



# Connect 24



Communicate

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Volume 3 Issue 4

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## Dealing with the Unexpected

As I read the Governor’s proclamation outlining the dates of the special election that will be conducted as a result of the vacancy left by the untimely death of Congressman Elijah Cummings, I almost had a panic attack. Even though I knew it was coming, conducting a special election two months prior to a Presidential Primary Election is unprecedented. I’m sure that you’re asking “Why are you concerned since you are not impacted by this?” I’m concerned because I can’t begin to imagine how my colleagues in Baltimore City, Baltimore and Howard Counties are feeling since they are directly affected.

In the “election business” we are told by the public, elected officials and others to “figure it out and get it done.” For the most part, we do just that. However, we need to realize that “getting it done” is very challenging and that we need to mindful of our mental and physical health when we are dealing with work-related stress. As I move up in age, I am realizing that stress is the catalyst of many diseases and should not be taking lightly. Psychologists tell us that the best way to relieve stress is to exercise, meditate, eat healthy foods, etc. While all that may be true, I find that having the support of my friends, family and colleagues gives me more solace and stress-relief than any other method.

To my friends in Baltimore City, Baltimore and Howard Counties, know that you are not alone. Your colleagues “have your back” and will be there to assist you any way that we can.

*Alisha Alexander, Prince George’s County Board of Elections*



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### 2019 Dates for Congressional District 7 Special Election

- 10/30 First Day to file a Certificate of Candidacy
- 11/20 Deadline file a Certificate of Candidacy
- 1/14 Close of Registration & Party Affiliation
- 2/4 Special Primary Election: 7am-8pm
- 2/17 Voter Registration Reopens
- 4/7 Close of Registration & Party Affiliation
- 4/9 Deadline for Write-In Candidates
- 4/28 Special General Election: 7am-8pm

## Presidential Visitor in Cambridge

The Sequoia II has paid little old Cambridge a visit. “The Floating Whitehouse” served as the presidential yacht from 1931 to 1977, until President Carter ordered it be sold because it was costing taxpayers an estimated \$800,000 a year (Wikipedia, 2019).

During her service, the Sequoia II entertained Presidents Herbert Hoover, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter; and, rumor has it, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt planned D-day together aboard the Sequoia (Wikipedia, 2019).



**“The Floating White House” USS Sequoia II has served as the Presidential yacht from 1931 to 1977.**

This isn’t the first time the Sequoia II has been to Cambridge. According the *Dorchester Banner*, a local newspaper, the first time the Sequoia visited the city was in 1935 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt attended the dedication of the Emerson C. Harrington Bridge, the first bridge to connect Talbot County and Dorchester County (Ryan & Clipper, 2019). At the time, the Harrington Bridge was the longest span in Maryland, and President Roosevelt called it, “A splendid bridge” at the dedication (Ryan

& Clipper, 2019). The bridge is now known as the Bill Burton Fishing Pier State Park, and runs right alongside the “new” Frederick C. Malkus Jr. bridge (Ryan & Clipper, 2019).



By the time this article prints, it will be probably already be in Maine getting restored to become a venue used to promote ocean conservation (Wikipedia, 2019).

*-Jessica Noranbrock, Dorchester County, September 26, 2019*

### References

Wikipedia contributors, ‘USS Sequoia (presidential yacht)’, *Wikipedia*, 2019 [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=USS\\_Sequoia\\_\(presidential\\_yacht\)&oldid=917666939](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=USS_Sequoia_(presidential_yacht)&oldid=917666939) [accessed 25 September 2019].

Ryan, D., Clipper, P, ‘Sequoia returns to Cambridge’, *Dorchester Banner*, 2019. <https://www.dorchesterbanner.com/local-history/sequoia-returns-to-cambridge/> [accessed 26 September 2019].



## New Courthouse for Queen Anne's County

Historic downtown Centreville has been bustling with activity and change – and not just recent town utility improvements. Since 2016, the new circuit courthouse for Queen Anne's County has been under construction.

