

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Since 1932

Vol. 86, No. 7 February 15 — February 21, 2018 Prince George's County, Maryland Newspaper of Record Phone: 301-627-0900 25 cents

Hoyer Meets With University of Maryland President Dr. Wallace Loh and DACA Recipients

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of Steny Hoyer

COLLEGE PARK, MD—On February 1, 2018, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05) met with University of Maryland President Dr. Wallace Loh and DACA recipients from the University of Maryland. Since the Trump Administration rescinded the DACA program in Septem-

ber, 122 individuals have lost their protections each day.

"I want to thank Dr. Loh for hosting today's important discussion," said Congressman Hoyer. "I was so proud to be with such an extraordinary group of young people. They each bring different skills and talents to their com-

See DACA Page A3

Bowie State Bulldogs Win Fourth Straight, Knock Off Lincoln (PA) 74-65

By GREGORY GOINGS
Bowie State University

BOWIE, MD—Sophomore Cameron Hayes (Upper Marlboro, MD) put up a personal season-best 22 points and senior Omari George (Baltimore, MD) notched a double-double of 18 points and 10 rebounds to lead Bowie State to a 74-64 victory over Lincoln University of Pennsylvania on February 7, 2018. The win was the Bulldogs' fourth in a row and keeps Bowie State tied for first in the CIAA North with a record of 5-1.

In addition to Hayes and George, sophomore Saiquan Jamison (Upper Marlboro, Md.)

hauled down nine rebounds and redshirt sophomore David Belle (Hyattsville, MD) chipped in eight points for the Bulldogs. The Bowie State bench outscored the Lincoln (Pa.) bench, 42-18.

Lincoln University of Pennsylvania (10-12, 5-7 CIAA, 2-4 North) held the lead for the first eight minutes until pair of free throws by Bowie State freshman Keith Duffin, Jr. (Fort Meade, MD) tied the game at 9—all and 3-point play by sophomore Yohance Fleming (Bowie, MD) gave the Bulldogs' its first lead at 12-9 at the 11:16 mark of the first half.

See BOWIE STATE Page A6



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY ALEX MANN

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan addressed the media at a news conference at the State House in Annapolis Feb. 2, 2018. Hogan said that he'd developed a common, but "not serious" form of skin cancer.

Governor Larry Hogan Announces Cancer Diagnosis; Bills of Interest

By ALEX MANN
and SEAN WHOOLEY
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, MD— Gov. Larry Hogan announced in a news conference on Thursday, February 1, 2018, that he has developed a common and "not-serious" form of skin cancer, and will have a procedure to fully remove the cancerous spots from his forehead Saturday.

Hogan's dermatologist, Dr. Beth Diamond of Annapolis Dermatology Center, biopsied several lesions from the Republican governor's forehead during a recent annual skin examination.

Further testing determined the lesions to be "extremely common" cancers, superficial basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, according to a letter from Diamond.

The governor said this cancer is "completely unrelated" to the advanced non-Hodgkin's lymphoma he battled and defeated earlier in his term. He attributes the common skin ailment to the six years he spent as a lifeguard in Florida. "It's basically sun damage," he said.

These skin cancers "are most often induced by a history of sun exposure," Diamond wrote in the letter.

Hogan is not expected to miss a day of work following the "Mohs surgery," though he will likely return to work with stitches on Monday. Luckily, he said, "scars are cool."

Meanwhile, business goes on in the State House, with bills advancing through the Maryland General Assembly this

See HOGAN Page A5

MGM National Harbor Welcomes Lunar New Year With Vibrant Conservatory Display

By PRESS OFFICER
MGM National Harbor

OXON HILL, MD—MGM National Harbor pays homage to the Year of the Dog with The Conservatory's new Lunar New Year display and a host of culinary and cultural experiences.

The Conservatory

The Conservatory display, entitled "Modern Asian Glamour," was created by renowned event designer Ed Libby and is brought to life with more than 16,000 fresh flowers throughout three distinct beds. Upon entering The Conservatory, visitors are welcomed by a royal, 30-foot-tall money tree covered in reflective red and gold bark. The traditional tree, symbolizing wealth and prosperity, is crowned with stunning gold coin leaves.

Nestled at its side, a tangerine tree encircled by silk marigolds in hues of gold and orange signifies riches emerging from the earth. Beneath the trees sit three floral Chinese pugs, frolicking on top of a mountain of botanical greenery.

Inspired by the traditional elements of Chinese gardens, the second bed features a 10-foot-tall Chinese Shar-Pei comprised of an assortment of rice, seeds and lentils, is perched beneath an oversized moon gate adorned with the "Fuk" and "Choi" symbols in metallic crimson. The majestic dog rests atop a floral mountain of golden coins representing the luck and good fortune brought to all who come to admire the display. A pond, surrounded by variegated ivies and Japanese junipers, signifies the flowing current of wealth, abundance and good fortune for the coming year.

The third bed features large Lunar New Year good luck envelopes that contour into an elegant foot bridge. Flowing beneath the bridge is a glistening pond complete with a vibrant silk rose Koi Fish, embodying the values of strength, courage and bravery.

Eight oversized Chinese lanterns, in rich red, orange and gold shades, hang from the 85-foot glass-topped atrium alongside gold coin medallions.



PHOTO COURTESY MGM NATIONAL HARBOR

Lunar New Year at MGM National Harbor

Completing the immersive experience are theatrical lighting effects illuminating the three beds while traditional Chinese music plays throughout the day and night.

The Conservatory at MGM National Harbor is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is complimentary to the

public. The Lunar New Year display is open now through the month of March.

Entertainment & Events

Celebratory activities for Lunar New Year began on

See MGM Page A3

Constellation Awarded \$21.5 Million by UMD for Energy Conservation

Maryland Clean Energy Center secures \$18.3 million to finance energy conservation measures projected to save the University \$1.7 million in the first year

By PRESS OFFICER
Constellation

COLLEGE PARK, MD—Constellation, an Exelon company, has been selected by the University of Maryland (UMD) to implement \$21.5 million in energy conservation measures at the university's College Park campus.

While UMD is the end-use customer, Constellation's contractual relationship will be with the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC). The state instrumentality—whose mission is to advance clean energy and energy efficiency in Maryland—secured \$18.3 million of tax-exempt financing for the project's development.

"MCEC is proud to continue providing technical support and advantageous capital to enable the success of similar energy projects in Maryland," said Wyatt Shifflet, director of finance programs for MCEC. "Working

in partnership with facilities managers and project developers like UMD and Constellation, we can effectively bring about desired cost savings, building improvements and the associated employment, not to mention the related environmental benefits."

The upgrades are anticipated to save UMD approximately \$1.7 million in the first year (with continued annual savings over the 13-year performance period) and conserve more than 6.4 million kilowatt-hours of electricity and more than 39,000 cubic feet of natural gas per year. These improvements will have the same annual impact on greenhouse gas reduction as taking nearly 1,500 cars off the road or conserving 777,000 gallons of gasoline, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency calculations.

See ENERGY Page A5

INSIDE

1.5 Million Motorists Caught by Speed Cameras in Maryland Municipalities and Counties Racked up \$62.2 Million in Penalties

During the past three years, 4,711,961 motorists in Maryland were ticketed by speed cameras and those drivers amassed nearly one-fifth of a billion dollars in speed camera fines, the AAA analysis reveals.

Community, Page A3

The State of the Union: Morally Dead and Leaving Vulnerable Children Behind

A nation that does not stand for children does not stand for anything and will not stand blameless before God when asked to account for every sacred child entrusted to our care and protection. Our nation's children deserve better. We all deserve better.

Commentary, Page A4

Hogan Touts Fiscal Focus, Criticizes National Divisiveness in State of State

Since he has taken office, the governor has been battling the Democrat-dominated House and Senate over the state budgetary priorities. In the Maryland General Assembly, Democrats outnumber Republicans by almost a 2-1 ratio.

Business, Page A5

Movie Review: The Shape of Water

In the hidden high-security government laboratory where she works, lonely Elisa is trapped in a life of isolation. Elisa's life is changed forever when she and co-worker Zelda discover a secret classified experiment. Rounding out the cast are Michael Shannon, Richard Jenkins, Doug Jones and Michael Stuhlbarg.

Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

I've heard that the chemicals we use to unclog backed-up drains are harmful to our health and the environment. Can you suggest safer alternative products or methods?

—Amy Smith,
Rome, N

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Surratt House presents Georgetown prof's talk on Slavery and Catholic America

Professor Adam Rothman will speak on "Slavery and Catholic America in the 19th Century," with focus on the Maryland Jesuit slave community, at the Surratt House Museum, Feb. 24 at 4 p.m.

Rothman, professor of history and member of Georgetown University's Working Group on Slavery, Memory & Reconciliation, has led the archival work, including the development of the Georgetown Slavery Archive.

The program is free. It begins at 4:00 but seating is limited, so come early. The Surratt House is at 9118 Brandywine Road in Clinton. For information, call 301-868-1121.

Public Forum on Police Accountability

The public is invited to participate in a Forum on Community Empowerment and Police Accountability in Prince George's County on Sunday, March 11, 3 to 5 p.m. at Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church, 7400 Temple Hill Road.

Hear from Jonathan W. Hutto, Sr., Social Justice and Peace Activist, and Major Neill Franklin (Ret.), Executive Director of Law Enforcement Action Partnership. Learn about the history and current status of police/community relations in the county and new possibilities for community involvement in policing. Take part in discussion about the next steps.

Parking available at the church or at the adjacent lodge. Doors open at 2:30. For information, call 301-395-5575.

