



# Connect 24



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## ***MAEO Conference Reception and Trade Show***

This year we are hosting our very first Reception and Vendor Trade Show! Don't miss out on this exciting event that will include appetizers and hors d'oeuvres on **Tuesday evening after the Business meeting**. Visit every vendor during the conference and enter to win the **Vendor Scavenger Hunt**. The winner will be selected during dinner on Thursday evening. ***You must be present to win all prizes.***

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## **New Cecil County Director**

The Cecil County Board of Elections is pleased to welcome Ruie Lavoie as the new Cecil County Election Director. Ruie began working for the state of Maryland in 2011 at DHMH, as an office supervisor. Eight months later, she took a promotional transfer to the Baltimore County Board of Elections, coming in as Data App Specialist II. After two years, she moved up to Administrative Officer. Prior to elections, Ruie spent a couple of decades in property management. Ruie has been Secretary for the Maryland Association of Election Officials since 2014. She is involved with several election committees and is an asset to many. Ruie brings with her a wide wealth of knowledge in election judge training, voter registration and election administration. She has a fantastic working relationship with everyone she meets. She is also a single mother who has brought up a wonderful daughter named Brianna. We are very excited that she is joining the Cecil County team.

**Lora Walters, Cecil County**



**Ruie Lavoie, Election Director for Cecil County**



## State Raises in High Gear

Carroll County Election Director Katherine Berry and her crew have been working tirelessly over the last couple of years in an effort for new salary proposals for State employees of the Local Board of Elections. This proposal would mean increased salaries for said employees. Elections can be a tough venture, especially since over the last several years Early Voting days and hours have steadily increased, adding to the already long hours on our schedule.

It looks as though those efforts will start to pay off, both literally and figuratively. A meeting is scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup> with the State Board and Katie is confident in everyone being able to see a 3% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) on July 1st while moving into a new grade and receive a salary increase in some form over the course of a few years.

As this process is still in its 'compromise/negotiation' phase, Katie feels it is important for everyone to remember the following:

- While benefits do not put food on our tables, we receive several thousand dollars per employee in benefits such as health insurance, pensions and leave packages that private industry and even county or federal government may not provide.
- We are one of the very few state agencies that accrue the amount of overtime that we all do.
- Most people who have worked in elections for a period of time enjoy what they're doing, so they may choose to work at the Board of Elections no matter what.
- Small salary increments over the course of a few years could actually yield more in the long run.
- People who intend to retire may not see a huge addition to their social security of pensions until at least 5 years after any type of salary increas-

es are implemented. Also, if you're a non-exempt employee and have the option for compensatory time or cash overtime, you should take the cash because you will see it positively impact your social security benefits when you become eligible.



**Carroll Co. Director  
Katherine Berry**

Everyone is encouraged to attend the "Personnel Power Hour" at the MAEO Conference where there will be a discussion about non-exempt employees, education on the new classification and a discussion on state employee unions and anything new that affects personnel matters which Human Resources finds important to discuss.

Katie says, "I want everyone to also recognize that the LBE HR structure is different from SBE in that we can go to SBE HR to ask for things such as reclassifications and the whole new job series." She continues, "In order [for] the SBE to have any of this, it must be approved by DBM [Department of Budget & Management]. Recognizing the incredibly difficult, thankless jobs that LBEs have, we also owe it to SBE to recognize the difficult, thankless jobs that they do too. Without one or the other, we would not be successful."

Katie would like to see things change for SBE as well, but the process they must go through is different. This negotiation may allow for them to implement similar reclassification.

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## State Raises in High Gear cont'd

She's hopeful that SBE employees will be given the same opportunity to grow.

Katie would like to recognize all those who have been a part of this project since the beginning: Armstead Jones, David Garreis, Joe Torre, Allison Murphy, Chrissy Jones and Danna Williams and a huge thanks to her staff at Carroll County. "[My staff} are a wonderful group of individuals that

continue to motivate me to fight for something more for them and everyone else in the State."

Although Katie has since stepped down from her position as chair of the Personnel Committee, her efforts can't be overstated.

Job well done!

**Shawn Larson, Baltimore City**

## Meet Candi Thomas!

Candi Thomas is the founder and owner of **Meetings Done Right Services, LLC** and has been in business for over 23 years. She was born in Washington, DC and raised in Maryland and this background has enabled Candi to establish long lasting and rewarding relationships in the Mid-Atlantic Region and nationally to benefit her company. She has received several awards for top producer and achiever. Her business, **Meetings Done Right**, is a government certified full service meeting, planning and hotel accommodations company. Candi has experience in both the hotel hospitality field and in conference planning providing her customers with outstanding service.

