

The Beltsville News

An All Volunteer Newspaper

Vol. 74, Number 9

Beltsville, Maryland

September 2026



Rendering of the new James E. Duckworth Elementary School

PGCPS To Host Ground Breaking For New James E. Duckworth Elementary School

Duckworth groundbreaking marks final Blueprint Phase II groundbreaking, precedes opening of two new schools for 26-27 SY

UPPER MARLBORO, MD — Prince George's County Public Schools broke ground on the new James E. Duckworth Elementary

School on Tuesday, July 14, marking the final groundbreaking in the district's award-winning Blueprint Schools Phase

II construction program.

The new 94,000-square-foot Duckworth Elementary School will accommodate up to 700

prekindergarten through 5th grade students. Duckworth will also

DUCKWORTH
continues on page 7

Classic Detective Story Brings A Fantastic Mystery to UpStage Artists This September

By Rick Bergmann

In *The Maltese Falcon*, Lieutenant Polehaus asks detective Sam Spade what the titular bird is made of. Spade responds, "The stuff that dreams are made of." That is exactly what the creative team behind UpStage Artists' production hopes to bring to the stage—the stuff that dreams are made of. *The Maltese Falcon* is based on the classic detective novel written by Dashiell Hammett in 1930 and later turned into the famous film starring Humphrey Bogart.

This particular adaptation is a world premiere, adapted from Hammett's novel by local playwright and UpStage Artists Board President John Cusumano. Cusumano says his "love for *The Maltese Falcon* began many years ago as a fan of Hammett's novel." According to him, the novel is filled with "sharp dialogue, complex characters, and a moral ambiguity that defines the story."

The story of *The Maltese Falcon* seems straightforward at first. A woman walks into



Rick Bergmann (left), who plays Joel Cairo, works on fight choreography with director John Cusumano during a rehearsal for UpStage Artists' *The Maltese Falcon*.

a private eye's office and asks for his help in getting access to her sister, who has taken up with a criminal. What follows is a series of lies, double-crosses, murders, villains, and a mystery that will keep audiences guessing until the end. To say more would give away too many details.

UpStage's production features many actors new to its stage, along with a few familiar faces. Dylan Hernandez, in his second UpStage production, brings a smoothness and intensity to Sam Spade. Nancy Somers plays Ruth Wonderly, the archetypal 1930s femme fatale, in her third time crossing the boards at UpStage. Vedant Sharma returns as the mysterious Kasper Gutman after previously appearing as the sympathetic immigrant Marco in *A View from the Bridge* and the calculating Wyndham Brandon in *Rope*. The *Beltsville News*' own Rick Bergmann plays the villainous Joel Cairo, whose loyalty lies with only one person—himself.

DETECTIVE STORY
continues on page 13

NEXT ISSUE:

Submissions Due

No Later Than:

September 16

Paper Out:

September 25



Photo courtesy of the official Prince George's County Sheriff's Facebook page.

Jose Sanchez-Sanchez was arrested on August 5 on charges of sexual abuse of a minor.

Sheriff's Deputies Arrest Man in Beltsville on Child Sexual Abuse Charges

According to the official Prince George's County Sheriff's Facebook page, deputies with the Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff arrested Jose Sanchez-Sanchez on August 5 on charges of sexual abuse of a minor.

The charges stem from an investigation by the Prince George's County Police Department into allegations that Sanchez-Sanchez inappropriately touched a minor on multiple occasions between April 2025 and March 2026.

Deputies located Sanchez-Sanchez in Beltsville, where he was taken into custody without incident. He remains in custody at the Prince George's County Department of Corrections in Upper Marlboro awaiting a court appearance.

The charges are allegations, and Sanchez-Sanchez is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in court.

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Beltsville News: Blast from the Past

By Ted Ladd

(From the Beltsville News issue of September 2001)

Nguyen Earns Spot on UMD Dean's List

Thanh Q. Nguyen has been named to the University of Maryland Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the 2001 spring semester.

Nguyen's grade point average that semester was 3.785 out of 4.0. He is the son of Michael and Van Nguyen.

Mr. Nguyen plans to apply to the Robert H. Smith Business School after the fall semester to pursue a degree in Business Information Systems.

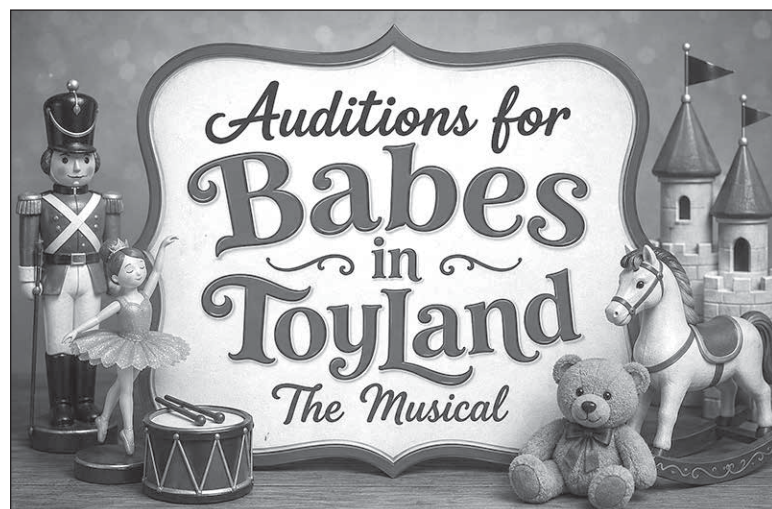
Neighbors in the News

UpStage Artists Announces Auditions for Babes In Toyland: The Musical

UpStage Artists is pleased to announce auditions for its holiday production of Babes in Toyland, featuring a cast of adults and children ages 8 and older.

Auditions for adult roles will be held Friday, October 2, at 7 p.m., with children's auditions on Saturday, October 3, at 12 p.m. at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705. The production will feature principal roles as well as both adult and children's ensembles.

Those auditioning should prepare 16 measures of a song and provide an MP3 accompaniment track to be played during the audition. Auditioners should also come prepared to dance. The audition process will include cold



UpStage Artists Auditions for Babes in Toyland the Musical will be held on October 2 and 3.

readings from the script.

Auditioners under the age of

18 must have a parent or legal guardian complete and sign the audition form on their behalf.

Babes in Toyland will be directed by Rick Bergmann, with Stacey Saunders serving as Music Director and Choreographer.

Rehearsals will generally be held Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays at 7 p.m., along with a few Saturday morning rehearsals.

The production will have seven performances in December. Evening performances will be held December 4, 5, 11 and 12 at 7:30 p.m., with matinees on December 5, 6 and 13 at 2 p.m.

With its colorful characters, memorable music and roles for performers of different ages, Babes in Toyland offers an opportunity for adults and young performers alike to be part of a festive theatrical production this holiday season.

Those interested in auditioning can sign up at www.upstageartists.com/auditions. Questions about auditions or the production may be directed to Rick Bergmann at rick.bergmann@upstageartists.com.

The Beltsville News
An All Volunteer Newspaper

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Beltsville kitten used as decoy in attempted bank robbery now has forever home!

You may have heard our crazy story on the evening news recently – someone stole one of our rescue kittens and tried to use it as a decoy in an attempted bank robbery. This all happened on July 13 at the Pet Supplies Plus store in Beltsville, where Beltsville Community Cats (BCC) has an adoption center to showcase adoptable kittens and



Photo by Beltsville Community Cats
Magnolia with her new family!

cats – including sweet young Magnolia, a 3-month-old tuxedo kitten. A man who had been visiting the store for a couple weeks decided it was a good idea to grab the habitat key when staff were busy elsewhere in the store, grab our kitten, run out of the store and across the parking lot to a nearby bank, hand Magnolia to a bank manager as a diversion, and write a note to a bank teller saying, “Give me all your cash.”

When BCC got the call that morning that Magnolia had been stolen, we immediately rushed over to the store and saw many police cars with lights flashing going to the same shopping center. We followed the police cars and soon found out that our kitten was inside the nearby PNC Bank.

BCC president Stephanie Stullich said, “Once we had Magnolia back safe and sound, her story turned from a potential tragedy into one that entertained millions of people all across the world. Everyone seemed to have a one-liner – from those who claimed that “Magnolia was the mastermind” behind the attempted robbery to those who responded, “No, Magnolia is innocent!”

One TikTok personality named Scott Cagle even created a “southern rap” song to tell the story of Magnolia’s bank caper (<https://bit.ly/4qqGMob>). He then followed that up with a second,

very sweet song encouraging people to support BCC’s work with community cats (<https://bit.ly/46cbQi0>), which Magnolia’s followers might enjoy as much as we do!

BCC is thrilled to report that Magnolia’s story has a happy ending: She was adopted into a forever home with two loving parents and another young kitten to play with.

BCC thought Magnolia’s initially terrifying experience might have a silver lining – surely some of the millions of people worldwide who were amused by her story would find their way to BCC’s website and be inspired to make a small donation to help provide medical care for “Magnolia’s friends.” That did not happen. But we are still hopeful that Magnolia’s unbelievable story will tug at a few heartstrings among the Beltsville residents who know our work best.

BCC receives many calls from local residents asking us to take

in kittens born in backyards, behind apartment building dumpsters, and in industrial areas. Left outside, most of them wouldn’t survive. We also find abandoned cats who clearly want to find their way back to a safe indoor home like they once had. Some are sick, some are injured, some are traumatized. All need and deserve love and care.