People

Sister Ghennet Ogbamichael, FSA (Daughters of St. Anne) is

celebrating her silver jubilee of 25 years in religious life. She is a native of Eritrea, in east Africa, where she completed her education and earned a diploma for elementary teaching. She currently teaches religion at Holy Spirit Church in Annandale and at St. Peter's School on Capitol Hill. She lives at a convent at St. Philip's in Camp Springs and is studying for an advanced degree in education.

Frank Howard, #23, a guard for the Syracuse Orange, is featured on the ACC Syracuse vs. Cornell 11/10/17 program cover. His parents are Jonathan and Gloria Howard of Skyline. Jonathan attended Suitland and Paul VI high schools. He is shown making a basket in the Jan. 10 Washington Post (even though the Orange lost to the Virginia Cavaliers).

Desna Johnson is the 2018 Miss Prince George's County, following competition that's a part of the official Miss America Organization. It was held at Friendly High School on Jan. 28. Maris Higginbotham is runner-up. Also, Solangé Muller won the 2018 Miss Prince George's County Outstanding Teen competition. First runner-up is Vanessa Rennock. Both titleholders will go on to the Miss Maryland competition in June in Hagerstown.

Condolences to the White and Bailey families in the loss of 4-day-old Julius Bailey. He was born Jan. 18 and died Jan. 22 following surgery. He is the grandson of Stephanie White, of Upper Marlboro, and son of Kimberly White (who used to sing in the St. Philip's choir with me).

Morningside Memories

Jeff Brunsdon grew up on Pine Grove Drive, in Morningside, from 1947 to 1960. He re-

cently emailed some of his memories

"There was no kindergarten then. First grade was in old telephone service building in Oxon Hill that we rode a school bus to for a year or so until the Morningside Elementary opened." He remembered hiking in woods "to south of our market/Esso station area to pick blackberries and cut Xmas trees. Further out was the gravel pits. There was a mound or mesa that had been cut around since it had a graveyard, headstones anyway. Us boys were planning to do some Huck Finn thing and dig up graves but we had no the tools or ambition to complete this mission. I think maybe the place had been emptied and they left gravestones standing."

He also commented that "Mr. McAllister was a real estate man and had the finest home in town and he drove a black Buick. He was rich." (John "Mac" McAllister lived on Pine Lane with his wife Doris and two daughters. He was the agent who listed the house we bought back in 1958.)

May they rest in peace

Benjamin W. Garner, 61, of University Park, a member of the large Wyvill family of the Upper Marlboro area, died Nov. 27. Survivors include his wife Nancy, sons Joseph and John "Jack," siblings Richard, Michael and Daniel Garner, Bonnie Meloy, Susan Garner and H. Jane Miller, his mother Gloria Wyvill Garner and uncle Rev. Christopher Wyvill OSB. He's also survived by many nieces, nephews and other members of the Garner, Melville and Wyvill families. Funeral Mass

See SKYLINE Page A8

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

THE LION QUEEN

The Lion Queen: Mala's Black History Month Celebration will be on Saturday, February 24, 2018 from 1:00-4:30 PM for ages 5 to 15. This 6th Annual Sovereign Social for Black History Month, Princesses will engage in cultural etiquette discussions, dancing, dining etiquette, black history trivia contests, and cultural games. All participants must be in semi-formal attire or any traditional attire relating to Black History Month, such as Agbada, to participate. There will be a special performance by "Umaja Ballet Academy". Please contact Paulette Dicks, at 301-780-7577 if your princess has any food allergies. Residents pay \$20; Non-Residents pay \$23 Ticket Code #SAO-SPEC-GA201824.

The address for the event is Upper Marlboro Community Center, 5400 Marlboro Race Track Road, Upper Marlboro Maryland 20772. Telephone number is 301-627-2828; 301-699-2544.

CONGRATULATIONS

Stephanie Deville Eugene "announced their daughter Morgan has committed to the 2018 Division 1 Volleyball Team and the Clara I Adams Honors College at the illustrious Morgan State University ... Full Scholarship! Thank you to our family, friends and community for the endless support. Thank you to the passionate and dedicated coaches from Southern Maryland Volleyball Club and Frederick Douglass High School. Thank you to all the amazing PGCPSS teachers, staff and Administrators who have invested years into the de-

velopment of our International Baccalaureate Athletic Scholar! PGCPSS Division Champs. MPSSAA Regional Champs, FDHS I.B. Diploma Candidate, National Honor Society, Div. 1 Recruit, MSU Jenkins Scholar."

Morgan is also the daughter of Curtis Eugene, sister of Makayla, granddaughter of Frank and Gwen Deville who resides in Brandywine, Maryland. Congratulations Morgan for all your achievements and good luck in all your future endeavors.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Brandon Freeman, Veronica Quarm, Vincent Glee, Jean Brown, Rom Escanilla, Joachim Neckere, Conrad Carter, Rachel Cain, Marvies Davies, Gloria Garrett, Emmanuel Oghogho, Ronald Davis, Jean Noel, Malcolm Terry, Matthew Oghogho, Karmalita Contee, Maleke Glee, Lynn Harper, Jose Rojas, Lawrence Oghogho and Romonia Pinkney who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in February.

NATIONAL HEART HEALTH MONTH

Join the Department of Parks and Recreation Prince George's County for some healthy activities with your loved ones. One activity in our area is Low Sodium & No Sodium Heart-Healthy Recipes on Wednesday, February 21, 6:30-7:30 PM (Free) at Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex, 8001 Sheriff Road, Landover, Maryland 20785. Telephone number

is 301-583-2400. Another activity is Jump Start Your Heart Boot Camp Saturday, February 24, 12-1:00 PM (Free). Location is Tucker Road Community Center, 1771 Tucker Road, Fort Washington 20744. Telephone number is 301-248-4404. For more information about these activities, please call Saxon Henderson at 301-446-6817 or e-mail wellness@pgparks.com.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Wedding Anniversary to Wendell and Florella Wallace, Steven Carter & Denise Bouyer who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating Wedding Anniversaries in February.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Clinton United Methodist Church is soliciting applications for a Gospel Choir Director. The Director should be able to play the piano and read music. The ability to play the piano by ear will be considered a bonus. Prior experience with conducting a Gospel Choir is preferred. The Gospel Choir sings each month at the 10:30 AM Service. You will be required to direct the Gospel Choir in Sunday Services and any special event.

Please submit resume to e-mail cumcmd@verizon.net, web: www.cumcmd.org, or mail: 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland 20735. For more information, call 301-868-1281. Reverend Dorothea J. Belt-Stroman, Senior Pastor Clinton United Methodist Church.

Neighborhoods

BGE's Electric Safety Contest for Elementary Students Returns

BALTIMORE, MD—BGE today announced the return of its sixth BGE *Wires Down Video Challenge* to educate elementary school-

aged children on the importance of practicing electrical safety. Entry kits include kindergarten through fifth grade lesson plans and entries are accepted through April 2, 2018. Elementary school teachers in public and private elementary schools across BGE's electric service area are encouraged to work with their classes to submit 30 to 45-second videos of their interpretation of BGE's popular *Wires Down* electrical safety commercial. Teachers and students have a chance to win between \$1,000 and \$10,000 to fund a school enrichment project. Up to \$34,000 will be awarded this year to winning schools with an additional \$500 awarded to the teacher who submits the entry from the grand prize winning school. Teachers of the first five entries will receive a portable power bank to recharge mobile devices. Additionally, the first five, first-time contest entries will be randomly selected to receive a \$100 gift card toward the purchase of classroom supplies.

Originally produced in 2000, the Emmy Award-winning BGE *Wires Down* commercial with its "do not, do not, do not touch" melody aims to help raise awareness of electricity hazards, especially among young children. Last year's \$10,000 grand prize winner, Krieger Schechter Day School, was a repeat winner and used the funding to buy specialized STEM Inquiry Kits for their science units. The kits include activities and hands-on experiments in varying subject areas including weather, electricity, rocks and minerals, sound, and food chemistry.

To date, BGE has awarded more than \$145,000 to 43 elementary schools across central Maryland as part of the *BGE Wires Down Video Challenge*. For more information on the contest, to download your free entry kit or to view last year's winning video, visit bgevideochallenge.com.

BGE reminds all customers to stay away from power lines and report any downed power lines or electrical emergencies immediately by calling 800.685.0123. Follow these safety guidelines:

- Assume that all overhead wires are energized at lethal voltages. Never assume that a wire is safe to touch even if it is down, appears to be insulated or if power is out at nearby premises.
- Never touch a fallen overhead power line. Call BGE at 800.685.0123 to report fallen electric lines.
- Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead wires during cleanup and other activities.
- If working at heights or handling long objects, survey the area before starting work for the presence of overhead wires.

- Avoid touching anything that may be in contact with an overhead wire like tree limbs or other debris.
- If an overhead wire falls across your vehicle while you are driving, stay inside the vehicle and continue to drive away from the line. If the engine stalls, do not leave your vehicle. Warn people not to touch the vehicle or the wire. Call or ask someone to call emergency services.
- Never operate electrical equipment while you are standing in water.
- Never repair electrical cords or equipment unless qualified and authorized.
- Have a qualified electrician inspect electrical equipment that has gotten wet before energizing it.
- If working in damp locations, inspect electric cords and equipment to ensure that they are in good condition and free of defects, and use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Always use caution when working near electricity.

Gaylord National Resort Announces New Hotel Manager

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD—Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center is pleased to announce the appointment of Tushaar Agrawal as its new hotel manager, effective immediately. Agrawal will oversee and lead Gaylord National's operational departments including rooms, events, food and beverage, spa and more.

