

# The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Since 1932

Vol. 83, No. 24 June 11 — June 17, 2015

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents

## PG County Council Adopts \$2.95 Billion FY 2016 Budget

Council Makes 70% Reduction in 15.6% Tax Increase Proposal

By PRESS OFFICER  
PG County Council

The Prince George's County Council adopted a \$2.95 billion balanced County Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 during session on Thursday, May 28, 2015. The budget becomes effective with the new Fiscal Year which begins July 1, 2015.

Prince George's County Council Chairman Mel Franklin (D) — District 9, during remarks immediately following the budget adoption, noted the challenges of a difficult budget season and thanked residents for their active participation in the budget process.

"This has certainly been a trying budget season, perhaps one of the most challenging in our County's history. Consistent throughout our budget debates, however, has been a strong and passionate commitment to the future and promise of Prince George's County. The active participation of our residents in the Council's budget process has been a critical factor in our decision-making, and represents a tremendous source of pride for our County. This Council works for you, and we have been mindful about the sensitivity and passionate views surrounding this year's

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CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY JAMES LEVIN

Greg Abbe, an Elysian Energy auditor, inspects a water heater at an Olney home on April 3, 2015. Elysian Energy is one of many contractors connected to the EmPOWER Maryland Program that aims to reduce energy consumption statewide.

## EmPOWER Maryland: Enlightening Users to Reduce Electricity

By KATELYN NEWMAN  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS—It is 8 a.m. on a Friday, and Elysian Energy auditor Greg Abbe steps out of his car into the drizzling April rain in a quiet neighborhood in Olney.

He waits at the door of a single-family home, the first of five on his schedule that day, to conduct a free, 90-minute efficient energy checkup for a Maryland homeowner.

Abbe, 29, is one of many energy auditors contracted to the five largest utility companies across the state, which are enrolled in the EmPOWER Maryland Program.

Baltimore Gas and Electric, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Delmarva Power, Potomac Edison and Pepco all work to fulfill the 2008 EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act's goal to become more energy efficient and decrease electricity demand statewide by 15 percent by 2015.

As of 2014, these electric utilities had reached more than 80 percent of this goal, with about a 12 percent reduction, according to the Maryland Public Service Commission. Maryland ranks ninth in the country in its progress toward state energy efficiency policies and programs, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

Abbe's trip to Olney was a subset to the EmPOWER Maryland Program known as a free

Quick Home Energy Checkup. The service entails a walk-through of a residential home during which an auditor identifies potential areas where the homeowner is losing heat and energy, the usual culprits for higher electricity bills, Abbe said.

The audit also includes the installation of a number of energy-saving items like pipe insulation, low-flow showerheads,

See EMPOWER Page A5

## Correction

Please excuse our error from last week's front page photo caption. Correct caption is below.



PHOTO COURTESY THE SENATORS OFFICE

Tuskegee Airman and World War II veteran William A. Colbert Jr. was bestowed with the Congressional Medal of Honor on Friday by U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin at the Allegany County Nursing Home.

## Middle College Students Overcome Challenges, Uncertainties and Fear to Create Their Future and Make History in the State of Maryland

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCC

The number of students on track to graduate from high school over the next few years is at an all-time high, according to U.S. News & World Report, however, the disparities in educational advancement among minority students is holding steady—specifically in the African American community.

The statistics illustrating the high dropout rates, low standardized test scores, and lack of attendance for children representing black households are staggering. Kids from more urbanized areas represent the largest populations, even though suburban and rural families face significant challenges as well. From a political standpoint, it is a nationwide problem that has been a platform talking point for politicians since the 80s. If numbers in a database were the only measuring stick available to gauge the ability, potential, and intelligence of kids that fall under the minority category, this

country would be in a very bad state. Fortunately, a group of Maryland educators and administrators decided to find solutions to this growing epidemic instead of standing still and silent in the problem. The group's ambitious vision to create an extraordinary learning environment began the process, and their meticulous planning, lobbying, and unrelenting desire to provide a once-in-a-lifetime educational opportunity to the children of Prince George's County would soon pay off.

In 2011, the Academy of Health Sciences (AHS) at Prince George's Community College (PGCC) opened the doors to Middle College High School. Located just minutes outside the District of Columbia at PGCC's Largo, Maryland campus, the progressive high school program each year selects a specific number of boys and girls who are entering the 9th grade. This elite group traverses the program for four years taking accelerated high school courses that quickly transition



PHOTO COURTESY PGCC

Middle College graduates: (l-r) Alex Saviet, Amanada Endres, Dang "Oswald" Truong, and Damari DeLaine

into a college-level health and sciences curriculum. The result? Upon completion of the program, each student graduates with a high school diploma and an Associate's degree.

By way of a sophisticated assessment and scoring system, candidates are chosen and those students granted admission to the program enter into an academic experience that one could only compare to Space Mountain

in Disney World. The curricula is fast-paced, challenging and even intimidating at times—just like Space Mountain. There are ups and downs, twists and turns, and even a few jolts of surprise along the way—just like Space Mountain. The process is exhilarating, scary, and exciting...it takes

See COLLEGE Page A3

## Cassandra Clayborne Selected to Capital One Academic All-District ® Softball Team

By PRESS OFFICER  
Bowies State

BOWIE, Md. - The 2014-15 Capital One Academic All-District ® Softball Teams, selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America, have been released to recognize the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances athletically and in the classroom. For the second time in her Bowie State career, senior Cassandra Clayborne (Damascus, Md.) is a member of the District 2 Team First Team. District 2 consists of schools in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) and Mountain East Conference (MAC). This is the fourth year of the expanded Academic All-America® program as CoSIDA moved from recognizing a University Division (Division I) and a College Division (all non-Division I) and has doubled the number of scholar-athletes honored. The expanded teams include NCAA Division I, NCAA Division II and NCAA Division III participants, while the College



PHOTO COURTESY BOWIE STATE

Cassandra Clayborne

Division Academic All-America® Team combines NAIA, Canadian and two-year schools.

The Capital One Division II and III Academic All-America® program is being financially supported by the NCAA Division II and III national governance structures, to assist CoSIDA with handling the awards fulfillment aspects for the 2014-15 DII and DIII Academic All-America® teams program.

First-team Academic All-District ® honorees advance to the

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## INSIDE

### PG County Library Offers 'Action-Packed Summer Reading Program'

As part of the program, summer events at the library will include superhero crafts, ice cream socials, superhero movie screenings and story times, costume workshops, music and sing-along events, and science, magic and animal shows.

Community, Page A3

### Overmedicating Children in Foster Care

There's evidence some children in foster care are subjected to powerful medications at very young ages and/or in combinations and amounts that are unsafe for children of any age. Many psychotropic medications are not approved for use in children at all.

Commentary, Page A4

### Maryland Launches Online Weights & Measures Device Registration Service for Businesses

Device registrations are now processed more quickly for businesses and the department benefits from more efficient processing and cost savings with this new electronic process.

Business, Page A5

### Movie Review: "Poltergeist"

Legendary filmmaker Sam Raimi and director Gil Kenan contemporize the classic tale about a family whose suburban home is haunted by evil forces. When the terrifying apparitions escalate their attacks and hold the youngest daughter captive, the family must come together to rescue her before she disappears forever.

Out on the Town, Page A6

### Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

What resources are out there for helping teachers integrate sustainability topics into their curricula?

—Melinda Zullo,  
Toronto, ON

Features, Page A7



# Towns and NEIGHBORS

## In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

### Your input needed: Public transit south—Light rail or bus?

The Maryland Transit Administration is holding a series of meetings June 11, 16 and 18, regarding the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit Study, an 18.7-mile route along the MD 5/US 301 corridor between the Branch Avenue Metro station and the Waldorf/White Plains area of Charles County.

The study is to determine where the route should be constructed—with special consideration given to crossing the Beltway—and station locations. And should it be light rail or bus?

The meetings will be at the following locations: Thursday, June 11, Waldorf Jaycees Community Center, 3090 Crain Highway; Tuesday, June 16, Crossland High School, 6901 Temple Hill Road; and Thursday, June 18, Surrattsville High School, 6101 Garden Drive, in Clinton.

There'll be short presentations at 6 and 7 p.m., but you can stop by anytime between 5:30 and 8 p.m. The staff will be available to answer questions.

If you can't attend but would like to provide input, you can email your comments to [smrt@mta.maryland.gov](mailto:smrt@mta.maryland.gov) or visit <http://mta.maryland.gov/smrt>, by July 17. You can also mail your comments to: Southern Maryland Rapid Transit Study, Maryland Transit Administration, Project Manager, Project Development; 6 Saint Paul Street, 9th floor, Baltimore, MD 21202.

