



MALA 2021 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

SPEAKER BIOS

ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Kathie Durbin is the Director of Montgomery County, MD's Alcohol Beverage Services and is the outgoing President of the Maryland Alcohol Licensing Association. For the past 15 years, she has been responsible for alcohol licensing, alcohol policy, education, legislative initiatives, and business compliance. Ms. Durbin began her career as a Responsible Alcohol Beverage Service Instructor for the Restaurant Association of Maryland's Hospitality Education Foundation while working in restaurant management positions in DC and Maryland. She then spent 10 years as a contractor for the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services where she wrote and managed state grants, mini-grants, and managed the substance abuse prevention network. During that time, she also served as the Executive Director of the Montgomery County Restaurant Association, collaborating with local agencies and the executive board to craft meaningful alcohol legislation.

Kathie is a University of Maryland, Baltimore County Graduate and is also certified by the State of Maryland as an Alcohol Server Instructor and a Substance Abuse Prevention Professional. She is an active member of the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association, Responsible Hospitality Institute, and the Responsible Retailing Forum. Recognized in 2016 by the National Alcohol Licensing Professional Association for Innovation and Leadership and again in 2017 by the Center for Alcohol Policy as Regulator of the Year, Kathie is considered an expert in the field of alcohol regulation, education, and policy. kathie.durbin@montgomerycountymd.gov

Lila Cooper is a recent graduate from Wagner College in NYC, having just earned her BA in Theatre Performance. She is so excited to be singing the *National Anthem* for the MALA 2021 Virtual Conference – one of her first “gigs” post-grad! In addition to her passion for Theatre, Lila also has an interest in political and social activism. Not only did Lila take part in flipping the Senate with her work as a Financial Compliance Associate for the Georgia Senate Campaigns, she also started her own crochet business to raise money for BLM and LGBTQ+ organizations. Lila hopes to continue to use her passion to enact real, concrete change, through love.

lilajcooper17@gmail.com

Debbe Owston was promoted to Administrator to the Garrett County Board of License Commissioners in 2006. At this time, she also was appointed to the MALA Executive Committee. Debbie is a past president of the Garrett County Drug Free Communities Coalition and is still very active with the coalition. Ms. Owston began her career with Garrett County Government in 1998. Originally, she was hired to fill an administrative assistant position in the Department of General Services. She worked directly with the Board of License Commissioners among other things. What set her apart from other employees was the fact that she had an Alcohol Awareness Certification. She quickly became familiar with alcoholic beverage regulations and advanced in her position.

Prior to working for Garrett County Government, Debbie worked at a Deep Creek Lake restaurant while pursuing her bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Frostburg State University. She also owned and operated a retail package store with an on-premise tavern. Additionally, Debbie is a graduate of Leadership Garrett County. She really enjoys being a part of MALA and looks forward to many more years serving on the board.

dowston@garrettcounty.org

Earl Bradford has worked for Cecil County Government for 38 years; 30 years have been with the Cecil County Liquor Board. In 2001 he became Chief Alcoholic Beverage Inspector for the department. He has successfully led the Liquor Board's Operation Stay Alert program since 2001, as well as Compliance Checks for the department. Earl has held a position on the Maryland Alcoholic Licensing Association Executive Board for 14 years and served as President for two. ebradford@ccgov.org

Raimee H. Eck, PhD, MPH, MPAS has over 20 years of clinical and public health training and experience, focusing on the epidemiology of alcohol use and harm, environmental interventions to reduce acute and chronic causes of alcohol-related harm, and translating research into effective policy. She recently completed a Cancer Research Training Award Fellowship at the National Cancer Institute where she studied the role of alcohol in development of cancer, the co-use of alcohol with other behavioral risk factors (e.g., tobacco), and points of intervention along the cancer control continuum. Raimee is Past President and current Co-Chair of the Advocacy Committee of the Maryland Public Health Association, where she leads the statewide Alcohol & Tobacco Network, a coalition of researchers, legal experts, and community advocates. She is also the founder and principal of Sonrisa Solutions, providing expertise on topics such as alcohol and cannabis epidemiology, regulation, and enforcement; public health policy translation; and advocacy in the form of research reports, workshops, and webinars.