BCC is a network of volunteers who collectively do their best to help these cats. Those that are adoptable (<https://bit.ly/4ghS3IT>) are placed in foster homes, to the extent that we have space available. Feral cats that don’t want to be “rescued” are neutered and vaccinated and returned to their outdoor homes. To do this work, BCC and other animal rescue groups all need community support, especially from people who can foster or adopt rescue kittens and cats or donate funds to help provide life-saving medical care (<https://bit.ly/45CudN2>) for cats that need it. If you feel so inspired, you can visit us at www.beltsvillecats.net!

In the meantime, Magnolia is now happily living a quiet life with her new family. Despite receiving 21 adoption applications for Magnolia, BCC chose to stick with the local couple who had applied to adopt Magnolia before she became an internet sensation. Her new parents Kaylei and Bryan said, “Magnolia has retired from her life of crime, and she will not be giving any more interviews!”



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Ask the Expert

BY ANDRE GIBSON,
CHAMPION HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Getting Your Home Ready for Back-to-School and Fall

As summer winds down and families prepare for another school year, it is also the perfect time to prepare your home for the cooler months ahead. Back-to-school season can get busy quickly, but taking care of a few important home maintenance projects now can help keep your home comfortable, organized, and protected throughout the fall.

Start With the Roof

Summer storms, heavy rain, and strong winds can take a toll on your roof. Before fall brings cooler temperatures and falling leaves, take a look for missing, cracked, or lifted shingles. Pay attention to signs of water damage inside the home, including stains on ceilings or walls. Addressing a small roof problem early can help prevent leaks and more expensive repairs later.

Clean and Inspect Your Gutters

Leaves and debris can quickly clog gutters during the fall. When gutters cannot drain properly, rainwater may overflow and cause problems around the roof, siding, foundation, and landscaping. Have your gutters and downspouts cleaned and



need attention. Making repairs now can help keep outdoor areas safer for your family and guests while preventing minor damage from becoming a larger project.

Get Organized for Back-to-School

Inside the home, create a designated area for backpacks, shoes, jackets, and school supplies.

Organizing entryways, closets, kitchens, and homework areas can make busy mornings easier. It is also a good opportunity to clear out unwanted items and make space before everyone starts spending more time indoors.

Don't Wait Until the Weather Changes

Preparing your home for fall does not have to happen all at once. Start with the areas that protect your home from the weather, including the roof, gutters, windows, siding, and exterior doors. Then focus on outdoor spaces and interior organization.

A little preparation at the end of summer can go a long way toward preventing unexpected problems later. With school starting and fall right around the corner, now is the ideal time to make sure your home is ready for the new season.

inspected before the leaves begin to fall. Make sure downspouts are directing water safely away from your home's foundation.

Check Your Windows and Doors

As temperatures begin to drop, drafty windows and doors can make your home less comfortable and increase energy use. Check around window and door frames for gaps, damaged seals, or signs of deterioration. Replacing older, inefficient windows can also improve your home's appearance while helping maintain a more comfortable indoor temperature throughout fall and winter.

Prepare Your Outdoor Spaces

Fall is a great time to inspect your deck, porch, railings, and fence. Look for loose boards, unstable railings, damaged posts, or other areas that may

Moisette Tonya Sweat Files Petition For Nomination As Independent Candidate For County Executive

LARGO, MD — As required by Maryland Election Law, Moisette "Tonya" Sweat, Esquire has collected the requisite number of signatures from registered voters in Prince Georges County on her petition to run as an Independent/Unaffiliated Candidate for the Office of County Executive in the November General Election.

Mrs. Sweat will file the signed petitions at the Prince Georges County Board of Elections, 1100 Mercantile Lane, Suite 115A in Largo, MD 20774, on Monday, August 3, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., well ahead of the 5:00 p.m. deadline.

"The voters of Prince George's County deserve a choice for County Executive in the November General Election," said Mrs. Sweat, a 29-year attorney and longtime community activist. "Voter apathy has adversely impacted Prince George's County elections for too long. The County is facing crucial issues: a non-compliant budget, a battle over data centers, a decrease in County services, an overall dissatisfaction with the waste of taxpayer dollars, and a general lack of trust in local government. The low voter turnout in the June 2026 Primary Election clearly demonstrated that too many of our residents felt they had no viable option. I bring my experience as an Air Force JAG officer; my leadership in federal government, consumer protection, and reform; my work as Director



Moisette "Tonya" Sweat, Esquire

of the National Credit Union Administration; along with my consistent community activism to the Office of County Executive to lead this great County."

Sweat's Campaign Team obtained consent from more than 6,300 registered voters in Prince Georges County. This exceeds the required number that allows her to run as an Independent/Unaffiliated candidate.

With this number of signed petitions, Tonya Sweat will be the first Independent Candidate to appear on the General Election ballot as a candidate for the Office of County Executive in the County's 330-year history.



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Quickly, do the clouds pass by
As winds erase them from the sky;
Flowers' beauty gently fades
Which was so vibrant yesterday;

Temp'ratures' oppressive heat
Will soon dip low enough to freeze;
Hardened ground in moments can
Become a muddy flooded land;

Hours dissolve the weeks and years
Into forgetfulness of tears;
Happiness is fleeting like
The migratory birds in flight.

Nothing ever stays the same
Elapsing time occasions change;
After one has lived a while
Impatience of youth garners smiles.

Wisdom speaks within the heart
Now's when eternal choices are
'Ere when we're called to declare
How we've lived out our
precious share.

Beckie Hutchings
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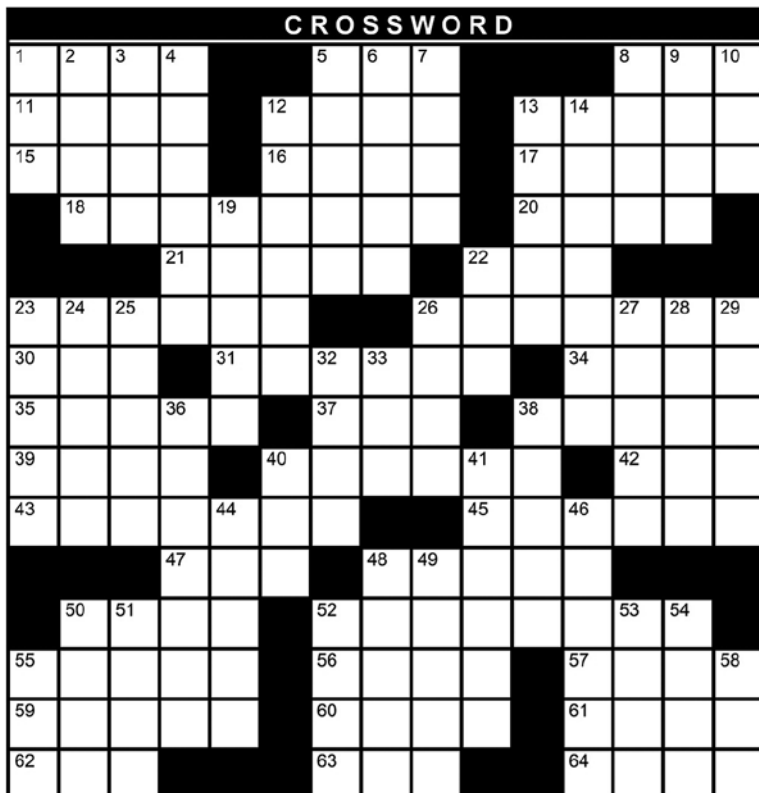
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Statepoint Crossword: Fictional Detectives



ACROSS

1. Invitation request, acr.
5. Workout unit
8. Prohibit
11. Affirmative response
12. Type of lure, pl.
13. Small silvery fish
15. Seed covering
16. Gumbo vegetable
17. Like Siberian winters
18. *"Murder, She Wrote" amateur sleuth
20. Descartes's "therefore"
21. *Apparition investigated in a Scooby-Doo cartoon
22. ____ Air in L.A.
23. *Arthur Conan Doyle's detective
26. Deposit, in Paris
30. "Wheel of Fortune" purchase (2 words)
31. Always, in Rome
34. "She ____ blue velvet..."
35. From then on
37. Am is to I as ____ is to we
38. Prison-related
39. International Civil Aviation Organization
40. Window-shop
42. "He ____ and drank the precious words..."
43. Announce
45. *Agatha Christie's Hercule

47. Ryder Cup participant
48. Fern leaf
50. Charitable contribution
52. *"The Pink Panther" Inspector
55. Diver's breathing device
56. Vietnam neighbor
57. Bald eagle's home
59. Bother
60. Highland tongue
61. Get checkmated
62. Cribbage piece
63. Like certain nurse
64. Ginger cookie

DOWN

1. Shag rug
2. Lord's worker
3. Colorado skiing destination
4. Mucus in lungs
5. Adherents of Sikhism
6. Wading bird
7. Russia's 1917 abdicator
8. Titanic's inanimate foe
9. "The Sun is ____ a Star"
10. Unknown power
12. Humorous
13. Blind followers
14. *Raymond Chandler's hardboiled detective
19. Not those

22. Quilting gathering
23. Orthodox Judaism adherent
24. Chilled (2 words)
25. Cancer-treating machine, acr.
26. *Carolyn Keene's amateur sleuth
27. Navigational aid
28. Inspiration for poets and musicians
29. Get a new tenant
32. Stud's companion
33. Trained instructor at a country club
36. *Peter Falk's Lieutenant
38. Lowly workers
40. Lingerie item
41. *Nick to Nora in The Thin Man series
44. Analyze
46. Paragons
48. Bell-bottoms bottom
49. Fowl perch
50. Skin problem
51. Miner's black one
52. Ball of yarn
53. Same as eon
54. Major one in the sky
55. Tree juice
58. Casual affirmative

See Solution on page 6

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Crossword Solution from page 5

R	S	V	P			S	E	T			B	A	N						
Y	E	A	H			J	I	G	S		S	M	E	L	T				
A	R	I	L			O	K	R	A		H	A	R	S	H				
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Rosapepe's Report to Beltsville

New online portal for Maryland taxes

Beginning September 1, individual Maryland taxpayers may use the online Maryland Tax Connection for filing income tax returns, making estimated payments, setting up payment plans, and more. Tax Connect is already in use by Maryland businesses to file returns and communicate directly with the Comptroller's office. Now, it will be free to use to all Maryland individual taxpayers. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, please don't hesitate to reach out to my office. For full details on what's changing, a complete list of key dates, and answers to common questions, visit: MarylandComptroller.gov/IndividualTaxHub

Need help with your water bill?