### Neighbors

Jean Nichols and her brother Steve Colandrea were both in town last week for the annual Morningside Day event at Patterson Park on May 30. They report that about 150 turned out, including lots of children, and a few deer. There was something for everyone—kickball, softball, water balloons, dirt bikes, motorcycles, a DJ, dancing, hugging and lots of picture-taking. Mike Watson is the guy who organizes this every year.

Yvonne Garvin, of Skyline, attended her 60th reunion of Dilard High School, in Goldsboro, N.C. She saw classmates she hadn't seen in 60 years, and she got to ride the float.

"Just Us: Horror in a Small Maryland Town" is the title of John Guerra's new novel. John is a 1976 Frederick Douglass High School grad and he has chosen to make the Upper Marlboro area the setting for his book. It's available at the Upper Marlboro and Oxon Hill libraries and on Amazon.

County Executive Baker delivered remarks at Panorama Elementary's Inaugural Beautification Day on May 28 in Temple Hills.

Kelvin Bennett, of Skyline, is a junior at Montgomery College, majoring in special ed.

My grandson Sam Mudd graduated May 20 from St. Vincent Pallotti High School in Laurel. He's spending the summer life-guarding and in the fall will attend Salisbury University.

Please email me ([mudmm@aol.com](mailto:mudmm@aol.com)) with news about your 2015 graduate.

### Morningside VFD is busy

Check the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department's website ([www.morningside-vfd27.com/news](http://www.morningside-vfd27.com/news)) for details on some of their recent runs, including a housefire on Diana Road; two accidents, only hours apart, near Allentown Road "with ejection"; and a major rollover on Suitland Parkway near Silver Hill Road that ejected three and trapped two.

### Suitland home is 1st Net Zero Energy House

A 100-year-old house at 3413 Glenn Drive in Suitland has been renovated for the ultimate in energy efficiency. It produces annually as much energy as it consumes in a year, minimizing the utility bill to virtually zero and has been selected as a 2015 Green Build Offsite Educational Tour Site. There will be tours of it, and other houses, on June 13. To find out more, contact Patricia Omondi, Senior Construction Advisor/Special Projects Administrator for the Redevelopment Authority at: [paomondi@co.pg.md.us](mailto:paomondi@co.pg.md.us) or 301-883-5300.

### May they rest in peace

John "Paul" Sexton, 88, of Annapolis, formerly of District Heights, died May 25. He was

born in Washington to Francis and Mary Pauline Sexton, graduated from Anacostia High, attended the University of Maryland and served aboard a Navy minesweeper in the Pacific during WWII. He retired as Chief Engineer after a 40-year membership in the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 99. When his sons were young, he was a CYO football coach for Mount Calvary School and was affectionately known as "Coach" thereafter. He was also a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Crofton from which he was buried. On June 26, 2014, Paul and his wife Dody celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. She survives him. He was the father of Kathy, John, Mark and Richard; brother of Gregory, Joan and the late Mary Frances; and grandfather of nine.

Victor Earl "Buddy" Talbert, 87, of Waldorf, former chief of the Boulevard Heights Volunteer Fire Department, died May 23 at home. He was born, also at home, in Bradbury Heights to the late Victor and Dorothy Talbert. He served with the Navy in the Pacific during WWII and worked 40 years as supervisor with Peppo. In addition to his years with the Boulevard Heights VFD, he was a member of Camp Springs Masonic Lodge # 227 and an ordained Baptist Deacon. Survivors include his wife of 67 years, Martha Jean Talbert; children, Vickie Tierney and James C. Talbert; three grandsons; and siblings Shirley Sindelar and Raymond Talbert.

### Milestones

Happy birthday to Keenus Clark and Shirley Proffit, June 12; Aimee Crawford, Joel McCune and Cameron Nichols, June 13; Rep. Steny Hoyer, June 14; Kara Dameron, Dot Pfeil and June Zaccagnino, June 15; Helen Padgett and Lucia Scott, June 16; and Bill Kimbles, June 18.

Happy anniversary to Steve and Cornelia Blankenship, their 10th on June 18; Kathy and Bob Elborne, their 44th on June 12; Jill and Ken Kimmel, their 17th on June 15; and especially to Ange and Marlyn Meoli, who'll be married 53 years on June 16.

## Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

### HEART SEMINAR

There will be an informative, interactive seminar entitled, "Everything You Wanted to Know about Heart Disease". Come and join Mun K. Hong, MD, FACC Chairman, Department of Cardiology MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center on Tuesday, June 16, 2015. The Seminar will be from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM at the Surratts-Clinton Branch Public Library. The address is 9400 Piscataway Road Clinton, Maryland. Admission is free, but you must reserve a seat in advance by calling 1-866-724-2099.

### LEGENDS OF SOUL

Join us Saturday August 1, 2015 to hear Legends of Soul featuring Millie Jackson, Latimore and Clarence Carter in Concert 6:00 PM at Show Place Arena. The address is 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Call 301-952-7900 for ticket information...

### MACARONI KID

Parents there is a website and free weekly e-newsletter of local events for kids. Subscribe on line today and visit [www.BrandywineMacaronikid.com](http://www.BrandywineMacaronikid.com).

### CARNIVAL

Nottingham Myers UMC will be hosting their First Carnival August 22, 2015 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. We invite our Church Family, friends and the community to join us. More information to follow at a later date.

### HUNTINGTON

Huntington is your tutoring and solution because they can help no matter what subject your child struggles with in school. Huntington highly trained tutors work individually with students. Their programs are tailored to address each student's needs. Huntington helps improve grades, skills and confidence. Their programs are tailored to address each student's needs. Call 301-705-7100 or visit [www.HuntingtonHelps.com](http://www.HuntingtonHelps.com).

### RAGTIME (THE MUSICAL)

Come and spend a day with us enjoying "RAGTIME THE MUSICAL" at Toby's Dinner Theatre Columbia, Maryland. The trip includes: Transportation; ticket to see the play

"Ragtime the Musical" and a buffet served lunch on November 11, 2015. Showtime is 12:30 PM.

Departure: Clinton Park & Ride Clinton, Maryland at 9:00 AM. Deposit: \$25.00 first payment due July 12, 2015 and \$55.00 final payment due October 9, 2015. There is no refund on deposit. Send payments to Phyllis Slater "Fly Under My Wings" PO Box 541 White Plains, Maryland 20695. For more information visit [Flyundermywings@yahoo.com](mailto:Flyundermywings@yahoo.com) or call Phyllis Slater (301) 653-7345 or Deborah Proctor (301) 275-2544.

### PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A reminder to everyone that Monday June 22 is a two hour early dismissal day. Tuesday June 23 the last day for students is a two hour early dismissal day. Fourth quarter report cards will be released Wednesday July 1.

### 2015 GRADUATES

Congratulations to all of the 2015 Graduates. Good luck in your future endeavors.

## Neighborhood Events

### Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards Introduces Dropout Prevention Bill

Washington, D.C. — Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-4) today reintroduced her Broadening Opportunities Through Education Act, which provides resources to states which raise the age of compulsory school attendance through age 17.

"Education is the key to building a workforce prepared to meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century global economy," Edwards said. "However, every year more than 1.2 million students drop out of high schools across the United States. Students who drop out of high school not only reduce their opportunity to learn, but also tend to earn less over the course of their life and are often less prepared to compete in the workforce.

"Additionally, reducing the high school dropout rate could provide a significant boost to the economy. A study from Columbia University estimates that the net economic benefit per student graduating high school is approximately \$127,000. As Congress continues to work on strategies to grow our economy, we cannot forget that our greatest asset is the knowledge base of our workforce."

The Broadening Opportunities Through Education Act provides funding for resources such as establishing or expanding work-based programs that integrate academic and career-based skills through career and technical training; school-registered apprenticeship programs; implementing early-warning indicator systems to help middle and high schools to identify struggling students and create a system of evidence-based interventions; providing extended learning opportunities to increase the amount of time for instruction in academic subjects; and increasing support for students through student advisories, school counseling opportunities, and one-to-one mentoring.

The bill was introduced with the following original cosponsors: Reps. Delaney, Holmes Norton, Langevin, McNeer, Rangel, and Vargas.

The bill has received support from education organizations, including the National Education Association and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

### Edwards Statement on Obama Administration's Decision to Implement Community Policing Safeguards

Washington, D.C. — Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-4) released the below statement today following President Obama's announcement to ban federal transfers of certain types of military-style gear to local police departments.