Raimee authored the [*Maryland Comparative Analysis of Alcohol Regulatory Systems*](#). Through personal interviews and data collection, she is updating key elements of the original document – creating an important and relevant snapshot in time as it relates to COVID-19 and the impact on regulators and businesses in Maryland. Raimee lives in Laytonsville with her husband, dogs, cat, turtle, fish, chickens, quail, and Corvettes. Raimee1eck@gmail.com

Jeffrey A. Kelly is the Director of the Field Enforcement Bureau, previously the Field Enforcement Division, for the Comptroller of Maryland and the Immediate Past President of the National Conference of State Liquor Administrators. Until January 1, 2021, the Field Enforcement Division was Maryland's regulator and enforcement agency for the State's alcohol, tobacco, and motor fuel industries. Since January, the regulatory and enforcement responsibility for alcohol and tobacco resides within the Maryland Alcohol and Tobacco Commission. Prior to being appointed Director in 2008 by Comptroller Peter Franchot, Jeff worked as the Deputy Director and as a field supervisor. Jeff's career in public safety spans over 40 years. Before joining the Office of the Comptroller, he was a police officer for the Anne Arundel County Police Department where he retired as the Executive Officer of the Western District. Jeff has a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Maryland in Management Studies with major course work in accounting, management, and financial planning. He has a Certificate in Emergency Medical Technician – Paramedic and a Certificate in Financial Planning. Jeff lives with his wife in Anne Arundel County and has three sons and four grandchildren.

JAKELLY@marylandtaxes.gov

Anthony (Tony) V. Hatcher is the acting Executive Director of the Maryland Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, which on January 1, 2021 took over responsibility for alcohol and tobacco licensing and regulation from the Comptroller of Maryland. Prior to being appointed acting Executive Director, Tony worked in the Field Enforcement Division of the Comptroller's office from 1998 through 2019 as an enforcement agent attaining the rank of Deputy Director prior to his retirement in 2019. Prior to joining the Field Enforcement Division Tony served 25 years as a police officer with the Annapolis Police Department., retiring as a Sergeant in 1997. Tony served a total of 45 years in public service. After graduation from high school Tony enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, serving two years, which included one tour of service in Vietnam. Tony has an Associates of Arts Degree from Anne Arundel Community College in Law Enforcement. Tony lives with his wife in Queen Anne's County and has four sons, two daughters, and seven grandchildren. thatcher@marylandtaxes.gov

William (Bill) George, Jr. is the Agent in Charge of the Maryland Alcohol and Tobacco Commission's Field Operations Bureau, previously the Field Enforcement Division's Enforcement Bureau, for the Comptroller of Maryland. Prior to being appointed Agent in Charge of the Enforcement Bureau in 2015 by Director Jeff Kelly, Bill worked as both a Field Supervisor, a Supervisor of the Tax Fraud Investigative Unit along with serving as an Enforcement Agent in the field. Bill's career as a law enforcement professional spans over 40 years. Before joining the Office of the Comptroller, he was a police officer for the Anne Arundel County Police Department where he retired as a Corporal while a member of the Narcotics Investigative Section assigned as a Federal Task Force Officer performing drug interdiction at points of mass transportation such as airports, train stations, and bus terminals throughout the Baltimore and surrounding areas as part of a nationwide effort. Bill attended the Anne Arundel Community College out of high school for two semesters before joining the Anne Arundel County Police Department. He is a General Instructor and a Firearms Instructor certified by the Maryland Police and Corrections Training and Standards Commission. Bill lives with his wife, son and daughter in Talbot County and has a grown daughter and son who both reside in Washington State with his three grandchildren. WGEORGE@marylandtaxes.gov

