

The Prince George's Post



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NAACP Applauds Return to Single Member District for County Schools

Legislation Was Passed With Support By County Delegation

By Mario E. Quiroz-Servellón
CASA de Maryland Inc.

A tumultuous period of appointed and at-large school representatives was today replaced by single-member school board districts in Prince George's County when Governor O'Malley signed House Bill 1041 and Senate Bill 33 into law before cheering activists.

"Support for this legislation has been a multi-year priority for the Prince George's County Branch of the NAACP," said June Dillard, Branch President.

"For the NAACP, single-member districts are a specific reflection of our broad commitment to enfranchisement, particu-

larly when it affects the most crucial priority of our community — our children's education," said Ms. Dillard.

This year's legislation was passed with broad political support in Prince George's County. In the House it was supported by the entire county delegation with particular leadership from Delegate Carolyn J.D.

The NAACP, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, is the oldest, largest and strongest Civil Rights Organization in the United States. The principal objective of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority group citizens of the United States.



PHOTO COURTESY The Mildred Ridgley-Gray Charitable Trust, Inc.
June White Dillard, President of the Prince George's County NAACP.



PHOTO BY LEGUSTA FLOYD, JR.

Main Street in Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Main Street Improvement Applications Accepted

Housing and Community Development's Revitalization of Towns and Cities

By PRESS INFORMATION OFFICER
Department of Housing and Community Development

CROWNSVILLE, MD - The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is now accepting applications for both the Main Street Maryland (MSM) Program and the Main Street Improvement Program (MIP). Both MSM and MIP support economic development through commercial and residential revitalization initiatives that contribute to the revitalization of traditional downtown business districts in Maryland's towns and cities. This is the first time DHCD has accepted new applicants for the Main Street Maryland program since 2005.

"Governor O'Malley and the Department of Housing and Community Development are committed to maximizing the potential of our existing communities and ensuring that they are rich and vibrant places to live, work and prosper," said

See MAIN STREET, Page A3

O'Malley Delivers Keynote Address to County Chamber

Luncheon Brings Together Local, Business Leaders with Officials

BY PRESS INFORMATION OFFICE
Office of the Governor

COLLEGE PARK, MD (May 2008) — Governor Martin O'Malley delivered the keynote address before the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce Annual Governor's Luncheon today,

focusing his remarks on the significance of minority owned business in Maryland, and the steps that his administration has taken to create and sustain a vibrant economy statewide.

"This county is a place which leads the way in our efforts to better harness the strength of our State's diversity," said Governor O'Malley. "Over the past 14 months, we've come together as One Maryland and made real and steady progress toward protecting

See CHAMBER, Page A3

INSIDE

Neighbors Columns: Morningside, Brandywine, Clinton And Suitland
Neighbors Page A2

Planning Board Announces County Historic Property Grant Program
Community, Page A3

All traces of Bonds, the greatest player in baseball history, have vanished from the Bay.
Opinion, Page A4

County Executive Jack Johnson Cuts Ribbon at Brand New Passport BMW
Business, Page A5

Camden Photographer Journeys to West Africa to Further "Unhush" New Jersey's legacy of Slavery
On The Town, Page A6

National Leadership And Service Award Winner

Press Officer
U. S. Achievement Academy

The United States Achievement Academy announced today that Kelvin Jens M. Moncera from Potomac Knolls Subdivision, Fort Washington, Maryland has been recognized for academic achievement as a United States National Honor Student and United States National Leadership and Service Award winner.

Kelvin Jens M. Moncera, a 10th Grader who attends Oxon Hill High School for Science and Technology Program with 4.13 GPA, will appear in the United States Achievement Academy's Official Yearbook which is published nationally. He is the only child of Jensen Garde Moncera, a Chemical

Engineer and Gloria Mendoza Moncera, a Registered Nurse.

"Recognizing and supporting our youth is more important than ever before in America's history. Certainly, United States Achievement Academy winners should be congratulated and appreciated for their dedication to excellence and achievement," said Dr. George Stevens, Founder of the United States Achievement Academy.

"Never regard study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and to the profit of the community to which your later work belongs," further said by Dr.

See MONCERA, Page A5

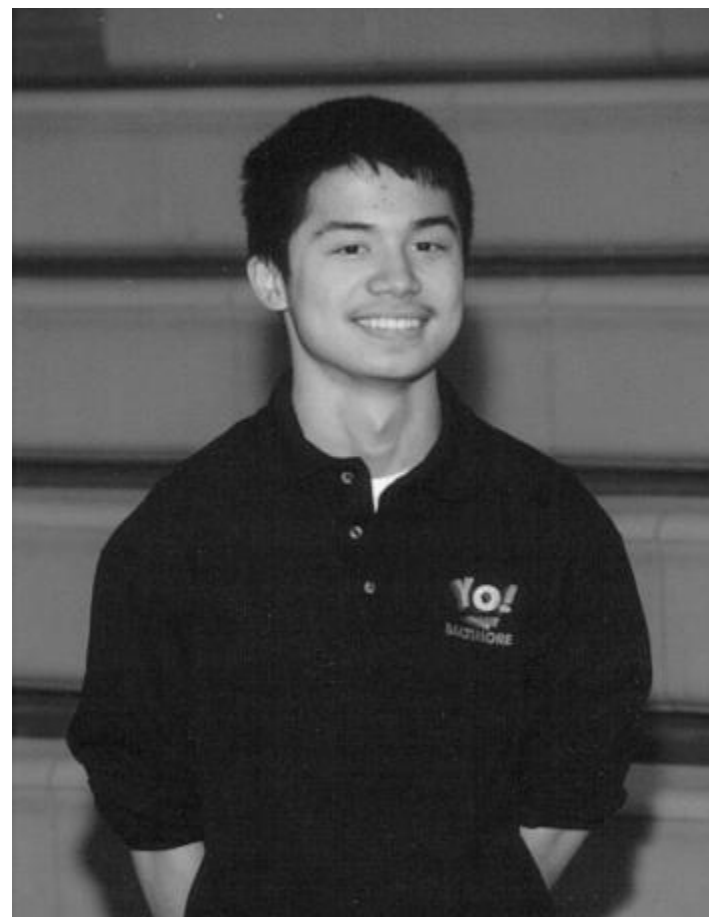


PHOTO COURTESY

Kelvin Jens M. Moncera

Mikulski, Colleagues Take Step Toward Gas Price Relief

By PRESS OFFICER
Sen. Barbara Mikulski's Office

"We want to make sure we keep America rolling and help roll back these prices."

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Senator Barbara

A. Mikulski (D-Md.) today applauded the Senate's passage of a provision to suspend the filling of the 97-percent-full Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) through December 2008, to help increase supply and lower prices. The amendment, which passed with an impressive 97-1 vote, could result in as much as a 5 cent reduction at the gas pump. A stand alone version of the

amendment has been introduced in the House of Representatives, with a vote expected this week.

"The American public needs relief - real solutions to what we are going to do to help them as they struggle with rising gas prices.

See GASOLINE, Page A5

Record Number of Highly Qualified Teachers Working in Classrooms

Three Quarters of Core Classes Meet High Requirements

By COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
PGC Public Schools

Nearly nine of every 10 classes in schools with large numbers of students highly impacted by the challenges of poverty are now taught by "Highly Qualified" teachers in the core academic subject areas according to data released today by Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS).

Additionally, nearly three quarters of all core subject area classes in Prince George's County public schools are taught by teachers who have met Maryland's "highly qualified" requirements in accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind law.