Standing sentry in the heart of downtown Centreville for nearly 224 years is the historic Courthouse which was originally accepted by the Circuit Court on June 1, 1796 and ordered to be “taken, held and deemed to be the proper Court House of Queen Anne's County.” It has the distinction of being the oldest Courthouse in continuous use in the State of Maryland – and among the oldest in the nation. Since its construction at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century for \$6,800 (\$130,217 in 2019 dollars), the building has undergone multiple renovations and upgrades including original electrification, installation of indoor plumbing, steam boiler heat, mechanical air conditioning and incorporation of additions including a Civil Defense fallout shelter in 1961. The building has witnessed the growth of a new nation, 45 presidencies, the War Between the States and two World Wars, the birth of aviation, a moon landing and in this new 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Information Age.

Friday, June 14, 2019 formally marked the last official day of operation in the historic courthouse. On the morning of Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, Court functions officially transferred to the new Queen Anne's County Circuit courthouse – the County's newest and most advanced facility. It is the age of technology, information and sustainability which largely defines the new Circuit Courthouse of Queen Anne's County. Succeeding the oldest courthouse in continuous use in the State of Maryland is a new, state-of-the-art facility which employs the latest technology in security, efficiency and function; it is



the first court house in the State designed to be fully-electronic – a fully modern, electronic and secure facility constructed at a cost of over 20 million dollars – the 42,000 square-foot facility is served by two 80-ton chillers, four high-efficiency propane gas boilers, 33 restrooms and over 90 voice-over-internet protocol phones – this in addition to many highly-advanced audio-visual and computer technologies which permit the Courts to function electronically and securely in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Together, with dignitaries from the Governor's office, State House of Delegates, Maryland Judiciary, Queen Anne's County Circuit Court, Grand Lodge of Maryland, County staff and with assistance from the American Heritage

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## New Courthouse for Queen Anne's County cont'd



Girls Troop 414, Boy Scout Troop 464 and Cub Scout Pack 129, the building was formally dedicated on the morning of April 13, 2019. At the conclusion of the Cornerstone Dedication Ceremony, the Grand Master of Masons in Maryland declared the building's foundation stone to be "well-formed, true and trusty".

On loan for display at the new courthouse dedication was the marble gavel which was

first used on September 18, 1793 by President George Washington when dedicating the cornerstone of the United States Capitol. It was found to be quite fitting that the new Queen Anne's courthouse be dedicated with presence of the gavel first used at a time when the historic courthouse was under construction 226 years ago.

While we look forward to the many amenities and security features that the new court house building provides, Queen Anne's County residents may be assured that, after over 223 years of operation, this is not the end for our historic courthouse, but the beginning of a new era which will see this remarkable building serve the citizens of Queen Anne's County and the State of Maryland with new responsibilities for many years to come.

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

*Article written by Lee Edgar—Public Works*



## The Closer Part 2...More Than a Concept...Whose Time HAS Come!

First, let me begin by referring you back to the Connect 24, Volume 2 Issue 3 Newsletter, referencing an article penned by then cub reporter, Craig Booth:

**"The Closer...A Concept Whose Time May have Come."**

Now, please allow me, Craig A. Booth, Journalist and Senior Correspondent...to announce:

"It's time! It's real! It's proven! AND IT WORKS...the closer position fills a valuable role in closing out the election at the precinct level!

*Continued on next page...*

## The Closer Part 2...cont'd

More than just a “body” who closes down the scanner – a job most any other trained judge could handle - the closer provides an important pair of hands that are positioned to assist the Chief Judge perform his or her duties at perhaps, the most critical time of the day in the local election precinct. The closer reports to their polling place, ready for duty by 6:30 pm. The astute chief judge welcomes the closer and turns them loose to assist in winding down the activities of the day. From judge assist to paperwork prep, the closer is focused on anything that can be done to aid in successfully closing out the Election Day.