"As a co-sponsor of the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act, I applaud the President for taking the appropriate steps to enhance accountability, increase transparency, and ultimately create better, innovative ways to serve the needs of law enforcement and our communities," Edwards said. "We must strike the appropriate balance between protecting those officers who



Congresswoman  
Donna F. Edwards

put their lives on the line and ensuring those communities trust them.

"Last June, I was only one of 62 House members (43 Democrats) to support an amendment that would have prevented the Department of Defense from distributing heavy weapons and vehicles to local police forces. While I applaud the efforts and courage our police departments continue to show each and every day, I feel that militarizing them will not solve the unrest that continues among our communities. I thank the President for leading on this ongoing issue of building strong relationships between law enforcement officers and those who they serve and protect."

### Thompson Windows and Gutters Installed on Local Homes Built for Disabled Veterans

*Local Window Replacement Company donating windows and gutters to houses built by Homes for Our Troops*

Thompson Creek Window Company is proud to announce its partnership with Homes for Our Troops, a privately funded nonprofit organization that builds specially-adapted, mortgage-free homes nationwide for the most severely injured Veterans Post-9/11, to enable them to rebuild their lives.

As a Regional Partner for Homes for Our Troops, Thompson Creek is currently volunteering, donating, and installing windows and gutters on brand new homes for Army Sergeant Steven Curry in Nokesville, VA, and Marine Corporal Marcus Dandrea in Haymarket, VA. These homes are being built to restore some of the freedom and independence Sergeant Curry and Corporal Dandrea sacrificed while defending our country and enable them to focus on their families and recovery.

Since its inception in 2004, nearly 90 percent of donations to Homes for Our Troops have gone directly to supporting Veterans. Despite their life-altering injuries, many of these heroes have embarked on new careers, completed their college degrees, or started families. Empowered by the freedom a mortgage-free and specially-adapted home brings, these Veterans can now focus on their recovery and returning to their life's work of serving others.

"It is truly a humbling experience to be a part of rebuilding the lives of these brave service men", said Thompson Creek CEO Rick Wuest. "Our partnership with Homes for Our Troops is our opportunity to help Veterans Sergeant Steven Curry and Corporal Dandrea

restore the freedom and independence they sacrificed defending ours."

During the month of May, in honor of Military Appreciation Month, Thompson Creek will also be donating a \$25 for every window purchased up to \$10,000 to Homes for Our Troops.

### College Park-Riverdale Park Transit District Development Plan and Zoning District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment is Approved

(Upper Marlboro, MD)-- The College Park-Riverdale Park Transit District Development Plan and its associated Transit District Overlay Zoning Map Amendment (TDOZMA) was recently reviewed by the Prince George's County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and transmitted with comments to the Prince George's County Council. The County Council, sitting as the District Council for the Maryland-Washington Regional District, approved the transit district development plan and TDOZMA on March 17, 2015 by Resolution No. CR-7-2015.

Building on the community's desires and the recommendations set forth in Plan Prince George's 2035, the approved plan lays the groundwork for a modern transit-oriented development district. It features amenities that will allow for more mobility including improved roadways and walkways for better connectivity, recommendations for growing a healthier community including recreational and biking facilities, and standards for preserving the community's neighborhoods and the natural environment. The approved plan also prepares the community for two new Purple Line stations and recommends mixed-use development while encouraging future residential growth.

This approved transit district development plan covers the area bounded by the College Park Airport to the north; the Metrorail / MARC / CSX tracks to the west; the residential portion of the Town of Riverdale Park to the south; and the Northeast Branch Stream Valley Park to the east. It replaces the 1997 Transit District Development Plan for the College Park-Riverdale Transit District Overlay Zone and portions of the 1989 Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt Master Plan and 1990 Sectional Map Amendment for Planning Areas 65, 66, and 67; and portions of the 1994 Planning Area 68 Master Plan and Sectional Map Amendment.

The approved transit district development plan and TDOZMA, when published, will be available for a fee from the M-NCPPC Planning Information Services counter located on the Lower Level of the County Administration Building, Upper Marlboro, Maryland, 301-952-3208. Until then, copies of the Adopted College Park-Riverdale Park Transit District Development Plan, the endorsed TDOZMA, and the Council resolution of approval are available free of charge at the same location.



# COMMUNITY

## Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

### Planning a Wedding on a Budget

Should a dream wedding mean delaying a down payment on a home? That's a tradeoff many couples make these days.

The Knot, a wedding planning and publishing company, recently released its Real Weddings Study (<http://www.xogroupinc.com/press-releases-home/2015-press-releases/2015-03-12-the-knot-2014-real-weddings-study.aspx>) of average wedding costs for 2014, announcing a national average price tag of \$31,213 (not including the honeymoon).

The average cost of a wedding is a good point of comparison against other major financial goals in a new marriage. Considering that the average price of a new home in America is now \$200,000, that wedding estimate would cover the majority of a 20 percent down payment (\$40,000). Despite getting married to my wife at family home 15 years ago, I still remember the sticker shock for all the wedding costs — a whopping \$10,000 for the entire event from tux, dress, flowers, food and honeymoon.

Here are a few suggestions to plan a wedding that won't break the bank:

**Marry off-season.** The most popular wedding months are now June and October, with longtime leader June losing a bit of ground. The most popular day to get married is Saturday and nighttime is the most competitive time slot for receptions. Consider a January wedding when the post-holiday rush is over — cold weather wedding venues are generally empty and priced to move. Weekday weddings have the potential added bonus of guests drinking less on a work night and weekend brunch weddings can be served buffet-style with more reasonably priced menu choices.

**Find alternative venues.** Farms, barns, warehouses, art galleries and of course, family property can be cheaper venues for a wedding, but make sure such spaces are properly insured for alcohol, food or other party-related risks. Also, in many communities, party venues must be properly licensed and/or zoned to avoid fines or legal action.

**DIY if possible.** Couples with a flair for party planning, decorating and cooking might be able to slash costs planning and executing their own event with minimal dependence on hired or volunteer help. From flowers to photography, wedding cake to wedding planners, check for affordable options. If a venue allows couples to supply their own flowers and decorations, it is wise to comparison shop. Consider professional photographers or skilled amateurs who meet your tastes and budget.

**Use a gift registry to pay for the wedding.** Couples can set up online gift registries that allow guests to directly fund honeymoon trips or specific expenses associated with the wedding.

**Plan a destination wedding.** Resorts around the world and well-known domestic wedding/travel destinations like Las Vegas or Hawaii offer wedding packages that blend a ceremony and vacation getaway. Planning a winter wedding? Research options for a warmer climate or snowy destination at a ski resort.

**Finally, be flexible.** Some venues have cancellations and if a couple is willing to put themselves on a waiting list and move quickly if they get the call, savings might be possible.

Before the planning a wedding, it's wise to start with planning finances. A meeting with a qualified financial advisor might help put wedding costs in perspective with other major financial priorities.

Bottom line: Dream weddings don't have to put a couple's financial life on hold. Consider real financial priorities first and build a smart wedding budget from there.



## PG County Library Offers 'Action-Packed Summer Reading Program'

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCCPS

HYATTSVILLE, Md.— Prince George's County Memorial Library System will launch "Every Hero Has a Story," the library system's superhero-themed summer reading program May 15 through Aug. 15. The program offers activities throughout the summer for preschool, elementary, middle and high school students.

"As superhero movies continue to captivate audiences this summer, we at the library are offering our own take on superheroes through our action-packed summer reading program," said Kathleen

Teaze, CEO of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. "And it couldn't come at a better time."

"Research shows summer breaks cause the average student to lose up to one month of instruction, referred to as the 'summer slide,' but increased summer reading reduces summer learning loss. A key step to stopping summer slide is the development of high-quality reading programs such as ours to help children learn, grow and develop," she said.

In order to participate, students can visit Prince George's County library branches to register and receive game boards. The game boards, designed for

different age groups, guide students through summer reading activities, such as reading and writing book reviews, holding guided conversations and attending library events, for a chance to win prizes.

As part of the program, summer events at the library will include superhero crafts, ice cream socials, superhero movie screenings and story times, costume workshops, music and sing-along events, and science, magic and animal shows. Each library branch will hold events listed on [www.pgcmcls.info/SummerAtYourLibrary](http://www.pgcmcls.info/SummerAtYourLibrary).

"Every Hero Has a Story" registration opened May 15 online and at all library branches.

