Globalization is changing the American city. From industry to innovation, culture to commerce, this new world economy is affecting nearly every aspect of our lives. The world, explains New York Times journalist Thomas L. Friedman, is now flat.

What does this mean for Baltimore? The most important factor for the future success of the city may well be our ability to build local talent. Fostering and retaining talented people—from innovators capable of solving complex issues to individuals stepping into their communities to fill a void—is paramount. "You can flourish in this flat world," Friedman writes in The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century, "but it does take the right imagination and the right motivation." Here is a look at some of the people, innovations, and trends that will help shape your local future in this growing global environment.

TREND: Globalization

Economists like Richard Florida see the struggle for the future as a global battle for talent between urban regions, not nations. In The Flight of the Creative Class, Florida argues that Baltimore's competition for critical brainpower is not just Boston, but also Barcelona and Bombay. From high-tech to biotech to sustainable design, Baltimore is beginning to answer this global challenge by redefining the economic engines that fuel the post-industrial city.

Key Han

65
Founder and CEO, DDMotion

Early in his career as a mechanical engineer, Kyung "Key" Han got a piece of advice from other young engineers: Find a pet project for life.

Decades later, Han's invention—an energy-efficient method of operating machines—has developed into much more than a pet project and is on the brink of revolutionizing fuel efficiency in automobiles.

Han is the founder and CEO of DDMotion, a Hampden-based company that explores applications of his patented technology, called Infinitely Variable Motion Control (IVMC). Although IVMC has the long-term potential to save energy in generators and compressors (like those in air conditioners and refrigerators), DDMotion is now focusing on the technology's use in automobile transmissions. By functioning without belts or hydraulics and transferring a continuous source of energy from engine to drive controls, the new product could lead to less pollution and save fuel in vehicles ranging from small cars to 18-wheelers.

"Fifteen years ago, fuel costs were low and people were not really serious about an energy-efficient transmission," the Korean-born Han explains. "Now everyone is talking about fuel and fossil oil. I believe that the time is right for this product."

"Key's mind is one of the best minds I have ever encountered in terms of conceptualizing and understanding complex mechanical systems and the way they move," says Jonathan Haslanger, a design engineer at DDMotion. "He has very good intuition and when he starts applying it to transmissions, he comes up with ideas that are completely different from what people have been doing for the past one hundred years."

Han wants to take a steady approach to proving its value to the market. "When this concept is developed, everyone will move into this," he says. "Ultimately, I believe it will change the world."

—Alice Ockleshaw

INNOVATION: Bringing Biotech to the Inner City

"For more than fifty years, the central city's historic role as a center of research and innovation has been usurped by Edge Cities like the Silicon Valley. The return to the city by the young and highly educated has created the opportunity for urban-based research, especially in biotech where big-city research hospitals remain strong. The next Silicon Valley could be in a redeveloped inner-city district like the one in East Baltimore."


Margaret "Sue" Penno

49
Founder, BioTechnical Institute of Maryland

Jean Smith was a single mother from the Hollander Ridge projects when she knocked on Sue Penno's door. Penno, director of the Cell Center at the Johns Hopkins University Medical School, had a job opening for a
Professional disciplines are shifting as rapidly as the global economy. By expanding traditional job descriptions, individuals are able to think creatively and holistically in a way that defies categorization and responds to real world problems. This new cross-pollination of disciplines is often fueled by a growing desire for individual work to have a broader social impact.

**TREND: The Intersection of Disciplines**

**Quote:**

Cities have one crucial resource—their people. Human cleverness, desires, motivations, imagination, and creativity are replacing location, natural resources, and market access as urban resources. The creativity of those who live in and run cities will determine future success.

—Charles Landry, author of *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*
Filmmaker Lee Boot and his company, InfoCulture, operate from a place where the compulsion to create art intersects with the desire to change culture. He dresses up the anti-drug message in his unorthodox film, *Euphoria,* with outlandish metaphors, but he's also prepared to help the viewer strip it down to the naked truth, if necessary. After a year on the film festival and small-group screening circuit, Boot is shopping *Euphoria* to distributors this spring. The goal, however, is not just to get into theaters, but also into high school classrooms. He made this film not only as artistic expression, but as an instrument of change.

"We're trying to take the most profound information and fuse it back into the culture, literally helping to grow our culture," says the artist/educator/filmmaker whose film won the Best Documentary award last year at the WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival.

He can't think of a better home base than Baltimore, which is like ground zero for *Euphoria*'s topic of drug abuse.

"I don't want to sound like I'm giving the town I love a black eye, but if you're a culture grower, you want to come to where the culture is struggling," Boot says. For him, it's like a battlefield stint for a surgeon.