Once the polls have closed, the “closer clock” really starts to tick! Yes, the scanner must be closed down...so the closer is assigned to perform that task. Yes, the voter totals reports must be run...so the closer does that too. **BUT**, where the closer position really pays its dividends, is in the timely delivery of crucial, time sensitive information into the hands of the folks who crunch and process the election numbers. In most instances, a process that previously could have taken anywhere from one, two, three hours (or more) to complete, is now being done in fifteen to thirty minutes! No matter how long it takes to close the rest of the polling place, and regardless of any problems that might still pop up, the memory sticks, the payroll paperwork, and the totals reports have been forwarded...and the numbers are in!

We’ve tried it...we like it...and we’re going to keep going with it. In Baltimore County, the closer is here to stay!

*Craig A. Booth, (Just another elections official...posing as a writer) Baltimore County*



## A Farewell to Josh Ramos



## The National Folk Festival on the Shore

The Eastern Shore was Folk-Music-Central for the weekend after Labor Day. The 79<sup>th</sup> National Folk Festival, organized and produced by The National Council for the Traditional Arts, came to Salisbury for three days in September, as it did last year and will do so again next year.

The National Folk Festival has maintained a remarkable schedule over the years. The Fest sets up shop in a city for 3 years. The city knows they're coming about a year before. Once the three years are up, the Festival moves to a different city, with the destination chosen from bids and proposals from the prospective locations.

Oh, yes, about the music. It was glorious. The artists are all residents of the US (hence the *National Folk Festival*) but they carry traditions from the entire globe. Five continents were represented this year. Native American, zydeco, blues, both acoustic and electric, bluegrass, Mexican, all the way up to Go-Go from DC, were just a sampling of North American traditions. Then you had Irish, Brazilian, Balkan, East and West African, Chinese, Ecuadorian and too many more to list.

Of course, being on the Eastern Shore, local music, crafts, and traditions were featured throughout the weekend. And the weather cooperated wonderfully. Tropical Storm Dorian teased us Friday afternoon, but by the time the music started Friday evening, it was simply cool, breezy and lovely, just like many of the artists.

*Ben Frey, Somerset County*



Sheila Kay Adams - Appalachian story teller



Strings from China, the Balkans, Iran, Iraq, Mexico - separately and together.



## Around the State

### Allegany County

Here in Allegany County the county fair is kind of a big deal. It is a week long event full of animal shows, rides, concerts, exhibits, and the race track. This past summer's county fair was an even bigger deal for us here in the office. One of our own was going to take a stab at the demolition derby. Like most people, Brandy Gordon has a bucket list. Unlike most people, this bucket list consisted of the fair's demolition derby. Her mother referred to it as her mid-life crisis, but Brandy insisted that it is just something she has always wanted to do. So Brandy did it; and she did it well. She came in second place, meaning there was only one other car (out of ten) that was still running when hers refused to start. Brandy gained a trophy, bragging rights, and an experience of her lifetime that night. All the rest of the staff got was a weeklong earful of complaints about how sore she was.

*Samantha Logsdon, Allegany County*



L-R: Samantha Logsdon & Brandy Gordon

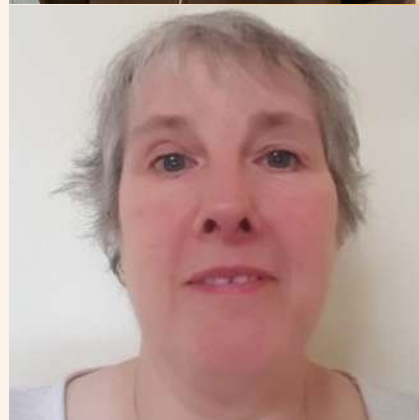
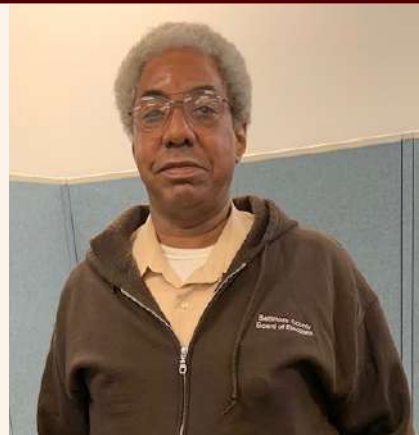


