

Editor in Chief

Spring Edition

We are consistently seeking articles and pictures to include in the *Informant*. If anyone has anything they would like to submit, please send to my home email kenfree-man49@gmail.com. If you would like to be on the *Informant* staff, please send to kenfreeman49@gmail.com. You may see past issues of the *Informant* by going on our website www.mccaaa.org.

Thank you
Ken Freeman
Editor in Chief
The Informant

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Donations to the MCCCC

If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to the Montgomery County Citizen Academy Alumni Association, please make out a check to MCCCC and mail to our P.O. Box at:

MCCCC
P.O. Box 8884
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8884

Thank you
Ken Freeman, President, MCCCC

Desk of the President Spring 2025 Edition

Montgomery County Citizen Academy Alumni Association



The MCCA AAA year is coming to a close and all the activities we have been doing were fun and rewarding. The MCCA AAA has been doing our mission that is to support the Montgomery County Police Department. Sergeant Mullaney has given us chances to volunteer to work with different departments in scenarios to help the officers where needed. For the first time we sent volunteers to talk to the officers that graduated from the Police Academy and get to know them and congratulate them on graduating and wish them well on their careers. We will do it again when the next class graduates in December.

There has been a change to our schedule as we will now meet 12 months a year. This was voted on by the membership a couple of months ago. I want to thank our program Officer Vivian Wolpers for finding us interesting speakers for each meeting. It happens on occasion that one of our speakers has to cancel at the last minute and Vivian has to find a new speaker to replace them.

The new Citizen Academy Session 76 has just started and we have 47 in the class. This is the highest attendance in a class since the pandemic.

I am contacting every service organization asking to speak at their membership meetings. I have contacted the Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis in Montgomery County as well as the Elk and Moose lodges, Izaak Walton League branches, and American League halls. I will pass out the Citizen Academy brochures with my business card and schedule of the classes. I have four speaking engagements and I am waiting to hear on dates from others. We will start to go back to the Olney Farmers Market in June every other week.

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(Desk of the President, continued)

If anyone has a speaker, contact our Program Officer Vivian Wolpers at mylighthousebysea@yahoo.com.

If you need to pay your dues for 2025, go to our website www.mccaaa.org, print the membership application, and mail a check for \$15.00 to the address on the form, with the check made out to MCCAAs. Or you may pay in person at one of our meetings.

I have been organizing socials every other month at the Outta the Way Cafe on Redland Road in Derwood, Maryland. We will have our next social on Saturday June 21st. I am looking for different members to attend. Everyone is responsible for their own bill.

If you are a new member, we would like to see you at our meetings. Congratulations to those that have joined recently.

Thank you,
Ken Freeman, President



From our Spring Social at The Outta the Way Cafe

Message from Jerry Mullarkey

Past President of the MCCA AAA

It began for me when I became aware of something called the Montgomery County Police Department Citizens Academy. I quickly called one Sgt. John Mullaney. He said yes, there is such a class, and the first one is tonight. I said OK, I guess I'll try for the next term. He said, "I actually have a spot left," and it became mine!

The journey consisted of several different aspects for me. We had a great group of people in our class! If there is such a thing, we were all kind of pretty much on the same page, which made going to class a pleasant experience! Not to mention the snacks that were provided by someone during our breaks (yes!)

So why are you there, Jerry? Because you are interested in learning about aspects of law enforcement. So simple, but in the long run, so profound!

And what a journey that was! We had some of the top law enforcement officials in the country come and spend time with us. If you were there to learn, you were in the right spot! And there were no free passes! If you stuck it out for the required 15 weeks, you were honored with a most respectable graduation ceremony. Then what?

The journey continues. Upon your graduation, you become eligible to join the MCCA AAA! Ah yes, an opportunity to continue to have access and exposure to the same group of law enforcement instructors you have become most respectful of!