"We are thrilled to have Tushaar join our team," said Doug Ridge, area general manager at Gaylord National Resort. "His knowledge and experience from overseeing multiple hotel properties will be invaluable for the growing success of Gaylord National."

"As one of the leading meeting and convention hotels in the industry, I look forward to working with Gaylord National's incredible operations team of nearly 2,000 STARS (employees)," said Agrawal. "I am excited to continue to ensure unparalleled guest experiences to convention, business and leisure guests."

Agrawal joins Gaylord National with more than 21 years of business experience, including 11 years within the hospitality industry. He began working for Marriott International, Inc. in 2007 as a senior manager in Corporate and Development Finance. From there, he moved into various director positions in the Global Asset Management team, where he managed strategic and tactical decisions regarding full-service hotel properties and iconic resorts.

In 2015, Agrawal was appointed as the vice president of Business Integration and played a critical part in the integration of the Marriott and Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, LCC merger. Most recently, he has managed the relationships for 15 of Marriott's largest owners of full-service hotels as vice president of Owner and Franchise Services in Bethesda, MD

Agrawal received his bachelor's degree in business from the University of Michigan and his master of business administration in finance and management from New York University. He also has volunteered for the Ghana Hippo Sanctuary Project helping to preserve wildlife and the environment, as well as the Cambodian Rural School projects.

Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center is the largest, non-gaming hotel and convention center on the East Coast. Located along the banks of the Potomac River in National Harbor, Md., Gaylord National is part of the Marriott International family of brands. Opened in April 2008 and only eight miles from Washington, D.C., the AAA-Four Diamond resort offers nearly 2,000 rooms including 110 suites; a 19-story atrium; 600,000 square-foot of convention space; acclaimed restaurants including Old Hickory Steakhouse; a full-service resort spa, Relache Spa; and Pose Rooftop Lounge.

For more information about Gaylord National Resort, visit www.GaylordNational.com or call 301-965-4000.

BGE Plan to Pass Federal Tax Reduction Savings to Customers Accepted by Maryland Public Service Commission

BALTIMORE, MD—On January 31, 2018, the Maryland Public Service Commission accepted BGE's proposal to provide approximately \$103 million in annual tax savings to customers beginning Feb. 1, 2018.

"This is a positive outcome for BGE customers, and we are appreciative of the Public Service Commission's decision to accept our proposal to convert tax savings to reduced rates," said Calvin G. Butler Jr, chief executive officer of BGE. "We are pleased to have another opportunity to further reduce the average BGE residential customers' total bills, which remain below levels from a decade ago."

The average BGE residential electric customer will receive an estimated \$2.91 decrease on their monthly bill, and the average residential combined natural gas and electric customer will receive an estimated \$5.41 monthly reduction. Commercial customers will also receive monthly bill reductions. Reduced rates for all BGE customers will be reflected beginning in customers' February 2018 bills.

While customer bills have decreased, BGE has continued to invest in energy infrastructure. The investments have resulted in record system reliability, accelerated modernization of the natural gas system through the STRIDE program, increased security and significant customer satisfaction improvements.

BGE voluntarily filed the proposal to reduce rates as a result of the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

COMMUNITY

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Learning To Listen To The Silence

Most of us have surely noticed that today's world is a pretty noisy place. From electronic gadgets, to the sounds of traffic, to just listening to the chatter of family, friends and co-workers, much of our day is probably filled with a great deal of sound.

This noise may seem a condition of modern life, but studies have found that purposely adding a little silence to our days may bring a number of benefits.

Adding some quiet can provide not just mental health benefits, but physiological ones as well. Turning off at least some of the noise has been shown to lower blood pressure, boost the body's immune system and possibly even improve brain function. A recent article cited a 2013 study that found that two hours of silence helped create new brain cells in the areas linked to remembering, emotions and learning.

While most of us might find it hard to find two hours of silence, even two minutes of quiet time was found to relieve tension through positive changes in blood pressure and circulation in the brain.

Being surrounded by non-stop noise often results in feeling tense and uncomfortable, and might lead to a headache. Numerous studies have documented the harmful effects that noise pollution can have on our health and ability to think and concentrate.

Finding more quiet in your day doesn't mean going to extremes or needing some totally silent environment. It simply requires making a conscious effort to escape from the everyday noise of your life for at least a short period, what professional counselors call mindfulness.

One suggestion is simply to get outdoors and enjoy a quiet walk with no specific purpose except to relax. Yes, there will still be sounds around you, but as you focus on yourself and your walk, they no longer become a primary distraction. Leave your headphones home, too. And if you walk with a companion, just agree to make it a silent journey.

Deep breathing exercises or quite meditation can also add periods of quiet to your life. Numerous online sites offer instructions for either activity. Or, just find a quiet corner in your home and settle in with a good book for a half hour.

None of us is ever going to live in a perfectly silent world, but finding a way of quieting at least some of the noise can offer real physical and psychological benefits.

Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org

MGM from A1

Wednesday, Feb. 14 with a variety of curated experiences:

- Guests can enjoy dining specials at Ginger, the resort's Pan-Asian restaurant offering authentic cuisine, through Thursday, March 15. Specials include Steamed Live Bass, Golden Crab, Glutinous Rice Cake and Red Bean Soup with Rice Dumpling.

- A traditional Lion Dance performance will take place Sunday, Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. to kick off the Lunar New Year celebration. Beginning in The Conservatory and weaving through the casino and retail corridors, the energetic dance

will be performed by the Imperial Lion Dance Team.

Lunar New Year Conservatory Fast Facts

- 16,400: Flowers in the display
- 10 feet: Height of the Chinese Shar-Pei made of rice, lentils, seeds, oats and sugar
- 30 feet: Height of the money tree comprised of 50 gold coins
- 5x8 feet: Height and width of the hanging silk Chinese lanterns
- 5 feet: Length of the Koi Fish comprised of silk roses

DACA from A1

munities, and sending them away would be extremely detrimental to the Fifth District, to Maryland, and to the nation."

"I've met with many DREAMers and have heard so many compelling stories" continued Congressman Hoyer. "The DREAMers at the University of Maryland are just as American

as any other Marylander. There's no reason why Congress can't solve this crisis right now to ensure they can stay here and have a path to citizenship. I will continue to call on my Republican colleagues to stand up and work with Democrats to protect DREAMers. I join in thanking Dr. Loh and the University of Maryland for their commitment to these courageous students."

1.5 Million Motorists Caught by Speed Cameras in Maryland Municipalities and Counties Racked up \$62.2 Million in Penalties

Violators Must Pay A \$40 Fine For Each Speed Camera System Violation

By PRESS OFFICER
AAA Mid-Atlantic

WASHINGTON, D. C.—At least 1,555,946 motorists were issued speed camera tickets in nearly 40 jurisdictions across Maryland in the 12-month period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. Ticketed motorists faced paying the staggering sum of \$62,237,840 in speed camera fines for speeding in school zones across the state and in residential areas in Montgomery County only. County and municipal law enforcement agencies in localities and communities in Montgomery County and Prince George's County issued 1,188,345 speed camera tickets with a face value of \$47,533,800, or 76.3 percent of the statewide total, according to an analysis by AAA Mid-Atlantic. The maximum fine is \$40 per infraction.

During the past three years, 4,711,961 motorists in Maryland were ticketed by speed cameras and those drivers amassed nearly one-fifth of a billion dollars in speed camera fines, the AAA analysis reveals. If it's true that the numbers of motorists speeding will eventually drop once jurisdictions implement speed camera programs, as proponents argue, what does it mean if the number of speeding violations remains virtually the same? Yet the sheer number of speed camera tickets issued in Maryland jurisdictions appears to defy the law of gravity, averaging around 1.5 million photo-radar tickets in each of the past three fiscal years, although two police departments in Maryland dropped their speed limit enforcement camera systems last year.

"Motorists are almost three times more likely to receive speed camera tickets while driving through localities large and small in Montgomery and Prince George's counties than in any other locations in the entire state," said John B. Townsend II, AAA Mid-Atlantic's Manager of Public and Government Affairs. "It is so shocking that so many drivers have a wanton disregard for safety. In the course of three years, motorists incurred nearly five million speed camera tickets that carried \$188,478,440 in fines, a mind-boggling sum."

Admittedly, it is enough to cause your eyes to glaze over. But keep in mind, while advocates are upfront in insisting the photo enforcement technology promotes highway safety, there are the facts and figures they are reticent to publicly discuss, and possibly why. To wit, the tens of millions of dollars generated in revenue for the coffers of localities yearly. Then there is the matter of the lucrative payments each jurisdiction made to for-profit contractors, which range from 33 percent to as much as 48.4 percent, depending on the fine print in the contract. Critics say such exorbitant payments comprise the dark side of automated enforcement.

Although 1,555,946 motorists were snagged by speed cameras while driving "hell-bent-for-leather," mostly in school zones where kids are often present, in Maryland during Fiscal Year 2017, the rate of speeding violations detected and documented by speed monitoring systems remained essentially unchanged from FY 2016. Even so, lead-footed drivers racked up 456 fewer notices of infractions year-

Jurisdiction	FY15 Speed Camera Tickets	FY16 Speed Camera Tickets	Fy17 Speed Camera Tickets
Montgomery County PD	507,531	529,993	509,542
Prince George's County PD	260,911	263,302	227,579
20 Local Police Agencies in Montgomery/Prince George's Counties	456,959	379,376	451,224
Other MD Jurisdictions	374,173	383,770	367,601
Speed Camera Ticket Total	1,599,574	1,556,441	1,555,946

over-year, according to an analysis by AAA Mid-Atlantic. Previously, 1,556,441 drivers in Maryland were slapped with speed camera tickets, as was the case in FY16. To make amends for their speeding ways, they were fined \$62,257,640. A year earlier, 1,599,574 motorists were caught on camera while speeding flagrante delicto in various and sundry jurisdictions statewide during FY15. Under the law, they were required to make recompense for the error of their ways by forking over \$63,982,960 in photo-radar revenue.