Jack R. Hartzell is an Agent Supervisor with the Maryland Alcohol and Tobacco Commission's Field Enforcement Division. His current duties are as the Division Administrator. He was transferred from his duties as the Division Administrator for the Comptroller's Field Enforcement Bureau into his current position upon the creation of the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission. He has served for four-and-one-half years between the Comptroller's Office and the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission. Prior to his promotion to Agent Supervisor, Jack served as an agent in the Comptroller's Field Enforcement Bureau's Tax Fraud Unit. Before coming to the Comptroller's Office, Jack served for 29 years with the Anne Arundel County Police Department. He retired in 2017 at the rank of Sergeant. Jack has specialized training as a Drug Recognition Expert / Instructor, Standardized Field Sobriety Testing / Instructor, Accident Reconstructionist, Breath Test Operator, Preliminary Breath Test Operator (PBT) and Field Training Officer (FTO), Homicide & Sex Crimes Investigations. He was also a part-time instructor at the Anne Arundel County Police Training Academy in the fields of Alcohol & Drug Enforcement and Criminal Investigations. Jack served four years in the United States Army as a Management Specialist, attaining the rank of Sergeant E5.

He received an honorable discharge in November 1987. Jack holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Science / Business Administration from St. Mary's College of Maryland and has taken masters courses at the University of Baltimore in the field of Criminal Justice / Police Administration. Jack lives with his wife in Anne Arundel County and has three daughters and three grandsons. jhartzell@marylandtaxes.gov

Andrew J. Waters is the Regulatory and Research Section Manager for the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, previously the Field Enforcement Division under the Comptroller of Maryland. Andrew has been employed under the Comptroller for six years, working as an Investigator and Researcher for the Field Enforcement Division where he managed the Comptroller's Fingerprinting Program which successfully printed over 1,200 Maryland Comptroller employees. Prior to working with the Field Enforcement Division, he served as a staffer and liaison for the Comptroller's Front Office. Andrew graduated from Salisbury University in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and History.

awaters@marylandtaxes.gov

Mike Mohler serves as the Chief Administrator for Baltimore County's Liquor Board/Rental Registration Program. Mike is also the incoming president of the Maryland Alcohol Licensing Association. In addition to his duties of regulating all facets of the licensing and sale of alcoholic beverages within the county, Mike has been appointed Co-chair of the Baltimore County Liquor License Review Task Force, consisting of 10 business leaders from diverse backgrounds to review and recommend changes to Baltimore County's Liquor License Laws. Mohler also manages Baltimore County's Rental Registration Program, which has grown from 249 units in 2007 to over 19,000 today.

Past positions include the Deputy Director of Permits and Development Management for Baltimore County's Code Enforcement division. As Deputy Director, he managed a diverse department that included a staff of 31 – supervisors, coordinators, inspectors, rental registration administrators, and clerical staff.

Prior to this time, Mohler held the position of Mid-Atlantic Region Sales Director for DIAGEO-GUINNESS USA where he managed the sales of the Guinness beer and FMB portfolio in a six-state, 3.5 million case region accounting for \$70 million in annual sales in Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, DC, and West Virginia. mmohler@baltimorecountymd.gov

Marshall Weston has held a number of senior management positions in non-profit associations and the foodservice industry over the past 25 years. He is currently the President and CEO of the Restaurant Association of Maryland (RAM), a statewide trade association of over 2,000 members that is dedicated to promoting, protecting, and improving the foodservice and hospitality industry in Maryland. Weston's knowledge and expertise comes from over 10 years of restaurant management experience along with a degree in Public Policy from Penn State University that included working as a Legislative Fellow in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He prides himself in keeping a team of employees, engaged association members and industry partners to ensure that RAM is the most trusted source for restaurant advocacy, regulatory compliance information, foodservice employee training and restaurant focused vendors. mweston@marylandrestaurants.com