Prince George's County Memorial Library System provides materials and information for study and personal enrichment, offering strategies for lifelong learning through access to varied media and professional guidance. The library system consists of branches in 19 communities including Accokeek, Baden, Beltsville, Bladensburg, Bowie, Fairmount Heights, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hillcrest Heights, Hyattsville, Largo-Kettering, Laurel, Mount Rainier, New Carrollton, Oxon Hill, South Bowie, Spauldings, Surratts-Clinton and Upper Marlboro. ([www.pgcmcls.info](http://www.pgcmcls.info))

## Maryland's State Assessment Program to be Streamlined

### PARCC to be Shorter, Use Single Testing Window

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCCPS

BALTIMORE (May 21, 2015) — Maryland students in grades 3-8 and high school will spend less time taking State assessments next year as a result of changes approved unanimously by the multi-state consortium governing the tests.

The Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) yesterday voted to consolidate the PARCC assessment's two test-

ing windows into one and cut total test time by about 90 minutes overall beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The changes were made in response to feedback from parents, students, and educators during the first year of testing and a careful review of test design.

"Next year's PARCC tests will take less time away from lessons, and cause less disruption to school schedules, while still keeping students on track for college and careers," said State Superintendent of School

Lillian M. Lowery. "These changes will help us focus on what's most important—ensuring that students are learning to think critically and master the skills they will need to graduate, ready for success."

The revisions to PARCC will:

① Combine the two English language arts and two math testing window to one 30-day window near the end of the semester or the school year.

② Reduce the number of test units that students will take

from 8 or 9, depending upon the grade level, to 7 or 6.

③ Cut the testing time for students by about 90 minutes overall depending on content and grade level.

The first full year of PARCC implementation in Maryland has gone smoothly for the most part, with more than 1.3 million tests administered and completed. The new assessments, aligned to Maryland's College and Career Ready Standards, replaced the Maryland School Assessment tests this year.

### College from A1

your breath away but leaves you with lifelong memories—JUST LIKE SPACE MOUNTAIN! Google Space Mountain if you don't believe me.

The Academy of Health Sciences Middle College program was designed to enhance the lives of its students by providing an educational environment with superior learning outcomes. Mission accomplished, but if you ask the principal, instructors and staff, they'll most likely tell you their lives have been changed by these amazing children. Ethnicity, socio-economic status, or most followers on Twitter are of no consequence in the selection process. The student body is extremely diverse and full of nervous kids who aren't exactly sure what they signed up for that first day...but in an instant, they know there is no place they'd rather be.

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of hanging out with four of the 92 kids that are now the Senior Class from the Academy of Health Sciences. And in just over a week, they will be THE FIRST graduating class from AHS Middle College High School at PGCC. Kind of a big deal? The BIGGEST! What the administrators, faculty, staff, Principal Dr. Kathy Richard-Andrews, and Dr. Charlene Dukes, president of Prince George's Community College accomplished in four years is unprecedented. Under their guidance, leadership, planning and structure, 100% of the senior class will graduate with their high school diploma, 100% of the senior class has been accepted to a four-year institution, merit-based scholarships in excess of 6 million dollars have been offered, and 90 out of 92 students will graduate with their Associate's degree. Maryland history... made!

When I reached the classroom assigned to me for the interviews, I was nervous. All of sudden it was 1990 and I was

back at Neshaminy High School. The energy pulsating through the halls was electrifying and the spirit of the school hit me like a brick. The vibe was upbeat, kids were chatting and darting in and out of rooms, and their sense of urgency to be "somewhere" was evident. The vibe screamed, "Yeah...we rock!", but it was totally unspoken. I knew though.

So I finally sat down at a huge table with Amanda Endres, Alex Saviet, Dang "Oswald" Truong, and Damari DeLaine. All of sudden I felt the need to sound smart. After all, I'm supposed to be a professional, the grown-up lady there to ask them all the questions and calm their nerves. Well, I had no real plan of how the interview was to go, but I did know that playing the role of "reporter" wasn't going to work. These kids are too cool and keen for that. So I decided to just talk to them—transparently and sincerely. I haven't been the same since.

Amanda, 18, can be really quiet, but that's only because she's constantly taking everything in—reflecting and focusing. It's still a little difficult for me to write this article with her in mind because she has overcome the most, physically speaking. She is what you call the epitome of strength because in spite of being diagnosed with Leukemia and having a bone marrow transplant in February 2014, Amanda took summer classes, studied in her hospital bed, and utilized every fiber of her being to stay on track, academically, while fighting a life-threatening disease. She will be walking, proudly, with her peers on May 21, with dreams of being a nurse. I asked her why nursing (as if I didn't know the answer) and she responded in a way that only she could, "I want to help people the same way my nurses took care of me," she said. "Their kindness and encouragement contributed to my healing, and I want to be just like them."

Amanda is from Laurel, MD, likes soccer and country mu-



PHOTO COURTESY PGCC  
Prince George's County Executive, Rushern Baker, Prof. Apollo Cordon, and Former MD. Governor O'Malley

sic—especially Carrie Underwood and Luke Bryan—and plans to attend Stephenson College in the fall.

I ended up sitting next to Alex, 18, during our talk and I immediately felt his larger-than-life presence. By the end of our conversation, he was hugging me as I tried desperately to pull my emotional self together. These kids have that kind of effect on you.

The EMT trainee, super-athlete and soccer coach from Cheverly is a true adrenaline junky. Perhaps that's why he plans to return to PGCC after graduation to obtain his Paramedic license. But there's much more to Alex than his tall, slim frame and kind eyes. He's a kid who has an inherent compassion for people and a sincere desire to help others; his way of deflecting the hurt and disappointments he has felt by being in foster care for a large part of his life. Alex is thoughtful in how he speaks, but is not shy when sharing his story of living in multiple homes and almost sent to another state.

"Things were really hard at the home I was living in, and they were preparing to send me away," said Alex. "I called Dr. Andrews and told her what was happening because I knew I was supposed to be here. She made a phone call and told me that I was staying. She's more than a prin-

icipal...she's always there when we need her in life," he said.

Alex has connected to his Latin roots and has a relationship with his biological sister in Puerto Rico, where he proudly embraces his culture and its music.

Sometimes fear can appear so real and intimidating that it stunts our growth—emotionally and mentally. Oswald understands those feelings better than most and for a while he felt really bad about himself. Thankfully, this super-smart guy realized that overcoming adversity means facing it...head on. That's exactly what he did and this soon-to-be-doctor is shining brighter than ever.

Oswald, 18, emigrated just six short years ago from Vietnam with his family. Imagine being a kid, in a new country, at a brand new school...and...you don't speak English. Oswald recalls it being extremely difficult just trying to understand basic conversations among classmates and the teacher. His confidence was deflated and he "felt stupid". When he was home in the comfort of his family, things weren't much better. He shared that many times he would sit around with his father and brother and they would excitedly talk about technology, current events, news—important things. Oswald never felt smart

### Clayborne from A1

Capital One Academic All-America® Team ballot, where first-, second- and third-team All-America honorees will be selected later this month.

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# COMMENTARY

## Cong. Steny H. Hoyer House Democratic Minority Whip



### Hoyer: Congress Needs to Pass a Long-Term Infrastructure Bill To Invest in America

"Mr. Speaker, let me thank Mr. [Pete] DeFazio for yielding and for the work that he does on this Committee. Let me also say to the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. [Bill] Shuster, how pleased I am at the kind of work that he does on the Committee. Very frankly, Mr. Shuster is committed to getting things done and to working in a bipartisan fashion, and that's good for this House, and it's good for his state, and it's good for the country. I thank him for his leadership.

"I rise in support of this sixty-day extension, because it's essential that we do this. The consequences of not doing it would be very, very negative. But I also rise to lament the fact that we have gone ten months knowing full well that this date was upon us and that, theoretically we thought, that funding as well as authorization would end on the 31st of this month. We have now found that funding will not end. This bill is necessary to authorize, not to fund, because funding is available for the next sixty days from [May] 31st.

"But I also rise to urge this House under the leadership of Mr. Shuster and Mr. DeFazio to do the work we were sent here to do: to invest in

America; to invest in the growth of our economy; to invest in the creation of jobs. To do, in fact, what the board of directors of the greatest country on the face of this Earth ought to have done many years — and certainly months — ago.

"I am absolutely convinced that this House has the capacity, the intellect, and the ability to, in sixty days from now or within sixty days, come to this Floor with a bill that will invest in our infrastructure and provide sufficient funds to make America competitive and to pay for it. Not to pass the expense along to future generations — my children, my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren. They are going to have to buy for themselves the infrastructure of their generation, and they ought not to have to pay the bills of our generation. It is a moral responsibility that this generation pay for the investments that it needs to make in the infrastructure that will be used today and tomorrow.