In 2014, 46 local Maryland jurisdictions operated speed monitoring systems that ticketed 1,290,000 motorists and generated \$51.6 million in revenue, report the Comptroller of Maryland and the Maryland General Assembly's Department of Legislative Services. It brings the ticket total to six million, which produced a windfall of \$240 million during the course of four budget cycles. Maryland boasts 125 law enforcement agencies, including 80 municipal and county police departments. Of that number, only three dozen or so localities operated speed camera programs in their footprint in FY17, nine fewer than in 2014.

Collectively, county and local law enforcement agencies operated a total network of 432 speed monitoring camera units all across Maryland, from the state capital in Annapolis to localities in the hinterlands and the highlands. But the preponderance of photo-radar cameras -360 speed cameras or 83.3 percent - are stationed along streets and roads in the towns and cities within Montgomery and Prince George's counties. That's according to an analysis by AAA Mid-Atlantic of the 2017 Report to the State of Maryland -Speed Monitoring Systems Use. As mandated by the Speed Monitoring Systems Reform Act of 2014, the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission released the report to the Maryland General Assembly on December 31, 2017. Speed cameras are deployed to safeguard the lives and limbs of school children

At the top of the funnel, nearly half (47.3 percent) of the 1.5 million speed camera tickets issued statewide during Fiscal Year 2017 were handed down by the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) and the Prince George's County Police Department (PGCPD). Municipal police departments in enclaves in the shadows of the nation's capital in Prince George's and Montgomery counties issued another 451,224 tickets in FY17. Tickets are issued to motorists traveling 12 or more miles per hour faster than the posted speed limit.

Deploying 169 speed cameras collectively, Montgomery

County Police and Prince George's County Police issued a combined total of 737,121 photo-radar citations in FY17. In dollars and cents, this equates to \$29,484,840 in potential ticket fine revenue. This tally also works out to nearly a moiety or 50 percent of the speed camera fine sum generated statewide by "37 reporting jurisdictions," including Baltimore County, Charles County, Howard County, Annapolis, the City of Frederick, Hagerstown, Salisbury, and Smithsburg. Speed cameras in school zones are active Monday through Friday from 6 A.M. until 8 P.M.

Statistically, three out of every ten (or 32.7 percent) speed camera tickets meted out in Maryland in FY17 were issued by speed cameras operated by the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD). It also leads the state in speed camera revenue. All told, 509,542 lead-footed motorists were nabbed by the countywide Safe Speed program. For the most part, they faced fines valued at \$20,381,680. Arithmetically, it compares to 529,993 speed camera tickets, valued at \$21,199,720, the MCPD handed out in FY16, and the 507,531 speed camera citations the department issued in FY15 that carried \$20,301,240 in penalties.

Of the 37 jurisdictions operating speed monitoring systems in Maryland, the Prince George's County Police Department (PGCPD) issued nearly 15 percent of the state's speed camera ticket total last year. That reality dawned on 227,579 motorists after they were clocked and photographed speeding in school zones by the department's countywide automated speed enforcement program. Consequently, those tickets carried \$9,103,160 in fines. In comparison, the speed cameras deployed by the PGCPD issued 263,302 tickets in FY16 valued at \$10,532,080 and nabbed 260,911 speeding motorists for photo-radar violations in FY15 that carried \$10,436,440 on fines. The County implemented its automated speed enforcement program in 2011

It is significantly higher than the speed camera ticket output by the Baltimore County Police Department, which issued 176,358 photo-radar citations in FY17, the state's third highest total (11.3 percent). Baltimore County Police operates 65 speed cameras. In contrast, Montgomery County Police deploys 88 speed cameras, while Prince George's County Police has an arsenal of 81 speed cameras. Under greater oversight and scrutiny, the moribund speed camera program in Baltimore City was re-activated in June 2017 with 20 speed camera sites initially. Plus, 15 more sites were added in September. The city shuttered its network

of 83 speed cameras in 2013 after a journalistic investigation revealed a widespread miasma of erroneous ticketing.

Yet 20 municipal police departments in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, which deployed a total of 191 speed cameras, accounted for nearly one third (29 percent) of all speed camera tickets issued in the state in FY17. A veritable alphabet soup of whistle-stop towns and smaller stomping grounds in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, such as Bowie, Forest Heights, Hyattsville, Riverdale, Seat Pleasant, and Takoma Park, issued 451,224 speed limit enforcement camera tickets during FY17 that carried \$18,048,960 in penalties. That compares to 379,376 speed camera tickets with a face value of \$15,175,040 in FY16, and 456,959 photo-radar tickets with \$18,735,219 in levies in FY15.

As of January 2018, 143 communities across the United States had speed camera programs, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). Automated speed camera programs are operated by a host of local police departments in suburban Maryland. Some police departments operate as few as two speed cameras, including the Berwyn Heights Police Department and the Landover Hills Police Department. Three police departments in the state have only one speed camera each in their jurisdictions, as the latest annual report by the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission shows. In the metro area, speed camera units are also deployed by the Capital Heights Police Department, the Cheverly Police Department, and the Chevy Chase Village Police Department. During their daily commutes and treks, motorists run a gauntlet of speed cameras from Hyattsville to Rockville, and from Landover Hills to Laurel. The same is true while tooling around in Gaithersburg, Glenarden and Greenbelt. Speed cameras keep highway users safe and sound.

Unlike other jurisdictions, the City of College Park also deploys speed cameras on roadways on the periphery of institutions of higher education, namely, the University of Maryland, as well as within a ½ mile radius of the city's elementary schools. College Park's nine speed cameras issued 79,256 speed camera tickets totaling \$3,170,240 in fines during FY 2017. That compares to 44,242 speed camera tickets with \$1,769,600 in charges in FY16. On top of that, the "town and gown" community issued 114,388 photo citations with a fine yield of \$4,575,520 in FY15, the year after the City of College Park began operating

See CAMERAS Page A7

The
Prince
George's Post

Your Newspaper
of Legal Record

Call (301) 627-0900 | Fax (301) 627-6260

Serving Prince George's County Since 1932

COMMENTARY

Cong. Chris Van Hollen United States Senator for Maryland



Senator Chris Van Hollen, Congressman Don Beyer Introduce Cap and Dividend Legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen and Congressman Don Beyer introduced the Healthy Climate and Family Security Act. This ‘cap and dividend’ approach is a simple, fair, and effective plan to address the dangers of climate change. It would put more money in the pockets of hardworking Americans, increasing their spending power and growing our entire economy. The introduction of the legislation came days after President Donald Trump gave an interview which again revealed his anti-science agenda and ignorance of climate science.

“Climate change is a clear and present danger, but we can confront that danger in a way that presents new economic opportunities. While the Trump Administration has abdicated American leadership on this critical issue, Congress must fight back,” said Senator Van Hollen, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the Senate Climate Task Force. “This legislation puts a price on carbon pollution and returns the proceeds directly to the American people at the same time it accelerates the growth of good paying jobs in clean technologies. It is a win-win-win, boosting middle class pocketbooks, growing good paying jobs, and reducing our carbon footprint.”

“Our bill would put a price on carbon and money into Americans’ pockets. The country deserves strong leadership that actually solves prob-

lems, rather than Donald Trump’s approach of denying that this existential threat to the planet even exists. Our ambitious, bicameral legislation is designed to have broad appeal across the political spectrum, and present real solutions to climate change,” said Congressman Don Beyer, Vice Ranking Member of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and co-Chair of the Congressional Safe Climate Caucus.

The Healthy Climate and Family Security Act caps carbon pollution and reduces CO2 emissions gradually but steadily. It auctions carbon pollution permits to the first sellers of oil, coal, and natural gas into the U.S. market, and returns 100 percent of the auction proceeds electronically each quarter to every American in the form of a Healthy Climate Dividend. A University of Massachusetts Amherst study found a ‘cap and dividend’ approach would mean more than 80 percent of families would see more money in their pockets, even before taking into account the economic benefits of preventing the costly impacts of climate change.

“Hands down, the Van Hollen ‘cap and dividend’ bill is the strongest strategy to reduce climate pollution ever introduced in Congress. This policy gets the job done in a way that’s simple, increases family budgets, and is utterly fair to all Americans,” said

See CLIMATE Page A6

Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



State of the Union Offers a Ray of Hope for Main Street Marshall Plan’s Robust, Targeted Infrastructure Development

“It turns out that advancing equal opportunity and economic empowerment is both morally right and good economics, because discrimination, poverty and ignorance restrict growth, while investments in education, infrastructure and scientific and technological research increase it, creating more good jobs and new wealth for all of us.”

—President Bill Clinton

Since the presidential election last year, the Urban League Movement has been vocal in opposing those of the new administration’s policies which erode civil rights and opportunities for underserved communities. But we have remained optimistic that we could find common ground in the area of infrastructure development.

In his State of the Union address earlier this week, President Trump sounded a hopeful but vague note on rebuilding the nation’s crumbling infrastructure:

Tonight, I am calling on the Congress to produce a bill that generates at least \$1.5 trillion for the new infrastructure investment we need. Every Federal dollar should be leveraged by partnering with State and local governments and, where appropriate, tapping into private sector investment—to permanently fix the infrastructure deficit ... Together, we can reclaim our building heritage. We will build gleaming new roads, bridges, highways, railways, and waterways across our land. And we will do it with American heart, American hands, and American grit.