"All children have the right to be taught by highly qualified and highly effective teachers," said PGCPS Superintendent Dr. John E. Deasy. "Children faced with the challenges of

See TEACHERS, Page A5

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Philip Rollins, Veterans Affairs retiree, dies at 83

In 1979 Philip and Margaret Rollins moved to Skyline, across the street from me, and have been my good neighbors ever since.

Philip John Rollins was born in Hustle, Va., one of 14 children. He served in the Army during World War II, and in 1945 at St. Stephen's Baptist Church in Central Point, Va., he met his future wife, Margaret R i c h a r d s o n .

They were married Oct. 19, 1946, in Washington where both had taken jobs with the federal government, he with the Veterans Administration (now the Department of Veterans Affairs) and she with the Civil Aeronautics Board.

He retired from the federal government in 1980 and later retired again as administrative assistant to the pastor at Matthews Memorial Baptist Church where he was a deacon.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Margaret; sons Marcello and Glenn; five siblings, and many other relatives. Services were at W.H. Bacon Funeral Home and at Cheltenham Veterans Chapel.

Neighbors

Christopher Flaherty, formerly of Elmendorf Drive in Skyline, and his wife Yodie are proud parents of Naomi Tigst Flaherty, born April 7. Tigst means Patience in Ethiopian.

Not only has Chris produced a daughter, but he is a movie-maker.

His latest film is a documentary about politics in Ethiopia and why so many Ethiopians migrate to the U.S. PBS will be showing the film, and trailers have been running in local theaters.

Welcome back to Father

Kevin Cusick, parochial vicar at St. Philip's Parish, on his safe return from Iraq where he has been a Navy chaplain this past year. On his return, he was assigned to Camp LeJeune, in North Carolina. Then he took a bicycling vacation in Italy where (according to the parish bulletin) he had a "spiritually rewarding visit with the Holy Father."

Bells Church Thrift Shop is holding a Bag Sale through the month of May—all the clothes (except coats) you can stuff into a brown paper bag, for only \$2. The shop, which opened in the late 1970s, is in the white building at 6016 Allentown Road. It's open on Thurs. and Sat., 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Edna Holland, of Randolph Road in Morningside, works there most Thursdays. Drop by.

Get well prayers for former Morningside and Suitland resident, Agnes Koch, who had major surgery this week.

Academia

More than 1,000 students and faculty at three County elementary schools started wearing pedometers April 7 to participate in Get Fit Kids Prince George's County, a four-week program that challenges students to take at least 10,000 steps a day. Students in grades 3 to 6 at Morningside, Suitland and Langley Park McCormick schools are involved.

The winning school gets a pizza party and a \$1,500 cash prize.

May they rest in peace

Father Francis T. Flaherty, 82, a priest who served in a number of Archdiocesan parishes, died April 12 at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton, N.J. Among his

assignments was St. John's in Clinton and as chaplain for La Reine High School in Suitland.

Kenneth J. Ritchey, 81, member of Camp Springs Masonic Lodge 227 for 50 years and president of Associated Builders Inc., died April 5 at his home in Great Falls. A native of Everett, Pa., he served in the Army Air Corps and with the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Columbia. He started work as a carpenter and earned a degree in accounting before forming Associated Builders in 1963. Under his tenure as president, the company constructed the presidential inaugural reviewing stands, and did work for the Smithsonian, the Zoo, and the Archdiocese of Washington. In 1979 he accepted the Outstanding General Contractor of the Year award from the D.C. Metropolitan Subcontractors Association. He was a trustee for Corkran U.M. Church. Survivors include his wife of 59 years, Adina Ritchey. He was the father of five, grandfather of ten and great-grandfather of six.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Helen Fadness, May 15; Fr. Charles McCann, Kenneth Darcey, Tim Cordero and Kitty Marshall, May 16; Otis Jones, Jean Glaubitz and Ellen Ashby, May 19; and Aidan Kilbride, May 20.

Happy anniversary to Jim and Shirley Behr, their 55th on May 10; Aidan and Mary Kilbride, their 45th on May 18; Dennis and Leigh D'Avanzo, their 19th on May 20; and Ronnie and Karen Ellis, their 42nd on May 20.

Protect your social security number, do not give out personal information on the phone, through the mail, or over the internet unless you know who you are dealing with, never click on links sent in unsolicited emails, do not use an obvious password, and keep your personal information in a secure place. Be alert to signs that require immediate attention, such as bills that do not arrive as expected, unexpected credit cards or account statements, denials of credit for no apparent reason, and calls or letters about purchases you did not make. File a police report as soon as you suspect something is not right.

The male praying mantis cannot copulate while its head is attached to its body. The female initiates sex by ripping the male's head off!

Some information about how to deter identify thieves is shred financial documents, pro-

increase was driven largely by a 26 percent jump in the number of officers killed by gunfire (68 in 2007, 54 in 2006). The number of officers killed in traffic-related accidents also rose in 2007, to 83, an all-time high. This was the 10th year in a row in which more officers died in traffic-related accidents than from gunfire or any other single cause. The other 30 deaths in 2007 were from a variety of causes, many of them involving job-related injuries or illnesses. This information comes from the Memorial News that I receive from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. If you are interested in visiting this memorial, it is located at 400 Seventh Street, NW. Call them at 202-717-3400 or go to info@nlcomf.org.

Some information about how to deter identify thieves is shred financial documents, pro-

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/ Prince George's County

Do you have desire to help abused and neglected children in our community?

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Prince George's County is recruiting volunteers to advocate for the needs of abused and neglected children living in foster care.

CASA provides training and supervision to volunteers who spend about 10 hours per month getting to know a child and what is in that child's best interest. Volunteers submit reports to help the courts better understand each individual child and collaborate with family mem-

bers, teachers, social workers and others to ensure that the child's needs are met. Applications for day and evening training sessions are now being accepted. For more information, please visit our website at www.pgCasa.org or call 301-209-0491.



PHOTO COURTESY PGPD PRESS INFORMATION OFFICE

Christmas in April Volunteers Paint Kitchen. (Below) Office paints trim.



Suitland Beat

by Janice Euell 301 736 3481

Drew-Freeman Middle School will have its annual Career Day Fair on May 15, 2008, from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. They are looking for parents, family members, friends of family that can speak to their students about their careers. The subjects that they need to fill with speakers are mathematics, science, reading/language arts, social studies/US history, music/band, foreign language, health, physical education, computer technology and tech. ed/construction. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the career development of our students, please contact Venus Drummond, Parent Liaison, at (301)817.0900.

Drew-Freeman will also host its Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, June 5, 2008, 6:30 - 9:00 pm at the Drew-Freeman Middle School auditorium. Drew-Freeman is located at 2600 Brooks Drive, Suitland. Ms. Drummond ask that you RSCP no later than Friday, May 23, 2008 or e-mail her at venus.drummond#pgcps.org.

This is a very important NOTICE! YOUTH NOW GET FREE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY CENTERS! This is the best news that parents can hear since we are, despite some opinions, in a recession and money is tight. Prince George's County children ages 6-17 get FREE access to all M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation community centers and drop-in programs with the new YOUTH ID card.

With the new ID cards, all young people can participate in parks and recreation programs, including Xtreme Pre-Teens (ages 10-12) and Xtreme Teens (ages 13-17), as well as other recreational, educational and cultural programs offered in a safe, fun environment. If you are between the ages of 13 and 17, you even get free weight room access at community centers.

For details about this new program and how to get your Youth ID Card, call Customer Service Help Desk at (301)699-2255 or stop by any M-NCPPC facility. Thanks to Ms. Drummond for bringing this important message to our attention.