The WSSC Water fund is now managed by the United Way of the National Capital Area (NCA). This transition will be a continuation of assisting customers with financial need through the Water Fund. Customers may still receive up to \$500 in assistance in a rolling 12-month period. Customers may now apply online at unitedwaynca.org/wsscwater.

Back-to-School Vaccine Clinic September 12 at High Point

As we prepare for the new school year, Prince George's County Public Schools and the Health Department are hosting free Back-to-School Vaccine Clinics. These events will include



food, backpack giveaways, and family fun; while helping students get the immunizations, they need to start school healthy and strong.

Maryland State Law requires all students to receive immunizations for school. This year, students must be up to date with all required immunizations by September 14 or risk being excluded from school. Weekend clinics will occur September 12 from 9AM to 3PM at High Point High School in Beltsville.

Constitutional Amendment Clarifying Congressional Redistricting

In this November election, you'll be able to vote for the Constitutional Amendment clarifying Congressional redistricting rules in Maryland. As you may have heard, the Maryland General Assembly held a special session on redistricting in early August. The Assembly approved a proposed constitutional amendment about the rules for drawing Maryland's congressional maps. Now that it has passed, it will go to a popular vote this

November. If ratified by voters, the amendment will address the constitutional barriers that a Maryland court used to block the congressional map passed in 2021. This will give the legislature clearer authority to draw lines as other states have done. The amendment does not, by itself, draw new congressional districts. It gives Maryland voters the chance to decide whether the state should have the flexibility to act under the same set of rules and standards as other states across the country.

Moratorium on new big data centers in Prince George's

A few weeks ago, the Prince George's County Council passed a two-year moratorium on big data center development to give our county more time to develop policy on the matter which protects our environment, electricity rates, and communities. The County Council and the County Office of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement continue to oversee the consideration process for all data center projects in the county. Please reach out to County Councilman Tom Dernoga if you have any further questions.

Contact me

Please let me know if there are other issues you have questions or thoughts about. And, of course, feel free to be in touch if I can be of help to you. Just email me at jim.rosapepe@senate.maryland.gov or call (410) 841-3141.

Join Cub Pack 1031 and Find a New Adventure!

By Regina Halper

This month we had a *FUN time* at National Night Out!! We introduced kids to one of our favorite activities- Stomp Rockets!

We also caught a rainbow this week as we were trying to do a simple experiment using salt/sugar and will they make an egg float? We discovered you can't use fresh eggs - but we saw a double rainbow!!

I hope to see lots of folks at Back-to-School nights and our Join Scouting Night on Sept. 28th at our meeting place at Beltsville Academy on Monday evenings.

Cub Pack 1031 is also selling Papa Johns Fundraiser cards again this year to earn money to offset our dues. It costs



Two scouts, one Cubmaster and a double rainbow!

\$240 to pay for a year of scouting. The fundraiser card costs \$15 and \$10 of it goes to the scout. Look for them in your neighborhood or contact me at the email address below and we will get together with you. The cards are good until Sept 30, 2027.

Check out our website: <https://pack1031.org/> There you can find information on how to join our Pack. If you are interested in Cub Scouts at P1031, contact Regina Halper at Pack1031cubscouting@gmail.com or BeAScout.org for information. We are a family scouting unit. During the school year we meet at Beltsville Academy for our den meetings and in the summer, we meet at least twice a month mostly in the parks.

From the Office of Council Member Tom Dernoga

Data Center Update

I want to update you with the latest information regarding data centers. I reviewed the 2025 Data Center Task Force report and believe that the County has not yet completed the necessary work outlined in the report to move forward this Legislative year. It is crucial to start implementing the recommendations outlined in the task force report so that there may be a transparent and collaborative effort to draft comprehensive legislation. I sent a letter to key County leaders requesting a status update on the implementation of the Data Center Task Force report's recommendations and next steps. See the full letter at tinyurl.com/Aug2026DernogaLtr.

The end of the 2026 Legislative year (scheduled for October 27) comes early because this is an election year. The last day to introduce zoning legislation this year is September 22, and the Council is currently on summer recess. I do not see a viable path to drafting and enacting comprehensive legislation in a transparent and collaborative manner by September 22.

Beltsville Community Vision Walk

The Prince George's County Planning Department is hosting the next Community Vision Walk on Saturday, September 5, from 11 AM to 12:30 PM, starting at the Sunrise Plaza Parking Lot, 10820 Rhode Island Avenue, 20705. They are launching the Beltsville Placemaking Pilot Project, an exciting initiative that will bring recommendations from the Route 1 Land Redevelopment Study to life.

Your feedback at this meeting can help to influence safer traffic along Rhode Island Avenue, more welcoming public spaces, enhancements to walking and biking spaces, and other future investments in Beltsville. Join the project staff and my team to ask questions and share your thoughts. Register to attend at tinyurl.com/



(From left to right) Retiring Sergeant Kenneth Hibbert, Council Member Tom Dernoga, Retiring Corporal Alan Jones, and Chief of Staff Michelle García at the District VI PGPD 2026 National Night Out.

BvilleVisionWalkSep2026.

District 1 Community Shred Days

This month, we are holding the last two District 1 Community Shred Days of my tenure. There will be a three-box limit per person. On Saturday, September 12, from 9 AM to 11 AM, the shred truck will be at Beltsville Academy, 4300 Wicomico Avenue, 20705. On Saturday, September 19, from 9 AM to 11 AM, the shred truck will be at Montpelier Elementary, 9200 Muirkirk Road, 20708. No registration is required.

Air Quality Permit Informational Meeting for Borgwardt

Last month, on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, my team and I attended the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)'s informational meeting concerning the air quality permit application for the Donald V. Borgwardt Funeral Home's proposed crematorium. At this meeting, MDE, the Borgwardt family, and a representative from Matthews Environmental Solutions discussed the permitting and public review process, general information about cremation equipment, as well as taking questions from residents. Many

residents expressed concern or opposition. The meeting was recorded and uploaded to MDE's YouTube channel at youtube.com/@mdenvironment.

Now that the informational meeting has taken place, MDE is performing a technical review of the application. Following this, they will provide a tentative determination to either issue or deny the permit. The next opportunity for public comment will come after the tentative determination is shared. Read more about the steps of this process at tinyurl.com/MDEAQRvw. View the docket, which includes the permit application and other supporting documents, at tinyurl.com/BorgwardtAQDocket. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Shannon Heafey, Public Participation Coordinator in the MDE Air Quality Permits Program at shannon.heafey@maryland.gov.

We will keep you updated on our eNewsletter (tinyurl.com/D1eNewsletterOptIn) and social media as the application progresses.

Contact Us

Please keep in touch by emailing us at councildistrict1@co.pg.md.us or calling 301-952-3887.

DUCKWORTH

continued from page 1

relieve some of the overcrowding at Calverton Elementary School. The modern facility will feature 43 general education classrooms and six specialized Criterion Referenced Instruction (CRI) classrooms designed to support students with special needs.

Built to meet at least Silver certification standards under LEED (Leadership in Energy &

Environmental Design), the school will incorporate sustainable design and energy-efficient systems, including a high-performance building envelope and advanced HVAC and lighting systems.

Made possible through a public-private partnership with Progressive Education Partners (PEP), Blueprint Schools Phase II includes the construction of eight new schools — six elementary schools and two Pre-K-8 academies—by 2028 and

represents a significant investment in modernizing the district's educational infrastructure while meeting the growing needs of the community.

The new James E. Duckworth is scheduled to open for the 2028-2029 school year.

For more information on design & layout. <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/capital-programs/projects/duckworth-es>

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Sudoku Solution on page 10

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

BELTSVILLE CELEBRATES COMMUNITY AT NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

By Rick Bergmann

Beltsville residents came together on August 4 for an evening of food, fellowship, and community spirit during this year's National Night Out celebration at the Beltsville Library and Police Station.

The highlight of the evening was the recognition of Cpl. Hibbert and Cpl. Jones upon their retirement. The Beltsville community is grateful for their many years of dedicated service and for the commitment they have shown to the people they served. We wish them both the very best as they begin this new chapter in their lives.

The evening would not have been possible without the many people and organizations who helped make it a success. A special thank you goes to all of the food vendors who provided refreshments and helped create a festive atmosphere throughout the event.

We also extend our appreciation to the many community organizations that participated. Their presence showcased the wide variety of groups, programs, and resources that serve Beltsville and demonstrated what can be accomplished when our community works together.