### Baltimore County

Our last entry recognized three special women who had done their time in Baltimore County elections and were moving on to different places in their lives...two to retirement and one, promoted to direct another county's election office. At this writing, their positions have been filled as we begin a new chapter in the direction of three of our office's departments. Promoted to lead the Registration Department is Ron Thomas, a longtime member of the department. Ron's friendly attitude and quiet, efficient work ethic will serve him well as he leads his department. Rita Walczyk Evans, herself a career elections official – first in Michigan and for years, here in Baltimore County, has ascended to a much deserved leadership position in the Absentee Department. Rita has literally, spent a lifetime preparing for this moment, and is ready for the challenge! Lastly, Mary-Frances Vavra-Alcoser, a ten year veteran of elections is our newest supervisor, overseeing the staff in the Judges Department. Our very own Miss Congeniality, an always smiling Mary-Frances works hard to get her staff to pull together to achieve the common goal. We congratulate these folks on their much deserved promotion as department heads!

The voids created by the above promotions are nearly filled – their replacements hired, with start dates right around the corner. Perhaps we will introduce them in the next newsletter...

In the meantime, it is all hands on deck as our entire office gears up for the



Ron Thomas (pictured above) & Rita Walczwk Evans

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## Around the State



Mary-Frances Vavra-Alcoser

recently announced, upcoming special election scheduled for February. To say that this event has thrown a wrench into our day-to-day 2020 Primary Election preparations would be a major understatement. That said, we are rising to the occasion and doing what needs to be done in the sixty or so precincts in Baltimore County that are part of Maryland's Seventh District. Our ability to switch gears, and make it happen along WITH all the rest of our regular election duties is both a testament to the resilience of our staff, and a nod to an elections system that allows such an important election to occur! Hats off to our counterparts in Baltimore City and Howard County as we all participate in what is sure to be an experience to remember! We are off and running in Baltimore County...where our best is yet to come!

*Craig A. Booth, Baltimore County*



### Cecil County

We welcomed Shawn Larson, Election Information System Specialist, to our office in September. We are honored and excited that he joined our team because he brings over 14 years of election experience and a vast knowledge of computer programs and social media expertise. He started working as a tech with Diebold Elections and after a year was hired by the Harford County election office. He worked there for 8 years and then begin a new adventure when hired by Baltimore City where he has worked for the past 5 years. From 2009 to 2015 Shawn was the conference planner for MAEO and he is currently a member of several committees including Election Technology and Voter Outreach. He is also a writer/Editor of the MAEO newsletter. We absolutely look forward to working with Shawn for many years to come.



Shawn Larson and Karen Perry

In other office news, Karen Perry was recently promoted to Election Supervisor. Karen has been with Cecil County since August of 2017, starting her election career as a Data Application Specialist. Karen quickly adapted to the election world, learning all aspects of the office. Prior to elections, she was a manager and trainer for a child care center so she brings years of managerial and customer service skills. She comes from a family with elections in their blood – her mom worked as a temp with the Baltimore County office years ago, and currently serves as an Election Judge. Karen will be supervising the Registration and Absentee Departments as well as assisting with judge recruitment and training. She is definitely a shining star in our office and we are thankful she is part of our team. Please take a moment to congratulate Karen and wish her well!

*Denise Calder, Cecil County*







## More From Around the State

### Charles County

Charles County had a new addition. Shelby Trice gave birth to a beautiful baby boy named Wyatt on August 21, 2019. He weighed in at 7 lbs 4 oz. and 21 inches long. This is especially exciting because it has been 18 years since the last additions to Charles County.

Congratulations!!

*Tracy Dickerson, Charles County*



### Worcester County

Worcester County Board of Elections had been participating in outreach activities for registration and recruiting new election judges. It has been a great deal of fun! We have traveled to local towns that hold 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday events, the Berlin Fiddlers Convention and local Farmer's Markets. So far we have had 64 people sign up to be judges. We have encountered people from all over: Carroll, Anne Arundel, Cecil, Somerset & Wicomico counties. We asked them to contact their home county to get signed up.