"Mr. Shuster, I know, wants to do that. Mr. Shuster and Mr. DeFazio have the courage to do that. The issue is going to be whether this body and both sides of the aisle come forward with a responsible, paid-for infrastructure bill, particularly for highways and roads and bridges but other investment as well.

"I want to tell Mr. Shuster and Mr. DeFazio that I will work closely with you. That I will urge the Members on my side of the aisle to work closely, Mr. Shuster, with the Members on your side of the aisle, to effect this end. But let us not pretend that we can extend until December 31 on July 30, or to a year from then. Let us commit ourselves today to using the next sixty — actually seventy days, approximately — to come up with a paid-for, six-year reauthorization that will make America stronger, grow our economy, and be a pride of the American people whom we serve."



PHOTO COURTESY THE OFFICE OF STENY HOYER

## Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



### Education Reform: The Equity and Excellence Project

"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest."

— Benjamin Franklin

All across the country, people are gathering to observe an annual academic rite of passage: graduation. In a scene that will be played out countless times during this season of celebration, family and friends will dutifully take their seats in auditoriums and open fields around the nation and proudly look on as their loved ones walk across stages to receive their diplomas or degrees and, finally, turn the tassel on their graduation caps.

This tradition holds much more significance than its primary function as the formal recognition of a student's academic achievement. It is also firmly rooted in our American belief that education—particularly higher education—is the key to greater opportunity and the chance to live the American dream.

The era when a high school diploma was enough to climb the ladder into America's middle class is long gone. In today's increasingly high-tech society, it is a college education, or degree, that has become the minimum requirement for that climb up our nation's social and economic opportunity ladders. Access to college, therefore, cannot remain a privilege afforded to a few when it has become a prerequisite to achieve greater success by the many.

In recognition of this enduring state of academic affairs, the National Urban League is spearheading the "Equity and Excellence Project." The project—which has six areas of academic focus tightly related to our organization's mission, including common core standards and improved access to high-quality curricula and effective teachers—has also made college attainment, and most importantly, completion one of its priorities.

The higher education initiative of the "Equity and Excellence" project is currently being run at three National Urban League affiliates: The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, The Urban League of Springfield and the Urban League of

Lexington-Fayette County. In those communities, communities that mirror so many Black and Brown communities in our country, national and local advocacy and engagement efforts are underway to ensure that more of our young people go to college.

Right now, there is much to celebrate in our country when it comes to academic achievement in African-American and Latino communities. Today, we enjoy the highest high school graduation rates in history. More students of color are in college and dropout rates are at historic lows. But more work lies ahead. Despite the fact that more Blacks and Hispanics are getting a college education than ever before, there is a gap in postsecondary attainment. In 2013, about 15 percent of Hispanics had a bachelor's degree or higher, degree attainment was at 20 percent for African Americans and 40 percent for whites, according to recent Pew Research Center analysis.

When a young man or woman is denied access to opportunity through education, we all lose. That potential graduate loses a well-known and well-worn path to individual success. College Board research demonstrated that people with bachelor degrees earned over \$21,000 more than high school graduates. People with some college and no postsecondary degree earned 14 percent more than high school graduates who worked full time. When young people are not obtaining postsecondary degrees, our nation suffers from the loss of their talent, their increased tax revenues, their civic engagement and more.

As was often quoted by President John F. Kennedy, "a rising tide lifts all boats." We need to rethink our funding of grants, we need to take a serious look at our student loan system, we—as a nation—need to confront head on all the obstacles to equity in access to quality postsecondary education. The return on our investment of the time, effort and money necessary to increase college attainment and completion, would be a competitive American workforce, a stronger economy and thriving communities.

## National Wildlife Visitors Center



Open to the Public

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

### NATIONAL WILDLIFE VISITORS CENTER

The National Wildlife Visitor Center, located at 10901 Tanager Loop, Laurel Maryland, is the largest science and environmental education center in the Department of the Interior. Designed to accommodate one million visitors per year, this unique facility seeks to impart to young and old alike an increased knowledge of and appreciation for the earth's vital resources. Interactive exhibits focus on global environmental issues, migratory bird studies, habitats, endangered species, creature life cycles and the research tools and techniques used by scientists. Visitor Center Building is open daily 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Hiking trails are open from sunrise to 4:30 p.m. For more information call 304-497-5580.

## Child Watch by Marion Wright Edelman



### Overmedicating Children in Foster Care

On any given day nearly one in four children in foster care is taking at least one psychotropic medication—more than four times the rate for all children. Nearly half of children living in residential treatment centers or group homes take psychotropic medications. Children in foster care are more likely to be prescribed multiple psychotropic medications at very high doses, although research shows higher doses can result in serious side effects.

Viewers of the ABC News program 20/20 may remember Ke'onte Cook from a few years ago, a 10-year-old who had already spent four years in foster care being treated with a dozen different medications for conditions including seizures, bipolar disorder, and ADHD. Ke'onte had never been diagnosed with the conditions some of the medications were meant to treat. Under his adoptive parents' care he stopped taking all the medications and started relying on therapy, and with that new treatment plan he was transformed. Why are some children in foster care being overmedicated, and what steps do we need to take to do something about it?

Psychotropic medications act on the brain and central nervous system to cause changes in mood, behavior, or perception. They can be effective treatments for certain serious mental health conditions but there is a growing concern that too many children in foster care are overmedicated—in some cases as a form of behavior control.

Children who come into foster care often have been exposed to multiple traumatic events including the removal from their families, and may be at higher risk for mental health problems and emotional disorders. Too often multiple medications may be used without other kinds of effective treatments that might better address the underlying trauma children are experiencing. There's evidence some children in foster care are subjected to powerful medications at very young ages and/or in combinations and amounts that are unsafe for children of any age. Many psychotropic medications are not approved for use in children at all.

Often children in foster care are prescribed drugs without any psychotherapy because resources aren't available. They may not receive a proper initial diagnosis or

any of the ongoing monitoring or extra services that should accompany the use of such powerful drugs—all essential considering the serious side effects from some that can include nightmares, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, and even death. The 20/20 special included the heartbreaking story of Gabriel Myers, a Florida seven-year-old who hung himself in his foster family's bathroom. A state investigation concluded the use of psychotropic drugs was a contributing factor in his death. His foster father said the doctor who prescribed the many drugs Gabriel was taking—some so strong that even the pharmacy filling them raised red flags—would spend no more than five minutes with the little boy before sending him out the door with another prescription.

We must do better. Last year JooYeun Chang, Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau in the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF), testified before Congress that despite important steps taken by the Administration and Congress to promote the monitoring and management of psychotropic medications and the development of trauma-informed practices, too many child welfare agencies lack the proper non-pharmacological

treatments to address the mental health needs of children in foster care. This year, for the second time, in President Obama's budget proposal ACF and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have jointly proposed a demonstration to promote trauma-informed psychosocial interventions to meet the complex needs of children who have experienced maltreatment and other trauma and to address the over-use of psychotropic medications for children in foster care.

The Administration seeks to reduce the over-reliance on drugs and increase the use of appropriate screening, assessment, and interventions. ACF is asking Congress for \$250 million over five years to create the necessary infrastructure to do this, including creating a special workforce to recruit families who can care for children receiving alternative treatments; better training in trauma-informed practice for child welfare professionals; better coordination between child welfare and Medicaid agencies in case planning and case management; and better data collection and information sharing by child welfare agencies, Medicaid, and

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## The Prince George's Post

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Contents © 2015, The Prince George's Post

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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

## The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

### Taking Action To Improve Confidence And Self-Esteem

Many of us would like to have higher self-esteem. We feel good when we're more confident and self-assured. Improved self-esteem enables us to be comfortable enough to relax and be ourselves with others. It enables us to quit worrying about saying the right thing or wondering what others are thinking of us.

The problem for many people is that they're waiting for some internal changes to signal that they can let the real "person" out to behave more confidently. But in reality, the path to high self-esteem is already there. Simply behaving more confidently, and trying new things, are the building blocks to improving self-esteem.

One roadblock is that there are sometimes hidden benefits to lower self-esteem. The most obvious one is that low self-esteem can let us feel safe and comfortable. If we lack the confidence to take some chances and to try new paths, we avoid risk and possible failure. We may feel safe, but will probably also feel stuck and somewhat depressed by always taking that no-risk route.