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Ruth Turner 301 888 1139

ANNUAL GRANDPARENT /GRANDCHILD FESTIVAL

The 15TH Annual Grandparent/ Grandchild Festival will be celebrated Friday, June

13, 11:00 AM-1:00 PM. Grandparents of all can bring their elementary school-age grandchildren to the park for a free morning of enjoyment and fun.

Activities will include hot dogs, popcorn, carousel, train rides, clown, and a magic show. Registration is required by June 9

The Festival will be celebrated at Watkins Regional Park located at 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD. Telephone

(301) 386-5525, (301) 454-1252; TTY 301-218-6768 if additional information is needed..

ASBURY UNITED

METHODIST CHURCH

The Senior and Junior Ushers of Asbury United Methodist Church will be celebrating their 59th Usher's Anniversary on Sunday, June 8th at 3:00 PM. The church is

located at 4004 Accokeek Road, Brandywine, MD. Rev. Dr. Priscilla Boswell is the Pastor. Please call (301) 372-8891 if additional information is needed.

SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK

Surrattsville High School Senior Karis Christian GPA is 3:88 and Cumulative is 3:82 current. Academics include AP Statistics, AP Biology Lab, AFJROTC Personnel Officer (Grades 10 and 12) AFJROTC Deputy Support Group Commander, National Honor Society.

Karis Extra Curricular activities include Yearbook Editor, AFJROTC Drill Team and Prom Committee.

Karis plans to attend Delaware State as a Pre-Med Major. She has earned 424 Community Service Awards. Received National Honor Roll Awards and Who's Who Among High School Students.

GRADUATION CELEBRATION

Dwayne A. Smith will be receiving his Master of Business Administration

Degree on Sunday June 29, 2008 at 2:00 PM. The ceremony will be held at Gwinnett Arena, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway in Duluth, Georgia.

Dwayne recently married Judith Wanda Lee at the Second Baptist Church in Coatesville, Pennsylvania resides in Georgia. Dwayne is the son of Silverene Spriggs who resides in Brandywine, Maryland.

ANNUAL MEN'S DAY (REMINDER)

Christ United Methodist Men will celebrate their Annual Men's Day on Sunday, June 29, 2008 at the 9:45 AM Worship Service. The theme for this celebration is "Men Thirsty for the Water from the Rock". Guest speaker will be Brother Dana Jones who is the Lay Leader at Plum Point United Methodist Church in Huntingtown, Maryland.

Christ United Methodist Church is located at 22919 Christ Church Road, Aquasco, Maryland. Reverend Dr. Robert E Walker Jr. is the Pastor.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

Graduating to 'the real world'

Anyone who's graduated from college understands the relief of leaving behind years of cramming for exams and living on dorm food. With the next chapter of their lives now at hand, this year's grads deserve kudos for successfully negotiating the twists and turns of higher education. Now the fun begins.

Take it from someone who's learned a few lessons the hard way — there are steps you should take now to ensure you start off on sound financial footing. A few tips:

Step 1: Budgeting 101. After living on a shoestring throughout college, many people go to the other extreme after landing their first full-time job, buying all the things they've done without. Before going on a spending spree, first figure out (A) how much you earn and (B) how much it costs to live. If (B) is larger than (A), not only will you not get ahead, you may soon find yourself reeling from debt.

Step 2: Figure out what you owe. Roughly two-thirds of young adults begin their post-graduation job search saddled with student loan debt — the average amount is around \$20,000, but for many it's much higher. When you factor in rent, car payments, credit card balances and other monthly obligations, it's easy to see why some grads feel overwhelmed.

Although most federal student loan programs offer a repayment grace period, many private loans don't. Ask your lender whether they'll reduce your loan's interest rate if you agree to automatic monthly payments or after making a certain number of on-time payments. If you anticipate repayment difficulties, contact your lender immediately to discuss your options. You may be able to work out an agreement to defer payments, extend the loan's term or refinance at a lower rate.

Step 3: Know the score, credit-wise. Many people don't realize the important role their credit score plays in their financial future until after they've seriously damaged it by making late payments, bouncing checks, opening too many accounts or exceeding their credit limits. This can haunt you later, not only when you try to borrow money for a house or car, but also when you try to rent an apartment or apply



for a job, since many landlords and employers now check credit records and reject applicants with poor credit.

Find out where you stand by ordering credit reports from the three major credit bureaus — Equifax (www.equifax.com), Experian (www.experian.com) and TransUnion (www.transunion.com). You can order one free credit report per year from each bureau. Order through www.annualcreditreport.com; otherwise you'll pay a small fee.

To learn more about the importance of understanding and improving your credit score, visit What's My Score (www.whatmyscore.com), a financial literacy program for young adults run by Visa Inc. It features a comprehensive workbook called Money 101: A Crash Course in Better Money Management, which can be downloaded for free. The workbook covers such topics as:

- Making smart financial decisions.
- Creating a workable budget.
- Explanation of banking services.
- Understanding different types of loans and credit scores.
- Saving to reach financial goals.
- What's My Score also features a free tool for estimating your credit score, guides for renting an apartment, buying a car and improving your credit score, and links to many other helpful sites.

This is when all your hard work finally starts to pay off — just make sure you don't sabotage yourself by overextending your finances early in your career.

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. Sign up for his free monthly e-Newsletter at www.practicalmoneyskills.com/newsletter.

Planning Board Announces County Historic Property Grant Program

Upper Marlboro -- The Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) today announced the startup of a program that will provide grants of up to \$100,000 to help rehabilitate, restore, preserve or acquire historic properties in the County, and approved guidelines for administration of the program.

Grants from the Prince George's County Historic Property Grant Program are designed to preserve, protect and enhance historic properties, encourage others to preserve, protect and enhance historic properties and to promote interest in and the study of historic properties. Grants will be awarded for the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, or acquisition of historic property. The grant program is administered by the Prince George's County Planning Department of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Who can apply? Individuals, nonprofit organizations/foundations and political

subdivisions can apply.

What properties are eligible? Eligible properties must be located in Prince George's County and have an official historic designation or be eligible for one.

What kinds of activities are eligible? Eligible activities include acquiring and rehabilitating historic properties.

Selection process: The Historic Property Grant Program is administered by M-NCPPC in partnership with the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The Historic Preservation Commission, upon the advice of its Grants Committee, will review all applications and make its recommendations to the Planning Board.

Requirements: A match of a minimum of 10% is required; the provision of in-kind matches of labor and materials are permitted. Successful applicants shall convey a perpetual preservation easement to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission at the time the grant is awarded and before any funds are dis-

bursed. Capital grant funded work must be performed by licensed, bonded and insured contractors. All work must conform to The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Deadlines: Draft applications must be postmarked or delivered by August 1, 2008. Final applications must be postmarked or delivered by November 1, 2008. You are not required to submit a draft of your application; however, draft applications received by August 1 receive preliminary review for errors and omissions. Applications received after November 1 may not receive this review and will be processed as submitted.

Applications are available at www.mncppc.org/county/propertygrant.htm. Copies of the application are also available at the Information Counter on the lower level at the County Administration Building, 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 or by calling 301-952-3680. For further information please call 301-952-3680 or send an email to propertygrant@ppd.mncppc.org.

Main Street from A1

DHCD Secretary Raymond A. Skinner. "Main Street Maryland has proven to be one of DHCD's most effective revitalization programs."

Created in 1998, Main Street Maryland is a comprehensive downtown revitalization program that is recognized nationally as a model for Smart Growth.