OK, so I must close by talking about my journey now; but not without a final comment. My journey consisted of meeting some really great people! But

as most of you know, my situation has changed somewhat. Physical impairments have greatly compromised my motor skills, which keeps me from getting to join you guys at so many things I would want to attend.

It's just the twists and turns of life, I'm still trying to figure out for myself:

- I played eight years of football: four high school, four college.
- I played basketball.
- I played baseball.
- I played tennis.
- I was a runner for over 20 years.

My point is, I always took my legs for granted! Now, here I am, I can't make it to one of our meetings to be with you guys! Not complaining, as my journey has been a fulfilling one. My work office was located in City Hall for over 25 years. I got to know a number of chiefs and officers of the police Department, some whom I still call "friend" today. For more than 30 years, I was involved in our regional EMS area, and for many of those years, I served as a PA State Certified EMS Instructor. That said, I want to say it was a most rewarding experience regarding my involvement with the Citizens Academy and the MCCA AAA.

Yes, it certainly was a "journey."

Jerry Mullarkey,
Immediate Past President

Dedication: Submitted in recognition of and with respect to Patrick Kepp. Get well Sgt.

Top Scams and How to Avoid Them by Walt Houser

In an increasingly digital world, scammers constantly develop new ways to deceive and defraud. To help combat these felons, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) recently issued the 2024 Scam Tracker Risk Report. Using the complaints filed at the BBB Scam Tracker, the report identified the year's top scams, providing a roadmap for staying vigilant. You can read the report at bbbmarketplacetrust.org/riskreport2024.

Generally, *be skeptical* of anything unexpected or too good to be true. Also, be suspicious of high-pressure tactics and threats. If the caller asks for gift cards, payment apps (Venmo, Zelle), crypto coins, wire transfers, or gold bars, *hang up*. To protect yourself from potential fraud, here's what you need to know:

Investment and Cryptocurrency Scams

Investment/cryptocurrency scams are the No. 1 riskiest

scam type again this year, with a reported median dollar loss of \$5,000 and 80% of reports with a monetary loss. According to survey respondents, over a quarter of victims said the scammer spent time building friendship or romance before perpetrating the scam. Stay safe by:

- Researching the investment opportunity thoroughly yourself using independent sources.
- Being cautious of unusual investment returns and high-pressure sales tactics.
- Verifying the legitimacy of the investment platform.

Employment Scams

Employment scams remained the second riskiest type, with a median dollar loss of \$1,500; it made up more than 14% of all reported scams. Fake job offers can lead to

significant financial and personal information losses.

Scammers can extract significant personal sensitive data from unwary job seekers. To stay safe:

- Research the company before accepting a job offer.
- Avoid job offers that require upfront payment for training or equipment.
- Be cautious if the job offer seems too good to be true.
- Verify the offer by calling the recruiter or hiring manager using the contact information you find independently of the communications you have received.

Romance/Friendship scams

Romance and friendship scams rose to No. 3 riskiest, with the highest median dollar loss of all scam types (\$6,099).

To avoid heartache and financial loss, you can:

- Do a reverse image lookup using a website, like Google Images, to see if the photos on a profile are stolen from somewhere else. Go to [Google.com](https://www.google.com), click Search by image, upload a file, select an image, drag and drop an image, then click Open or Choose.

- Search online for a profile name, email, or phone number to see what adds up and what doesn't.
- Beware if the person cannot meet in person or begins asking for money.
- Don't share personal details with somebody you haven't met.

Online Purchase Scams

Online purchase scams are a top concern, according to the BBB. Fake websites and fraudulent transactions are rising. To avoid falling victim, the Bureau recommends:

- Only buy from reputable websites.
- Look for HTTPS in the URL to ensure a secure connection.
- Read reviews and research the seller before purchasing.

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(Top Scams and How to Avoid Them, continued)

Debt Collections

Scammers posing as legitimate debt collectors will use aggressive tactics to demand immediate payment.