Jane Springer is the Executive Director of the MSLBA, Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association. MSLBA is a trade association of approximately 1,000 local beer, wine, and spirits retailers throughout the state. Jane began her career with MSLBA over 30 years ago when she launched their statewide Maryland TAM®, Techniques of Alcohol Management® training program. The program has since certified over 70,000 participants in alcohol awareness training. As an extension of the training, she researched local rules and regulations and developed relationships with health, substance abuse, and enforcement agencies to help retailers in building local coalitions and affiliate organizations of MSLBA. Currently Jane manages the operations of MSLBA as well as their education and charitable organizations: MSLBA Educational Resources and MSLBA Community Charity. mslba@msn.com

Nicholas G. Manis, the son of MCA co-founder George Manis and managing partner of the firm, has presided over legislative and special event successes on behalf of clients such as the Motion Picture Association of America, the Baltimore Ravens, the Maryland Beer Wholesalers Association, the Maryland Association of Certified Public Accountants, and Pfizer.

Nick has been an accomplished lobbyist and legislative analyst for more than 30 years and has played an instrumental role in forging innovative and economically enhancing business partnerships among clients. He is proud to see MCA continuously ranked as one of the top lobbying firms in Maryland and the growth the firm has experienced during his time here. He has represented clients in matters related to sports entertainment, taxes, professional licensing, gaming, transportation, insurance, franchises, business regulation, information technology, environmental regulation, mergers and acquisitions, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare.

In 1989, Nick's business bent led him to co-found Manis & Wright Realty, a premier residential and commercial realty firm that grew from modest beginnings to a successful 40 associates company that merged with the largest real estate company in Maryland. Nick graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park in 1980. He was the captain of the varsity lacrosse team during his time at College Park. A native of Annapolis, Nick is involved in many local business and community organizations including the Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce, the University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center Board of Advisors, Annapolis Youth Lacrosse Association, and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce. He was presented the Louis L. Goldstein Award in 1998 in recognition of his efforts on behalf of the Maryland Alcohol Beverage Industry. He is married with two children.

nmanis@maniscanning.com

Kevin Atticks started out writing press articles for the wine industry, but soon grew the organization with new events, promotional programs, government affairs initiatives, and more. After leading the wineries association for 15 years, he founded Grow & Fortify to promote the value-added agriculture industry, notably wineries, breweries, and distilleries. He serves on the University of Maryland College of Agriculture's Global Leadership Council, is the past chair of the Maryland Tourism Coalition, past president of the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council, and past chair of the WineAmerica State & Regional Associations Advisory Council. Kevin holds a Master's in Environmental Journalism from CU-Boulder, a Doctorate in Communications Design from University of Baltimore, and a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Music Composition from Loyola University, where he holds a faculty position. Kevin@growandfortify.com

Nick Blendy serves as the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Board of Liquor License Commissioners of Baltimore City, since January of 2021. Prior to this role, Nicholas worked in the Government Relations offices of three Mayors of Baltimore City and three County Executives of Baltimore County. A native of Ocean City, Maryland, Nicholas has over a decade of restaurant industry experience, and during contentious liquor board hearings, he occasionally wonders why he stopped tending bar for a living to become an attorney. He resides in Baltimore City's Hampden neighborhood with his wife and their two dogs.

Nicholas.Blenky3@baltimorecity.gov

Dawn Shugars joined the Frederick County Liquor Board in April of 2017 as part time administrative assistant. Within two years Mrs. Shugars was promoted to a fulltime Frederick County Liquor Board employee. That transition allowed Dawn to become a certified Alcohol Awareness Trainer. Until March of 2020, Dawn was a TIPS certified trainer, providing in-person training to Frederick businesses. When COVID prevented in-person training delivery, Shugars created a new virtual classroom platform – Safe Alcohol Service – the first approved, Alcohol Awareness Certification training in the State of Maryland.