When *Euphoria* plays in high schools, it is accompanied by diagrams and lesson aids created by his wife and director of outreach, Stacy Arnold. Even without a manual for the science, visual metaphors, and philosophy that pepper the film, audiences embrace its premise that the key to happiness is doing what you find meaningful. This can stimulate the same parts of your brain as the artificial high of drugs, only for much, much longer. Boot, a former high school teacher, is doing his innovative filmmaking as a research associate professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He appears in his own film as a sort of tour guide, stripping down to boxer shorts in an empty room before explicitly stating the film's basic message.

From then on, it's a multimedia carnival: Boot talks science and punctuates it with surreal and absurd images. A dead rat embedded in an over-frosted cake is a metaphor for rats that press a lever for more and more cocaine until they drop dead.

"We had the privilege of screening *Euphoria* in both versions—work in progress and finished film," says Jed Dietz, director of the Maryland Film Festival. "It's a unique, visionary film."

—Anne Haddad

**Quote:**

There is a place where different cultures, domains, and disciplines stream together toward a single point. They connect, allowing for established concepts to clash and combine, ultimately forming a multitude of new, groundbreaking ideas. When you step into an intersection of fields, disciplines, or cultures, you can combine existing concepts into a large number of extraordinary new ideas.

—Excerpted from *The Medici Effect: Breakthrough Insights at the Intersection of Ideas, Concepts, and Cultures* by Frans Johansson

*Marybeth Shaw*  
**42**  
Designer, Graphics and Building Products

*Shelonda Stokes*  
**33**  
President and CEO, greiBO Media  

For Shelonda Stokes, a childhood without role models pushed her to create long-term change. "Not seeing any businesses run by people who looked like me was disheartening," she says. "My goal became to provide...

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*Shelonda Stokes,* a childhood without role models pushed her to create long-term change. "Not seeing any businesses run by people who looked like me was disheartening," she says. "My goal became to provide...
business opportunities that the community could carry forward.”

As president of minority-owned production company greiBO Media, and program director of Baltimore’s Digital Village—which promotes economic development by teaching technology—Stokes has come a long way from the rough East Baltimore neighborhood of her youth. While her father was addicted to drugs and in prison, Stokes’ mother supported the family on welfare—and directed her children toward a better life. “We weren’t allowed to say ‘can’t,’” Stokes says.

Stokes graduated cum laude in engineering from Morgan State University. “When you are the first in your family to go to college, you are carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders,” she says. Stokes spent five years with Hewlett Packard but felt she could make more of a difference in her community.

Her opportunity came in 2001, when she began helping her husband and his business partner by formalizing the structure of their company, attracting new business, and establishing a process for working with customers. That same year, Stokes helped the city secure a $5 million grant from Hewlett Packard to support education programs and forge business partnerships in the East Baltimore Empowerment Zone. Stokes was hired through greiBO in 2002 to manage the program, which she did for two years. Today, in her mission to contribute to the community, she donates her company’s marketing and promotion services to one or two organizations each year and gives substantial discounts to nonprofit organizations.

“This is someone who really beat the odds through hard work and a creative spirit,” says Jan Houbolt, executive director of The Leadership, a Greater Baltimore Committee program that Stokes completed. “She cares about her community, and will for the rest of her life.”

In her free time, she advises minority-owned companies, tutors girls, and volunteers at a women’s shelter. But Stokes says her biggest contribution is greiBO’s ability to provide opportunities for people. The company performs “compelling, socially conscious” work for clients like AIDS Interfaith Residential Services (AIRS) and The Governor’s Office of Minority Affairs. “I pray that this business is a legacy,” she says.

—A.O.

**Michael Sarbanes**

Community Activist

One of Michael Sarbanes’ neighbors is a 12-year-old girl whose main joy in a hardscrabble life is playing the trumpet in her school band. When the girl moved from an elementary school that had instruments for its students to a middle school that did not, she knew her family couldn’t afford to buy her a trumpet. She didn’t even ask. Sarbanes did. He e-mailed a lawyer friend, who e-mailed other lawyers and got eight replies from people with unused trumpets in their closets. Sarbanes says that’s Baltimore’s problem in a nutshell. “The trumpets are out there,” but class divisions keep the haves separated from the have-nots, so simple needs go unnoticed and unmet.

Sarbanes has a gift for seeing simultaneously an individual child’s needs and the larger underlying social problem, says Susan Goering, executive director of the ACLU of Maryland. “He’s smart, he’s savvy, and he’s inspirational.” The son of Sen. Paul Sarbanes, he grew up in Baltimore’s Bolton Hill and Oakenshawe neighborhoods. He was a lawyer for grassroots groups combating open-air drug dealing and later served as deputy chief of staff to former Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend. In 2003 he became executive director of the Citizens Planning and Housing Association, a 65-year-old citywide nonprofit dedicated to strengthening neighborhoods and improving the quality of life in the Baltimore region.