Most importantly, thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate Beltsville. National Night Out is about building relationships, strengthening neighborhoods, and bringing people together, and the wonderful turnout on August 4 showed just how much community spirit Beltsville has.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, served, and stopped by. It was a wonderful evening celebrating the people who make Beltsville a community we are proud to call home.



Remembering 9/11 Twenty-Five Years Later

By Rick Bergmann

It's hard to believe that this year marks a quarter century since September 11, 2001. Twenty-five years is a long time, and yet in many ways, it feels like it was just yesterday. I was a junior at the University of Maryland in College Park when it happened, and I still remember the details vividly.

At the time, I didn't have a car, so I relied on public transportation to get from home to campus. I left the house around 7 a.m. because I had a 9 a.m. Modern American Literature class, and I wanted to get a little reading done and grab a bite to eat before class.

We were studying Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise* at the time. If you've never read it, it is almost eerie how relevant the book felt that day. The novel follows a college professor named Jack, who lives with his wife, Babette, and their children. Their ordinary lives are disrupted by a toxic chemical accident, forcing Jack to confront his fear of death and the uncertainty of the world around him. The novel explores consumerism, technology, fear, and our attempts to find security in an unpredictable world. Reading that book on September 11 has stuck with me to this day.



Plumes of smoke billow from the World Trade Center after the September 11th attacks (2001). Photo By Michael Foran, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11785530>

I arrived on campus and headed to the student union to grab coffee and a bagel before walking across the street to class. When I walked in, everyone was gathered around one of the TVs in the union watching *Today*. Matt Lauer had just announced that a plane had hit one of the Twin Towers, and there really wasn't much other information available yet.

I remember thinking, "That's weird," grabbing my coffee and heading to class. When I got there, I asked my professor

if he had seen the news about a plane hitting the Twin Towers in New York. He said he hadn't, and then we had class. I really didn't give it much more thought until I walked out afterward and put my headphones in my ears.

That's when I realized how bad things were.

Living in Maryland, so close to Washington, D.C., I think it was easy to take for granted what it meant to live near the center of the federal government. That morning was an eye-opening experience. Suddenly, an attack on the government didn't seem like something happening somewhere far away. It felt frighteningly close to home.

The news reporting was all over the map. No one seemed to have definitive answers, and details were coming out minute by minute. It was terrifying. Classes were canceled, and I had to head home without even knowing whether there would be a bus to pick me up.

As I stood at the bus stop, I listened to the radio for anything new. There was a lot of reporting that later turned out not to be true. Stations were reporting bombs in the streets, additional attacks and people being hurt. Rumors and facts were mixed together, and it seemed like mass chaos.

The bus finally came, and I headed home to watch the story unfold on television, like so many other Americans did that day. September 11 is one of only two news events from my younger years that I can remember so vividly. The other is the Challenger disaster.

I often hear young people who didn't live through 9/11 ask why we have a day of remembrance. The truth is, I don't always have an easy answer for that.

For me, it is a day to remind myself that the world can change in an instant and that none of us lives in a bubble. It is also a day to remember that hate doesn't solve anything. It only breeds more hate, and eventually, it ends in tragedy.

I remember the sense of unity that followed those terrible days, and 25 years later, I find myself wishing we could rediscover some of that willingness to see one another as neighbors first. We may have different backgrounds, different beliefs and different ideas about what is best for our country, but each of us has something to offer.

Perhaps that is one of the most important lessons worth remembering 25 years later: We need to embrace our neighbors, not be afraid of them.

City of Greenbelt Welcomes Federal Court Ruling Protecting FBI Headquarters Project

Greenbelt, MD – The City of Greenbelt acknowledges the U.S. District Court ruling blocking the relocation of the planned FBI headquarters to the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C. The ruling restores the path forward for the FBI headquarters project in Greenbelt.

After years of federal review and a competitive selection process, Greenbelt was chosen as the best location for the FBI headquarters. The court's ruling that the current administration's effort to abandon the selected Greenbelt site and redirect funds towards the Reagan Building was unlawful and void, permanently barring actions and funding to advance that alternative relocation.

"Greenbelt is ready to help deliver the modern, secure headquarters campus that the FBI needs to carry out its mission" said Mayor Emmett Jordan. "This decision honors a thorough federal process, respects Congress's investment, and recognizes that Greenbelt was selected on its merits."

Benefits for Maryland, Prince George's County, and Greenbelt

The potential benefits of the project extend far beyond Greenbelt and Prince George's County. A new FBI headquarters will create local jobs, generate billions of dollars in economic activity for Maryland, and support new growth in communities served by Metro and MARC.

The City of Greenbelt also

recognizes the broader national importance of moving forward. Federal officials, Maryland's congressional delegation, and Prince George's County's Executive and legal team have emphasized that Greenbelt was selected through a competitive and transparent process to provide a secure, cost-effective facility for the FBI's workforce and mission.

Acknowledging State and County Leadership

"We thank Attorney General Anthony G. Brown, Prince George's County led by County Executive Aisha Braveboy, and the State of Maryland for standing firm on behalf of our residents and community throughout this fight," Mayor Jordan said. "We hope this ruling will clear the way for construction of a modern FBI headquarters campus in Greenbelt, which the FBI truly needs."

Attorney General Brown and Prince George's County Executive Braveboy filed suit in November 2025 to challenge the effort to shift the headquarters project away from Greenbelt. The court's decision blocks the attempted diversion of congressionally appropriated funds and clears the path towards resuming the project in Greenbelt.

The City of Greenbelt looks forward to continued collaboration with Maryland's federal, state, county, and local partners to advance construction of a world-class, secure FBI headquarters campus in Greenbelt.

Autumn Arrives with the Fall Equinox on September 22

By Rick Bergmann

As summer begins to wind down and the days gradually grow shorter, the official start of astronomical fall is approaching. This year, the autumnal equinox will occur on **Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 8:05 p.m. EDT**, marking the beginning of fall in the Northern Hemisphere.

The autumnal equinox, also known as the fall or September equinox, occurs at the precise moment the Sun crosses the celestial equator while moving south. At this point in Earth's annual journey around the Sun, neither hemisphere is tilted significantly toward or away from the Sun. After the equinox, those of us in the Northern Hemisphere will experience increasingly longer nights and shorter days until the winter solstice on December 21.

The word *equinox* comes from the Latin words *aequus*, meaning "equal," and *nox*, meaning "night." Despite the name, however, day and night are not exactly 12 hours long on the equinox. Because Earth's atmosphere bends sunlight and because sunrise and sunset are measured using the edge of the Sun rather than its center, there are actually a few extra minutes of daylight. The date when daylight and darkness are closest to equal is known as the "equilux," which will occur in most of the continental United

States a few days after the equinox.

Earth's **23.4-degree tilt** is responsible for our changing seasons. During summer, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted toward the Sun, bringing longer days. By winter, it is tilted away, resulting in shorter days. During the spring and fall equinoxes, Earth's position creates a temporary balance between the two. Around the equinox, the Sun also rises essentially due east and sets due west across most of the world.

The changing season will soon become increasingly visible. Birds begin their journeys south, temperatures cool, animals prepare for colder weather and leaves begin changing from summer greens to the familiar reds, oranges and yellows of autumn. Daylight has already been decreasing since the summer solstice in June and will continue to decline until the winter solstice in December.

Fall has also traditionally been associated with the harvest. The full Moon closest to the autumnal equinox is known as the **Harvest Moon**. In 2026, it will occur on **Friday, September 25**, just three nights after the equinox. The name dates to a time when farmers took advantage of the bright moonlight and relatively short period between successive moonrises to continue bringing in crops after sunset.

Cultures around the world

have developed traditions surrounding the arrival of autumn and the harvest season. These range from Mabon harvest celebrations to Japan's Buddhist Higan observance and gatherings at Mexico's Chichen Itza, where the angle of the equinox Sun creates a famous pattern of light and shadow along the pyramid of El Castillo.

There are actually two ways of determining when fall begins. Meteorologists consider September 1 the beginning of fall and divide the seasons into three-month periods for weather and climate recordkeeping. Astronomical fall, however, is determined by Earth's position relative to the Sun and begins with the autumnal equinox.

So, whether your favorite part of fall is cooler weather, colorful leaves, pumpkins, football or simply spending an evening outside without the summer heat, mark **September 22** on your calendar. At 8:05 p.m., summer officially gives way to autumn, beginning the seasonal journey toward the shorter, colder days of winter.

Information for this article was drawn from the Farmers' Almanac guide to the 2026 fall equinox. (<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/fall-equinox-first-day-of-fall>)

World Alzheimer's Month Highlights Importance of Early Diagnosis

By Rick Bergmann

September marks World Alzheimer's Month, an international campaign dedicated to raising awareness about dementia, challenging stigma and encouraging greater support for people living with dementia and their families. In 2026, the campaign celebrates its 15th anniversary.

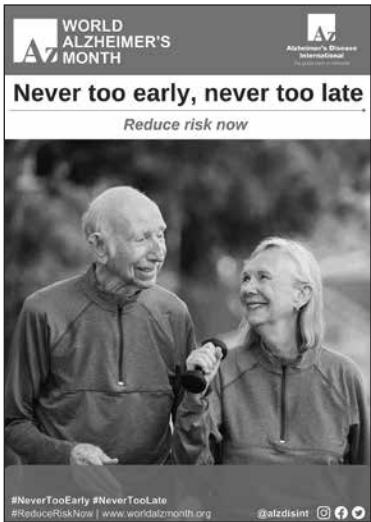
This year's theme, "The Earlier You Know, The More You Can Do: A Dementia Diagnosis Matters," places particular emphasis on the importance of early and accurate diagnosis.

Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), which coordinates the worldwide campaign, hopes the message will help address some of the fear, stigma and misinformation that can prevent people from seeking help when they begin noticing possible signs of dementia.

A diagnosis can be an important first step toward receiving appropriate treatment, care and support. It can also give individuals and their families an opportunity to better understand what is happening and begin making decisions about the future.

One of the most important messages of World Alzheimer's Month is that **dementia is not a normal part of aging**. Yet misconceptions about the condition remain widespread. According to ADI, 65 percent of health and care professionals incorrectly believe dementia is a normal part of aging. Fear and stigma can also create barriers: 46 percent of people living with dementia and caregivers identified fear of diagnosis and stigma as obstacles to receiving a diagnosis.

The number of people affected



by dementia makes awareness increasingly important. More than 55 million people worldwide are currently living with dementia, and someone develops dementia approximately every three seconds. That number is projected to increase to 78 million by 2030 and 139 million by 2050.

There is also growing evidence that dementia risk is not necessarily beyond an individual's influence. Research cited by ADI suggests that addressing 14 modifiable risk factors could delay or potentially prevent as many as 45 percent of dementia cases.

For those who do receive a diagnosis, medical treatment is only one part of the support that may be needed. Social activities, rehabilitation, respite care, reminiscence programs, accessible and dementia-friendly environments, and other forms of social support can help people living with dementia maintain their independence while also supporting their caregivers.

Caregivers themselves are significantly affected by dementia.

ALZHEIMER'S continues on page 11

Neighbors in the News

Update on the possible Borgwardt Crematorium

By Jillian Schweitzer

There was an updated, albeit, informal community meeting at the Beltsville Library on August 18th. It was held as a hybrid meeting as well, there was a virtual option via Google meetings.

There was a presentation by Donna Borgwardt-Mabry and then by Paul Seyler, from Mathews Environmental Solutions, the company who makes the possible equipment that would comprise the possible crematorium. The Maryland Department of the Environment was also on hand to answer any questions.

There will be a formal hearing, should the permit for the building be approved. Currently, there will be a technical review done by the state, with the comments and concerns voiced during this meeting taken into account.

There were many concerns raised during the Q & A session, chief among them health and environment concerns.

Among the variety of comments, questions and concerns raised:

- If this crematorium were to be built, there would be a yearly check on the facilities and employees, as well as unannounced visits along with announced visits.

- While emissions are tracked in real time to avoid any issues, particularly power outages, the amount of emissions is not zero. There is also a shut down override that the company can trigger remotely.
- Steve Smith and his wife mentioned the recent NBC4 coverage and a petition they were circulating. They also wanted to be able to limit the amount of cremations a year, as Beltsville already has a high environmental justice score of 83.3.
- The Air Quality Permits Office will be doing their own testing/modeling. This data would be provided ahead of any forthcoming hearings.
- Paul Seyler noted that "Machines run extremely clean, couldn't do this 10, 20 years ago".
- Another Beltsville resident noted that someone has already listed their house due to the possible crematorium.
- A retired public health expert from Johns Hopkins spoke in favor of the crematorium.
- Out of all the crematoriums in the US, 55-60% are from the company Borgwardt's is using.
- A question was asked about mercury abatement, which

- apparently the state no longer checks for and the company does not have filters for, due to many less people having mercury fillings in their teeth.
 - A question was asked about weather conditions preventing the machine from running, which currently are none, but with climate change and higher temps, it is something the company is looking at.
 - Were the funeral home to get the permit, there would be an initial period of checking before the five year permit could be applied for. It would need to be renewed every five years.
 - I asked about remediation, if there were more emissions than usual and it seems it'd just be tracking and possible fines.
 - The fuel used would be natural gas.
 - Someone noted about the crematorium in Baltimore, which is already under investigation for air quality issues, after being opened in April. MDE said since it was still under investigation, they had no comment.
- The meeting was recorded and will be available on MDE's YouTube channel, youtube.com/@mdenvironment.

Tips to Ace Math Class This School Year

(StatePoint) Math is often the most challenging class in a student's course load. But it doesn't have to be. Follow these tips to prevent feeling frazzled and overwhelmed this school year:

Find study buddies: Staying on top of your A-game can be as simple as making some friends in your class. Find some study buddies to remain accountable and work through difficult problems together.

Check in with your teacher: If you are having trouble with any particular concept, don't be afraid to reach out to your teacher. Ask questions during class or request to see them before or after class for a little extra support.

Equip yourself to succeed: A well-designed scientific calculator can simplify learning and make test days less stressful. The fx-300ES Plus B 2nd Edition from Casio is affordable, user-friendly and a good choice for everyday math needs. Its Natural



(c) koldo studio / iStock via Getty Images Plus

Textbook Display shows results and formulas as they typically appear in textbooks, making it easier to read and understand complex equations, and its clearly labeled buttons are intuitive to use. With a total of 262 functions, it's great for middle school, high

school and college students across a variety of mathematical subjects, including algebra, trigonometry and statistics. Plus, it's reliable and convenient. With a single

MATH CLASS continues on page 14

Sudoku Solution from page 7

9	6	1	5	8	7	2	4	3
5	4	7	3	2	6	8	1	9
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6	8	5	2	4	9	3	7	1
2	9	4	7	3	1	6	8	5
1	5	2	8	9	3	4	6	7
4	3	6	1	7	2	5	9	8
8	7	9	4	6	5	1	3	2

Back to School 2026

I am writing in August and schools in Maryland are opening in August again. When I was growing up school normally began the day after Labor Day. Go figure!

Things to Teach your Kids First

Before your kids go to school you can start by teaching your children how to stay safe. Make certain your kids know and remember their names, addresses and emergency phone numbers. Also, include a card securely stored in a book bag or other generally safe place that includes this information. Include bus stop information and anything you feel may be relevant in regards to your child.

I also like the practice of giving the child a code word. When you have to communicate a message to your child through another party, the code word can give your child confidence that the message came from you. Do not write this code word on the card. The child must remember this secret code word.

Teach your children (especially the older ones), how to create secure passwords. I publish at least one column a year showing how to create secure passwords. Pick a method and teach it to your child for them to use.

Set up a Learning Location At Home

Learning doesn't end at the end of the school day. Set up a learning area in your home with computing devices for the kids to do their homework and classroom



projects. I do not like having children working in their bedrooms with the door closed because the Internet is a dangerous place for children. If a separate workspace can't be found, have them leave their doors open while they use the computers.

Install a tool like OpenDNS (free) on the network or individually on each computer to block harmful Internet content. In the past, I have helped people select email services that limit who a child can communicate with exchange via email.

I would also consider removing or disabling any AI software on computers used by younger children.

About Computer Gear

Distribution of computer gear used in

schools today has changed a lot. Often younger children get access to tablets. Older children in are more likely to get Chromebooks. Access to desktop, laptop, or notebook computers will typically go to the upper students.

Keep this in mind if you are considering purchasing computers. Computers have increased significantly in costs due to the demand from the AI industry. I have successfully purchased refurbished (used) computers for years. Microcenter is a good place to shop locally.

Accessories

I personally prefer using a mouse but many kids like the touch pads on the computer instead. Today's students need

a headset. The headset allows the student to speak and listen without disturbing those around them. Tablets and laptops usually include a camera. The camera allows remote learning. Cameras for desktop computers are available as well.

I always like to make sure the student has a USB Thumb Drive to backup any assignments or other work.

Software

Most of the software the students need should be provided or available from the school. If you are using an older of Windows (Windows 10 for example), you may want a malware protection program like McAfee. I prefer using free and open software for anything else. My daughters did all of their schoolwork on free software like LibreOffice and Gimp.

Home Printers

Typically, a family only needs a single color printer but your mileage may vary. I prefer the all-in-one printers that include a scanner and a printer. There are a number of inexpensive printers available but they make up the cost by making the ink expensive. Now bulk ink printers have become more popular. These are less expensive to operate but cost more to purchase. If you expect to print a lot, get a bulk ink printer.

Until Next Month

Have a great a first day of school, next month I may write on stopping SPAM.

Maintaining Great Indoor Air Quality at Home During Wildfires

(StatePoint) Wildfire smoke can travel hundreds or even thousands of miles, impacting indoor air quality well beyond active fire zones. While you can't control the air outside, you can create a cleaner indoor environment by taking these steps:

1. Monitor your local Air Quality Index (AQI) and wildfire smoke forecasts before conditions worsen. Visit <https://www.airnow.gov> to get real-time local data.
2. Run a HEPA air purifier continuously in frequently used spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms.
3. Consider an air purifier with an air quality monitor that automatically adjusts as indoor air quality changes, such as the GermGuardian 22" Intelligent Tower Air Purifier (AC4880). Beyond smoke, it provides whole-room coverage, capturing 99.97% of dust, pollen and pet dander, while an optional UV-C light reduces airborne allergens, germs, bacteria and mold spores. Its IntelliSense technology monitors air quality 60 times per minute and automatically adjusts fan speed, and its digital panel displays real-time air quality, so you always know your air is clean. Another choice designed with smart home enthusiasts in mind



is the GermGuardian AirSafe+ XL Smart Air Purifier, which is equipped with four layers of protection including a HEPA PURE 360-degree filter, UV-C light, carbon filter, and washable fabric pre-filter, capturing 99.97% of dust, pollen, and pet dander. Also featuring IntelliSense technology, it automatically adjusts fan speed when poor air quality is detected to deliver continuous, round-the-clock purification. Plus, it syncs with the Aria for Home app, Alexa, and Google Home so you can keep your air quality visible; monitor real-time AQI, set timers, and get filter replacement reminders, whether you're home or not.