The program strengthens the economic potential of Maryland's traditional main streets and neighborhoods. Using a competitive process, MSM selects communities which have made a commitment to revitalization, and helps them increase private-

sector small business investment, and improve the appearance and image of their core business districts.

The program has designated 18 communities in 12 counties, resulting in the opening of 833 new businesses and the creation of 3,350 new jobs. n to expanding the number of Main Street designations, DHCD's Main Street Improvement Program (MIP) will offer \$300,000 in funds for new and existing Main Street communities.

In this application round, MIP funds can be used for traditional Main Street improvement projects, as well as for projects related to residential revitalization projects near the business district that

strengthen the relationship between downtown commercial districts and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Applications for MSM designation and MIP funding are due by June 11, 2008. Applications should be sent to Amy Seitz, Main Street Maryland Coordinator, 1201 W. Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21223.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development works with partners to finance housing opportunities and revitalize great places for Maryland citizens to live, work and prosper. To learn more about DHCD and its programs, visit www.mdhousing.org.

Chamber from A1

our shared priorities. And we've done so in a manner that we believe has strengthened our business climate here in Prince George's County."

"During times of economic growth and development, it is important that we all work collectively to ensure everyone enjoys an opportunity to participate," said James Dula, PhD, President of the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce. "Governor O'Malley is a leader that embraces this concept and we are extremely happy to have him address the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce business community."

On fiscal accountability, the Governor highlighted the progress of this administration in the face of challenging economic times. "When we inherited a \$1.7 billion structural deficit from our predecessors we did what we had to do and we tried to do it in the fairest way possible, without putting our State at a competitive disadvantage with Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and other states," he said. "Working together as One Maryland, we've nearly closed that deficit, cut spending by nearly \$2 billion, reduced the size of our bureaucracy, left a cash balance of nearly \$1 billion, retained our Triple A bond rating, and created a system of performance based governance we call StateStat to better target our resources so our State government can do more with less.

We've done these things while strengthening our priorities, instead of abandoning them. Fiscal responsibility is not an end in and of itself — but rather it's what allows us to make these investments in workforce creation, in transportation, in expanding educational opportunity."

The Governor also discussed public safety, recognizing that a safe community is a community friendly to business growth. "As we make these investments, we have no higher priority than our public's safety," he said. "When Lt. Governor Brown and I took that oath, we said that it's not acceptable and it's not right that our State should be first in so many good categories and also near the top when it comes to violent crimes. While we still have much work to do, we've come together and made some real progress over these past 15 months. Our murder rate is down across our State, including in this county, where it has dropped 12%. And, we've knocked down the backlog of some 24,000 DNA samples — which has led to the arrest of 61 rapists and murderers. We've increased by 46% the number of CODIS match hits, doubled the size of our DNA database — and just yesterday I signed legislation which will give our police and law enforcement agencies the tools they need to resolve open investigations, weed out false leads, and continue saving lives. In addition, we're partnering with officials here in Prince George's County to reduce gun violence, crime

and gang related activity. We're taking this action, because we believe there is no such thing as a spare Marylander or a spare American and to lose even one life is a tragedy."

Identifying Maryland's workforce as its best competitive advantage among the fifty states, Governor O'Malley touted significant measures aimed at increasing opportunity for workforce development. "We've expanded the P-20 Leadership Council to make sure our schools are adequately preparing our kids for the demands of the workforce and of higher education. We've made major investments in school construction, investing \$93 million here in Prince George's County — by comparison, the previous administration allocated only \$23 million in their first two years. All in all, we will have invested more in two years than the previous administration invested in four. We've also invested a record \$150 million in facility improvements at our community colleges. And, we froze college tuition for three consecutive years, making college education more accessible for our families."

Governor O'Malley also highlighted the transit-oriented development opportunities in Prince George's County. "There is enough land available for transit-oriented development within a half mile of our state's 112 transit stations to theoretically absorb all the new residents Maryland is expected to gain in the next two decades —

all 1.1 million of them," he said. "In Prince George's County alone, 14 of our 15 Metro Station properties have ample room for development. There are nearly 2,800 acres of land available for true smart growth within walking distance to these stations, and we're working with the County to harness this potential. The University of Maryland is working on one of these projects in its East Campus, which will tie into the future Purple Line. Our State Transportation and Business and Economic Development departments have been working to bring businesses to these sites, and we've also been partnering with our Congressional delegation to bring federal offices — with a specific emphasis on Prince George's locations."

The Prince George's Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit alliance of over 900 businesses, representing over 250,000 employees, making it one of the largest chambers in the state of Maryland and the eleventh largest chamber in the Washington Metropolitan region. Founded in 1924, the Chamber works to carry out its mission of advancing the interest of business for a vibrant Prince George's County. It is recognized as the most effective voice for business in Prince George's County and has dedicated itself to fostering a sound and progressive business climate for the County, as well as assuming a leadership position in identifying and resolving community issues and concerns.

Delaware Beach!!!

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MDDC 2x2 DISPLAY AD NETWORK

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Mold, mildew and water leaking into your basement causes health and foundation damage. What can be done to fix the problem? Allstate American Waterproofing is an honest, hardworking local company. We will give you a FREE evaluation and estimate and a fair price. We have repaired thousands of basements in the area; we can provide local references. When your neighbors needed waterproofing they called Allstate American. Why don't you? Call now to receive a 20% discount with your FREE ESTIMATE.

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COMMENTARY

MORTGAGE LATE? DON'T WAIT!

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www.MDHOPE.org

Get Information on:

- ▶ Free Counseling Services
- ▶ Finance Options
- ▶ Fraud Intervention



CITY OF DISTRICT HEIGHTS NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Mayor and Commissioners of the City of District Heights propose to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2008, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 10.9% from \$312,595,413 to \$346,783,325.
2. If the City of District Heights maintains the current tax rate of \$0.73 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 10.9% resulting in \$249,571 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.658, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The City is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.730 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 10.9% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$249,571 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 7:00 p.m. on June 10, 2008 at the E. Michael Roll Municipal Building, 2000 Marbury Drive, District Heights, Maryland.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged.

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call (301) 336-1402 for further information.

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SOJOURNER TRUTH ROOM

Oxon Hill Library
6200 Oxon Hill Road
Oxon Hill, MD
301-839-2400

The Oxon Hill Library is built on the site of the Sojourner Truth Elementary School. The Sojourner Truth Room was established in 1967 and named in honor of the great activist for the rights of African Americans and women.

It contains a collection of books, periodicals, pamphlets, photographs, and other material on African American history and culture.

It is one of the two largest African-American research collections in Maryland, comparable only to the State Library Resource Center in Baltimore.

The library is open to the public. Call for additional information and operating hours. (D)

Open to the Public



Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Washington's Two Economies—A Growing Income Gap

Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, is one of the great cities of the world. Tourists come here from around the globe to enjoy its world-class museums and art galleries and visit its columned edifices of gleaming marble. It's a city that attracts some of the most talented people from America and abroad. Well-educated, highly paid professionals who work for federal agencies, in the halls of Congress and at media organizations make their homes on the banks of the Potomac.

But many long-time local residents use Washington's other name—the District of Columbia. While the District's streets course through middle-income communities with neat row houses fronting well-kept lawns, its overall poverty rate has reached its highest level in nearly ten years. Sadly, the socioeconomic divide between Washington and the District of Columbia has been widening over the past two decades.

According to the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute's October 2007 report, "D.C.'s Two Economies: Many Residents Are Falling Behind Despite the City's Revitalization," the wage gap between D.C.'s highest earners (the top 20 percent) and the lowest (the bottom 20 percent) is the widest it has been since 1979. And the number of impoverished District residents has grown. According to the Institute report, nearly 20 percent, or one in five District residents, have incomes below the poverty level. Since the late 1990s, about 27,000 D.C. residents have fallen into poverty.