Sarbanes sees both danger and opportunity in the city’s real estate boom. As wealthier residents move in, they could revitalize neighborhoods—or drive out the poor, forcing them into worse housing and putting even more stress on blighted communities. He is chairing a Baltimore City Council-appointed task force working on an “inclusionary housing” policy. Inclusionary housing would mean that new development projects would need to include some units for low or moderate-income families, along with market rate units. “At a real time of transition,” Sarbanes says, CPHA wants to “help citizens understand what is happening and help the region respond in a way that’s consistent with our better nature.”

—H.D.

**IDEAS TO STEAL**

Who was it that said imitation is the highest form of flattery? We’ve come across a few forward-thinking ideas that Baltimore should consider implementing. Check out these ideas to pinch.

**Idea: Require all new city buildings to install green roofs**

*Stolen From: Chicago’s Mayor Daley*

Why do it? The Chesapeake will thank us. Green roofs have numerous benefits, including lower energy costs, improved aesthetics, and longer roof lives. The bonus for Baltimore is that these plant-covered roofs soak up 50% to 60% of the precipitation that falls on them, easing stress on storm drains and preventing overflow—which in turn eases stress on the Bay.

**Idea: Reclaim unused buildings for sustainable cohousing**

*Stolen From: Silver Spring, Maryland*

Why do it? Cohousing reinstates community as a core tenet of life by creating communal spaces for all residents within a larger community that still offers the privacy of individual residences. What better way to regenerate the city’s many industrial areas than to convert its surplus of beautiful old warehouses into such developments? Furthermore, innovations in green construction that can be used in these communities have made it possible to make sustainable buildings at no greater cost.

**Idea: Build a progressive city audit program with citizen feedback**

*Stolen From: Portland, Oregon*

Why do it? An informed citizenry is a powerful citizenry. Building a comprehensive city stats program will promote an efficient and accountable city government. In addition to making important stats about government agencies easily available online, Portland annually surveys all citizens about city services because they know better than anyone else how their services are being delivered. The government then responds by adjusting its process to address the needs of residents.

**Idea: Give tax breaks for cafes and restaurants with outdoor seating**
Stolen From: Portugal, Spain, and Australia
Why do it? Fundamental to revitalizing Baltimore is neighborhood participation. Developing a “cafe culture” by encouraging outdoor seating will make the city more interesting, drawing people to hang out in the city past their regular work hours. More people means more money for local businesses and safer neighborhoods.

—Cate Han and Stacey Seltzer

TREND: Generation C
The C stands for “Content.” But it could as easily stand for communication. As technology increases our capacity to connect, content is building new communities across the city (and the world) as people share their ideas. It’s easier than ever to print a book, build a blog, share a song, and reach new audiences. The result? Our disparate worlds become linked as individuals build bridges through their creative endeavors.

CJ Hilton
17
Musician

Flashing a wry smile, CJ Hilton refers to himself as an “entertainer.” It’s an easy way of saying, “I do a lot of things.” Entertainer translates into performer, singer, songwriter, musician, and producer. Last year CJ, whose voice has been likened to Marvin Gaye, signed with Capitol Records. The first single from his debut album, Too Young to Know, was released in February. And if the title didn’t give it away, he’s just 17.

On my album, he says, “I talk about some things that teenagers want to talk about but they can’t. I know all the grownups are going to be like, ‘Wow. He’s so young. How did he know about that?’ So basically, I put it out there in my title.”

CJ’s talents emerged at age nine when he auditioned for Thaddeus L. Price Jr., who directed the music program at Southwest Academy Middle School in Baltimore County. Price, who now chairs the performing arts department of Milford Mill Academy, saw CJ’s talents early on.

“CJ is truly one of the very rare breed of true musicians. He is a real singer, not a fly-by-night studio sensation,” says Price.

CJ was raised in Catonsville. His parents divorced when he was 13. “When it happened, I was kind of upset at my mom, and I was kind of upset at my dad … I just crawled into my music.” He credits his mother with being an anchor in his life as he straddles a blossoming music career and life as a teenager.

“Music is kinda like a drug for me. When I go through problems, music is what keeps me level.”

—Jason Tinney

Lisa Mathews and Mikel Gehl
Early forties
Musicians

Some children’s performers dress in crazy animal suits to get attention. Others sing in baby voices syrupy enough to infantilize an infant. When the Baltimore band Milkshake wants to grab a young audience, they rock.

At a sold-out show at the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C., lead singer Lisa Mathews belted out songs about being scared and having a bottle full of sunshine as she danced onstage in combat boots and a tutu. Cofounder and guitarist Mikel Gehl and their band accompanied her with guitar licks, rock and roll kicks, two video screens, and confetti shooting out of cannons. The rapt crowd of juice-box swilling fans sang along and bopped to the beat. And the kids liked it, too.

“We do music that everyone can listen to and enjoy,” Mathews says. “Kids don’t seem to have any rules for the kind of music they like. I want to do quality stuff that is fun and has an element of goodness.”