Safeguard your finances by:

- Asking for written proof of the debt and verifying it independently.
- Avoid giving out personal information over the phone.
- Independently verify the legitimacy of the debt collector before making any payments.

Phishing

Phishing scams involve emails, text messages, and video calls from scammers impersonating trusted organizations to steal sensitive information. Artificial intelligence is making it nearly impossible to detect bogus messages. Protect yourself by:

- Being cautious of unsolicited emails and messages.
- Never clicking on links or downloading attachments from unknown senders.
- Verifying the sender's identity if you're unsure using information from reliable sources, not the incoming message.

Counterfeit or Inferior Products

Reports of fake or low-quality products with difficulties in obtaining refunds are common. To avoid these products:

- Purchase from authorized retailers.

- Check product reviews and ratings.
- Be cautious of deals that seem too good to be true.

Travel/Vacation/ Timeshare Scams

Scammers promise luxurious vacations or timeshares at reduced prices, leading to fake bookings and lost money. Protect your travel plans by:

- Booking through reputable travel agencies or websites.
- Verifying the legitimacy of the deal and reading the fine print.
- Being cautious of unsolicited travel offers.

Government Agency Imposter Scams

Scammers posing as government officials threaten individuals into providing personal information or payments. Government agencies typically communicate in writing first and ask for payment via personal check mailed to an official address. To fend off these scoundrels:

- Verify the caller's identity by contacting the official government agency using contact information you find independently.
- Never share personal information over the phone.

Sweepstakes/ Lottery/Prize Scams

Victims are informed they won a prize but must pay fees or provide personal information. To avoid these scams:

- Be skeptical of unsolicited notifications about winning a prize.

- Never pay fees to claim a prize.
- Verify the legitimacy of the prize offer.

Tech Support Scams

Scammers use scareware advertising and website alerts to frighten you. They pose as tech support to request remote computer access to install malware or steal information.

Protect your tech by:

- Avoiding unsolicited tech support offers. Legitimate tech firms do not make this kind of call.
- Using official tech support channels provided by your software or hardware provider.
- Never granting unknown individuals remote access to your computer.

By staying informed and vigilant, you can significantly reduce your risk of falling victim to these scams. If you ever encounter a suspicious situation, it's always a good idea to consult with someone you trust or report it to the appropriate authorities. For information on how to report these criminals, go to the QR code below or see the [Reporting Fraud](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/fraud/reporting-fraud.html) webpage from the Montgomery County Police Department at montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/fraud/reporting-fraud.html

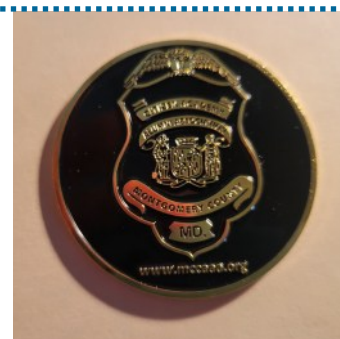
Knowing the top frauds of 2024, you can keep yourself safe and scam-savvy in 2025!





MCCAAA Challenge Coins

We have challenge coins that were made for the community and are available for \$10.00 each. You can pay for them at any membership meeting.



Vice President's Report

Dear Members,

I hope this message finds you well. As your newly elected Vice President, I am both honored and excited to serve in this role and help continue the important work of our organization.

At our most recent meeting, we held elections for the new board, and I'm proud to announce the leadership team for this term:

- President: Ken Freeman
- Vice President: Melissa Johns
- Secretary: Phil Gilbert
- Treasurer: Rachel Johns
- Program Officer: Vivian Wolpers
- Activities Officer: Heyfa Khenissi

Please join me in congratulating our officers and thanking them for their willingness to serve. We're confident this team will bring strong leadership and fresh energy to the work we do in support of public safety and community engagement.

We are also excited to welcome several new members to the Police Citizens Academy family! Your passion, curiosity, and involvement are what keep our mission thriving. Whether you're brand new or a long-time member, we encourage you to stay active and connected throughout the year.