Analysis of the Administration’s plan has found it “light on federal funds and details.” Of the \$1.5 trillion, only \$200 billion would come from federal funds—which would be offset by unspecified budget cuts.

The National Urban League has a better—and far more detailed plan.

The Main Street Marshall Plan, From Poverty to Shared Prosperity is a forward-leaning investment of \$4 trillion over 10 years—\$2 trillion for physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges and buildings, and \$2 trillion for human development, such as education, job training and health insurance. The Main Street Marshall Plan is aimed not

only at combating poverty but at promoting equality and eliminating disparities.

The plan calls for a comprehensive infrastructure initiative that rebuilds the nation’s roads, bridges, rails, water systems, parks, community facilities, affordable housing and broadband. While our plan, like the administration’s, would leverage private dollars create millions of jobs, it calls for a maximum public investment and a guarantee of business opportunities for American-based businesses both large and small. Such an infrastructure initiative should meet three conditions:

Maximized opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses

A workforce development and job training program to bring millions of youth and young adults into the construction industry for the first time

Investments in schools, libraries, community centers, recreation facilities, parks, housing and broadband internet access

A decade after the onset of the Great Recession, African Americans who were hardest hit have benefited least from the fragile economic recovery that followed. Despite laudable reductions in the Black unemployment rate, it stubbornly remains double the rate for whites. Black Americans continue to lag behind in wealth, income and homeownership, and across all educational levels.

Just as the original Marshall Plan virtually wiped out widespread poverty across Europe following World War II, the Main Street Marshall Plan has the potential to transform urban America. We also took inspiration from Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who confronted the twin crises of massive unemployment and lagging infrastructure development with the New Deal Agencies.

The New Deal brought electricity to rural America. The Main Street Marshall Plan can bring high-speed broadband to urban America. The New Deal virtually eliminated widespread illiteracy. The Main Street Marshall Plan can eliminate the racial achievement gap.

We urgently ask Congress to work quickly to build on the foundation of the Administration’s emerging infrastructure plan, and join us in the effort to transform America again.

College Park Aviation Museum



Open to the Public

COLLEGE PARK AVIATION MUSEUM

The College Park Aviation Museum houses antique and reproduction aircraft associated with the history of College Park Airport. Artifacts and hands-on activities highlight the aviators, aircraft builders and airplanes that operated at the airport. The museum offers changing exhibits, special events, lectures, workshops and programs for the public, schools and groups. There are also an extensive library and archives which hold materials relating to the airport’s history, early aviation history—especially relating to Maryland—and general aeronautics. Opened in 1998, the museum is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. Open daily from 10 am to 5 pm, except for major holidays. Admission: Adults \$4, Senior \$3, Children \$2, & Children 1 & under free. 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD 20740 • 301-864-6029

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



The State of the Union: Morally Dead and Leaving Vulnerable Children Behind

As I listened to President Trump’s State of the Union Address waiting to hear even a kernel of hope for our country’s most vulnerable children I became more and more distressed and disgusted as these children’s needs were once again left behind along with the values of the America and all great faiths that so many of us love and respect.

The President’s address was silent on the shameful problems of homelessness, hunger, the lack of poor quality early childhood and educational opportunities, needed reforms in our child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and the violence that plagues too many children in their families and communities that I laid out in a letter urging him to address the state of America’s children. This silence is a national embarrassment.

While the address included a few broad brushstrokes that might help improve the odds for some children, at best these solutions would fill only a very small hole in the moral chasm of child needs—help to grow up healthy, safe, educated and excited about the future. The President dramatized the horrible effect of the opioid crisis that is ravaging our country but failed to commit to the urgently needed investments necessary to help babies and other children who are its faultless little victims or their families. He spoke about getting tough on “drug dealers and pushers” but was not clear that pharmaceutical companies or physicians contributing to the crisis were targets. And there was no attention—none—to the great need for investments in treatment.

The President highlighted important job growth but made no mention of the critical need for safe, quality and affordable child care to enable parents to take these jobs. The \$1.5 trillion in federal, state and local state investments mentioned in infrastructure improvements included no recognition that today’s children will form the core of tomorrow’s workforce, but millions—especially the more than 13.2 million living in poverty—

need significant investments in their own futures before they can contribute to our nation’s future.

Other references were grossly at odds with the actual challenges threatening children today. The President’s pride that “we are totally defending our Second Amendment” ignored the fact that most recent data show eight children and teens killed by guns every day. There was no sign of a commitment to protect children over guns.

Immigration was perhaps the saddest discussion of all as we see the lives of almost two million young people with promising futures and eager to contribute to our land being held hostage for a border wall and anti-family policies that threaten the safety and stability of many seeking refuge in our country—for most the only country they know. His comment that “Americans are dreamers too” sowed more ugly seeds of division and dissent and his highlighting the tragic MS-13 murders of two young girls stoked the flames of hate and fear that we have felt too often over the last year. I urge

the President and all of us to recall Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s truth: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” Protections for Dreamers in our land—their land—must be preserved.

A nation that does not stand for children does not stand for anything and will not stand blameless before God when asked to account for every sacred child entrusted to our care and protection. Our nation’s children deserve better. We all deserve better.

Marion Wright Edelman is President of the Children’s Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.

Mrs. Edelman’s Child Watch Column also appears each week on The Huffington Post.

The Prince George’s Post

The Prince George’s Post
P.O. Box 1001 15207 Marlboro Pike
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3151
Phone: 301-627-0900 • Legal Fax: 301-627-6260
Email: pgpost@gmail.com
Contents © 2018, The Prince George’s Post

Publisher/Senior Editor Legusta Floyd	Editor Michal W. Frangia
General Manager/ Legal Advertising Manager Brenda Boice	Typesetter/Page Layout Jennifer Sheckels
Legal Advertising Assistant Robin Boerckel	Web Manager Kyler Quesenberry

Prince George’s County, Md. Member National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia Press Association. The Prince George’s Post (ISSN 10532226) is published every Thursday by the New Prince George’s Post Inc., 15207 Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20772-3151. Subscription rate: 25 cents per single copy; \$15 per year; \$7.50 senior citizens and students; out of county add \$1; out of state add \$2. Periodical postage paid at Southern Md. 20790. Postmaster, send address changes to Prince George’s Post, P.O. Box 1001, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20772-3151.

BUSINESS

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty—What Divorced Spouse Benefits are Available?

by Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: Thank you for your Social Security articles, which a group of friends and I read every week. If it had not been for one of your articles, I wouldn't have known that I could get benefits on my ex-husband's record, especially that when I turn 66 I can file to get just spouse benefits and not take my own yet. Some of my friends are also divorced, and most of us don't understand what we can get from our ex-spouse's record. Could you explain what kind of benefits we can get being divorced? We have no one to ask and Social Security doesn't tell you these things.

Signed: Divorced & Want to Know

Dear Divorced: I'm glad you and your friends are enjoying my Social Security articles. I'll be happy to focus this one on the benefits available to divorced spouses. For starters, you should know that Social Security's rules on divorce are "gender neutral"; that is, they apply equally to both divorced women and divorced men.

The basis for a spousal benefit is always the ex's benefit amount at their full retirement age (FRA), even if your ex-spouse started benefits earlier. In order to be eligible for spouse benefits though, you must be at least 62 and unmarried, you must have been married to your ex for at least 10 years, and your ex must be either already collecting retirement (or disability) benefits or at least be eligible to collect them. If they're not already collecting but are eligible, you must be divorced for at least 2 years.

Although spouse benefits are often cited as being ½ of the ex's benefit amount, that's only true if you have reached your full retirement age when you claim the spouse benefit. Otherwise, your spouse benefit will be reduced to something less than 50%, perhaps as low as 32.5% of your ex's FRA benefit amount (depending upon your age when you apply). If you are also eligible for Social Security benefits on your own work record, the spousal benefit must be larger than your own for you to get a "spousal boost" bringing you up to the spousal benefit amount. The amount of benefit you get will not affect the amount of your ex's benefit, nor the benefit of anyone else receiving benefits on your ex's record.

If you were born before January 2, 1954, and you have reached your full retirement age and have not yet applied for benefits, you have the option to take only spouse benefits and allow your benefit from your own work record grow at 8% per year up until you reach age 70, at which time you can switch to your own benefit if it is larger. You should also be aware that if you take any Social Security benefits before you reach your full retirement age and also work, you'll be subject to an "earnings limit" which, if you exceed it, will result in some of your benefits being withheld.

If, as a divorced spouse, your ex-spouse predeceases you, you may be eligible for survivor benefits equal to 100% of what your ex was receiving (or entitled to receive). In this case there is an exception to the age rule which says that you can collect survivor benefits as early as age 60 (50 if you're disabled). However, if you take survivor's benefits before your full retirement age (which as a survivor can be less than your normal FRA), your benefit amount will be reduced. You may defer collecting survivor's benefits to let them grow to their full value at your full retirement age, but they stop growing when you reach your FRA. You can, however, continue to collect survivor benefits past your full retirement age and allow your own retirement benefit to grow, if that would be to your financial advantage. In fact, if your survivor benefit is larger than your own retirement benefit, you may continue collecting it for the rest of your life.