The company (MDR) offers assistance with but is not limited to hotel lodging, registration, onsite management, audio visual, website & marketing, financial planning, transportation, menus, hotel site selection, site inspections, contract negotiations, room rates, food and beverage arrangements, and budget

management. She also meets with the hotel staff prior to and after the conference.

Candi's company has worked with the government, military, business associations, nonprofit agencies, universities and social groups to provide the best service for planning conferences and all the details that it encompasses. Recently MAEO has been privileged to have Candi working with them the past two years to offer planning and coordination of all the conference arrangements. You will see Candi and her skills in action May 21-24 2019 managing all the behind the scene details making the MAEO conference "Future Ready".



**Cathy Quesenberry, Queen Anne's County**

## A Gem in Prince George's County, MD

The National Harbor located in Prince George's County is one of the true gems in the state. It is home to many shops, restaurants, bars and spas... many with beautiful water views. You can ride the 180 feet Capital Ferris Wheel, participate in outdoor Zumba and yoga classes, purchase fresh produce from local farmers, watch sports or movies on the jumbotron, sing along with the live bands at Bob McKey's Piano Bar or even take a water taxi across the Potomac River to Alexandria, Virginia.

One of my favorite places to go on a Friday and/or Saturday night is the MGM-National Harbor. It is literally two "driving" minutes from the National Harbor and has many high-end shops and restaurants. MGM also has a theater that features both nationally and internationally renowned music artists and comedians. Last, but not least, it houses the casino with the highest revenue and from my understanding "the highest payouts" in the state.

I especially enjoy the Happy Hours at Taps Sports Bar at MGM. It has an extensive menu of bar and grill type foods such as wings, nachos and fish and chips. In addition, it offers a plethora of draft beers

and mixed cocktails that are so delicious they will easily make a hard week in the elections office become a distant memory.

One of my goals is to have Prince George's County host a MAEO Conference at the National Harbor. If we can make that happen, I am positive that the membership will love it just as much as I do.

*Alisha Alexander, Prince George's County*



The famous Leo the Lion statue at MGM.

## MAEO Elections

Membership will be voting on changes to the MAEO Bylaws this year. These changes, if approved, would affect how MAEO conducts its business and manages the annual MAEO election. Ballots were mailed out on April 26. Please mail them or turn them in at the conference registration desk.

Be sure to participate in this and

every MAEO election. As election officials, we should always lead by example.

**Amendment #1 – Article III-Membership** would simplify language pertaining to voting on questions put before the MAEO membership.

**Amendment #2 – Article V-Meetings** would eliminate the

requirement for a quorum to be present *in person* at all MAEO Board meetings. This amendment would allow a quorum by teleconference as well.

**Amendment #3 – Article VII-Officers and Directors** would delete language that refers to specific years and start dates in ref-

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## MAEO Elections cont'd

erence to terms of office.

**Amendment #4 – Article XIII-Elections** would make a number of revisions to the rules governing MAEO elections. *Section 1* – would require any Election Committee member to resign from the committee if they wished to run for MAEO office; *Section 2(e)* – would add the requirement of testing the voting equipment to the list of Election Committee responsibilities; *Section 3* – would simplify language pertaining to the deadline for requesting an Absen-

tee ballot application, and the deadline for receipt of an Absentee ballot; *Section 6(b)* – would simplify language regarding qualifications for Write-In candidates; *Section 7* – would specify that the Board of Canvassers (Election Committee) have the responsibility to post election results; *Section 7* – would add detail to the requirement of the President of announcing election results before the end of the conference.

**Ben Frey, Somerset County**



## Voter Outreach Committee Extending its Grasp

Voter Outreach is an essential part of increasing voter turnout and spreading information regarding Elections, voter registration, and Election Judge Recruitment. Recently, a new Voter Outreach Committee was started by Joshua Ramos from Anne Arundel County Board of Elections.

The purpose of this Committee is to create a community of individuals from 24 counties to help create and coordinate events. The hope is that all jurisdictions will be involved. The committee will have a wide range of perspectives and ideas for different programs and educate the public.