The online course added the element of virtual testing online with strict parameters approved by the State Field Enforcement Division. Dawn has taken on the challenge of maintaining the Alcohol Awareness training virtual platform and provided a collaborate, innovative, and relevant experience for her participants. liquorboard@FrederickCountyMD.gov

Bailey Allard has worked closely with Montgomery County ABS for the past year. Collaborating with Cooper Communications, she created and is implementing a State-certified, virtual alcohol awareness training – the Responsible Beverage Service & Policy Training (RBSP) – targeting county agencies which do not traditionally have consistent policies and practices regarding alcohol service. Since the program's launch in January 2021, over 200 people have been trained and have received their Alcohol Awareness Certifications. Allard has trained and certified dozens more in TIPS.

With 10+ years in restaurant and hospitality management experience, she has an insider's perspective on the industry and an extensive background in implementing safe alcohol service. She is also a Cicerone Certified Beer Server, MoCo Food Service Manager, Pink Boots Society member, and works closely with the craft beer industry. In her free time, Bailey enjoys spending time renovating her house with her fiancé and two little dogs. bailey.j.allard@gmail.com

Barb Giniger Cooper is President of Cooper Communications – a social marketing and communications company which specializes in *assessing challenges, applying strategies, and achieving solutions*. For over 27 years, Cooper has created website content, materials, and programs that hit-the-mark. Her company delivers products, programs, and services based on audience feedback and participation. She has provided communication services to MALA (serves as the organization's webmaster) and the Montgomery County Alcohol Beverage Services since 2018. Responsibilities include managing portions of a NABC grant, co-creating and facilitating the Montgomery County Responsible Beverage Service & Policy training, building an alcohol trade practice curriculum, and helping to orchestrate this MALA 2021 Virtual Conference.

Current and past clients include: The U.S. Department of Labor, the Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Agency, Montgomery County, MD's Workforce Development Board, Employ Prince George's, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, National Council on Patient Information and Education, and Montgomery County's Drawing the Line on Underage Drinking. Cooper received her Bachelor of Science degree – Administration of Justice – from The American University and has completed coursework towards a master's degree in Public Administration also from The American University. Cooper resides in Silver Spring, MD with her husband Stan, and has two adult children – Lila (who is singing the *National Anthem* today) and Grady – about to start his MSW program at UPitt. She enjoys baking and playing with her mischievous dog, Charlie! barb.c@verizon.net

Melissa (Missi) Johns joined Montgomery County Government, Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS) in 1987 as a liquor store clerk, while attending the University of Maryland. Over the years, she has worked her way through the different divisions of ABS gaining knowledge in customer service, purchasing, pricing, and licensing. In 2006, Missi joined the Licensure, Regulation and Education Division as an Administrative Specialist. Since 2012 she has been an Alcohol/Tobacco Enforcement Specialist, working as the pre-license inspector, managing a program that her Division Chief, Kathie Durbin, created as a way to assist new applicants who are applying for an alcohol license in Montgomery County. This program was built to ensure the applicants have the education, information, and tools to succeed.

Johns is extremely customer service oriented and enjoys working with and assisting people. Missi is also part of the Alert Class program and has designed a portion of the class to specifically review the hearing process with the new applicants, preparing them for the Board's hearing. Melissa.Johns@montgomerycountymd.gov

Rodrigo (Roddy) Aguirre, or as most people call him, Roddy, joined Montgomery County Alcohol Beverage Services in March 2020 as a Community Outreach Specialist. While navigating all the changes that the COVID-19 pandemic brought, Roddy learned the laws and regulations of the alcohol business. Roddy provides support to the License, Regulation, and Education (LRE) division by creating educational material that serves to equip license holders to be successful and safe while serving alcohol.

Prior to working with Montgomery County, Roddy enjoyed a five-year stint with a non-profit in Washington, DC where he provided social services to mostly immigrant communities. Roddy is a proud Maryland Terp and enjoys reading, hiking, music, and his new dog, Bailey.

rodrigo.aguirre@montgomerycountymd.gov