Despite the recent economic downturn, Washington's strong economy has been anchored by large employers such as the federal government, the District government, universities, hospitals and corporate offices. The city also has experienced a boom in commercial and residential construction. Long seen as "recession proof," the Washington economy is strong. The economy has produced jobs for skilled and well-educated workers who have seen their incomes soar. While a large segment of the Washington population is economically successful, that prosperity has not been shared by a considerable segment of the District's Black population and the least educated residents who have remained sunken at the bottom.

According to the Institute report, the median income for White households in Washington grew from \$55,000 in 1980 to \$92,000 in 2006 (in 2006 dollars). The incomes of the least paid workers (when adjusted for inflation) have stayed practically unchanged over the last three decades. The incomes of Black households from 1980 to 2006 have remained essentially flat at \$34,500. In addition, employment for Black adults has declined steadily since the late 1980s, from 62 percent in 1988 to 51 percent in 2006. Only two other U.S. cities, Tampa and Atlanta, have worse income disparities. One's level of education can be critical for economic success. Just 51 percent of D.C. residents with only a high school diploma had jobs; this is the lowest level in nearly 30 years.

One-third of the District's children are poor, compared with 16 percent of adults ages 18 to 64. In 2004, approximately 22,000 District families with children had incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, or less than about \$31,000 for a family of three. Seventy-four percent of these were working families with one or more parents who worked at least part of the year. About 12,000 of these low-income District families with children—more than half—included adults who worked more

than half of the year. In many cases, the parents worked full-time and year-round. Overall, some 47,000 District residents, including 27,000 children, lived in families that were poor or near-poor despite working most of the year.

This problem must be addressed at its roots. The first thing that must be done is to improve the quality of education at all levels—preschool, elementary, secondary and post-secondary—as well as provide job training programs that will equip District residents with the skills that will enable them to participate and succeed in the city's economy. Residents who are stuck in low-wage jobs and striving to stay off public assistance rolls need support. We must provide that support by establishing decent living wages, child care assistance, health care coverage and affordable housing.

For more information about Children's Defense Fund, go to <http://www.childrensdefense.org/>.

Marion Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund and its Action Council 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.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS

Business Exchange

by William Reed



Will Blacks Support Their Own Television News Channel?

The current ongoing media manufactured circus crucifying Rev. Jeremiah Wright is instructive in understanding America's institutionalized racism, especially illustrative is "mainstream media's" coverage of Blacks and their points of view.

The acrimony corporate media created and manipulated regarding Rev. Wright started when their programmers saturated the airwaves with sound-bite clips of Wright sermonizing about the evils of America. When Rev. Wright started his defense, mainstream media's provocateurs stoked the controversy by overblowing statements with a stable of black commentators in tow - each professing Wright "didn't represent their views and blaming him, for, as they saw it, continuing to be an albatross around Obama's neck.

Corporate Media's endless faintings about "Obama's pastor problem" illustrates consistent and colluded institutional racism thinly veiled as a defense of American civility and patriotism. Barack Obama does not have as much "a pastor problem" as Americans has a corrupt media problem. The airwaves are filled with "Obama's Pastor Problem" because an irresponsible media pretends that America does not have a race or a division of wealth problem. Black-oriented issues are rarely aired via corporate media.

The medium is the greatest barrier to honest conversations over race in this country. Corporate Media's cable and network television news programs have been less than fair and balanced in their coverage of African Americans; and, nonexistent in broadcasts of issues and topics important to them. Up to now, how African Americans see themselves and their issues has been dominated by companies: Time Warner, Disney, News Corporation, Bertelsmann of Germany, General Electric's NBC, and Viacom (formerly CBS).

Corporate Media is a system of media production and distribution among a precious few. The current conglomeration is an integrated mass communications system that acts in unison. The corporate owners and managers of the dominant networks are interchangeable and indistinguishable and share a common mission and worldview.

A "change" is on the horizon for African Americans' communications needs. The Black Television News Channel (BTNC) will launch in early 2009

with the nation's first all-news cable network dedicated to the African American community. Based in Washington, D.C., BTNC is the creation of J.C. Watts, the former Republican congressman from Oklahoma. The network is part of a multi-year carriage agreement with Comcast Cable. Initial distribution will be limited to Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Atlanta, and Baltimore.

A black cable news network will be a welcome addition to the media world. But, BTNC's 24-hour news format will be a costly proposition.

To satisfy a bourgeois black clientele addicted to mainstream media, BTNC will especially need to put forth a state-of-the-art product. BTNC's difference, of course, will all be in the perspective it brings to screens. As BTNC brings blacks news from their own points of view, it will stem growth and maturation of black people who will not only be on-air talent but the ones making editorial decisions on what stories actually get covered. Many of those blacks currently forced to prostrate themselves at corporate media altars could become "shot callers" under the Watts paradigm.

According to Nielsen and a National Urban League study, African Americans watch more television than other ethnic groups. However, the studies also say TV is the only arena where solid, broad news representation of the black community has not been achieved in any meaningful way.

Watts' company's partner in the network is Comcast Cable, a part of the nation's largest cable television owner. In announcing the venture Watts praised Comcast for "presenting divergent points of view". He said, "Our unique and vast content partnerships with African American newsmakers will provide our viewers live access to the stories and people in whom our viewers have a special interest".

Prior attempts to launch a full-time news channel have failed, mostly due to the high cost of developing news. One question is whether Watts will put forth a competitive product.

The second question is whether African-Americans in the targeted cities will join BTNC in moving away from a historically hostile corporate media; or, will they remain satisfied with the status quo. (William Reed - www.BlackPressInternational.com)

County Executive Cuts Ribbon at Brand New Passport BMW

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the County Executive

UPPER MARLBORO, MD - Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson today joined Everett Hellmuth, President of Passport BMW and other officials from BMW for the grand opening of the new Passport BMW in Marlow Heights.

"Today we celebrate not only the grand opening of a great dealership, but also the continued growth of an organization that has provided great opportunity for all those it employs and for all those who benefit from the donations Passport makes to so many wonderful charities," Johnson said.

"I want to thank Everett

Hellmuth and Passport BMW for investing in Prince George's County."

Founded in 1991, Passport BMW has seen continuous rising sales, and has been named one of the top 50 BMW dealerships in the United States. The dealership has 83,000 square feet on more than 6.5 acres and sells more than 2,600 new and previously owned BMW's annually and employs more than 160 people.

The dealership houses 53 service stalls which can service up to 200 cars per day, 6 days per week. BMW customers receive a wide range of "perks" including a free car wash for all service customers, valet service to pick up and return cars needing service, Fast Lane service for repairs taking no

Teachers from A1

poverty are in particular need of high-level instruction, and we are committed to recruiting and developing the best teachers to work in our most impacted schools."

Currently, 88.4 percent of classroom teachers teaching in the core academic subject areas are highly qualified in

Title I schools. Overall, 73 percent of teachers teaching core academic subject classes are highly qualified in Prince George's County public schools.

Both percentages are record-high levels.

Last year, PGCPS reported 72 percent of highly qualified teachers in core academic subject classes at Title I schools,

Gasoline from A1

We know what it means to their businesses and their families," said Senator Mikulski. "Instead of being able to concentrate on raising their families, parents are gripped by the fear of rising gas prices. We know that for the trucks delivering food and products to the market, prices continue to go up. Even delivering Meals on Wheels will soon be a reach for a volunteer. We want to make sure we keep America rolling and help roll back these prices."