Child magazine named Milkshake’s first CD Happy Songs one of their “Stand Out CDs” of 2002. Their second CD, Bottle of Sunshine, was hailed by the Los Angeles Times as “a smiling hug of an album.” And the band was included in an article about children’s music in the February 13, 2006 issue of Time magazine.

“Milkshake has a sincerity and sophistication among children’s recording artists that’s fairly rare,” says Kenny Curtis, director of children’s programming for XM Satellite Radio. “They have firsthand experience as parents and they are an amazing band whose songs are conceptual and fully thought out pieces of music.”

Next on Mathew’s ten-year plan for the band? She is working on creating The Milkshake Show, a TV series something in the vein of Pee Wee’s Playhouse. Mathews says it will be educational and entertaining, with music at the center. And, hopefully, it will rock.

—Maria Blackburn

Aaron Henkin
32
Radio Producer, WYPR

After a year and a half producing The Signal, a weekly radio arts journal at WYPR hosted by Andy Bienstock and co-produced by Lisa Morgan, Aaron Henkin hasn’t come close to meeting all of Baltimore’s most colorful characters. But he’s working on it—from the dolphin trainer mourning the loss of a beloved animal to the local actor who was stepped on by an AT-AT walker in The Empire Strikes Back.

“We’ll never run out of material doing a show like this in Baltimore,” he says. “People [here] have got an openness about them, a willingness to let you into their lives—and they all have something bizarre to tell you.”

Baltimore has embraced Henkin’s idiosyncratic glimpses into Baltimore’s culture. As one of WYPR’s most popular locally produced shows, it was named the Best Radio Show by the City Paper in 2005. Henkin also collaborated with Urbanite on its “Portraits of Belief” story last November.
"Aaron approaches his job with a focused passion I’ve never seen in those who work in the field, particularly in someone so young," says Anthony McCarthy, former host of WYPR's News Round-Up. "There’s something about his stories that connects with the audience, and in creating those stories, he really is giving a part of himself."

Henkin showed potential from early in his radio career, when the Chicago native started volunteering at WYPR four years ago. He became a full-time producer on the Marc Steiner Show and taught himself digital editing when the station was still analog. After a four-month stint at NPR headquarters in Washington, Henkin returned to Baltimore when the station offered him a chance to co-produce his concept for an arts and culture hour.

Although he has considered syndication, Henkin says the program couldn’t work without its local focus. He continues to look for stories, "that will not only continue to surprise the people who live here, but also surprise us." That said, radio stations across the country have starting picking up episodes of The Signal for rebroadcast.

—A.O.

**Gregg Wilhelm**

38
President and CEO of CityLit Project, Publisher of Pagoda Press

At the age of 13, Gregg Wilhelm wrote, illustrated, and bound (with twine) his first story—a science fiction story borrowed from the intergalactic adventures of *Star Wars* and *Buck Rogers*. Today, the Highlandtown resident is the founder and president of Baltimore’s CityLit Project, a nonprofit organization that nurtures the entire culture of literature through literary festivals, author readings, writers workshops, and youth education, along with teaching writers how to get published and market their books. A publisher, editor, and writer himself, Wilhelm is devoting his life to making Baltimore a literary destination.

"I've always had an affinity for books as artifacts," says Wilhelm, who was born and raised in Hampden and is a graduate of Loyola College where he also serves as director of Apprentice House, a student-staffed publishing company. By day, Wilhelm is the director of communications for the Babe Ruth Museum.

After five years of publishing local authors through Woodholme House Publishers, Wilhelm had the epiphany that to publish was not enough. "I came to the realization that if I didn’t do more to help develop a culture of literature and develop audiences, who would buy books?"

Wilhelm founded CityLit Project in January 2004 when he produced the first CityLit Festival at the Enoch Pratt Free Library, featuring a standing-room-only crowd for The Known World author Edward P. Jones, who won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction just days before the festival. He repeated the phenomenon with the second annual CityLit Festival, when featured author Steve Coll won a Pulitzer for the nonfiction *Ghost Wars* days before coming to Baltimore. CityLit Project also includes a publishing division, Pagoda Press, and the recently launched site CityLitProject.org, which is the city's first one-stop shop for local literary news.

Judy Cooper, coordinator of programs and publications at Enoch Pratt, sees Wilhelm’s work as a labor of love for both the literary community and for Baltimore. "He’s just very passionate about books and writing and connecting them to people in Baltimore and trying to create a really vibrant literary scene," she says.

—J.T.

**TREND: The Young and Restless**

Pundits warn of a brain drain in certain markets as the pool of young talent moves about the country (and the globe) in search of economic opportunities in creative settings. Educating and attracting new thinkers and keeping that talent local are critical issues for American cities. The places that win will be the ones that create a welcoming environment for this diverse generation.