The information presented in this article is intended for general information purposes only. The opinions and interpretations expressed are the viewpoints of the AMAC Foundation's Social Security Advisory staff, trained and accredited under the National Social Security Advisors program of the National Social Security Association, LLC (NSSA). NSSA, the AMAC Foundation, and the Foundation's Social Security Advisors are not affiliated with or endorsed by the United States Government, the Social Security Administration, or any other state government. Furthermore, the AMAC Foundation and its staff do not provide legal or accounting services. The Foundation welcomes questions from readers regarding Social Security issues. To submit a request, contact the Foundation at info@amacfoundation.org.

Energy from A1

"Constellation is proud to support the University of Maryland's goal of reducing energy consumption by 20 percent by 2020," said Michael D. Smith, senior vice president, Distributed Energy for Constellation. "We're excited to help enhance the learning environment through infrastructure and energy improvements for the University's students, faculty and staff."

The conservation measures to be installed by Constellation include: energy efficient lighting, lab hood ventilation upgrades, new automated HVAC controls, building envelope im-

provements, transformer updates and chiller plant optimization. The project will impact eight on-campus buildings, including J.M. Patterson Hall and Hornbake Library. The work is slated to be completed by April 2019.

"This energy performance contract will help the University reduce its energy consumption and provide important savings of energy costs via the various energy conservation measures that will be deployed," said Mary-Ann Ibeziaok, director, Engineering & Efficiency for UMD. "We are grateful for our relationships with Constellation and MCEC for this exciting collaboration."

Hogan Touts Fiscal Focus, Criticizes National Divisiveness in State of State

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, MD—On January 31, 2018, Gov. Larry Hogan addressed the Maryland General Assembly and touted his fiscal management while at the same time distancing himself from political upheaval in Washington.

In Hogan's fourth and final State of the State address before he seeks to become the second Republican to win re-election in Maryland, the governor encouraged lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to seek middle ground in order to "continue changing Maryland for the better."

He frequently alluded to Republican President Donald Trump and strife at the federal level—calling for bipartisanship and stating that Marylanders need not let national politics divide them.

During Hogan's 23-minute speech, the governor covered his legislative agenda and policy initiatives while avoiding more controversial social issues.

Hogan's focus has been reducing taxes and state spending since his 2014 campaign.

Since he has taken office, the governor has been battling the Democrat-dominated House and Senate over the state budgetary priorities. In the Maryland General Assembly, Democrats outnumber Republicans by almost a 2-1 ratio.

Among his successes, Hogan pointed to record education spending, his efforts to battle the opioid epidemic, transportation funding, tax cuts, a stable economy and anti-crime efforts.

But some Democrats were critical that the governor is not sufficiently mitigating changes from the Republican-controlled Congress and White House, including immigration policy, tax reform and more.

"There are a lot of challenges to our state that (Hogan) is not facing head on," said Attorney General Brian Frosh, a Democrat. "Foremost among them are the challenges posed by the Trump administration. We see an assault on civil rights, on our environment, on consumers."

But Hogan, as a GOP governor in a majority Democratic state, has the support of Republicans in



Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, a Republican, greets State Sen. Barbara Robinson, D-Baltimore, at the State of the State address in Annapolis on January 31, 2018.

the legislature who are resisting efforts to link him to the president and Capitol Hill squabbling.

"His agenda is really common sense—bringing jobs (and) allowing Marylanders to keep their hard-earned money," said House Minority Whip Delegate Kathy Szeliga, R-Harford and Baltimore counties. "I don't blame him for staying away from Trump. We are not Washington, D.C. You see a lot of partisan bickering when you go just 50 miles down the road, but that's not how Annapolis operates."

The governor touted his record investments in school spending since he took office.

"Our budget provides an unprecedented \$6.5 billion for K-12 education, which is more than the legislative funding formulas call for," Hogan told lawmakers.

But Democratic legislators are upset with the public school system's decreasing national rankings and on Tuesday proposed a bill to dedicate an additional \$500 million from casino revenues to education.

Hogan has declared Maryland's increasing casualties from opioid addiction a state emergency, increasing an opioid crisis fund from \$3.7 million in 2017 to \$13.7 million this fiscal year, according to a state budget summary.

Senate Minority Leader J.B. Jennings, R-Harford and Baltimore Counties, said the opioid epidemic is the biggest challenge facing the governor right now.

"It's not an easy fix," said Jennings. "We can fix it as long as we work together."

The impact of a new Republican-backed federal tax plan has created dissonance between the state and federal government. Left unchanged, most Marylanders would pay more in total tax.

Hogan announced legislation to protect taxpayers from increases resulting from the tax overhaul. Democrats have said their plan is on its way.

In his first State of the State address in 2015, Hogan said he hoped to make all retirement income tax-exempt. Wednesday he touted the Hometown Heroes Act of 2018, legislation that would exempt retired law enforcement, fire, rescue, emergency response personnel, and correctional officers from state tax specific to their service on their retirement income.

Hogan also touted a package of crime bills targeted to combat gangs and repeat-offenders as crime in Baltimore has soared, and said he would sign a bill that has unanimous bipartisan support that terminates the parental rights of rapist, which was met with a standing ovation.

But Hogan has recently received criticism for a \$5 billion plan to entice Amazon to bring its second headquarters to Montgomery County. The headquarters could bring up to 50,000 jobs to the area.

Also criticized is his proposal to widen Interstates 270 and

495, and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

Mirroring a national trend, Maryland has seen a decrease in unemployment rates, dropping from 5.5 percent in 2014 to 4 percent today, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In his speech Wednesday, Hogan referenced the job growth and economic turnaround for the "best year for business in Maryland in 15 years and the best year for job growth in a decade."

"Maryland's always had a good economy not because of what any elected official has done, but because we are located close to the nation's capital," said Maryland Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr., D-Charles, Calvert and Prince George's. "We've always had good employment, we've always had good income and low poverty."

"I think the governor stated the obvious, and it was a positive speech."

Prince George's County Executive Rushern Baker, who is running in the Democratic primary for governor, said he was hoping to see a more critical response from Hogan after President Trump's State of the Union on Tuesday night.

"What we find is Donald Trump is hard on Maryland but (Governor Hogan's) response is always soft."

**CNS correspondents Layne Litzinger and Katherine Brzozowski contributed to this report.*

Hogan from A1

week touching on adultery, child marriage and more.

Bill would decriminalize adultery

Adultery is illegal in Maryland and is a misdemeanor, punishable by \$10 fine.

At least three adultery violations were filed in Maryland district courts during fiscal 2017, while the state's Office of the Public Defender confirmed it has handled five cases over the past eight years. None of those cases consisted of adultery as the primary charge, according to a state legislative analysis.

The House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday heard House Bill 267, sponsored by Delegate Kathleen Dumais, D-Montgomery, that would repeal the misdemeanor.

Including Maryland, 19 states still have statutes criminalizing adultery, and Dumais seeks to make it 18.

"The fine is a whopping \$10 and, in my 28 years of practice, I have never, ever, had a client charged with it or been in a case where anyone was charged with it," Dumais, a divorce lawyer, said in her testimony.

In his testimony Tuesday, Maryland family attorney James Milko argued the law is not only outdated but directly impacts legal proceedings. He said the law in place thwarts the purpose of some statutes in the divorce arena.

Dumais agreed. "This is simply arcane," Dumais said. "It is still a ground for divorce and is something we can talk about in family law cases, but there need not be a crime on the books."

Legislation would make youth marriages illegal

Under current Maryland law, youths at least 15 years old may marry. That would change under a bill making its way through the Legislature.

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, D-Howard, is sponsoring House bill 191, which would repeal provisions allowing 16- and 17-year-olds from marrying with consent of a parent or guardian.

The legislation also prevents 15-year-olds, who currently can marry with the same consent and a certificate from a medical professional, from marrying. The bill is in its third attempt, Atterbeary said.

Atterbeary showed a video in Thursday's House Judiciary

Committee hearing. The video featured a woman who said she married at 16 years old, wasn't allowed back in her high school and lost a scholarship because she was considered a dropout.

Atterbeary said bill opponents are misinformed.

"When individuals think of marriage and teenage marriage, it's, 'OK, there are some circumstances that have worked out,'" Atterbeary said. "Then there's this romanticized teen-on-teen love. Then there are these horrific stories that you don't know until you know."

Veterans' suicides would be tracked under bill

A bill sponsored by Sen. Bryan Simonaire, R-Anne Arundel, alters the information required on a death certificate to include, under certain circumstances, the decedent's military status. It also requires the Maryland Department of Health to publish an annual report on veteran suicide.

On Thursday, Senate bill 66 was heard in the Senate Finance Committee.

A 2016 report by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs found that nationally in 2014, an average of 20 veterans commit-

ted suicide each day, according to a state legislative analysis. The report stated veterans made up 8.5 percent of the United States population ages 18 and older, but accounted for 18 percent of all deaths by suicide among adults in the United States.

Boat winterization incident sparks safety-related legislation

In 2016, a Capital Gazette article reported, Matthew McHale entered a boat that had already been shrink-wrapped so he could winterize it. McHale idled the engine, which emits carbon monoxide, was found unconscious and later pronounced dead, the newspaper reported.

Also in the Senate Finance Committee, Sen. Edward Reilly, R-Anne Arundel, presented Senate bill 19, which "prohibits a business that winterizes boats from shrink wrapping a boat until all winterization procedures that require an employee to be inside the boat are complete."

The Maryland Occupational Safety and Health program found McHale's employer had not committed any violations, as

OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

The Shape of Water

The Shape of Water

Grade: A-

Rated ?R, some harsh profanity, some graphic violence, nudity, a brief sex scene

2 hrs., 3 min

Like many fairy tales, *The Shape of Water* is a fantastical story about a lonely person who finds fulfillment through interaction with a magical creature. Unlike most fairy tales, *The Shape of Water* lets its sex, violence, and cruelty fall out casually, no sugar-coating. You're being charmed by the Amelie-like musical score and the whimsical characters when oh, hey, there's Michael Shannon being very gross while having relations with his wife.

