoffs, players from the Buffalo Bills revealed that they put cayenne pepper in their socks to generate extra warmth in the cold. I plan to try it myself and will report back on the experience.

## PACK 1031

continued from page 1

dogs, chips, hot chocolate, and s'mores—along with practicing how to light a fire and enjoying some well-earned fun.

On January 21, Committee Chair Regina Halper will be presented with a Waste Diversion & Recycling Award by the Prince George's County Department of the Environment. This award recognizes the work Pack 1031 does in the community, including

cleaning local trails and leading the Anacostia Watershed Society's Earth Day cleanup at Little Paint Branch Park. This year's AWS cleanup will take place on April 25, with registration opening in March.

In February, we will celebrate Scout Sunday by attending our places of worship to earn the Scout Sunday patch. Services will be held on February 8 at Emmanuel United Methodist Church and on February 15 at St. Joseph's.

Be sure to check out our new website at pack1031.org, where you can find more information on how to join our pack.

If you are interested in Cub Scouts, please contact Regina Halper at Pack1031cubscouting@gmail.com for more information. We are a family scouting unit. During the school year, we meet at Beltsville Academy for den meetings, and in the summer we meet at least twice a month, mostly in local parks.

## Classifieds • Call 301-257-3408

### SERVICES

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### VOLUNTEERING

#### CALLING ALL CAT LOVERS!

Do you enjoy cats and can spare one hour a week? Beltsville Community Cats would love for you to join our awesome Colony Support Team to help feed kitties and experience their gratitude firsthand! Contact 240-444-8353 or email [hello@beltsvillecats.net](mailto:hello@beltsvillecats.net) 01/27

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## Boospherous Boonipherous Bojangles Barnaby III, a.k.a. BOO By Joseph West





# Where to Turn to for Help in Navigating Financial Challenges

(StatePoint) Managing your finances can be challenging, especially when you're not sure where to turn for help.

Darlene Goins, head of Philanthropy and Community Impact at Wells Fargo, shares practical tips and lesser-known resources for taking the next step forward at various stages in your financial life.

**What's happening:** You need guidance and funding to launch your small business.

**What you can do now:** Securing capital can be especially challenging if you don't qualify for a traditional bank loan. A Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) can help. These specialized lenders provide financing to small businesses, organizations and individuals, and are suited to helping new business ideas get off the ground. CDFIs offer such options as term loans, lines of credit, credit cards and real estate financing. Many also provide consulting, coaching, education, connections and financial planning at low or no cost.

Certified by the U.S. Treasury, CDFIs raise low-cost capital



through grants and low-interest funds provided by the government and banks like Wells Fargo. The more than 1,000 CDFIs nationwide collectively manage over \$436 billion. Wells Fargo has a long-standing commitment of supporting CDFIs through philanthropic grants and investments that help extend capital to businesses nationwide. CDFI matching services available through the Small Business Resource Navigator are made possible by a donation from Wells Fargo to Community Reinvestment Fund,

USA.

**What's happening:** You received notice of a rent increase.

**What you can do now:** Don't assume you have to accept a rent increase. If you're a responsible tenant with a solid rental history, you may have more negotiating power than you think. The best time to start the conversation is one to two months before your lease renewal. Come prepared with research on comparable rental rates, a list of your strengths as a tenant, and a clear ask — such as a lower monthly

rate, a longer lease or added amenities. A respectful, well-prepared conversation could lead to tangible savings.

The Wells Fargo Foundation provides grant funding to organizations that can help. For example, SaverLife offers free financial tools and resources, including scripts for negotiating rent.

**What's happening:** You and your family are facing financial pressures related to a disability.

**What you can do now:** Consider leveraging a tax-advantaged savings program, like an ABLE account, to help cover qualified expenses such as education, healthcare, transportation and more.

Available to anyone in the United States, these accounts offer a way for people with disabilities and their families to save without potentially impacting their eligibility for public benefits.

The National Association of State Treasurers is building awareness about ABLE accounts through the ABLEtoday program. ABLEtoday partners with state treasurers to provide plan comparisons, best practices and

strategies to help families maximize savings.

**What's happening:** You worry you're missing out on eligible tax credits and deductions because you can't afford a professional tax preparer.

**What you can do now:** Take advantage of free, IRS-certified tax preparation services to ensure you're claiming every benefit you're eligible for. These services are offered through trusted community-based organizations supported by Prosperity Now. Through a recent Wells Fargo Foundation grant, \$200,000 was deployed to 15 organizations across 12 U.S. markets and will help qualified experts prepare over 20,000 tax returns at no cost, returning an estimated \$25 million to households, according to participating nonprofits. Many of these organizations also offer year-round financial coaching and help navigating public benefits.

Whether you're negotiating rent or filing taxes, lean on available resources so you can do so with greater confidence and more support.

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\*\*Introductory Balance Transfer APR is 2.99% on transferred balances for 6 months from date of card approval. Thereafter, the APR will revert to the balance transfer rate, currently 8.99% to 17.99% APR, based on an evaluation of applicant creditworthiness. Your rate may vary. The fee for cash advances is \$5 or 2% of amount advanced, whichever is greater. The fee for international transactions is equal to the exchange rate plus 1% of the transaction. This offer is not guaranteed if you do not meet our credit criteria and if your account is not in good standing. The maximum APR is 18% or the maximum allowed by NCUA. The Introductory Rate is not available on Visa Secured credit cards. Introductory Rate only applies to non-Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union creditors and does not apply to balances transferred from Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union loans. You may transfer up to your approved and available credit limit. Please continue to make minimum payments on your other financial institution credit card(s) until the balance has been transferred. A balance transfer will not close your account with your other creditors. Payments to these accounts should continue until acknowledgement of the transfer is received. Check with your individual creditors to close your accounts. Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union is not responsible for any payments lost or delayed in the mail, outstanding balance(s) or additional charges regarding such accounts, or for any charges resulting in any delay in the payment or transfer of balances. The total amount(s) transferred will be treated as a cash advance; finance charges will be accrued immediately from the day the balance(s) are transferred to your Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union credit card account. Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union reserves the right to refuse multiple transfers from the same credit card. Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union expressly reserves the right to terminate this offer at any time and without notice provided to you. Call 301.627.2666, visit a convenient branch location, or visit [www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org](http://www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org) for details.

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