**Peter Kannam**

34
Executive Director, New Leaders for New Schools

To make a huge difference in Baltimore’s public schools, where do you even start? That’s not a rhetorical question for Peter Kannam. He’s already started.

New Leaders for New Schools promotes high academic achievement in public urban schools by attracting, preparing, and supporting the next generation of principals. Kannam, who was recruited last winter to lead the Baltimore office of New Leaders, is a former Lombard Middle School teacher who later became executive director of Teach for America’s Baltimore program.

"Teaching was a transformative experience," Kannam says. "You see all the urban ills manifested in the child. I’m amazed at how resilient kids are and how smart they are. Even with incredible challenges, our students can achieve at high levels."

"Peter never took the easy route or made excuses—he just got it done. For our unit on the Harlem Renaissance, he organized a bus trip every year for the entire eighth-grade to Harlem, " says Matthew Byars, who team-taught with Kannam at Lombard Middle when both were novices.

"Not only was it an incredible educational and social experience for the kids, it afforded them an opportunity most of them had never dreamed of."

Kannam would like to see Baltimore schools achieve to the level of so-called 90-90-90 schools: 90 percent minority, 90 percent low-income, achieving at 90 percent of the proficiency rates. "The reason schools fail is the inability of adults to organize themselves—it’s not the kids."

Kannam is confident his work with New Leaders will make a difference. "Fifty new principals in three years—that’s 25% of the schools in Baltimore. We will close the achievement gap in our schools and be part of a catalytic change in the system."

—A.H.

**INNOVATION: The Baltimore Scholars**
Any Baltimore resident who completes grades 10–12 in the city schools and is admitted to Johns Hopkins University receives a four-year full tuition scholarship. That's $33,000 just for next year. "Baltimore's future is our future," says JHU president William Brody.

Ryan M. Harrison

18
Student

Last year, Ryan M. Harrison placed fifth in what's known as the Junior Nobel Prize. He was the first Baltimore City Public School student in five decades to make the finals of the elite nationwide Intel Science Talent Search. Harrison's achievement represented the fruition of more than ten years of work developing The Ingenuity Project at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, a program funded by the Abell Foundation to identify and encourage Baltimore City Public School students who show talent in science and math. (Two other Ingenuity Project students, Abe Davis and Owen Hill, made the semi-finals this year, with Davis going on to the finals this month.) Watching Harrison succeed, friends and family had visions of him winning a real Nobel some day.

But Harrison, now a freshman in biomedical engineering at Johns Hopkins University, says he hasn't decided whether or not to be a scientist. What?

Don't get him wrong. He still loves science, and he plans to publish the research that got him the Intel placement. He loves the freedom in science to explore and solve puzzles. That's also why he is considering a second major in economics.

"I'm interested in why things are the way they are," he says. "Why is the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, with a few exceptions, poor? Why are there so few African Americans at Hopkins? A lot of the answers come from economics. I would say economics can be even more complex than protein science."

It also irks him that social stratification "takes low-income and minority students and puts them into the worst possible educational circumstances and expects them to perform well. I think that's absurd." His social studies teacher at Poly, Dennis Jutras, was "surprised, but not surprised" at Harrison's passion for economics.

"He's not the traditional science geek," says Jutras, who is Baltimore's Teacher of the Year for 2005–2006. "He's very well rounded. In many ways, his approach to the social sciences is not unlike his approach to the hard sciences. It's about logic and deconstruction. He loves and respects the logic of a good argument."

—A.H.

Quote:

Andres Duany [of New Urbanism fame] was in town and city leaders asked him, "What can we do to bring people back to inner-city Dallas in meaningful numbers?" Duany said to them, "You can hire me and pay me thousands of dollars for advice and plans that you'll never use. Or ... you can build two elementary schools and a high school right downtown and staff it with good people and the rest will take care of itself."

—Developer Edward Baum, from "Developer Does Dallas" in Dwell magazine

TREND: Retiring to Cities

"The aging of the Baby Boom generation is a huge demographic event, as just about everyone knows, but it's been discussed almost entirely as a challenge or a threat—to government budgets, health care systems, even to transportation systems. But there's another side of this: tens of millions of newly retired people, physically vigorous and available to provide communities with crucial assistance on a whole range of fronts. My instinct is that the Boomers will be unlike any elderly population in history. Many of them, perhaps most, will be functionally middle-aged to 75 or 80 or even beyond. Local government needs to find a way to take advantage of this phenomenon. This might involve changing retirement ages and incentives, systematically mining the expertise of those who have left the work force, or recreating volunteerism in a wholly new way. In short, cities are about to acquire some new burdens, but they are also being given a huge potential gift. The question of how to seize it should be part of the public dialogue."

—Alan Ehrenhalt, executive editor, Governing magazine. Excerpted from 40 Ideas about the Future published by CEOs for Cities.

Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell

35
Dancer

When Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell retired in May as a principal dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, she never questioned what she'd do next. More than anything, Fisher-Harrell wanted to come back to Baltimore to teach dance at The Baltimore School for the Arts.

Her reasoning was simple. "This school taught me how to dance," she said one afternoon before stepping out into the BSA studio to lead a modern dance class. Fisher-Harrell hadn't taken any formal dance classes until she was 14. Remembering her audition makes her laugh now. "You know when you dance all crazy in your bedroom to the radio and you think you're really good but you're not—that was me," said the dancer, who also teaches at Towson University.

But her teachers saw a blend of raw talent, charisma, and a willingness to work. "She had something so special," says Baltimore School for the Arts Director Leslie Shepard. "She has such a presence on stage and is so beautiful, but she is also such a hard worker. The minute she entered the dance studio she was hungry to learn."

After graduating from The Baltimore School for the Arts in 1988, Fisher-Harrell attended Juilliard for a year, then toured with Chicago's Hubbard Street Dance Company, dancing for world-class choreographers like Twyla Tharp.

In May 1992, she joined Alvin Ailey and spent the next thirteen years traveling the world. New York Times critic Anna Kisselgoff described her as "a vision, glamorous and fluent in her silky leg extensions and stunning in images of sculptural recline."

Who is Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell? A vision, glamorous and fluent in her silky leg extensions and stunning in images of sculptural recline. She has such a presence on stage and is so beautiful, but she is also such a hard worker. The minute she entered the dance studio she was hungry to learn. When Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell retired in May as a principal dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, she never questioned what she'd do next. More than anything, Fisher-Harrell wanted to come back to Baltimore to teach dance at The Baltimore School for the Arts. Her reasoning was simple. "This school taught me how to dance," she said one afternoon before stepping out into the BSA studio to lead a modern dance class. Fisher-Harrell hadn't taken any formal dance classes until she was 14. Remembering her audition makes her laugh now. "You know when you dance all crazy in your bedroom to the radio and you think you're really good but you're not—that was me," said the dancer, who also teaches at Towson University.

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Now, Fisher-Harrell is committed to teaching her passion to the next generation. She says, "Dance is something that's in your heart."

—M.B.

**INNOVATION: Experience Corps**

A growing national program, The Experience Corps, offers service opportunities to people over 55, particularly as mentors in urban schools. In Baltimore, more than two hundred participants work at least fifteen hours a week with K–3 children, mostly as literacy tutors. Studies show the tutors benefit as much as the kids do.

**Larry Silverstein**
40
Developer

There aren't many lofts in Baltimore with walls large enough to hang the wing of an airplane. Developer Larry Silverstein proudly makes this point as he shows off the massive white-washed brick wall he calls an "open canvas" in the homes that he's creating near Little Italy.

Silverstein's Union Box Company is developing thirty-eight lofts on five floors—a sophisticated mix of renovation and new infill construction at the old Canal Street Malt House, built in 1866 on the 300 block of South Central Avenue. The project of red brick and colossal paned windows is a bold nod to Baltimore's industrial past, reflecting the surrounding historic neighborhoods of Fells Point and Little Italy. Thirteen of the lofts occupy the old warehouse, with another twenty-five in an adjoining new building designed to create the warehouse feel of the original space.

Ellen von Karajian, executive director of the Preservation Society in Fells Point, said Silverstein has been doing some very good infill in Fells Point that is compatible with adjacent historic properties. "He has really distinguished himself," she says.

Silverstein founded his company in 1996, taking its name from the restored nineteenth century Union Box Company that once built crates for local oyster canneries and is now his headquarters in Fells Point. "I love old buildings," Silverstein says. "I think they have incredible amounts of character and present a lot of opportunities to create great spaces." With floor-to-ceiling windows, sleek steel stairs and railings, and old fire doors, each of the Malt House lofts, though luxurious, have aspects that are modern reminders of the blue collar Baltimore once wore.

"I try never to build something I wouldn't live in or work in," Silverstein said, "and I feel that these industrial products that are re-used are kind of the fabric of Baltimore."

—J.T.

**Gary A. Officer**
40
Businessman/Philanthropist

Gary A. Officer knows that African Americans are more likely to be imprisoned, suffer from crime and chronic diseases, earn fewer degrees, buy fewer homes, and die earlier than other Americans.

As president and CEO of the Associated Black Charities (ABC), Officer wants to do something about it. Running a successful nonprofit with programs challenging such overwhelming problems takes more than good intentions, he says. You need to be able to raise money. Lots of it. "If we are to make a difference in our community and take leadership on issues affecting our community, we have to have access to greater means," he says.

Officer is a British-born graduate of the London School of Economics who has run community development programs in Boston and Chicago. As president and CEO of the National Credit Union Foundation in Washington, D.C., he established a $370 million community investment fund. Officer took the helm of ABC in December 2004, believing his skills could make a difference. "ABC is my calling," he says.