A first step in increasing self-esteem is to recognize that there's no perfect moment to begin. Waiting until we're smarter or richer or happier before we start taking action usually means that we probably never will take action. The cure is simply to try really living in the present, to go ahead and take a risk rather than always waiting.

Another roadblock to increasing self-esteem is that we often ignore our own needs. It can feel good when we please others but not if it means putting our own needs on hold. It's important to be just as able to say, "I need your help," as it is to say, "Can I help you?" When our relationships are more balanced and reciprocal, our self-esteem improves.

The temptation for many of us is to stay safely within our comfort zones. While taking chances may sometimes feel risky, playing it safe all the time can be as uncomfortable as trying something new. Even people with strong self-esteem will wonder about being judged, looking silly or making waves. The difference is that they don't worry about it as long and don't let the worry immobilize them.

Trying something new or different is usually better than staying stuck. The "trying" builds our strength, not the outcome. Whether we succeed or fail, we get to say, "I did it." And that's what builds self-esteem.

*Counseling Corner* is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to [ACAcorner@counseling.org](mailto:ACAcorner@counseling.org) or visit the ACA website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)

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## Maryland Launches Online Weights & Measures Device Registration Service for Businesses

By PRESS OFFICER  
MDA

ANNAPOLIS, MD — The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has launched an online Weights & Measures Device Registration Service that allows businesses with weighing and measuring devices to pay for the renewal and obtain the certificate online. This new service accepts all major credit cards and eCheck/ACH payments and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Businesses that need to register their devices can access the online Weights & Measures Device Registration Service through the State's official website, [www.maryland.gov](http://www.maryland.gov) or through MDA's website, [www.mda.maryland.gov](http://www.mda.maryland.gov).

"MDA has spent the past year developing its online system to make the registration process simple and efficient," said MDA Weights and Measures Chief Kenneth Ramsburg. "We hope that our customers will find the new system a convenient option

for online payment 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

Businesses register their devices by entering their MDA account number and select the devices to renew, and proceed to payment. If a business has devices in more than one location, all of their devices may be registered in one easy transaction. The certificate for each device is displayed for printing and can also be reprinted at any time from the online system. Device registrations are now processed more quickly for businesses and the department benefits from more efficient processing and cost savings with this new electronic process.

MDA's Weights and Measures program ensures the fairness and equity of all commercial transactions involving determinations of quantity. This includes day-to-day activities such as the sale of food that is weighed by a scale in a supermarket, the sale of gasoline through a gasoline pump, or the sale of fuel oil through a truck

mounted meter. Maryland weights and measures officials inspect and regulate devices used in determining the quantity of commodities as diverse as fuel oil, food products, livestock, grain, and precious metals.

The MDA's Weights & Measures Device Registration Service was developed at no charge for the Maryland Department of Agriculture by NIC Maryland, through the self-funded eGovernment services contract with the State Department of Information Technology (DoIT).

### About NIC Maryland

NIC Maryland builds, operates, maintains, and markets the official website of the state of Maryland, [www.maryland.gov](http://www.maryland.gov) and its eGovernment services. NIC Maryland is a collaborative public/private partnership managed by the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) and NIC Maryland. NIC Maryland helps Maryland state and local government entities web-enable their services and operates without

tax funds through a Self-funded eGovernment Services contract. NIC Maryland has developed nearly 50 eGov services for the state of Maryland since the contract was awarded in August 2011.

### About NIC

Founded in 1992, NIC (NASDAQ: EGOV) is the nation's leading provider of official government websites, online services, and secure payment processing solutions. The company's innovative eGovernment services help make government more accessible to everyone through technology. The family of NIC companies provides eGovernment solutions for more than 3,500 federal, state, and local agencies in the United States. Forbes has named NIC as one of the "100 Best Small Companies in America" five times, most recently ranked at No.11 (2013), and the company has been included four times on the Barron's 400 Index. Additional information is available at <http://www.egov.com>

### EmPOWER from A1

and the replacement of installed incandescent light bulbs with up to 12 compact fluorescent light bulbs, according to the involved utilities companies' websites.

And if you're a Maryland resident, Elysian Energy marketing coordinator David Zussman said, you've already paid for this one-time service through your electricity bills.

"The main point of this particular program is to educate people," Abbe said as he installed energy-efficient light bulbs over the Olney home's dining room table. "It's giving people the tools to make informed decisions rather than people making decisions kind of blindly."



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO  
BY JAMES LEVIN

**Greg Abbe, an Elysian Energy auditor, checks the insulation at an Olney home on April 3, 2015. Elysian Energy is one of many contractors connected to the EmPOWER Maryland Program that aims to reduce energy consumption statewide.**

For more than two decades, the Public Service Commission has required energy companies to provide any program or service that promotes the efficient use and conservation of energy, said Regina L. Davis, the commission's communications director.

In 2008, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to amp up the number of energy-efficient programs offered by these utility companies in order to meet the 15 percent electricity reduction goal by 2015. For utility companies to afford these new programs, a surcharge was established in 2009 onto ratepayers' monthly electricity bills.

The amount of the surcharge on the monthly bill depends on a customer's usage as well as his utility service provider, and it is calculated based on costs that each utility company paid over the last five years to install these energy efficiency programs, said Marissa Paslick, an adviser to the state's Public Service Commission.

"The program costs that are actually spent are divided up into equal installments and are spread over a number of years," Paslick said. "In one year, they are recovering five years' worth of program costs."

The 2015 monthly surcharge has increased significantly since 2010, Paslick said, because the utility companies have installed more programs to reach the 15 percent energy efficiency and electricity reduction goal by Dec. 31, and they're reaching more participants.

Regulated by the Public Service Commission, each utility



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY JAMES LEVIN

**Greg Abbe, an Elysian Energy auditor, inspects a water heater at an Olney home on April 3, 2015. Elysian Energy is one of many contractors connected to the EmPOWER Maryland Program that aims to reduce energy consumption statewide.**

company submits semiannual and annual reports to show what it has spent on programs that qualify for reimbursement under the surcharge.

The energy companies' costs are spread out over five-, 10- and 15-year cycles, so the surcharges will go down a little bit next year because 2016 is the first year that the state's reimbursement for utility companies' energy-efficient programs offsets their costs, Paslick said.

And the surcharge is set indefinitely on Maryland residents' electricity bills until the program's costs outweigh its benefits.

"Even if we stopped EmPOWER programs today, like if we had no more EmPOWER programs, the surcharge would exist for another four years because it would have to recover for years' past," Paslick said.

The program's budget for each company runs in three-year

cycles, and then is reevaluated to ensure cost-effectiveness and an appropriate impact on ratepayers.

"If they didn't spend all the money in 2012, they could spend it in the next year because it's approved for three years," Paslick said. "Utilities can only recover what they've actually spent."

The program-to-date investment in EmPOWER Maryland is projected to yield energy savings in excess of 35.8 billion kilowatt-hours ("kWh") over the lifetime of the installed measures, equal to \$4.089 billion in energy bill savings, according to Davis.

With the average residential ratepayer using around 1,000 kilowatt-hours a month, the predicted amount of saved energy from these reduction programs

See **EMPOWER** Page A7

### Budget from A1

budget. We will always be a body that listens, leads and looks out for County residents, and we have listened to everything you said as we considered this final budget."

The FY 2016 County Budget adopted by the Council reduces the proposed 15.6% increase in property taxes in the County Executive's budget to 4%, and invests \$34 Million in additional Board of Education funding for Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), an amount directly tied to the unfunded mandate adopted by the State of Maryland in 2012 which shifted state teacher pension costs — approximately \$30 million in Fiscal Year 2016 and \$42 million in Fiscal Year 2017 - to Prince George's County.

"While we appreciate the boldness and aggressiveness of the Prince George's County Public

Schools' Strategic Plan and the County Executive's proposed 15.6% tax increase to pay for it, the County Council collectively determined that a 15.6% increase in property taxes is unaffordable for the working families of Prince George's County," said Chairman Franklin.

The County Council and the school system will proceed with an outside performance audit of the school system for the first time in 18 years to study how existing tax dollars are spent, and recommend potential cost-savings in existing programs. In addition, the audit is designed to increase confidence among constituents in the County school system. The audit is scheduled to begin this summer.

Council budget action also averted proposed furloughs and layoffs for County employees during FY 2016.

"We value our workforce and the critical services County em-

ployees provide. The Council will safeguard the level and quality of those services, especially for public safety. Council-initiated spending control measures applied across all agencies approved in the FY 2016 Budget generate \$14.86 million in cost-savings to eliminate proposed layoffs and furloughs," said Chairman Franklin.