On behalf of the entire Academy, I'd like to extend

our sincere appreciation to the police officers who serve and protect our community every day. Your dedication, professionalism, and courage are deeply valued, and we thank you for your ongoing service.

Additionally, a heartfelt thank-you to the incredible speakers who take time out of their own schedules to attend our classes and share their experiences and knowledge with our group. Your insights enrich our understanding and help bridge the gap between the department and the community.

We're thrilled to announce our upcoming Annual Summer Social, taking place on: Saturday, June 21, 2025. Location details to follow.

This will be a fantastic opportunity to reconnect, meet new members, and enjoy a relaxing afternoon together. We hope to see you there!

Thank you all for your continued support, participation, and commitment. Here's to a meaningful and impactful year ahead!

In service,
Melissa Johns
Vice President, Citizens
Academy Alumni Association



Program Officer's Report

Hello from your Program Officer and Care For Cops Committee member.

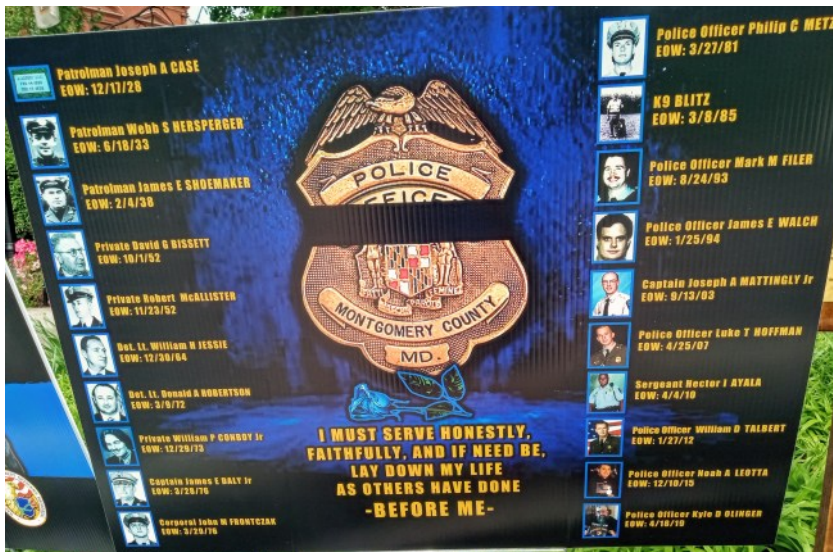
In March, we had Sgt Justin Saffar as our speaker of the month.

In April we had Officer Bruce Beardsley who did an Awesome CRASE presentation. For those who don't know, CRASE is Citizens Response to Active Shooter Event.

In May the Alumni Association had their yearly membership voting session.



POIII Bruce Beardsley



PW 2025 Pics

Also in May is Police Week.

I attended Police Week on Sunday, May 11th which is also Mother's Day.



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(Program Officer's Report, continued)

I handed out lots of my laminated Thank You cards around the NLEOM and also gave a few Hugs, as well as let a few COPS survivors cry on my shoulders. COPS Concerns Of Police Survivors.

Prayers in Memoriam for POIII Noah Leotta.

On the Care for Cops Committee side, I delivered 103 goodie bags to the MCP 4th district.

In June our Speaker of the Month is State's Attorney General John McCarthy.

I don't have July settled yet, however we have 6th District Outreach Officer Melanie Romano making her presentation.

In September we will have Captain Nick Picerno.



Take Care and Stay Healthy,
Vivian



4D Goodie Bags Delivery

Member Spotlight: Heyfa Khenissi

What is your role with the MCCA AAA?

My role with the MCCA AAA is as a member who seeks to appreciate law enforcement's role better in the community.

I am also at MCCA AAA to gain more exposure to the legal system. Given the career field I'm in (loss prevention), and the career I am pursuing (private security), being in the MCCA AAA helps me cultivate better partnerships with law enforcement. There is also a chance to form better interactions with EMS.