4. Check whether your air purifier's

filter needs replacing. GermGuardian recommends replacing the filter every 6-8 months depending on use. When purchasing a new filter, be cautious of inexpensive "compatible" filters sold online and seek out genuine replacement filters designed specifically for your unit. Doing so will help ensure proper fit and optimal filtration performance when it matters most.

With wildfires increasing in both frequency and intensity, having a way to protect the air you breathe at home is essential. Be sure that your home is equipped with top notch air purifiers, and that you properly replace their filters often.

ALZHEIMER'S

continued from page 10

More than half of caregivers worldwide report that their health has suffered because of their caregiving responsibilities. Globally, the amount of unpaid care provided to people with dementia living at home each year is equivalent to the work of 67 million full-time employees. Women provide approximately two-thirds of primary dementia care worldwide.

Despite the challenges associated with receiving a dementia diagnosis, being informed can also provide a sense of empowerment. Evidence cited in the World Alzheimer's Month campaign suggests that when people with dementia and their families are properly prepared and supported, the shock, anger and grief that can accompany a diagnosis may be balanced by feelings of reassurance and empowerment.

Throughout September, organizations and individuals around the world will participate in advocacy efforts, educational programs, Memory Walks, fundraising events and other activities designed to increase understanding of dementia and reduce the stigma surrounding it.

The message behind this year's World Alzheimer's Month campaign is ultimately a simple one: noticing possible symptoms and seeking answers should not be something to fear or hide. With earlier knowledge can come greater access to treatment, support, planning and the resources that can help people living with dementia continue to live as independently as possible.

The earlier you know, the more you can do.

Calendar of Events

COLLEGE PARK DAY

Save the Date: Sat., Oct. 3 from 12 noon to 6 p.m. The annual College Park Day festival will take place at the College Park Aviation Museum and Airport, located at 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Drive, College Park. There will be three stages of live music and performances, 17+ food & drink vendors, artist alley, activities and games for all ages, fun races, helicopter and plane fly-in, games, free museum entry, and more! Free event with free nearby parking, metro access, bicycle racks, and nearby shuttle service. Details at www.collegeparkday.org.

VICTORIA FALLS 2026 YARD & GARAGE SALE

Save the Date: Sat., Oct. 3 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is no rain date. This event will be held at 13701 Belle Chasse Blvd., Laurel, MD 20707, and various garage locations within the community. Only residents can sell items, but it is open to the public for purchases.

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 additional events see www.pgparks.com/facilities/college-park-aviation-museum.

WOMEN IN AVIATION TOUR

Sun., Sept. 6 from 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Discover the vital role women have played in powered flight, beginning with Katharine Wright in 1903. Explore the groundbreaking achievements of female pilots with ties to College Park Airport, and engage in a conversation about the opportunities and challenges women face in aviation careers. This program is FREE. Ages 8 and up.

CUB CORNER

Two dates: Sat., Sept. 19 and Sun., Sept. 20 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. each day. Blast off into an out-of-this-world adventure with a reading of *Dogs in Space* by Vix Southgate and Iris Deppe. Young learners will discover the brave dogs who journeyed into space and helped pave the way for human space exploration. After the story, participants can create their own adorable, paper bag dog puppets to take home. This program is recommended for children ages 3 – 6. FREE! No registration required; includes 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.
- **Contact us** for more information regarding additional events taking place in September.

FRIENDS OF PATUXENT POLLINATOR FESTIVAL

Sat., Sept. 26 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., **rain or shine**. FREE activities for the public and families. See the movie *The Extraordinary Caterpillar*. Weather permitting, there will be a Monarch butterfly-tagging and release. Other activities included are:

- Wild Bird Meet & Greet, Maryland Raptor Conservancy
- Live music
- Family arts and crafts
- Nature walks
- USGS EESC scientists and local experts on site for: pollinators, bees, native plants, birds, amphibians, conservation, and gardening

Also, there will be artisan and native plant vendors and food available for purchase.

STORY TRAIL

Daily, from sunrise to sunset (except Tuesdays, only until 4 p.m.). All Ages. Explore a seasonal children's book, displayed page-by-page in weather-protected, child-height boxes outdoors along the paved Loop Trail that are near the outdoor bathrooms.

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.

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). Ages 3 – 10, with an adult. Crafts, puzzles, games, nature exploration. Registration is strongly recommended: Call 301.497.5772 during regular business hours. For large groups please contact michael_cangelosi@fws.gov.

MONARCH MAGIC CENTER

Open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the Visitor Center is open. The monarch butterfly season is here! All ages. This is a fun and educational exhibit. See the various stages of this fascinating insect's life cycle in person! You can also see the monarch butterfly life cycle video. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, call 301.497.5772 when the Visitor Center is open and sign up for a Butterfly Team overview presentation.

HOLLINGSWORTH ART GALLERY

Free. All ages. Open when the building is open. The art gallery is next to the bookstore.

- **September** artists: Imagine Earth Collective. The members include scientists, researchers, and communications specialists. Their exhibit is titled *Meet Your Neighbors* and features artworks inspired by flora and fauna of the Maryland and Washington, DC area.

FAMILY FUN

This educational exhibit is open to individual study from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wed. – Sat. All ages.

- **Theme for late summer and autumn:** Dirt—Dig it! Explore through hands-on activities, games and crafts for all ages. This is a drop-in program: come when you wish and leave when you're ready.

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.

LAUREL SENIOR FRIENDSHIP CLUB (LSFC)

The September meeting will be Wed., Sept. 2 at 10:30 a.m. The club meets on the first Wednesday of each month. For more information about the meeting, contact Ms. Pary Harris at

240.893.6738.

- The LSFC office is open Mon. – Fri. from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Call 301.206.3380.
- Please make lunch reservations two weeks in advance of each meeting. Call the office for details.
- Trips planned for 2026: *Be sure to register early since many trips sell out in advance!*
- 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. 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.

YOUNG AT HEART CLUB

Change of date for the September meeting: The September meeting will take place **Thur., Sept. 10** at 10:30 a.m. Address: the Beltsville Community Center, 3900 Sellman Rd., Beltsville. The meeting is for residents who are 55 years of age and older. Our speaker will be talking about *How to Keep More of Your Money in Retirement*. We'll have our usual light refreshments, 50/50 chance, and you can sign up for the Christmas trip that is planned for November to the American Music Theater in Pennsylvania. You do not have to be a senior citizen to go on this trip, in case you have a young adult to go with you. A meal is included in the price as well as the bus transportation. Contact Lois at 301.498.9736 for more information.

UPSTAGE ARTISTS PRESENTS THE MALTESE FALCON

Step into the shadowy world of 1930s San Francisco, where everyone has a secret—and everyone wants something. When a mysterious woman walks into private detective Sam Spade's office seeking help, what begins as a seemingly simple case quickly spirals into murder, deception, and a dangerous hunt for a priceless treasure: the legendary Maltese Falcon. As Spade navigates a web of eccentric criminals, shifting

alliances, and carefully crafted lies, he must determine who he can trust before he becomes the next victim. Based on Dashiell Hammett's legendary detective novel, this world-premiere stage adaptation by local playwright John Cusumano brings the intrigue, sharp dialogue, dark humor, and unforgettable characters of *The Maltese Falcon* to the stage. Join UpStage Artists for a suspenseful journey into the world of classic film noir, where the truth is elusive, betrayal comes easily, and everyone is searching for "the stuff that dreams are made of."

Where: Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville MD 20705.

When: Evening Performances are September 18, 19, 25, 26 at 7:30 pm and Matinee performances are September 19*, 20, and 27 at 2:00 pm.

*The September 19 Matinee will be followed by a talkback with the cast and writer/director
Cost: Tickets are just \$15 and can be purchased at www.upstageartists.com

BELTSVILLE LIBRARY EVENTS

Please note: The Beltsville Branch Library will be **closed from Wed., Aug. 26 through Mon., Sept. 7** for building repairs and maintenance. The library is scheduled to reopen on Tue., Sept. 8. 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.pgcmlls.info/location/Beltsville for online services and information about other county library branches and programs.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

READY 2 READ STORYTIME

Two Mondays: Sept. 14 and 21 at 10:30 a.m. each day. Ages 2 – 3. Bring your toddler for stories, songs, and fingerplays that spark imagination and encourage a love of reading.

SPANISH–ENGLISH READY 2 READ STORYTIME

Two Thursdays: Sept. 17 and 24 at 10:30 a.m. each day. Ages 3 – 5. Enjoy a vibrant mix of stories, fingerplays, and songs in both Spanish and English. This interactive session helps little ones explore language and culture in a fun, engaging way.

READY 2 READ ART: MONARCH BUTTERFLY RINGS

Thur., Sept. 10 at 10:30 a.m. Celebrate Welcoming Week with stories and a fun monarch butterfly ring craft. Supplies are provided and are limited, so **registration is required**.

Neighbors in the News



Photo by Billy McNeel.

The Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC) after the 2001 tornado.

The Day The Tornado Came To Beltsville!

By Jillian Schweitzer

Twenty-five years ago, this month held a lot of pain. Just after the attacks of September 11th, an F3 tornado swept our area on September 24th. It hit Beltsville, the BARC campus, College Park and the UMD grounds, and then Laurel as well.