The newly-adopted spending plan includes additional public safety classes and a commitment to heightened oversight of public safety agencies for better management of overtime spending. Additionally, to address the County's longstanding structural deficit and related fiscal challenges, the County Council will adopt a spending control measure that requires each non-education County agency to reserve 2% of their operating budgets and \$6 million of their overtime budgets

in a contingency reserve fund. This will enable the Council, as the County's fiscal authority, to provide greater assurance that County Government does not exceed the approved budget and to provide for funding to address any fiscal emergencies during the fiscal year.

In further action, the Council presented CB-33-2015, legislation to reserve half of future MGM National Harbor gaming/tax revenue, up to \$25 million annually, for education spending. This includes Pre-K through 12 education, Prince George's Community College, Prince George's County Memorial Library System. "During the referendum debate on bringing gaming to the County, our residents were told that this new project would generate revenue, in large part, for education. This legislation makes the County Gov-

ernment fiscally accountable for that commitment," said Chairman Franklin.

The Council also introduced CR-26-2015, which creates a Blue Ribbon Commission to address Prince George's County's structural deficit. The panel will propose policies to the Council and County Executive in the next year to address the imbalance caused when normal government spending exceeds County tax revenues on an annual basis. The commission will be comprised of residents and stakeholders with expertise in budget, finance and public policy.

In bi-county budget action earlier this month, lawmakers from Prince George's and Montgomery counties unanimously adopted the FY 16 Operating and Capital budgets for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC); the Central Administra-

tive Services (CAS) budget of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC); and the budget for the Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC). The Councils approved the WSSC FY 2016 operating and capital budget of \$1.3 billion, which includes a 1.0-percent rate increase for water and sewer customers.

In order to support and sustain many of the County's existing critical public recreation projects, the Council has authorized a one and half cents rate increase, half of what was requested, for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which is also facing a structural deficit of recreation and planning expenses exceeding revenues on an annual basis. This will require tight management of spending for planned new recreation projects and planning administration.



# OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S  
IN THE DARK

## Movie Review "Poltergeist"

*Poltergeist*  
Grade: C

Rated PG-13, a little mild profanity and some suggestive dialogue; a lot of intense, supposedly scary stuff  
1 hr., 33 min

You probably remember the tragic fire at the MGM archives, where every single copy of the 1982 horror classic "Poltergeist" was destroyed, including, somehow, all the DVD and digital versions. I don't recall the event myself, but it must have happened, because now there's a "Poltergeist" remake, and why else would it exist? What other possible justification could there be?

How disappointing is this movie? It features the line "Where'd all these clowns come from?" yet is still useless. Dutifully following the same plot as the original, only now with bland CGI and slipshod characterization, it's the story of a suburban family that moves into a house that is haunted because it was built on a cemetery. The little girl (Kennedy Clements) talks to invisible people; the scaredy-cat boy (Kyle Catlett) is traumatized by a box of clown dolls left in the attic; the bratty teenage sister (Saxon Sharbino) gets stuck in black sludge that rises from the basement.

At the film's halfway point, the parents (Sam Rockwell and Rosemarie DeWitt) become convinced that the supernatural terrors their chil-



Legendary filmmaker Sam Raimi ("Spiderman," "Evil Dead," "The Grudge") and director Gil Kenan ("Monster House") contemporize the classic tale about a family whose suburban home is haunted by evil forces. When the terrifying apparitions escalate their attacks and hold the youngest daughter captive, the family must come together to rescue her before she disappears forever. (C) Fox

dren report are real (once the little one goes into the TV), and they bring in a team of paranormal investigators. (These investigators are much more frightened by the house's spooky activities than the family is, by the way. The family just seems flustered.)

Director Gil Kenan's first film was the animated junior scare-flick "Monster House," which would seem to be good

practice for "Poltergeist." But his remake, written with vanilla-flavored disinterest by David Lindsay-Abaire, rushes through all the story beats — scary tree, clown doll, maggot hallucination, etc. — with no sense of proportion, let alone suspense, as if he's ticking them off a checklist. The movie has the same form as the original, but none of the substance. Cinematically speaking, they

kept the headstones but got rid of the bodies.

URGENT UPDATE: I just checked, the original "Poltergeist" is readily available in all popular video formats, including digital rentals through iTunes and Amazon! The need for a remake that improves upon the original in no discernible way is thus obviated, and it will, I assume, be withdrawn from circulation.

### College from A3

enough to contribute to the conversations so he just sat back and never spoke up.

The fighter in him would never allow him to give up. Oswald learned English in six years and was accepted to the AHS Middle College program. The new environment and experience seemed overwhelming at first, but his persevering spirit attracted many students to him and he immersed himself in his classes. Biological Science has proven to be Oswald's passion and strong suit, and he, too, will graduate on May 21 with a diploma and Associate's degree. And so will his dad, but Radiology is his calling. Both Truong men with receive their Associate's degrees at the same ceremony in front of their very proud family.

"My grandfather died of lung cancer, and ever since then I have been interested in pursuing medicine as a career. I want to find a cure for this disease and impact lives," eloquently expressed Oswald. He said that after only a year in Middle College, his confidence was building and although his classes were challenging, they fueled his passion for biological science even more.

Oswald is a music connoisseur and listens to practically everything, but he feels most connected to acoustic guitar artists like Ed Sheeran. He's cool with the Classical genre too—which he gets from his parents. He plans to attend Johns Hopkins University in the fall. His advice to other kids, "When you start, believe in yourself and make every day count. The tough times don't last forever." Well said, Oswald!

Bleak House by Charles Dickens is one of the latest nov-

els Damari DeLaine is wrapped up in. Along with his peers, he is an avid reader of books that run the gamut of topics—despite how much homework, exams, and required reading is assigned. The 17-year-old Hyattsville native who lives with his grandmother and had a history of getting into trouble at his former schools is one of the most unique personalities I had the honor of engaging at Middle College. From a very young age, Damari could absorb complex information like a sponge and not only retain it, but recall every aspect of what he learned. This level of aptitude was threatening to some of his teachers and instead of nurturing his gifts, they deemed him a troublemaker. "I would get into trouble because I was bored," said Damari, "I wanted to be in an environment that challenged me, encouraged my unique way of thinking, and could help me channel my mental energy in a positive way," he said.

He attended an orientation for the Academy of Health Sciences Middle College and was struck by Dr. Kathy Andrews' level of enthusiasm. Shortly after the event, he made the life-changing decision to attend. A decision that made his mother very proud.

The extremely tall and extroverted teen who enjoys reading books while walking down the street has many layers—all of which have their own unique Damari story to tell. One layer would speak on how he's preparing to attend Howard University under the Legacy Scholarship where he'll major in Pre-Law. Another layer would express his affinity for music and eccentric artists like Earl Sweatshirt, MF Doom, and Black Mosh Super Rainbow (I know...crickets), while another layer would speak loudly about his professional dreams of ob-



Excited students at their brand new school. AHS Middle College High School, PGCC (2011)

taining his J.D. and MBA at the same time, becoming a lobbyist for the small business community, leading the way in Corporate and Regulatory Law, and creating an organization for kids. While all of this is impressive, in Damari land he's just being himself. And THAT is a pretty cool accomplishment.

The statistics from U.S. News and World Report and the scores of unsubstantiated labels conjured up by people who think that a Damari DeLaine or an Alex Saviet are anomalies, should probably go back to the drawing board. All of the standardized testing, traditional teaching, structure and stringent guidelines can't begin to adequately measure the potential, desire, or courage a boy or girl has unless you know the backstory. Oswald, Amanda, Damari or Alex could have given up Middle College, perhaps justifiably, and became another statistic in the report. That option wasn't in Dr. Andrews' plan and her students knew it.

She had a vision back then and four years later, the Academy of Health Sciences Middle College program has exceeded every expectation. Thanks to support from leaders like Dr.

Charlene Dukes, Dr. Kevin Maxwell, and a first-rate instructional staff, the coursework given to the students is extremely challenging and taught at a rigorous pace, they are learning Anatomy, Microbiology, and Statistics Math and other advanced subjects at 17 years-old, and these kids are setting a new standard in academia that will be the blueprint for other states.

The real, bottom line, net-net of it all, however, boils down to something that can't be taught, trained, or placed in a syllabus. The love, respect, and feeling of camaraderie among the Middle College students is resounding. They support each other on every level and when one of their own is struggling, they rally around and shower each other with encouragement. They know when a friend is having trouble at home, and they don't put anyone down who can't afford food or snacks. It's a kind of utopian society that we as adults could only hope to experience. These kids are on deck to be world-changers, and after hanging out with several of their representatives, I feel better living in the world knowing they'll soon take over.