Tom Wilcox, president of the Baltimore Community Foundation, predicts Officer's work will have a tremendous impact. "The fact that the head of our leading African American charity is someone so well schooled in community development and sophisticated wealth building is nothing but good news for Baltimore," he says.

Last fall, the ABC, under Officer's leadership, started the Legacy Fund, which aims to raise $50 million over three years. It's a huge undertaking for a group with a $23 million budget, but Officer says he is up to the challenge. "We get so many calls from groups and churches asking if we can address issues that affect their communities, issues like affordable housing, community development, and healthcare, and we have to tell them we don't have the discretionary means to do that," Officer says. "It's heartbreaking. I want to change that."

—M.B.

**TREND: DIY Community**

Across the country, as city budgets and infrastructure are unable to keep up with urban needs, citizens have started to pick up where their governments leave off, reclaiming public space and parklands, schools and cityscapes. What can government do to capitalize on this do-it-yourself movement? San Francisco City Hall reporter Rachel Gordon has a suggestion: Leverage this human capital. "Help organize and direct these groups and their work," she writes in the CEOs for Cities 40 Ideas about the Future. "It would be in everyone's interest to improve the city."

**Margaret Footner**
Executive Director, Creative Alliance

Margaret Footner works in the challenging medium of bringing art to the community. For eleven years, Footner has been the string that ties together the budget and the programs for Baltimore's most inclusive arts organization, the Creative Alliance at The Patterson. As co-founder and executive director, Footner has helped transform the Creative Alliance into a city-wide institution embraced by the funky, the crafty, the hip, the artists and art lovers, and especially everyday people.

From its modest start in Fells Point to its spacious headquarters in The Patterson Theater on Eastern Avenue,
Footner, ironically, is not an artist. Nothing in her background was an obvious prelude to founding the Creative Alliance. Her degrees are in English and education. She designed a unit on black maritime history and wrote grants so city school children could attend it for free through Living Classrooms Foundation. And she owned a cafe for eight years in Fells Point.

At the Creative Alliance, she has found a calling orchestrating arts endeavors so creative they have led to new Baltimore traditions, like the annual Halloween lantern parade in Patterson Park, produced in collaboration with Friends of Patterson Park, the Patterson Park Community Development Corporation, and artist Molly Ross. It has become a city-wide phenomenon, illuminating the park with at least 3,200 participants and observers last year.

“I think there’s a lot more respect for the arts community and for the importance of artists as leaders in the community,” Footner says. “We did grow very fast, but that was in response to a mandate for a successful redevelopment project in Highlandtown.” Today Footner manages an operating budget of $900,000 and ten staff members. Cheryl Casciani, a member of the Creative Alliance board of directors, says Footner’s style complements the flamboyant energy around her.

“She’s a very understated person,” says Casciani. “She has this quiet, steady, patient leadership that allows all kinds of people to flourish.”

—A.H.

FUTURE TREND: What’s Next for Cities?

Cities and regions are changing rapidly. We polled some observers of urban life about the future of the American city in general, and Baltimore specifically. Each was asked the same three questions: What do you believe will influence how cities develop over the next five years? What should cities do now to prepare for this opportunity or challenge? Where are the places that we should look for inspiration? These are excerpts of what they had to say. To contribute your own thoughts, e-mail us at mail@urbanitebaltimore.com.

Successful cities will continue to provide opportunities for folks with a variety of backgrounds, interests, and income levels. Developers have already invested money in their next five years’ worth of projects. The most forward-looking ones are planning for the decade after the next five years. Still, as much as developers lead the process, they have to follow someone: innovators, urbanites old and young, anyone with courage and ideas. By connecting with these people, they are assuring that even if all their projects are not huge successes, at least they will not be irrelevant.

What should city governments do? What should city-dwellers do? Two things: Listen. Connect. Inspiration needs to be local to be genuine. Along the way there will be opportunities to serve the community, to create moments, to shape institutions, to design places, and to enjoy the ride.

—Bob Caldwell, senior associate, Gensler Baltimore

More people will choose where they live based on what kinds of amenities they want. Households without kids, retirees, people who work at home, and families teaching kids at home or sending kids to inter-district magnet and charter schools—all growing demographics—do not need to follow traditional constraints on location. Watch for them to move to far-flung exurbs and to unique city neighborhoods, with less interesting urban neighborhoods and older suburbs the biggest losers.

All cities and suburbs need to realize that they will have to do more to compete for residents than they did in past generations—both in basics like crime prevention and transportation infrastructure and amenities like parks and cultural offerings. Cities also have to make sure that they remain affordable to people who want to live there by cutting red tape for developers and making provisions for adequate modestly priced housing.

Los Angeles is a place to look for inspiration. The city is retrofitting its landscape, designed for 1950s suburbia, with ambitious new transit lines and parks. It is also permitting massive new infill projects, thus helping keep housing prices more manageable than in cities like San Francisco where “not in my backyard” groups kill off development.