The goal is to eventually have all counties reach out to High Schools and generate the highest number of 16, 17 and 18 year olds to be Election Judges where they can receive their service learning credit or payment.

Hopefully, as the committee continues to grow, each county's local festivals and events will contain applications from all 24 LBEs as well as VRAs (Voter Registration Applications).

As for the smaller Election offices which may not have the staff available to host events for voter outreach, the committee would work with other counties to provide an extra hand to assist in this regard.

The outreach committee is also working with the Radio One Network and disc jockey Konan from 92Q to help spread the word. By sharing every LBE's outreach schedule with the radio station, Konan will announce it on his show.

There are a multitude of ways to spread information, whether it be through television, radio or social media; but still, there is nothing like a face-to-face interaction. Not only does it spread knowledge, but it establishes relationships. A face-to-face dialogue can form bonds and establish trust. We can answer questions more directly and efficiently, more than what can be done in an email. This is the goal of the voter outreach committee; expanding the public forum, one LBE at a time.

**Shawn Larson, Baltimore City**

## Queen Anne's County: Outreach Events

Queen Anne's County is involved with a number of outreach activities throughout the year. Some events are participated in annually and others as they develop throughout the year. We have a portable booth/table that we take to all the events. There is a wheel to spin for prizes. The wheel is fun, it attracts attention and is very reasonably priced as well. Our prizes include water bottles, lanyards, chip clips, pencils, leis, pens & nail files. These items are purchased from Oriental Trading or from other product catalogs. Almost all the items have our name Queen Anne's County Board of Elections proudly displayed. We also have a table cloth that has our name on the front and makes it easy to identify us.



**Students enjoy the prize wheel, where they can spin and get a prize.**

Yearly events include our week long County Fair in August, the Senior Summit in May and the Harvest Breakfast hosted by the local Chamber of Commerce each November. Other events are: Black History Month, VFW events, Artisans Fair, Centreville Days, League of Women Voters, Kent Island Days, occasional NAACP meetings, Kids Connection, Family Festival, Farmers' Markets, National Night Out and other events as they become known to us.

Just recently we held three day events at both the local high schools during their lunch periods. These



were very successful and there was a great deal of interest by the students. We also attend the council meetings for the various Senior Centers in the county and offer them information and handouts.

We make sure the public is registered and offer them the opportunity to register if they have not done so. We also have election judge sign up. We provide as much information as we are able. Some people ask questions about their status when they move and what to do or how can they obtain an absentee ballot. Maybe they want know how their college student should obtain their ballot if they are away from home.



We feel we are being proactive in letting the public know we are available to assist them in any way we can and that we are very approachable if they have questions.

**Cathy Quesenberry, Queen Anne's County**

## Liz Weber

MAEO Conference time is nearly upon us! An agenda that was birthed as a concept roughly a year ago is coming to fruition...in less than two weeks. One of the many speakers on that agenda is Liz Weber, who was introduced in the last issue of this newsletter. Liz, a strategic leadership expert with over 25 years' experience will be sharing proven business strategies with our Election Directors, Deputy Directors, Administrators, and Supervisors. There will be two breakout sessions on Wednesday May 22 that will feature Liz and her "Five Stages of Focused Leadership Development".

Occasionally, our best efforts as election workers leave our supervisors feeling frustrated with less than effective results. Liz's approach to leadership in management can inspire our election leaders to identify where they might want to focus their individual leadership development energies. Our leaders will learn how they can adjust their leadership styles to enhance their teams' performances by creating processes for developing "leadership depth" in their individual offices.

Liz is known for her candor and clear insights. Audiences have appreciated her "engaging humor, down-to-earth style, and 'packed to go' action strategies." She offers solid, workable solutions to real world

business, or in our case, election challenges by simply, telling it like it is!

Liz is one of less than 100 people in the United

States who hold both the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) and Certified Management Consultant

(CMC) designations. She has shared her concepts in twenty two different countries, and has helped to educate and energize audiences all around the globe.

In the words of Eric Henry, a former client and the CEO of the Hershey Trust...

"Liz is the standard by which I measure all others."

Liz's presentation in learning which of the five stages of leadership you are modeling may be the session that will help to turn your office frustrations into successes! Give it a look and you might just leave the MAEO Conference a better leader than the one who arrived there.

**Craig Booth, Baltimore County**



## Conference Planning Committee

Less than two weeks out from the conference, and everything is finished and ready to go.