Anyone who saw *Pan's Labyrinth* won't be surprised to learn that its maker, the mischievous Mexican maestro Guillermo del Toro, is also behind *The Shape of Water* (sharing screenplay credit with Vanessa Taylor), his 10th feature and approximately the 10th to have macabre, gothic themes, beautiful imagery, and a dark sense of humor.

And yes, it's about a woman who befriends a fish-man.

The woman is Elisa (Sally Hawkins), mute since birth (or thereabouts) but able to hear, sign, and love. She lives above a Baltimore movie theater in 1962, across the hall from Giles (Richard Jenkins), an older, gay freelance commercial illustrator whose loneliness mirrors hers. (Just about everyone in this story is lonely.) They watch old musicals on TV and tap along with the dancing, almost like a father and daughter.

Elisa, who dreams of watery adventures and was found near a river as an orphan baby, works on the overnight cleaning crew at a government research facility alongside Zelda (Octavia Spencer), a chatterbox who, like Giles, is fluent in understanding Elisa's sign language. Elisa and Zelda are



ROTTENTOMATOES

From master story teller, Guillermo del Toro, comes *The Shape of Water*—an other-worldly fairy tale, set against the backdrop of Cold War era America circa 1962. In the hidden high-security government laboratory where she works, lonely Elisa (Sally Hawkins) is trapped in a life of isolation. Elisa's life is changed forever when she and co-worker Zelda (Octavia Spencer) discover a secret classified experiment. Rounding out the cast are Michael Shannon, Richard Jenkins, Doug Jones and Michael Stuhlbarg.

on the clock when a new "asset" arrives accompanied by one Mr. Strickland (Michael Shannon), the government functionary who found it and brought it here from South America. The asset is an amphibious man-like creature (played by Doug Jones) with sharp teeth and claws, kept chained in a tank so he can be studied and eventually dissected.

Strickland and his five-star boss, Gen. Hoyt (Nick Searcy), view the creature as nothing more than a tool to help us beat the Soviets (and you better believe the Soviets are after this thing too). Strickland, narrow-minded and racist, tells Elisa and Zelda that it's an "affront," an aberration that wasn't "created in the Lord's image" like we were (well, like white people were), that is has no feelings or emotions. Elisa comes to believe otherwise, as does Dr. Hoffstetler (Michael Stuhlbarg), a

scientist who witnesses the fish-man's cognitive abilities.

Del Toro's story has multiple angles, then: Elisa befriendng fish-man; the Soviets trying to get him (or at least stop the Americans from having him); Elisa and Hoffstetler trying to save him before Strickland and Hoyt "crack the damn thing open, learn what you can, and close shop." Strickland emerges as a true fairy tale ogre, a lewd, controlling villain who enjoys afflicting the fish-man with his cattle prod, which he calls an "Alabama howdy-do." (You must admit, that's a very good name for a cattle prod.) It's a "Beauty and the Beast" situation, including the eternal question of who's the real monster here. Michael Shannon plays the role with fearsome malevolence.

But our primary concern is kind, meek Elisa and her amphibious companion, unspeaking misfits who make a connection in a

world where so many are excluded because of their sexuality, race, or biological class. Baltimore's racial tensions play out in the background; the Cuban Missile Crisis looms—but here are two souls finding tranquility in the peaceful seas beneath the choppy surface, metaphorically speaking. Sally Hawkins' gentle plainness always makes her sympathetic, more so when she plays someone with a disadvantage that makes us want to protect her. Doug Jones, who's played demons, ghouls, and other makeup- or CGI-intensive entities in a couple dozen movies (he was the Pale Man in *Pan's Labyrinth*), has become expert at conveying emotion and humanity through his body language, unhindered by whatever latex or pixels are superimposed over his face. Elisa and the amphibian man's sweet, unorthodox relationship reminds the other characters and us that there's someone out there for everyone.

Hogan from A5

there are no regulations or standards specific to the process of winterizing boats.

Divorce bill passes Senate

The Maryland Senate on Thursday passed a bill that would authorize a court to allow divorce on grounds of mutual consent if the parties have minor children. The measure, Senate bill 120, sponsored by Sen. Bobby Zirkin,

D-Baltimore County, came under some debate.

Simonaire and Sen. Andrew Serafini, R-Washington, presented opposition, with the former citing his own experiences as a child of divorced parents.

Zirkin said the bill helps to eliminate a drawn-out process of divorce that can take years to complete.

"This is not some drive-by quickie divorce...it's saying, if the parties work it out, then they

can file without having to go through this farce," Zirkin said.

The bill passed on third reading via a 33-14 vote.

Franchot aims to help brew pubs

Comptroller Peter Franchot met with Maryland municipal leaders at Chesapeake Brewing Co. in Annapolis on Thursday to discuss a bill that would lift restrictions on craft breweries and aims to make Maryland a

leader in craft beer. The meeting came hours before the official start of Maryland's month-long craft beer celebration, FeBREWary.

"These breweries' ... value cannot be underestimated," said Franchot, a Democrat, citing an approximate economic impact of \$637 million.

—CNS correspondent Hannah Brockway contributed to this report.

Climate from A4

Mike Tidwell, Executive Director of Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund.

Gene Karpinski, President of the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), said, "LCV applauds Senator Van Hollen and Representative Beyer for their leadership with this legislation. Putting a price on carbon and transitioning to clean energy will create

jobs, protect our health, and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. More members of Congress should follow their lead and work to address the climate crisis instead of doubling down on Trump's pro-polluter agenda that guts our most basic public health protections. LCV is committed to working with our climate champions like Senator Van Hollen and Representative Beyer to address climate change."

"EDF Action applauds Senator Van Hollen and Representative Beyer for their continuing efforts to address the dangers of climate change. The Van Hollen-Beyer legislation is a serious proposal to reduce climate pollution, protect our children's future, and boost job-creating clean energy solutions," said Environmental Defense Fund Action President Joe Bonfiglio.

The dividend approach has received bipartisan support. Last year, a group of Republican leaders met with top White House officials to make the case for a similar approach to combat climate change that returns the proceeds to the American people but through a carbon tax and dividend. The Washington Post called this 'cap and dividend' proposal "elegant and effective" for its simple and market-based approach.

Bowie State from A1

The Lions roared back to create the games' fourth tie of the night, this time at 19—all. From there, Lincoln (PA) rolled off a 7-0 run to take its largest lead of the night at 28-21 after a pair of free throws by Gevon Arrington (Petersburg, VA) with 4:10 left in the first half.

Bowie State (12-11, 7-5 CIAA) trimmed the Lincoln (PA) lead down to one (28-27) with just

under a minute to go in the opening half but the Lions were able to carry a 33-28 lead into halftime.

The Bulldogs began the second half with an 8-0 burst to regain what would be the lead for good. Bowie State led by as much as nine (52-43) at the 11:50 mark of the second half but see Lincoln (PA) narrow the gap to 62-59 with 4:47 remaining in the game.

From that point, the Bulldogs outscored the Lions 12-6 to ac-

count for the final score of 74-65. Bowie State improved its field goal shooting percentage from 21.2 percent (7-of-33) in the first half to 48 percent (12-of-25) over the final 20 minutes.

Josh Page (Washington, D.C.) came off the Lincoln (PA) bench to tally a team-high 14 points, with 10-of-11 coming at the free throw line. Arrington and Cameron Campbell (Fayetteville, NC) scored 13 points apiece and Deaquan Williams (Camden, NJ)

were responsible for 10 points each in the loss. Williams ripped down a game-high 13 points for the Lions.

The Bulldogs converted 18 Lions turnovers into 19 points, but Lincoln blocked a whopping nine Bowie State shots.

The Bowie State Bulldogs returned to the hardwood on Saturday (February 10th), hosting the Virginia Union Panthers in a nationally televised contest at 4 p.m. in the A.C. Jordan Arena.

Spring Planting is Near

Join the Arbor Day Foundation in February and Receive 10 Free Trees

Joining the Arbor Day Foundation is an ideal way to get in the mood for spring planting. Anyone who joins the Foundation in February 2018 will receive 10 free Norway spruce trees or 10 free redbud trees to plant when the weather turns warm.

The free trees are part of the nonprofit Foundation's Trees for America campaign.

"These trees will help beautify your home for many years to come," said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "The trees will also add to the proud heritage of your state's existing Tree City USA communities."

The Tree City USA program has supported community forestry throughout the country for the past 40 years.

The trees will be shipped postpaid at the right time for planting, between March 1 and May 31, with enclosed planting instructions. The 6- to 12-inch trees are guaranteed to grow, or they will be replaced free of charge.

Members also receive a subscription to the Foundation's colorful bimonthly publication, Arbor Day, and The Tree Book, which contains information about planting and care.

To become a member of the Foundation and receive the free trees, send a \$10 contribution to TEN FREE NORWAY SPRUCE TREES or TEN FREE EASTERN REDBUD TREES, Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410, by February 28, 2018, or visit arborday.org/february.

Bringing Awareness to Annapolis

Annual Independent Living Awareness Day For People With Disabilities

By LAURIE ELINOFF ARI

GLEN BURNIE, MD—Marylanders with disabilities will 'walk and roll' down the halls of our State Capital on Tuesday, February 27, 2018 during Independent Living Awareness Day, speaking to legislators about current proposals and their impact on people with disabilities in Maryland.