Some folks from Baltimore are even willing to be judges at their second home in Worcester County. The overall response has been very positive to our outreach efforts. Even our State Senator Mary Beth Carozza greeted us at the Blessing of the Combines to tell how pleased she was with all our hard work and photographed us!

Last election over 40 judges had to be replaced. We are pleased that many folks have also registered to vote as well. Lisa Shockley and I have attended all the events and our Director Patti has made appearances as well. Outreach started in July and just finished up September 28<sup>th</sup>. Door prizes have been a popular part of our training sessions. In the past I even made red, white and blue Afghans to use as prizes.

We will be having a retirement part for Board Member Hinson Finney who has served us for the past 36 years. His dedication and hard worked will be missed by Worcester County.

*Karen Timmons, Worcester County*



L-R: Terron Pinder, Hinson Finney, Lisa Shockley, Karen Timmons (behind Lisa), Patti Jackson, Teresa Rigglin



## Neighbors and Partners — Howard County History

Howard County officially became the 21st of Maryland's 23 counties in 1851. It was originally part of Anne Arundel County and was designated the Howard District in 1839, in honor of John Eager Howard, statesman, soldier, and fifth governor of Maryland.

Howard County was mainly the farming and hunting grounds of Native Americans until 1608 when Captain John Smith of Jamestown sailed up the Patapsco River. However, the first colonial settler, a Puritan named Adam Shipley, came much later, in 1687, when Lord Baltimore granted him a home on the Patapsco River. It is also at this time when Howard County's tradition of farming started.



Doughoregan Manor in Ellicott City

In the 1700s, the family of Charles Carroll, one of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence, acquired nearly 13,000 acres of farmland and forests. On this property, Carroll built an elaborate masonry home in grand plantation style, located several miles west of Ellicott City. It was named Doughoregan Manor. Today, descendants of the Carroll family still live on the property, of which only 3,000 acres remain. This is a private residence, not open to the public.

Howard County has 220,000 active registered voters. There are 90 polling places and 4 early voting sites. Our voting judge department, which includes Kimberly Phillips, Monica Fields, Rebecca Ayres and Justin Maddox are tasked to work with our judges.

Our staff consists of 27 employees—20 office staff and 7 warehouse staff. Our director is Guy Mickley, and Charlotte Davis is our Deputy. Kim Phillips is the supervisor for the Judges and Provisional departments. Teresa Womble is the Voter Registration supervisor and Tiffany Ferrell is the supervisor for the Absentee department. Doug Swift is the warehouse supervisor.

*Jose Morales, Howard County*



## How to Make an "Elections" Quilt

It's nice to be reminded, every now and again, that we will be remembered in some small way, well after we are gone.

This past summer, former Wicomico County Election Chief Clerk Doris Bradley, who held the position from 1982 to 1994, passed away. Unfortunately, I was away in Kansas at the same time, to be home as a family member of mine also passed away. So I was unable to attend her service.

*Continued on next page...*

## How to Make an “Elections” Quilt cont’d

About a month later, a man came to our office and dropped off a quilt. He told our seasonal worker that someone at his mother’s service asked if he would return it to our office, so that’s what he was doing. It turns out that was Doris’ son, and to this day, we do not know who it was that asked for the quilt back.

It had been crafted 22 years ago, back in 1997, on the occasion of Doris’ retirement by Miss Mary Duschene, 87 years of age, Chestertown MD. No doubt recruited to do so by Doris’ good friend, Florence Sutton. Each LBE, and the SABEL office (which is what SBE used to be called), created a square for the quilt. Many of the staff persons in these offices signed them, or had their name printed on a square.



L-R: Rich Jerscheid, Armstead Jones, Abigail Goldman, Josh Ramos and Stuart Harvey all signed the quilt in 1997.

The names of around 170 Maryland election officials are listed on it; many of them appear to be original signatures.