Since President Bush came to office, gas prices have more than doubled, the Big Oil com-

panies have made more than half a trillion dollars in profits and the United States is even more dependent on oil. Gas prices in Maryland have increased by \$2.18 per gallon, an increase of 153 percent. The Department of Energy estimates that families, businesses and farmers in Maryland will spend \$464 million more on gasoline in May 2008 than they spent in January 2001.

The Administration places between 70,000 and 80,000 barrels of oil a day underground in the SPR, despite some estimates that it is 97 percent full. The Senate's amendment allows filling to

Moncera from A1

Stevens. We are all aware of Albert Einstein's genius and contributions to education. Viewing education as an opportunity lifts the burden of learning as a duty. Your contributions to your family, school and community will profit all concerned.

The USAA National Honor Student Awards provide honor students with many benefits and services and is a great tribute to a student's dedication, talent, and ability. The purpose of the USAA National Leadership and Service Award is to pay tribute to the dedicated students who

exhibit the qualities set forth in our standards for selection based on Academic Performance, Interest and Aptitude, Leadership Qualities, Responsibility, Motivation to Learn, Enthusiasm, Attitude and Cooperative Spirit, and Dependability. The USAA honored Kelvin Jens who has been featured in the whole page of the yearbook for his exemplary leadership and service.

A good leader is a person of character who possesses the moral courage to apply the traits of fairness, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, and concern in their lives and the lives of others. The

USAA recognizes the importance of these traits and honors young people who exhibit exemplary leadership and service.

Kelvin Jens' teachers refer to him as a highly motivated and well respected individual who contributes positively to his school and community. His educators describes him as an energetic, highly motivated, and academically exceptional student, his impressive intellectual aptitude, moral integrity and maturity make him a natural leader. He is referred to by his teachers as an exceptional scholar who possesses the ability to make significant contributions to the world.



PHOTO COURTESY OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson today joined Everett Hellmuth, President of Passport BMW and other officials from BMW for the grand opening of the new Passport BMW in Marlow Heights.

more than 1.5 hours and a loaner vehicle.

The new dealership will provide a luxurious customer waiting lounge, as well as a customer business center, complete with complimentary state-of-the-art computers, faxes, scanners, and copying equipment.

The entire building is wireless for those who have their own laptop. If you don't have your own laptop, Passport BMW will provide a PC for

you to use during your wait. There will also be a gourmet on-site coffee shop, offering the latest in coffee drinks, sandwiches, salads, soups, and snacks.

"From the fast, courteous service to the new technology that will allow customers to use computers and other equipment to work while they wait for their cars, Passport BMW is the gold standard for what all car dealerships should be," Johnson said.

and 66 percent overall.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires that all teachers of core academic subjects in the classroom be highly qualified by 2014. To be highly qualified, classroom teachers in core academic subject areas (including early childhood and elementary) must:

- Hold at least a bachelor's

degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education;

- Hold a valid Standard Professional Certificate or Advanced Professional Certificate or Resident Teacher Certificate in the subject area they are teaching; and
- Satisfy the requirements associated with specific teaching levels and experience.

Rail System and other forms of mass transit that are safe for the commuter, cost efficient for the consumer and environmentally sound.

"More money for Maryland mass transit systems means more than just transportation - it means residents and visitors in Maryland and our nation's Capitol can live, work, worship and play throughout the state without ever getting in their cars," said Senator Mikulski.

"I will continue to fight for Maryland's fair share with smart investments that keep travelers on the move and help lessen pollution and congestion."

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MONDAY	MAY 26	10 AM - 8 PM

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OUT ON THE TOWN

Movie Review

"SPEED RACER"

The action is plentiful, but it never feels like it matters.



PHOTO COURTESY ROTTENTOMATOES

Speed Racer Pictures: Emile Hirsch, Christina Ricci, Susan Sarandon

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK
MOVIE REVIEWS
"SPEED RACER"
Grade: C-

Rated PG for a little mild profanity,
some violence, an instance of bird-flipping
2 hrs., 14 min.

When "The Matrix" burst onto the scene in 1999, its creators, brothers Andy and Larry Wachowski, were hailed as geniuses whose advancements in special-effects technology would forever change the way movies were made. That has proven to be true, but it has also proven to be the undoing of countless imitators. These pretenders often fall into the trap of thinking that spectacular visuals are all they need to make a great film, forgetting that "The Matrix" had a terrific story, too.

The latest filmmakers to succumb to that style-over-substance mentality are the Wachowskis themselves. With their live-action version of the cheesy 1960s cartoon "Speed Racer," they have created a candy-colored world full of impossibly vivid images and eye-popping visuals. I often found myself agape at the brilliant colors and stunning pictures -- during the first 20 minutes, anyway. Then I grew accustomed to the film's look and started paying attention to its story, dialogue, and characters. That's when the disappointment settled in.

Why do so many filmmakers forget that 134 minutes of exhilaration is not automatically a good thing? Even the world's most thrilling roller coaster would grow tiresome if you rode it nonstop for two hours. Action must be supported by story, and the story

must lead organically to the action. All of it has to stem from the characters' motivations. "Speed Racer" is full of people doing things for no discernible reason, and people fighting other people only because, I think, the script labeled one group "good guys" and the other "bad guys." Other elements exist solely because they existed in the cartoon series -- the worst possible excuse.

The title character, played by Emile Hirsch, is a young man of about 17 whose family has racing in its blood. His older brother, Rex Racer (Scott Porter), was a champion driver until his tragic death eight years ago. Speed's father, Pops (John Goodman), builds the cars while Mom (Susan Sarandon) cheers her boy on. Speed has a chubby little brother, Spritle (Paulie Litt), who is his biggest fan, who gets into trouble a lot, and who for some reason has a pet monkey. Speed's girlfriend, Trixie (Christina Ricci), for some reason lives with the family (or at least she is always at their house, including late at night and early in the morning).

The plot concerns an effort by an evil corporate auto manufacturer named Royalton (Roger Allam) to insinuate himself into the Racer family's operation by becoming Speed's chief sponsor. The Racers prefer to remain independent, thank you very much, which enrages Royalton. He is tangled up with a nefarious organization that fixes races and ruins the purity of the sport, and somehow a couple of Japanese companies are involved. There is an awful lot of dialogue related to the politics of racing and the high-finance skulduggery taking place behind the scenes, so much that I eventually gave up on keeping track of it. Considering the movie is aimed

at kids, and kids are not as clever as I am, I doubt they'll be able to make heads or tails of it either.

The gist is that Speed Racer has to compete in some races in order to ... um ... stop Royalton from ... doing whatever it is that he's doing. Speed is assisted by Racer X (Matthew Fox), a mysterious figure who fights for the side of good. Speed thinks Racer X might be his presumed-dead brother in disguise. Hey, why not?

So we get a lot of whiz-bang racing sequences in which futuristic cars drive at impossible angles, ricocheting off berms and each other and performing a variety of mechanical stunts that would certainly raise eyebrows among NASCAR officials. Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein might have a few choice words for the drivers, too, what with their blatant disregard for physics and gravity.

And that is part of the problem. In addition to the outrageously convoluted story, the flat characters, and the passionless dialogue, there's also the fact that there's no tension in any of the action. We never fear for anyone's safety because we know that their cars can drive up walls or execute triple somersaults or whatever else might be needed to ensure the driver's survival. The action is plentiful, but it never feels like it matters.