Good joke, right? Actually, things are moving along and falling into place, but the heavy lifting is yet to come. Teaming up with Ruie Lavoie to lead the planning and management of the annual event is Conference Planning Committee co-chair Abigail Goldman, Deputy Director from Baltimore City. According to Abigail, she and Ruie “have a great working relationship and friendship, and this enables us to work together to get the job done.”

In fact, for Abigail, the best part of the planning work is “working with Ruie and the great group of people planning the conference.” The hardest part? Abigail says “making sure that all the logistics are in place and that the MAEO members and guests get a meaningful experience out of the conference.”

And she is quite the booster for this annual get-together. Abigail says, “This year we are having our first ever reception and trade show that we are so excited about. We encourage everyone to attend on Tuesday night, and remember to do the vendor scavenger hunt during the convention.” Plus, there’s “an action packed agenda with a great Table Top exercise on the second day led by Nikki Charlson, Guy Mickley, Erin Perrone and Tracey Hartman.”

Beyond the logistics of planning and managing the conference, there are so many pieces of the puzzle that Ruie and Abigail have to juggle (to mix metaphors). Vendors, entertainment, A/V and more. Thank goodness for the many folks supporting each aspect of the conference. People like – Gail Hatfield bringing in the vendors and organizing the trade show; Maggie Mundle coordinating the various awards that will be handed out; Stephanie Tayler overseeing our election (don’t forget to



**The dynamic duo, Abigail and Ruie.**

vote!); Kim Phillips, Teresa Womble, Mary-Frances Alcoser and Ruie handling all of the entertainment; Kim and Ruie gathering up and handing out tons of door prizes; Jeff Stevens on A/V duty; Guy Mickley putting together the MAEO Feud (that’s going to be a blast); Craig Booth handling the DJ duties throughout the conference.

Asked if there is anything else she wants to pass along, Abigail answers, “Just to wish everyone a good conference and if they need anything, please find Ruie or myself and let us know.”

Don’t worry. We will.

**Ben Frey, Somerset County**

### **Send us your Conference Pics and Thoughts!**

As in years past, we’re interested in your reactions from the MAEO Conference. Send us a few lines pointing up something you enjoyed or impressed you – sessions, entertainment, food, anything. We also ask you to forward to us your photo memories from the conference.



We’ll try to publish as many pics and reviews as we can in the next issue of **Connect 24**.

Email them to:

[shawn.larson@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:shawn.larson@baltimorecity.gov)





## Around the State



**Caroline County** is working on a newsletter that I send to the judges letting them know legislative changes that may affect them as they are working, the election dates and other information that may be pertinent. Also included is a page for them to reply whether or not they are interested in returning to work in 2020 along with a place to give us referrals.

*Allison Murphy, Caroline County*

### **Dorchester County**

Daily, we mail Election Judge applications with every voter notification card that goes out. We periodically take Election Judge brochures to local agencies (Social Services, Health Department, Temp Agencies, etc.), and attend the local Art Showcase every fall to pass out Election Judge brochures and voter registration information. A member of our staff goes to events at the local state hospital before elections to register voters and get absentee applications filled out, similar to the Nursing Home and Assisted Living Program. We do voter registration volunteer training in our office, and when our Election Judges are looking for something to do during the "off time" we suggest they take the voter registration volunteer training.

*Jessica Noranbrock, Dorchester County*

### **St. Mary's County**

Hello Fellow Election Officials,

I can't believe looking at my calendar that it is May! Soon we will be at MAEO and enjoying the events that await us there. Here in St. Mary's, we have finished P.E.M as well as our Equip Inventory Audit, YAY! Currently we are working on corresponding with our polling places concerning the information SBE sent for signal testing/networking regarding SDR on Election Day. Recently we participated in a Voter Registration Drive for the NAACP College Fair locally at the Forrest Technology Center. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year we have contributed to this event and as always it's a huge success for the college/career bound high school students. We also came away with a handful of newly registered voters and election judges. In the fall we will host a table at the St. Mary's County Fair for voter registration and election judge recruitment. We all look forward to enjoying all the fun festivities but also the food is local and delicious! We usually receive a large number of voter updates, new registrations, as well as election judge interest during this time. Looking forward to seeing you all at the conference!

*Brandi Underwood, St. Mary's County*

Hello from **Wicomico!**

We are using this interim period to finish "moving in" to our facility, clearing out some of the old and installing some of the new. Just like moving into a new house!