—Adam Gordon, editor-in-chief, The Next American City

I think our biggest cities will enter a period of rather severe contraction as America (and the rest of the world) enters a new era of permanent energy scarcity. The big cities are products of early twentieth century fossil fuel industrialism, with a heavy reliance on the automobile. To make matters worse, the suburban project of the late twentieth century resulted in a massive disinvestment in those industrial cities, so we flnd many of them today in an already advanced state of contraction.

Paradoxically, though, I believe these cities will re-densify at their centers and along their waterfronts, in no small part because suburbia is the next to falter. The final result will be smaller but denser cities. In Baltimore, that exact process is well underway. Baltimore is doing a pretty good job at re-densifying its core—as good as any city I’ve seen. And I have seen a lot of them. I say this also because Baltimore was pretty far gone in 1996. Not much was happening then, besides the new ballpark, and the city has come a long way. But the farther-out neighborhoods may not be able to follow the same trajectory.

We have to restore public transit at all scales, especially the heavy rail passenger system between cities. City leaders have to start very aggressively campaigning for the state and federal governments to make this happen, while they redirect some municipal funds still going into car infrastructure toward light rail and other smaller-scale local urban transit. The fact that we are not even talking about this shows how dumb, deluded, and unserious we are as a society.

—James Howard Kunstler, author of Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America’s Man-Made Landscape and The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century

Baltimore will thrive as young and old continue to discover the pleasures of a cosmopolitan lifestyle and, in the process, remake our city on a European model. New residents across Baltimore will crave Continental features such as parks, sidewalk cafes, transit-oriented development, and
mixed-use, walkable communities.

The infusion of population, attention, and tax dollars promises to alleviate Baltimore’s biggest challenges, such as crime and the quality of our public schools. But we must be careful not to create a city of extremes—extremely rich and extremely poor. Economic integration, like racial inclusion, is key to creating a healthy community with a place for all.

— Kirby Fowler, president, Downtown Partnership of Baltimore

I am very upbeat about the future of Baltimore and believe that the last few years of strong leadership, favorable real estate trends, and good economic climate have moved our city over the hump. Not long ago, author David Rusk located Baltimore beyond a point of no return, essentially beyond hope. I believe that now it would take extreme circumstances or incompetence in local government to bring us back to such a state of despair. Our geographic position between the Appalachians and the Chesapeake Bay, our proximity to D.C. and New York, our rich history and memorable architecture, and our world-class institutions, from Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland to the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Baltimore Museum of Art, almost guarantee the desire of upwardly mobile folks from around the world to locate in our region.

As a city, we have to direct some of this growth from the greenfields to the core. As a state, Maryland has reached density levels comparable to my birth country of Germany. In our metro region, we are at the point where folks are truly fed up with sprawl, destruction of green space, the ugliness of endless commercial strips, and aggressive automobile traffic.

Place-making and quality of life are the new paradigms. Instead of segregation by class and race, we will strive for diversity and mix. We will accept density and look for intensity paired with rich visual and sensual experience in lieu of the sterility of the monochrome suburb. The city in the postindustrial world allows work and living, recreation and enjoyment all to come together in unexpected ways, as we can see already in the revitalized mixed-use areas of Federal Hill, Canton, Pigtown, and Hampden.

As Baltimore has pioneered downtown waterfronts and the downtown stadium, so will we pioneer urban biotech parks on the east and west side of downtown. Many other things we will have to learn from others. From Philadelphia and Boston, we must learn how to integrate a university campus successfully into urban life. We will have to learn from Portland or Zurich, Switzerland, how to make transit successful in a city that has no space or desire to build more roads or widen the streets. We will have to learn from Chicago, New York, and Charleston, South Carolina, how to maintain affordable housing and make it part of revitalization in order to provide opportunity for all and break up the concentrations of poverty and disinvestments that still jeopardize the future of Baltimore. We will have to learn from Portland or Zurich how to make a city “green.”

We will have to grow from being a beggar for development, just any development, to being choosy and critical. We will have to learn how quality development will beget more quality and how raising the bar will attract better investment. We just need to look to D.C. to see how the U Street corridor, which very recently was a “no go” zone, has become a vibrant destination. We need to have the courage for a vision that transforms every part of our city instead of leaving behind wastelands of disinvestments, crime, and abandonment. If we doubt that this can be done, we need to visit Boston and, increasingly, Brooklyn and the Bronx where these transformations have taken place or are underway.

I believe that the distribution and scarcity of resources and the resulting cost of energy and concerns about climate change will shape the next decades. I believe that true homeland security grows out of creating a stable, just, and attractive society. Cities and metro regions will be in the forefront of creating such places and solutions for sustainability and livability because cities are the places of knowledge and interaction.

— Klaus Philipsen, principal of ArchPlan, Baltimore