Were it not for the fact that the film is well over two hours long, I would think that watching it with the sound off might be the most rewarding way to experience it.

It certainly is a wonder to look at. Too bad the Wachowskis neglected to concoct a story to go with it. Who would have thought a movie this dazzling could also be so boring?

Camden Photographer Journeys to West Africa to Further "Unhush" New Jersey's legacy of Slavery

By Tara Nurin
Media Relations

Beverly Collins-Roberts will Document Direct Slavery Links between Camden and Africa

CAMDEN, NJ, 2008 -- Beverly Collins-Roberts, the Camden, NJ, historian, photographer and filmmaker who was the first to publicly reveal the presence of African slaves in Camden, is furthering her research with a sabbatical to Ghana and Guinea, planned for this summer. Collins-Roberts made national news in 2005 when she created and produced the "Still Standing" project, an artistic and educational tribute to her discovery that 14 slaves toiled in captivity under Camden's prominent Cooper

family in Pomona Hall, an 18th century mansion that anchored a 412 acre plantation.

In Ghana, Collins-Roberts will continue her quest to identify and gather documentation of the removal of slaves from Africa and make connections to their arrival at Cooper's Ferry (now Camden) slave port destinations.

Collins-Roberts, who traces her own roots to a Guinea prince, will spend several months there and in Ghana compiling and filming the oral histories from African elders and photographing descendants of captured slaves, ships' manifests, records of sale, and sites where unwitting Africans were kidnapped, processed, sold and shipped directly on Schooners



PHOTO COURTESY Tara Nurin Media Relations

Beverly Collins-Roberts will Document Direct Slavery Links between Camden and Africa.

to Petty's Island then auctioned in Philadelphia. When taxation on slaves in Philadelphia rose to 15%, Africans were instead sold on the Auction Block

across the Delaware River on

See **PHOTOGRAPHER,**
Page A7

County Events

May 22 - May 28, 2008

Friday, May 23, 6:30 pm

Campfire Night

Roast a hot dog for dinner and have a s'more for dessert. Reservations required by May 20.

All ages welcome. FREE

Beltsville Community Center

3900 Sellman Road, Beltsville

Information: 301-937-6613; TTY 301-445-4512

Friday, May 23, 7:30-9 pm

Family Campfire

Enjoy nature tales and roasted marshmallows around a campfire. Dress for the outdoors. Reservations required.

Ages 2 & up

Fee: Resident \$2; Non-Resident \$3

Watkins Nature Center

301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro

Information: 301-218-6702; TTY 301-699-2544

SMARTlink #112367

Friday, May 23, 8 pm

Montpelier Folk & Blues Series: Lea

This young local musician is fast developing a national reputation. Called a cross between Odetta and Joni Mitchell, Lea has a magnificent voice and powerful, insightful compositions.

All ages welcome.

Tickets: \$20/person, \$18/members & seniors

Montpelier Arts Center

9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel

Information: 301-953-1993, 410-792-0664; TTY 301-490-2329

Saturday, May 24 & Sunday, May 25, 8 am

Black-Eyed Susan Hunter Series Horse Show

Watch a regional horse show featuring children and adult riders.

FREE for spectators

Prince George's Equestrian Center

14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro

Information: 301-952-7999; TTY 301-952-7998

Saturday, May 24, 7:30 pm

Chesapeake Tide Indoor Football

See the Chesapeake Tide Indoor Football team take the floor against the Marion Mayhem. Tickets are available at the box office or through TicketMaster.

Show Place Arena

14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro

Information: 301-952-7999; TTY 301-952-7998

Sunday, May 25, 1-3 pm & 4-6 pm

Memorial Day Super Saver Ice Skating

Ice skate for a special rate on Memorial Day. Fee includes skate rental.

All ages welcome.

Fee: Resident \$4; Non-Resident \$5

Tucker Road Ice Rink

1770 Tucker Road, Fort Washington

Information: 301-265-1525; TTY 301-203-6030

Sunday, May 25, 1-3 pm & 4-6 pm

Memorial Day Bumper Cars on Ice

Celebrate Memorial Day by riding a bumper car on ice. Riders must be 5 years or older; riders 4 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Each ride is 4 to 5 minutes in length; the last ride begins 10 minutes prior to the end of the session. Rides are on a first-come, first-served basis.

Fee: Resident \$3/ride; Non-Resident \$4/ride

Tucker Road Ice Rink

1770 Tucker Road, Fort Washington

Information: 301-265-1525; TTY 301-203-6030

Monday, May 26, 12 noon-2 pm

Memorial Day Workout

If you're interested in burning off those holiday calories, then join us for an afternoon workout followed by healthy refreshments.

Ages 18 & up; FREE

Deerfield Run Community Center

13000 Laurel-Bowie Road, Laurel

Information: 301-953-7882; TTY 301-445-4512

Tuesday, May 27, 11:30 am-1 pm

A Taste of Vietnam

Sample the exquisite and tasty cuisine of Vietnam. Reservations required by May 23.

Ages 60 & up; FREE

Bladensburg Community Center

4500 57th Avenue, Bladensburg

Information: 301-277-2124; TTY 301-445-4512

The Counseling Corner

by the American Counseling Association

Be A Better Friend By Being A Better Listener

Friendships are an essential part of feeling good about yourself and enjoying positive mental health. But good friendships take time to develop and require both parties to make an effort to build a relationship.

One of the most important elements in a strong friendship is communication. That means not simply being able to talk with each other, but actually being able to "communicate" about important matters. For such communication to take place, and a friendship to grow and develop, being able to listen is a vital skill most of us need to develop better.

You can see the effect of poor listening skills just by observing how various people listen to what you have to say. You'll soon notice that some people closely pay attention to your words and communicate back that they understand what you've been saying.

On the other hand, poor listeners are often distracted, pay little attention to your words, give almost no feedback and may misinterpret what you were trying to communicate.

In most cases, you'll find it's the good listener with whom you have a better relationship. Developing your own good listener skills can help improve friendships, family communications and even work relationships. Fortunately, developing such skills isn't difficult.

One key to good listening is simply to listen more than you talk. Avoid the impulse to interrupt with your own stories and experiences. As a good listener you want to hear what the other person has to say, not to try and top his or her story with a better one of your own.

As a good listener you also want to show you've understood what's being said. If something isn't totally clear, ask for clarification. Show you're been paying attention by feeding back key parts of the conversation, then summarize what you've heard as a way of ending your conversation.

Learning to be a better listener is a key skill for building stronger relationships of every type. Do you really listen when your child has a story to tell about his or her school day? Do you pay attention when your spouse wants to summarize the day's events over dinner? Do you only half hear what a work colleague has to say?

Learning to listen well can make every relationship function better. And it can also help those closest to you learn to respect and listen to your words when you have something to share.

"The Counseling Corner" is provided as a public service by the American Counseling Association, the nation's largest organization of counseling professionals. Learn more about the counseling profession at the ACA web site, www.counseling.org.

EARTH TALK - Bottled Water Backlash

Bottled water is out, and tap water is in, says the May/June 2008 cover story of E - The Environmental Magazine (now posted at: www.emagazine.com).

Bottled Water's Days are Numbered, says leading Environmental Magazine

Call it reverse snob appeal. These days, it's the tap water enthusiasts, concerned about the environment, who get to act self-righteous. Just like it has become cool to bring your own cloth bags to the grocery store and your own mug to the coffee shop, the reusable water bottle is the hip, new eco-accessory.