We are also preparing to support the City of Salisbury November 2019 municipal election at the end of the year. And of course, right on the heels of that one

comes the April 2020 Primary! The Salisbury election only involves 5 polling places, so it will be a nice "practice run" for us to get back into the swing of things prior to 2020. We have also been keeping in touch with our Eastern Shore colleagues during our monthly meetings, too. And it's always great to attend the MAEO board meetings to see how everyone is doing statewide as we anticipate a lot of work ahead with the pro-

*Continued on Next Page...*



# Around the State cont'd

posed personnel reclassification, election day registration, and on and on....

See you all at MAEO!

**Anthony Gutierrez, Wicomico County**



## Talbot County

I would like to welcome Fred Gleockler, Election Information Systems Specialist, and Monae Butler, Data Applications Specialist II, both of whom actually came into the Talbot office in 2018. They have been steadily climbing the 'election ladder'. Monae got her start in elections as an L&A tester and EFS for Wicomico County. Fred has had a few stints as County Technician, working in Caroline County for the 2016 Primary and General and 2018 Primary, then over to Talbot County for the 2018 General.



**Fred Gleockler, pictured left, and Monae Butler**

**Jeri Cook, Talbot County**

## Baltimore County is celebrating three very special women!

Our office is entering a transitional time as we say farewell via promotion, to our office administrator, and to two department heads to retirement. So many things can be said about these special women that cannot really be contained in this writing. Although they leave us with our heartfelt wishes, we are left a little empty inside from their departure. Beyond a workplace this is a family. As family members, you want the best for each other.

**Diana Moran** has been like the energizer bunny



**Diana Moran**

from the first day she started in our office. The Absentee Department reflects their leader's vision in every sense of the word. When there was an assignment to be completed, she wanted it done yesterday! Her enthusiasm and tenacity will be missed, along with her contagious laugh that never grows old.

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## Around the State cont'd



**Marcel Kagler** has been the “Queen” of the Registration Department...forever, even though she recently celebrated her ‘29<sup>th</sup>’ birthday...again! Registration runs like a well-oiled machine due to her leadership. Now that she will have a little more time on her hands, you may want to buy stock in QVC and HSN as purchases from one of their best customers are sure to increase.



**Marcel Kagler**

Administrator **Ruie Lavoie** has been a force of nature from the time she began her employment with Baltimore County. Starting with a brief stay in the AB Department, she went on to leave an indelible mark on the Election Judge Department that will inspire us into the future. She worked tirelessly to help people succeed not in just her department, but in every area of this office. As she leaves to become the Director of Cecil County, we are left with a void that will

be difficult to fill!  
As we say farewell to these amazing women, we recognize that neither their titles, nor the volumes of work performed by them over the years can define who they are.

They are so much more than that! So, as we say farewell to each of them, this is not good bye but

**SEE YOU SOON!**

**Mary-Frances Vavra-Alcoser, Baltimore County**



### Contributors:

**Articles** – Shawn Larson – Baltimore City · Craig Booth – Baltimore County

- Mary-Frances Vavra-Alcoser – Baltimore County · Allison Murphy – Caroline County
- Lora Walters – Cecil County · Jessica Noranbrock – Dorchester County
- Alisha Alexander – Prince George’s County · Cathy Quesenberry – Queen Anne’s County
- Ben Frey – Somerset County · Brandi Underwood – St. Mary’s County · Jeri Cook – Talbot County
- Anthony Gutierrez – Wicomico County

**Photos (taken or provided by)** – Mary-Frances Vavra-Alcoser – Baltimore County

- Katherine Berry – Carroll County · Alisha Alexander – Prince George’s County
- Paul Noranbrock – Queen Anne’s County · Cathy Quesenberry – Queen Anne’s County
- Chrissy Jones – Queen Anne’s County · Crystal McGinn – Queen Anne’s County
- Ben Frey – Somerset County · Jeri Cook – Talbot County

**Assistance** — Joshua Ramos – Anne Arundel County · Abigail Goldman – Baltimore City

- Ruie Lavoie – Cecil County · Katherine Berry – Carroll County · Vanessa Graham – Harford County
- Stephanie Taylor – Harford County · Cathy Quesenberry – Queen Anne’s County

**Connect 24 layout and design** – Shawn Larson – Baltimore City