Centers for Independent Living serve every community in Maryland, providing skills training, technology and advocacy services. Katie Collins-Ihrke, Representative from MACIL and MSILC and Executive Director of Accessible Resources for Independence (ARI), said "Inde-

pendent Living Awareness Day provides an opportunity for people with disabilities and our allies from all over the State of Maryland to share stories about barriers to full community participation and ensure that voices are heard when the legislators enter session to vote on bills that impact our lives."

This event is sponsored by the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council (MSILC) and the Maryland Association of Centers for Independent Living (MACIL).

For more information, please contact Katie Collins-Ihrke, Executive Director of ARI at 443-713-3914 or kihrike@arinow.org.



ADVERTISE!
in
The Prince George's Post
Call Brenda Boice at
301 627 0900

Calendar of Events

February 15 — February 21, 2018

"Nobody's Free Until Everybody's Free":

From Black Wall Street to Baltimore

Date and time: Thursday, February 15, 2018, 6:30 PM–8:00 PM
Description: What constitutes domestic terrorism? The bombing of "Black Wall Street", the Rosewood Massacre, MOVE Bombing, and Ferguson ... past and present the "war" on the black community continues. Via exhibit and discussion the Prince George's Ballroom will showcase the commonalities between past and present atrocities. What will it take to rebuild the Black community and can it be done while racial tensions and prejudices continue to increase?

Come prepared to learn, engage and grow from history to better impact the future. Light Refreshments to be served. RSVPs welcomed, but not required.

Cost: FREE

Ages: 12 and older

Location: Prince George's Ballroom

2411 Pinebrook Avenue, Landover, MD

Contact: 301-341-7439; TTY 301-699-2544

Spread the Love! Workout

Date and time: Saturday, February 17, 2018, 9:30 AM–10:30 AM
Description: Roses are red, violets are blue ... fall in love with a workout for you! Celebrate American Heart Month this February, and take part in a heart-pumping workout that will leave you feeling energized and refreshed! Call us at 301-446-6842 for more information.

Note: This event is scheduled to take place outdoors; weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, classes will be held in the gymnasium.

Cost: Free

Ages: 13 and older

Location: Kentland Community Center

2413 Pinebrook Avenue, Landover, MD

Contact: 301-386-2278; TTY 301-699-2544

I'm with Cupid! Archery

Date and time: Saturday, February 17, 2018, 11:00 AM–2:00 PM
Description: Come out and improve your balance, mental focus, coordination, upper body strength, and relaxation with archery in a beautiful park setting. Show some love, wear red!

Cost: FREE

Ages: Call for age recommendations

Location: Riversdale House Museum

4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park, MD

Contact: 301-864-0420; TTY 301-699-2544

Engineering 101: African-American Inventors

Date and time: Saturday, February 17, 2018, 2:00 PM–4:00 PM
Description: African-American inventors have helped shape the world we experience today with crucial inventions such as the spark plug, to fun inventions like the Super Soaker™. Learn more about these inventors and celebrate their creative spirit by building tables made of newspaper. Do you have the inventive spirit to solve this engineering challenge? Well, make sure you don't miss this event!

Cost: \$5/person (includes museum admission)

Ages: 8 and older

Location: College Park Aviation Museum

1985 Corporal Frank Scott Dr, College Park, MD

Contact: 301-864-6029; TTY 301-699-2544

A Night of Gospel Music & Dance

Date and time: Saturday, February 17, 2018, 6:30 PM–8:30 PM
Description: Come and enjoy the amazing voices of the Northwestern High School Gospel Choir, dance performances by Deena Richardson and the Distinctions Performing Arts Studio. Followed by instrumental selections from musician extraordinaire, Ryan Richardson. This will be an evening you don't want to miss!

Cost: FREE

Ages: all ages are welcome

Location: North Brentwood Community Center

4012 Webster Street, North Brentwood, MD

Contact: 301-445-4500; TTY 301-445-4512

Dick Gregory: His Life, His Work, His Legacy

Date and time: Sunday, February 18, 2018 through Saturday, February 24, 2018, 2:00 PM–5:00 PM

Description: Join us for this week-long celebration of the life and accomplishments of the late Dick Gregory. For the entire week, an exhibit will be on display where you can learn about his contributions to a variety of fields, including comedy, civil rights, humanitarian efforts, and nutrition. There will also be activities throughout the week, including an opening reception; a book signing with members of the Gregory family; a Family and Friends Night of reflections; and, a performance of Ayana Gregory's stage play on her father's life.

This event is in partnership with the Harmony Hall Regional Center's John Addison Concert Hall. Spend the week with us and learn more about this phenomenal personality.

Cost: FREE

Ages: All ages are welcome

Location: Oxon Hill Manor

6901 Oxon Hill Manor Road, Oxon Hill, MD

Contact: 301-839-7782; TTY 301-699-2544

Xtreme Teens: HBCU Experience

Date and time: Monday, February 19, 2018, 9:00 AM–2:00 PM
Description: You are invited to visit Morgan State University and receive a guided tour of this Historically Black College/University (HBCU). Founded in 1867, Morgan is a designated public urban university and the largest HBCU in Maryland. Lunch and transportation will be provided. Contact the center for more details.

Cost: FREE

Ages: 13–18

Location: Marlow Heights Community Center

2810 St. Clair Drive, Temple Hills, MD

Contact: 301-423-0505; TTY 301-699-2544

EARTH TALK ... Stopping That Drain Clog Naturally

Dear EarthTalk:

I've heard that the chemicals we use to unclog backed-up drains are harmful to our health and the environment. Can you suggest safer alternative products or methods?

—Amy Smith,
Rome, NY

Chemical drain clog removers do contain some pretty harmful stuff. The three main types available to consumers—caustic, oxidizing and acid—work by using harsh chemicals that heat up clogs to melt the congealed grease impeding the outflow. All three are acutely toxic to humans and animals if swallowed, and coming into contact with them can burn your eyes, skin and mucous membranes. Even the fumes can cause respiratory distress. These chemicals can also explode inside your home's pipes—especially if inadvertently mixed with other chemicals or cleaners.

Unfortunately, you'll have to look hard to find drain clog removal formulations that don't come with big risks. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) Guide to Healthy Cleaning gives drain clog removers from the likes of Amway, Clorox, CVS, Drano, Liquid Plumr and Safeway an "F" grade, given their toxicity to humans and animals and harshness to the environment.

And don't be fooled by a product's branding, as an eco-friendly name can sometimes belie toxic ingredients. To wit, EWG also gave an "F" to Up and Up Drain Pipe Opener and Earthworm Family-Safe Drain Cleaner for their environmental and health dangers.

EWG found that a few products—Biokleen Bac-Out Drain Care Gel, Drainbo The Natural Solution Natural Drain Cleaner and Earth Friendly Products' Earth Enzymes Drain Opener—did a decent job unclogging drains without using especially toxic chemicals, but it's always better to try to avoid the problem in the first place.

In the kitchen, refrain from putting eggshells, coffee grounds, pasta, potato peels, rice, flour, produce stickers, paint and cleaning products down your sink drain, even if you have a garbage disposal. As for keeping grease out of the drain, try to scrape or mop it up with a paper towel and throw it away. Also, keeping your garbage disposal clean—pour a little dish detergent down the drain and run the disposal under cold water for a minute or two each night after doing the dishes—will also prevent back-ups.

As for the bathroom sink, shower or tub, hair—whether from dad's shaving or sister's styling—is likely the chief suspect in clogs. A hair catcher like the TubShroom (or SinkShroom or ShowerSh-



CREDIT: EARTH TALK

Simple devices like the TubShroom can trap hair before it gets into your drain and causes a back-up.

room) could help. This ingenious little mushroom-shaped device pops into the drain and attracts and coils hairs around itself before problems start. Pop it out every couple of weeks, peel off and dispose of the collected hair in the garbage, and start the process all over again.

A little preventive maintenance goes a long way to keep

drains clear. Health and wellness site Mercola.com suggests filling sinks with a mix of white vinegar and warm water, then releasing the drain so this all-natural dynamic cleaning duo can do its work degreasing your outflow pipes. If the drain still runs slowly, pour in several tablespoons of baking soda followed by a white vinegar chaser.

CONTACTS: HowStuffWorks' "How Drain Cleaners Work," home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/plumbing/drain-cleaner2.htm; TubShroom, tubshroom.com; Environmental Working Group's Guide to Healthy Cleaning, ewg.org/guides/cleaners; Mercola.com, mercola.com.

EarthTalk® is written and edited by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of E - The Environmental Magazine (www.emagazine.com). Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

Cameras from A3

speed cameras 24 hours a day, following pedestrian deaths near the University of Maryland.

A year ago, two law enforcement agencies stopped deploying speed cameras on roadways in their jurisdictions: the Brent-

wood Police Department and the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, according to the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission. Across the map of Maryland, county and local law enforcement agencies are deploying a variety of speed limit enforcement camera systems,

police departments say, to monitor compliance with the posted speed limit, and to combat and ticket speeding motorists. The veritable arsenal includes speed cameras perched atop portable trailer units, mobile traffic camera units, fixed pole-mounted systems, stationary photo-radar

units, and handheld speed camera monitoring systems. Speed monitoring systems automatically enforce traffic laws. Contesting a speed camera ticket in Maryland? State law requires local jurisdictions to appoint an ombudsman to investigate the concerns of ticketed motorists.

Become a COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE



Learn how you can stand up for youth in foster care by attending an information session!

February 20th, 2018

6PM TO 7:30PM

First floor training room

6811 Kenilworth Avenue

Riverdale, MD 20737



RSVP TO VOLUNTEER@PGCASA.ORG OR CALL 301.209.0491