I also felt like it was important to have a sense of community, and MCCA AAA helps with that.

As time goes on, I'll see how I can further help with MCCA AAA.

Where were you born? Raised? Schooling?

I was born in Washington, DC, and I grew up in Chevy Chase, MD most of my life. I attended French school, which is intellectually rigorous, and taught me basic foundations about Western society. The

sciences were also heavily valued in French school.

I was raised in the United States with strong values about democracy, dignity and human



rights, and awareness of the Ben Ali dictatorship in my parents' home country, Tunisia, underscored my feelings that democracy, prudence with power, checks and balances, and human rights should never be taken for granted.

My dad had work trips with the family to Bangladesh, Sierra

Leone and Japan when I was a child.

What do your parents do for a living?

My dad is a retired economist at the World Bank, he also worked for the IMF.

My mother is a preschool teacher, and she also is a translator as a second job.

Did you attend college? Where? When?

I attended college at the University of Maryland between 2006 and 2010. I have an undergraduate degree in Geology. The biggest thing I got out of the program was critical thinking, and a general idea of strengths and limitations of many concepts. Then I attended New Mexico Tech through Distance Education between 2014 and 2017.

I developed a foundation for problem-solving that was indirectly useful when solving safety and security issues in a store.

What career field do you work in?

After trying to get a career in natural science, I decided to

(continued on next page)

(Member Spotlight: Heyfa Khenissi, continued)

look for a career that was a better fit. I struggled to get into various forms of law enforcement, but retail experience allowed me to get into loss prevention, and now I can get into private security. With new legal requirements for loss prevention, I did successfully get my unarmed security license, which opens more doors.

I am happy with the improved safety I have brought to the store, the solid practices I bring to loss prevention, and the stable career I have cultivated at Ross for 4.5 years. I am grateful a supervisor entrusted me with safety responsibilities for a store. With my strong ethics, integrity, attention to detail, deep commitment to safety, ability to notice patterns in people's behaviors, ability to make probability calculations with confidence intervals, and commitment to objectivity and intellectual honesty, the Rockville Ross store has above-average results for which I am proud.

Did you ever have any dreams of another path you would have done?

Not at this point.

When did you become interested in Police work?

I became interested in police work since I was six years old; I was a big Batman fan at the time.

Did you ever want to become a police officer?

I definitely wanted to become a police officer since I was six years old. I seriously worked on that goal in my late 20s and in my 30s, and pursued various types of law enforcement opportunities (including hunting and fishing enforcement, park enforcement), but I have

not been successful, and the MCPD hiring process was especially difficult with the background investigation. My physical development, ethical development, strong sense of checks and balances, and some professional success were not enough for the agency.

Given my struggles getting into law enforcement, I am grateful I got into loss prevention, and I am entrusted with unarmed security.

What is your favorite sport/take part in?

I'm into weightlifting since 2017 and martial arts since 2009 (2nd degree black belt in karate). I have participated in a few tournaments in martial arts, and I have taken part in one weightlifting competition so far.

What do you do in your spare time?

Any hobbies? Volunteer work?

Aside from weightlifting training and karate training, I help out with a French Tomb Raider website, dealing with spambots these days. I also do sporting clays, and occasionally hunt and fish.

Do you have any pets?

I did have my own comet goldfish at one point, the ones who lived the longest were named Sunrise and Sunset. The oldest one recently passed away after 2.5 years. It was incredible to see how even small fish had their own unique habits.

I want to have a cat or a dog at some point, but I think it would have to be a retirement project.

One thing we don't know about you?

In 2024, I did get to meet two celebrity corgis and their owners (Hammy with his owner Chris, Maxine with her owner Bryan), when Bark Social used to exist.