I lived in College Park at the time and my mother, who grew up in the Midwest and knew the warning signs, saw the funnel cloud and ushered myself and my three brothers into the basement. We heard the wind roar past the house and then it was eerily silent. My mother worked at the then Linens N Things in the shopping center near to the IKEA (which became Best Buy) but thankfully wasn't scheduled for work that day. The front of the building was dented and caved in, as it was in the path of the tornado. We were without power for two days as repairs were made.

In Beltsville proper, the roof nearly came off St. Joseph's on Rt 1, power was out for many days and trees/debris clogged the roads. There was also extensive damage to the BARC campus. From the Under the Clock Tower

newsletter:

"Slate and roofing material were torn off of Bldgs. 003, 006, 009, 011 and 050...the greatest damage occurred to the greenhouses...over 2,000 panes of glass were broken in Range 2 and Bldg .050."

Throughout Beltsville, many residents were also affected. I recently asked folks in the Beltsville Matters Facebook group, for what they remembered of that time.

"Tried to get home from working on the U campus. Drove north on Virginia Manor, but it was blocked by a downed tree. Coming back south was able to take a right turn onto Powder Mill, but the trees were very damaged."

—Charles B. Cranston

"One of the buildings [Montpelier village condominiums] was ripped clean off."

—Alison Bauer

"I remember the sky as I turned onto cedar Lane it looked like two huge snakes writhing in the clouds"

—George Woo

Residents Organize Against Proposed ICE Expansion at Metro 1

Community members are organizing in opposition to the proposed expansion of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations at 6505 Belcrest Road in Hyattsville.

The Metro 1 building has long housed Prince George's County services, including programs related to food assistance, healthcare and education. An ICE law office already operates in the building and has reportedly received permission to expand across the third floor. Opponents say the increased ICE presence could make residents fearful of visiting the building and accessing county services.

Organizers are encouraging residents to sign a petition opposing the expansion and participate in weekly rallies outside 6505 Belcrest Road on Fridays from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.

A larger community rally is planned for Tuesday, September 8, at 10:00 a.m. outside the Prince George's County Council meeting. Residents may also submit written testimony, sign up to speak before the Council or register to provide public comment.

Organizers say their goal is to keep Metro 1 a safe and welcoming location where all Prince George's County residents can access essential public services.

Club News

Beltsville Young at Heart

By Lois Hamilton

CHANGE FOR SEPT. MEETING: Because of the club's Massachusetts trip, our monthly meeting will be on the SECOND Thursday instead of the third. We will meet on Sept. 10—regular time and place—10:30 a.m. at the Beltsville Community Center. Our speaker will be talking about "How to keep more of your money in retirement." We've had Mr. Sciannella speak to us earlier this

year on a different subject, but it should be an interesting subject and suggestions.

We'll have our usual light refreshments, 50/50 chance, and you can sign up for the Christmas trip in November to the American Music Theater in Penn.

You do not have to be a senior to go on this trip, in case you have a young adult to go with you. A meal is included in the price as well as the bus transportation.

I will **not** be writing an article

in September for the Beltsville News because I'll be on the trip to Mass. that week. But our October 15 meeting will have a lady to present recipes and suggestions for the **Heart Healthy Month**, with a tasting of what to make to help your heart.

Call Lois at 301-498-9736 for any information about the club or its meetings. You do not have to live in Beltsville to attend, only be at least 55 years of age.

DETECTIVE STORY

continued from page 1

The production also welcomes several newcomers to the UpStage stage: Kelly Simmons as Iva Archer, Michaela Haber as Effie Perrine, Count Momo as Lt. Polehaus, Anmol Arora as Miles Archer and Wilmer "The Kid," and Marc Ferrera as Lt. Dundy.

The Maltese Falcon opens

September 18 and runs for seven performances through September 27. Evening performances are September 18, 19, 25, and 26 at 7:30 p.m., with matinee performances on September 19, 20, and 27 at 2:00 p.m. A special talkback with the cast and director/writer will follow the September 19 matinee.

Tickets for *The Maltese Falcon* are just \$15 and can be purchased

online at www.upstageartists.com. All performances will be held at Emmanuel United Methodist Church, 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705.

This September, UpStage Artists invites audiences to follow Sam Spade into a shadowy world where everyone has a secret, no one can be trusted, and one mysterious black bird may be worth killing for.

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

MATH CLASS

continued from page 10

AAA battery, its efficient power supply lasts approximately three years, and its slim size easily fits into backpacks, bags and drawers.

Don't save math homework for last: If math is not your favorite subject, it can be tempting to put this homework off for last. Don't. To avoid burnout, consider approaching the subjects that are most difficult for you when you're still fresh.

Get help online: Free online resources can help you gain more practice and improve

your math skills. For example, Casio's ClassPad.net offers a clean, versatile workspace for performing essential primary computational and trigonometric functions, visualizing expressions and analyzing functions. There are also many YouTube and TikTok content creators offering math tutorials and advice, along with demonstrations on how to make the most of specific calculator models.

With new study habits and the right tools, you can ensure math class is fun, engaging and never a source of stress.

CALENDAR

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FROM THE MUSEUM TO THE LIBRARY: EXPLORE PURO RITMO

Tue., Sept. 15 at 6:30 p.m. Discover the Smithsonian exhibition *Puro Ritmo: The Musical Journey of Salsa* and create your own Celia Cruz-inspired shoe using craft supplies. Family participation is encouraged.

READY 2 READ STORYTIME: PALETA PARTY

Mon., Sept. 28 at 10:30 a.m. Ages 2 – 3. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with a special story time featuring

Paletero Man by Lucky Diaz, followed by a refreshing frozen treat.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

LEGOS: BRICKS AND BEYOND

Three Wednesdays: Sept. 9, 23, and 30 at 3:30 p.m. Build, create, and explore with LEGOs! With plenty of pieces and endless possibilities, kids can let their imaginations take the lead in this freestyle building session.

TAIL WAGGIN' TUTOR

Two dates: Sat., Sept. 12 and Fri., Sept. 18 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Boost your child's confidence

by reading to friendly, trained therapy dogs. Bring a favorite book or choose one from the library.

LEGOS: ALEBRIJES

Wed., Sept. 16 at 3:30 p.m. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by exploring the colorful Mexican tradition of alebrijes and building your own LEGO creation.

STEM FUN: ELLEN OCHOA

Thur., Sept. 17 at 4 p.m. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month while learning about engineer and astronaut Ellen Ochoa. Children will explore STEM and create their own constellations.

PROGRAMS FOR TEENS

TEEN ACTION GROUP (TAG) — EVERY MINUTE MATTERS: TEEN FIRST AID WORKSHOP

Mon., Sept. 14 at 4 p.m. Learn essential first aid skills, including CPR, AED use, opioid overdose response with Naloxone, and bleeding control techniques.

SIP AND PAINT: SALVADORAN FOLK ART

Mon., Sept. 21 at 4 p.m. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month while creating your own masterpiece inspired by Salvadoran folk art. All painting supplies and refreshments are provided.

TEEN ACTION GROUP (TAG)

Mon., Sept. 28 at 4 p.m. Earn community service hours while making a real impact! Join TAG to contribute to your community, meet new friends, and have your voice heard at the library.

PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLUB

Every Wednesday at 6 p.m. each day. Practice English conversation, build confidence, and connect with others in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

NEEDLEWORK SOCIAL

Mon., Sept. 14 at 4 p.m. Bring your current needlecraft project and enjoy a relaxed atmosphere while connecting with others, exchanging tips, and sharing ideas.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: PREVENTING BURNOUT IN THE WORKPLACE

Tue., Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. Explore strategies for managing stress, improving focus, and maintaining work-life balance. Learn practical habits to support productivity and overall well-being.

LEARN AND EARN: CAREER TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS FOR TODAY'S WORKFORCE

Wed., Sept. 16 at 6 p.m. Learn about continuing education, career training, and certification opportunities at Prince George's Community College, including the Workforce Development Sequence Scholarship.

MOVIE: UNDER THE SAME MOON

Tue., Sept. 22 at 5:30 p.m. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with a

CALENDAR

continues on page 15

Beltsville News CHURCH DIRECTORY



EMMANUEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BELTSVILLE, MD

ALL ARE WELCOME HERE!
Emmanuel United Methodist Church
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11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705

Join us for meaningful worship, inspiring music, and a warm, welcoming community.

Can't attend in person? Watch our live broadcast at www.eumcbeltsville.com

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

 **Upcoming Events** 

ONLINE BIBLE STUDY RESUMES SEPT. 2 (TUESDAYS at 7:00 PM)
LINK: <https://meet.google.com/qbz-nxzy-frj>
September 12: following service Potluck and Sundae Bar
September 18-27 UpStage Artists Presents *The Maltese Falcon*

Rev. Dr. Andrea Middleton King, Pastor
(301)937-7114 † office@eumcbeltsville.com
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Struggling with job loss, to pay rent, to get food, or need emergency help? The Beltsville Adventist Community Center (BACC) exists to help those in the Beltsville Community and beyond take the next step toward financial independence.

FIND US at 4220 Ammendale Road, Beltsville MD 20705, located in the house behind the Beltsville SDA Church

BACC Services

- Job Counseling Assistance
- Rental & Utility Assistance (on a case by case basis)
- Food Supplement
- Professional Counseling

On Site Agent of Dept of Social Services (DSS)

- SAIL: Apply for services on-line
- Food Supplement (FS)
- Medical Assistance for Families & Children (FAC)
- Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP)
- Recertify—(Redetermination) -Dropoff documents
- Other DSS Emergency Assistance

Food and financial assistance HOURS:
Tues and Wed 9 am to 2 pm.
Office calling HOURS:
Mon through Thurs
9 am to 4:30 pm

We are celebrating our tenth year of operation



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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.