In Canada, the bottled water issue has reached the level of an "uprising." College students are staging protests -? declaring "bottled-water free zones" on campus. High school activists are raising questions about why their school board members are locking them into a contract with Coke or Pepsi (makers of Aquafina and Dasani bottled water) when they have access to drinking fountains for free. Some of the students have jokingly started selling bottled air for \$1.

Perhaps Richard Girard, a corporate researcher for the Ottawa-based Polaris Institute, says it best. "This movement is gaining momentum because the general public is starting to figure out bottled water is a scam," he says.

Bottled Waste

Bottled water is also contributing to huge amounts of waste and energy consumption. It takes 15 million barrels of oil per year to make all of the plastic water bottles in America, according to the Container Recycling Institute. Sending those bottles by air and truck uses even more fossil fuel.

Once people drain the bottles, they rarely recycle them because they're often purchased at big concert venues or airports with no recycling bins. CRI says eight out of 10 water bottles end up in the landfill. The bottles that drift from landfills or end up as litter in streams are washing out to sea to form a huge raft of plastic debris in the center of the Pacific that is estimated to be twice the size of Texas.

It takes 1,000 years for plastic bottles to break down, CRI estimates. States could add deposit bills that would increase recycling efforts, but few have taken the initiative.

Don't Refill the Bottle!

Consumers aren't advised to reuse store-bought bottled water, or even plastic bottles made for refilling due to dangers of leaching chemicals. Research shows that clear bottles made of polycarbonate plastic (such as the original 32-ounce Nalgene) can leach bisphenol-A (BPA), an endocrine disrupting chemical that acts like estrogen in the body. Since BPA has been linked to low sperm counts and an increased risk of breast and prostate cancer, scientists suggest avoiding reusable bottles made from plastic. They also raise serious concerns about the potential for other plastic chemicals to leach out of typical PET bottled water bottles, especially if they sit in the hot sun.

Some of the best refillable bottle options come from the stainless guaranteed-not-to-leach SIGG bottles made in Switzerland. The trend away



PHOTO BY COURTESY EMAGAZINE

from bottled water may also boost sales of home filters. Water quality experts say most tap water is fine to drink straight from the faucet -? especially in cities like San Francisco, Seattle, New York City and Denver, where water comes from pristine mountain reservoirs.

Turning Back to Tap

It makes sense for anyone turning back to tap to become educated about the local public water supply. And since the Environmental Protection Agency requires frequent water quality reports, the data is easy to find. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) makes it easy with its Tap Water Database. You can plug in your zip code and find out whether your local water system is up to par.

Now that more people are trying kick the bottled water habit, groups like Natural Resources Defense Council

(NRDC) and EWG hope this new awareness will translate into more support for public water supplies, and for water conservation in general.

E - The Environmental Magazine distributes 50,000 copies six times per year to subscribers and bookstores. It's website, www.emagazine.com, enjoys 600,000 monthly visitors. E also publishes EarthTalk, a nationally syndicated environmental Q&A column distributed free to 1,700 newspapers, magazines and websites throughout the U.S. and Canada

(www.emagazine.com/earthtalk/thisweek).

Single copies of E's May/June 2008 issue are available for \$5 postpaid from: E Magazine, P.O. Box 50032, Boulder, CO 80322. Subscriptions are \$29.95 per year, available at the same address.

Public Service Notices

Meals On Wheels Needs Volunteer Drivers

Columbia, MD - The Howard County Meals on Wheels program, the program that delivers meals to Laurel residents who are homebound, is in need of volunteer drivers and substitute drivers on Thursdays. Drivers would pick up the meals at approximately 11:15 a.m. at the Phelps Senior Center, 701 Montgomery Street, Laurel, MD 20707. The delivery routes take approximately an hour and a half to complete. To volunteer, call Karen Saul, 410-730-9476, or e-mail howard@mowcm.org.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/ Prince George's County

Do you have desire to help abused and neglected children in our community? Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Prince George's County is recruiting volunteers to advocate for the needs of abused and neglected children living in foster care. CASA provides training and supervision to volunteers who spend about 10 hours per month getting to know a child and what is in that child's best interest. Volunteers submit reports to help the courts better understand each individual child and collaborate with family members, teachers, social workers and others to ensure that the child's needs are met. Applications for day and evening training sessions are now being accepted. For more information, please visit our website at www.pgcasa.org or call 301-209-0491.

UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation

Did you know that there are new grants available for families struggling with child health-related expenses? UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation is accepting applications for the 2008 grant program now. The grants are available to help children who need critical health care treatment, services or equipment not covered or not fully covered by their parents' health benefit plans. They include health care services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy sessions, prescriptions, and medical equipment such as wheelchairs, orthotics and eyeglasses. Parents and legal guardians may apply for grants of up to \$5,000 for child medical services. For eligibility guidelines or to apply go online to www.uhccf.org or telephone 1-800-328-5979 ext. 24459.

Protect Your Dream Workshop for County Homeowners A Success

BY PRESS INFORMATION OFFICER
Office of the County Executive

GLEN DALE, MD - The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), in conjunction with WHUR 96.3 FM Radio, hosted a "Protect your Dream Seminar" with one-on-one counseling to help homeowners in the county facing foreclosure.

Over 200 people attended the seminar held at Reid Temple AME Church where all

attendees received one-on-one counseling from the Coalition for Home Ownership Preservation in Prince George's County. The coalition includes State and local government as well as non-profit housing counseling agencies including the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; the Prince George's County DHCD; Sowing Empowerment and Economic Development (SEED); Kairos; Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP); NeighborWorks; Roots of

public to better understand New Jersey's role in American slavery and further shed light on the slave trade conducted in northern states, which until recently has been largely ignored and, in the case of Camden, intentionally kept secret for hundreds of years.

Collins-Roberts has been a fine art and documentary photographer for 29 years. Her 2005 short film, entitled "Unhushed," chronicled her

research into Camden's slave plantations and screened on PBS and in the Philadelphia International Film Festival and the Harlem Stage Film Festival in 2007.

It was co-produced as the beneficiary of Scribe Video's "Precious Places" History Project. She is the great-great granddaughter of William Still, a famous abolitionist who wrote The Underground Railroad in

1872 and for whom there is an historical marker on South 12th Street in Philadelphia. To help fund her research journey to Africa, Collins-Roberts is using a Leeway Foundation grant and hosting a private exhibition and sale of her work on May 16, 2008 at the Walt Whitman Arts Center in Camden.

For more information or to purchase artwork online, visit www.bevcr.com

These agencies can be found on Maryland Department of Housing's website at www.mdhousing.org or the HUD website at www.hud.gov. The event also focused on prioritizing your debts, and being aware of predatory lending schemes.

Foreclosure Workshops are held every Thursday at 7 p.m. at various locations throughout the County. For more information please contact the Prince George's County Home Center at 301-883-HOME (4663).

Photographer from A6

the shores of what was then called West Jersey.

Upon her return, Collins-Roberts will complete "The History of African Americans from Slavery to Now," her multi-media exhibition that will include the images and stories of her findings in West Africa. The exhibition will travel the country to help scholars, historians, artists and the general

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NEWSUSA

From household cleaning products made with plant-derived formulas to beauty products with natural ingredients, today many shoppers are choosing products that harness the power of nature. Skin care companies are significant contributors to the surge of natural ingredients in consumer products due to the increasing evidence of their skin benefits. But are these products with natural ingredients just a trend, or do they really offer extra benefits?
 Dermatologist Dr. Marta Rendon finds that natural, active ingredients are especially beneficial when it comes to skin care for cleansing, toning, moisturizing, anti-aging and sun protection.
 So, what kinds of natural ingredients are being used in skin care lines, and which ones have proven results?
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