I took the quilt to a recent MAEO meeting, where a number of persons remembered signing it all those years ago. It also served as a reminder of so many others who are named on the quilt, but like their friend Doris, are no longer with us. (I wonder if perhaps they were all together, looking down on us and appreciating that all of them were once again remembered, if only for a fleeting moment.) Finally, it was my privilege to capture a photo of a few colleagues who had signed it and were now reunited with the quilt. That picture now becomes a memento itself, serving as a fresh reminder of those who have served the voters of our state these 22 years and more. We plan to keep the quilt, and any photos of the signers, in our Wicomico County LBE office. Remember, you are all always welcome to stop by any time to see it and us, too!

Although she didn’t realize it at the time, Doris ensured she would be remembered well after she was gone by unknowingly starting to build her own quilt, long before the first stitch was sewn. She began it by collecting, then knitting together a large group of friends, some of them good friends, from all walks of life and all parts of her state.

And these good people in turn gave just a brief moment of their time, 22 years ago, to do something timeless by lending their hand, and their names, to help create a beautiful, thoughtful keepsake.

A lasting memorial which now serves as a final “farewell and best wishes” to their friend, Doris.

*Anthony Gutierrez, Wicomico County*



## Washington LBE Moving to a New Home!

For many years, the Washington County Board of Elections lobbied our county government to provide a combined facility for us that would house our offices, warehouse, election judge training, and primary Early Voting center.

It seemed, however, that every time we thought we were making progress, we'd end up in a worse situation, the classic one step forward, two steps backward. It ended up that our offices, warehouse, election judge training, and Early Voting center were in four different locations throughout the county. We had to beg, borrow, and not quite steal in order to find facilities owned by other entities.



**The new home of the Washington County Board of Elections – Coming Soon!**

It made conducting the elections in 2018 extremely difficult, and it dou-

bled our determination to plead our case to the county commissioners for a combined facility. One major contributing factor this year was that we simply had no place in the county available for Early Voting in 2020, and we were nearing the deadline to select a site.

As a result, on September 24<sup>th</sup> of this year, the Washington County Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to purchase the former Food Lion on Virginia Avenue in Hagerstown for the Board of Elections!

The building has more than enough room for us to place all of our operations under one roof. Since it is a wide open space, we have the opportunity to build it to our specifications (funding permitting). We have visited and spoken with many of the LBEs around the state, especially those who have moved recently. We hope to incorporate many of the best ideas that we have seen and heard into our own facility. So maybe, when you come visit us in the new place, you'll see something familiar!

It's exciting times in Washington County! We'll keep you posted on our progress and host an open house when it's completed.

*Barry Jackson, Washington County*



## From the Biennial



L-R: Vincent Omenka and Abigail Goldman listen as Nikki Charlson discusses Disaster Recovery



**Save the Date**



### THE 2020 MAEO CONFERENCE

JUNE 2-JUNE 5, 2020

THE CLARION HOTEL – OCEAN CITY, MD

**Be a part of the Innovations in Elections session at the  
2020 MAEO Conference, June 2-5**

**PARTICIPATE – SHARE – CONTRIBUTE**

**Connect with your peers**

**Looking for 3-4 more presenters**

**What is your office doing to make elections better –**

***Training, Tech, Registration, Logistics***

***Improvements, New processes, INNOVATIONS***

**We need 10-15 minute presentations to *Enlighten and Entertain***

**Contact Ben Frey at 410-651-5913**

**[ben.frey@maryland.gov](mailto:ben.frey@maryland.gov)**

## From the Table Top!



### Contributors:

- Articles** – Samantha Logsdon – Allegany County · Craig Booth – Baltimore County  
 · Denise Calder – Cecil County · Tracy Dickerson – Charles County · Jose Morales – Howard County  
 · Alisha Alexander – Prince George’s County · Lee Edgar – Queen Anne’s County Public Works  
 · Ben Frey – Somerset County · Barry Jackson – Washington County  
 · Anthony Guitierrez – Wicomico County · Karen Timmons – Worcester County
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