Citizen Academy

by Sergeant John Mullaney

Greetings everyone. Session 75 just graduated a few weeks ago with 15 students who were eager to learn about their police department. Seeing how enrollment numbers have been going the past few classes, Ken and others stepped up to the recruiting challenge and it paid off! Session 76 will start May 6th and it currently has 40 students enrolled. We haven't had that number of attendees since pre-COVID, so thanks to everyone for all the hard work spreading the word about joining the Citizen Academy.

The MCCAAs truly are our best recruiters.

The curriculum remains the same for Session 76, but we have a few new instructors as some previous ones have left the department. I especially would like to thank our Recruiter, PO3 Melissa Coligan, who recently retired. She provided outstanding blocks on how to join the department and was able to recruit a few of the Citizen Academy students to join MCP as sworn officers, professional staff, and 911 operators. Her efforts were exceptional, and she will be missed from our cadre of instructors. A very special thanks also goes to PO3



Graduates of Citizen Academy Session 75

Fernando Carvajal, who retired several years ago from MCP, but continues to assist me with the box drill scenarios. His dedication to this program and the Hispanic Community Academy is unmatched.

I am already recruiting for Session 77 which will run from September to December, so if you know of anyone that might be interested in the course, please have them email the application to citizen.academy@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Have a great day and stay safe.

Respectfully,

Sgt M

To join the next Citizen Academy session, apply at
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/jobs/citizen-academy.html



Banner for MCCA AAA to use at the Olney Farmers market

Activities Officer's Report



I want to thank the Alumni Association for the opportunity to be your Activities Officer. I will not be able to continue as your Activities Officer and wish the next person all the best.

We will deliver the Care for Cops packages to the Wheaton District very soon. This project has been going on for a long time. Our last District that we need to provide packages for will be District One at headquarters.

I have been working with Ken by going to the Olney Farmers market passing out free gifts and talking to people walking by about the Citizen Academy. We will start up again in June going every other week.

Ken has worked out a date to work with Commander Jordan Satinsky to be on a podcast at headquarters and get our name out there on Social media.

Take care,
Jacques Horvatic

Membership Renewal

You may pay your membership at any of our meetings or send a check of \$15.00 with a membership application from our website www.mccaaa.org. Please make the check to MCCA AAA and send to

MCCA AAA
P.O. Box 8884
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8884

Income and Expense Report

February 1 through April 30, 2025

Income

Beg Balance	3369.39	
	3369.39	
2/5 Deposit	15.00	
2/21 Deposit	120.00	
3/10 Deposit	15.00	
3/17 Deposit	15.00	
3/24 Deposit	60.00	
4/22 Deposit	115.00	
4/25 Deposit	60.00	
<u>Total</u>	<u>400.00</u>	<u>400.00</u>
Balance		3769.39

Expenses

3/20 Vivian Wolpers (Care 4 Cops)	65.58	
4/4 Reimbursement for Vivian/Petes lunch	55.00	
	<u>120.58</u>	<u>120.58</u>
Ending Balance		3648.8

Submitted by
Ken Freeman

The Informant

The Informant is published by the MCCCCA three times a year. Its purpose is to inform and engage MCCCCA membership and the Montgomery County community.

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The Informant welcomes submissions from the MCCCCA membership, the Montgomery County Police Department, and the broader Montgomery County community. Submission does not guarantee publication. The Informant reserves the right to edit for length, clarity, style, and tone.

MCCCCA Officers

President - Ken Freeman • Vice President - Missi Johns • Program Officer - Vivian Wolpers
Activities Officer - Heyfa Khenissi • Secretary - Phil Gilbert • Treasurer - Rachel Johns
Past President - Jerry Mullarkey • Advisor - Diane Platt • Advisor - Eileen Broderick



JOIN MCCAAA FOR OUR SUMMER SOCIAL



**June 21, 2025
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

**Outta the Way Cafe
17503 Redland Rd
Derwood, MD 20855**

**Everyone is responsible for their own bill.
Please RSVP to Ken Freeman at
kenfreeman49@gmail.com or 301-948-1642**