August in Dallas is not for the faint of heart. The sweltering heat is a test of endurance. Some days at 1 a.m. the outside temperature cools down to 91 degrees or thereabout. The gardens many of us fought to start are suffering in silence, the ground is cracking up from heat and the rabbits in my neighborhood are eating shrubs meant for my front hedge. The pressure is real.

Humans --- oh, we are acting up in strange ways. Recently, there was a road rage situation on a local major road in Irving, Beltline Road (equivalent to Route 1 in Beltsville) Two motorists pulled over on I 30 and started swinging at each other. A week ago, in full glare of traffic and a police patrol car, an enraged driver rammed into another car and fled. Unfortunately for the fleeing driver, there was a police patrol car sitting at the light on the other side, so a pursuit ensued.

Sadly, in the last week, in Fort Worth another road rage incident took place that resulted in a loss of life. A male driver fired shots at a car, striking the occupant of the other car. Allegedly he fled the scene and apparently (according to police/news sources) he went on into his regular job, as if nothing had happened. Shell casings from the shooting were traced back to him and he was arrested on the job.

It is sad that in sweltering heat, some people have no control of their emotions. I am not a medical expert, but it would be interesting

to know if there is a correlation between heat, hydration and human temperament.

By the time this column comes out, the NFL season should be just underway. Is your team ready? Living in Dallas, it is that time of the year when Dallas Cowboy fans start the rhetoric about how their team is going to make the playoffs and win the Superbowl. The fans have come out of the woodwork, wearing their team memorabilia and flying their Cowboy flags with the single lonely star on it (my joke on them). I love to tease the fans at work or anywhere else I see them. This is my favorite time of the year. I am a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, for life, and as long as we defeat and humble the Baltimore Ravens, I can care less about the playoffs. So who's your team? What are your expectations? Like I tease Cowboy fans - William Shakespeare will write a new book, his first in a few hundred years, when the Dallas Cowboys make the Superbowl and win.

On to something else. I have been drinking a lot more water recently, thanks to the heat. I envy coworkers of mine when I see them walk into the building with a gallon of water, and that is the only fluid they are drinking - no coffee or tea, no sodas or juice from the vending machines. I want to try and get to that stage where all I drink is water with my meals, when I am thirsty or even when I am out socializing. Trying to step up my health drive.

Doing a lot more fruit, the good

ones and vegetables --- oh and I just rediscovered lentils. Lentils are superfood in my cookbook.

How often do you walk? How many steps? Do you have a goal?

Walking is one of the simplest ways to stay active, and I usually tell people that aiming for **7,000-10,000 steps a day** is a solid, realistic goal. The old 10,000step standard is still fine, but newer research shows you don't have to hit that exact number to see real benefits. Around **7,000 steps** already support heart health and lower longterm risks, while pushing toward **8,000-10,000 steps** adds extra perks like better weight management and improved metabolism. Even consistently reaching **4,000-5,000 steps** make a difference, especially if it helps break up long periods of sitting. The real key is staying active throughout the day - whether it's a morning walk, taking the stairs, or an evening stroll. Movement adds up, and those steps become a powerful investment in your health.

So, get a pair of comfortable walking shoes and start walking. There are lots of areas in Beltsville where one can go on walks. We have a few scenic trails in the area. Alternatively, you can walk round the track at High Point High School or walk from Dar Cars and Route 29, all the way to Shoppers/Route 1 and the back.

Well, that's all I have for now and hope you have a great day, week, month --- whatever time of day you it is for you.

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 01/27

HELP WANTED

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS Accounting, Bookkeeping, Payroll, Tax Planning, Preparation & Representation Budgets, Analyses, Support Services, NPOs & Govt. Contract Compliance, Indirect Rates, DCAA, Incurred Costs, Submission, DCAA & More. 30Yrs+, Incorporations& Entity Choice Selection Audits, Reviews, Compilations Plus Sarbanes-Oxley Compliance Services. inforequest@bai-tech.com When CPA Experience & Results Matter. Call 301-608-2248. <https://bai-tech.com>. Creating Powerful Business Affordable Solutions For America & Beyond. 01/27



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The Beltsville News

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CALENDAR

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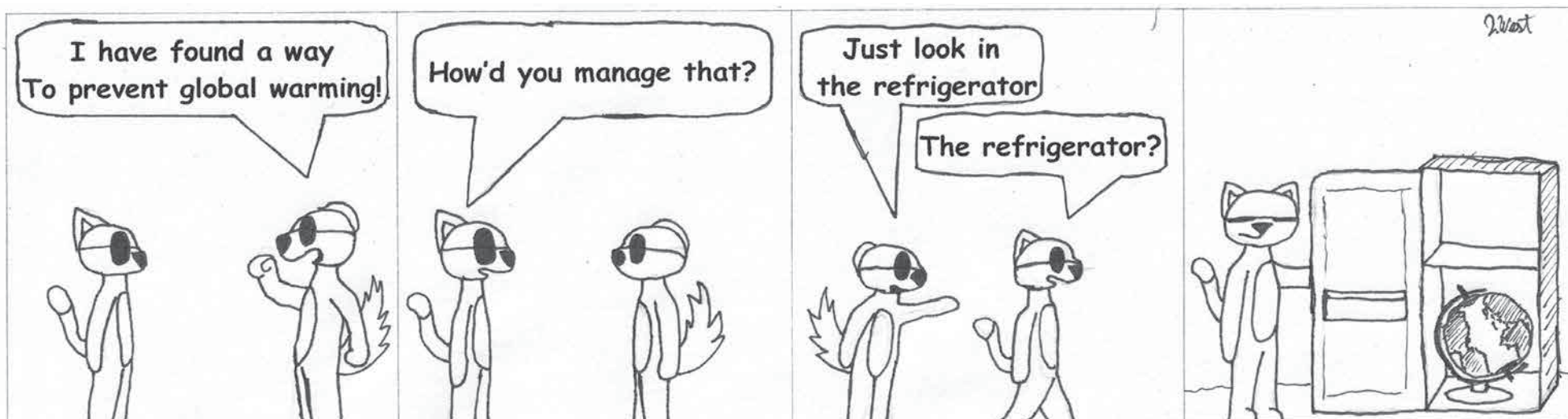
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Boospherous Boonipherous Bojangles Barnaby III, a.k.a. BOO By Joseph West



6 Doctor-Approved Back-to-School Tips for a Healthy School Year

(StatePoint) A healthy school year starts before the first day of class. The American Medical Association (AMA) is sharing six tips to help families prepare children for a healthy return to the classroom.

1. Pack nutritious food: When packing your child's lunch and snacks, include a variety of healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, lean or plant-based proteins and whole grains. As much as possible, try to avoid highly processed food products, such as processed meats and sugar-sweetened drinks such as soda and juice. To help you make the healthiest choices for your growing child, read nutrition labels carefully and choose foods that are lower in sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.

2. Make sleep a priority: A good night's sleep is essential to overall health, especially as children develop. School stress, illnesses and other factors can keep kids from getting enough sleep. Set a consistent sleep routine and bedtime to keep the whole family on track. Teens should aim for 8-10 hours of sleep per night and children between 6 and 12 should get



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9-12 hours. Keep cell phones out of the bedroom to improve sleep time and quality. If your child experiences persistent sleep issues, talk with their doctor to find out if it's caused by a sleep disorder and whether treatment is needed.

3. Get up-to-date on MMR vaccination: Be aware that the United States is seeing the highest number of measles cases in more than 30 years, and measles spreads very easily, often before you realize that you — or

the people around you — are sick. Measles is more than a rash. It is an extremely contagious, airborne virus that can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, brain swelling, blindness and even death, especially in babies and young children. An MMR vaccine is the best way to avoid spreading measles, mumps and rubella and prevent children from getting sick. There is no treatment for these infections, so vaccination is the best defense.

Nearly everyone who doesn't get an MMR vaccine will get sick if exposed to measles, mumps or rubella. Be sure your child is up to date on MMR vaccination to protect them against severe complications. Doing so will help keep them from missing out on school and help you from missing work to care for a sick child.

4. Limit screen time: People are on their devices more than ever before. Too much screen time can have negative mental and physical health effects and increase feelings of loneliness. The start of a new school year is a good time to replace screen time with other activities, such as after school clubs, sports, playdates, reading, quality family time and sleep. Screen-free meals and keeping devices out of bedrooms can also help children build healthier habits.

5. Protect their smile: Establishing good dental routines, including brushing, flossing, and regular dental visits, will help make these habits stick and keep kids smiling. Poor dental hygiene is associated with health complications later in life, making it especially important to

establish good dental habits early.

6. Prevent spread of norovirus: Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting, diarrhea or both, and can spread quickly in schools. It is the leading cause of foodborne illness, but it is preventable. When buying school supplies, stock up on cleaning supplies as well. Cleaning frequently touched surfaces and modeling good hand-washing habits for your children can help prevent the spread of norovirus and other gastrointestinal germs. If your child develops GI symptoms, keep them home from school for at least 48 hours after symptoms stop to prevent spreading the virus to others.

For more back-to-school health information, visit the AMA website at <https://www.ama-assn.org>.

"Backpacks, notebooks and pencils are classroom essentials — but one of the best school supplies you can give a child is a healthy start," said AMA President Willie Underwood, III, MD. "Prioritizing physical and mental health helps students arrive ready to learn, grow and thrive all year long."



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