## The Edge of Sports by DAVE ZIRIN

### 'The Game Done Changed': Reconsidering 'The Wire' Amidst the Baltimore Uprising



I fanatically loved HBO's Baltimore-based television drama, *The Wire*. It's difficult to even imagine my pop-cultural brain without the presence of Omar Little, Stringer Bell, Bunk, and "McNulty." When I started doing my sports radio show eight years ago, I scheduled interviews with as many of the actors as I could for no other reason than I wanted to breathe their air. Talking to Michael K. Williams about the method of Omar's "long game" while he aggressively chewed on a sandwich will forever remain a career highlight. In every interview, I would always ask the same question: I wanted the cast to tell me whether working on this program was just another acting gig or if they all knew that they were doing something utterly unique in television history. When I asked this of Seth Gilliam, who played Officer Ellis Carver, he said, "It felt to us more like we were a movement, on a mission, in an army to bring awareness." What really stoked me back then was the bracingly original political message that ran through *The Wire* compared to a typical Hollywood production. Most assembly-line entertainment is a variation on the shopworn theme of lone heroes confronting obstacles and then overcoming them. The connective thread of every *Wire* season, as described by show co-creator David Simon was that when individuals, no matter how heroic, fight to change entrenched power structures and bureaucracies—whether in the form of City Hall politics, police, or organized crime—the individual is going to lose.

That's why I always shoved it to the back of my mind when my friends in Baltimore—I live about 45 minutes from the city—almost uniformly would tell me they either did not like or would not watch the show. People were hostile toward *The Wire* for a multiplicity of reasons. Some felt it was like gangster rap for a more sophisticated audience, glorifying black-on-black hyper-masculine street violence while selling itself as somehow more literate and ennobling to consume. My friend Mark once pissed me off fiercely when he told me that my favorite show was "NWA for people who read *The New Yorker*."

My Baltimore friends who had seen the show also believed, given the police violence in their town, that *The Wire*'s view of Baltimore's finest was almost comically kind. The one policeman who accidentally shoots someone (a fellow officer) not only isn't prosecuted but gets reintroduced later in the series as a big-hearted public school teacher. And then other people just said to me that living in Baltimore was a struggle and the idea of anyone making commerce out of their pain was simply not their idea of entertainment.

I would casually dismiss these concerns, thinking people were being overly sensitive, overly critical, or just not "seeing" the brilliance in front of them. I also politically defended the show as one of the few spaces on television that, through its brilliant multiracial cast, looked at issues of crime, corruption, and urban blight in a systemic manner. The fact that it actually cared about the hopes, dreams, and lives of street criminals and not just cops felt more than radical. It felt revolutionary.

The events of the last two weeks, however, have changed my view of *The Wire* in a very fundamental way. I have spent most of my time listening to people in Baltimore speak about how this uprising came to be and why the anger runs so deep. I've been primarily speaking to black Baltimoreans in grassroots organizations who have, in a state of MSM invisibility, been building movements for years to fight poverty, end street violence, and challenge police brutality. This is humbling to admit, but this experience has made me reassess my favorite show, as if a very dim light bulb was being switched on above my head. I am now seeing what *The Wire* was missing, despite its much lauded, painstaking verisimilitude: the voices of people organizing together for change. Everyone on *The Wire* seeks individual solutions for social problems: the lone cop, the lone criminal, the lone teacher, the lone newspaper reporter. Yes, it is certainly true that when entrenched bureaucracies battle individuals, individuals lose. But when bureaucracies battle social movements, the results can be quite different.

It is also impossible for me to separate David Simon's view of people as either passive sheep or lone-wolf heroes from his comments about the events last week in Baltimore. Not his comments to "end the fucking drug war," which are surely welcome, but his other public perspective.

With the fires in Baltimore just hours old, Simon wrote, "But now—in this moment—the anger and the selfishness and the brutality of those claiming the right to violence in Freddie Gray's name needs to cease ... This, now, in the streets, is an affront to that man's memory and a diminution of the absolute moral lesson that underlies his unnecessary death. If you can't seek redress and demand reform without a brick in your hand, you risk losing this moment for all of us in Baltimore. Turn around. Go home. Please."

It's always cringe-worthy when a wealthy middle-aged white guy lectures young black people about who they are and what

See UPRISING Page A7



## Calendar of Events

June 11 — June 17, 2015

### Xtreme Teens: G.E.A.R Skate & Shake

Date and Time: Friday, June 12, 2015 7-10 pm  
Description: Ladies, tonight we are strapping our laces and hitting the floor for a skating party. To top off the night, shake up some fun at the milkshake making table. Please remember to wear socks!  
Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID  
Ages: 10-17  
Location: Beltsville Community Center  
3900 Sellman Road  
Beltsville 20705  
Contact: 301-937-6613; TTY 301-445-4512

### Mornings at the Museum

Date and Time: Saturday, June 13, 2015 11 am  
Description: Explore exciting aspects of the College Park Aviation Museum's collection on the second Saturday of each month with a museum educator. June's tour will look at our new exhibit "Biological Flyers of College Park".  
Cost: Free with museum admission  
Ages: All ages welcome  
Location: College Park Aviation Museum  
1985 Corporal Frank Scott Drive, College Park  
Contact: 301-864-6029; TTY 301-699-2544

### Adult Line Dance Social

Date and Time: Saturday, June 13, 2015 8 pm-12 midnight  
Description: Bring your dancing shoes and learn the latest line dances, while listening to the hottest tunes. Light refreshments will be sold.  
Cost: Residents \$10; Non-Residents \$12 (Prices valid until June 10, after price increases to \$14 for residents and \$16 for non-residents)  
Ages: 18 & up  
Location: Potomac Landing Community Center  
12500 Fort Washington Road, Fort Washington  
Contact: 301-292-9191; TTY 301-203-6030

### "Uncorked: A Saturday at Snow Hill"

Date & Time: Saturday, June 13, 2015 6-9 pm  
Description: Our annual First Friday wine series has a new twist! This Saturday participants will sample a multitude of Maryland wines, enjoy intrinsic music from Upton Blues Band and learn distinctions in art culture at the historic Snow Hill Manor.  
Cost: Resident: \$25; Non-Resident: \$25  
Ages: 21 & up  
Location: Snow Hill Manor Historic Site  
13301 Laurel-Bowie Road, Laurel 20708  
Contact: 301-249-2004; TTY 301-446-6802

### Seniors: 2015 Club 300 Summer Group Walk

Date and Time: Monday, June 15, 2015 8:30 am  
Description: Meet other Club 300 members and keep those feet moving as we explore some of the wonderful trails in our area. For those who are interested, Club 300 group walks will be scheduled and posted on the Club 300 webpage. We are bringing a new dimension to our Club 300 group walks! A doctor/health care practitioner will be sharing a health tip and leading our group walk! Don't miss out on this great opportunity to Walk and Talk with the Doc.  
Cost: Free  
Ages: Any Prince George's County senior (age 60 & better) or pre-senior (age 50-59)  
Location: Northeast Branch Trail (Meet at Wells-Linson Complex)  
5211 Paint Branch Parkway, College Park, MD  
Contact: 301-446-3400 (Special Programs Division) or 301-446-3444 (Club 300 voicemail)

### Colonial Festival & Picnic

Date and Time: Saturday, June 13, 2015 1-4 pm  
Description: Come experience early American life at Darnall's Chance House Museum. Festival features colonial reenactors and demonstrations, 18th century entertainers, the Chesapeake Caledonian Pipes and Drums, farm animals, hands-on activities, walk-thru tours of the historic house and more! Bring a picnic lunch or purchase a food ticket for southern barbeque. Advance discount tickets will be sold online from May 13 until midnight Sunday, June 7, 2015. After June 7, regularly priced tickets are only available for purchase at the event. A limited number of food tickets will be available at the event. All sales are final, no refunds unless event is cancelled.  
Cost: Advance: General Admission: \$2/person; FREE for ages 4 & under; General Admission & Food Ticket: \$16/person (Purchase)  
Regular General Admission: \$4/person; FREE for ages 4 & under; Food Ticket: \$20/person  
Ages: All ages welcome  
Location: Darnall's Chance House Museum  
14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro  
Contact: 301-952-8010; TTY 301-699-2544

### Trails Master Plan Open House

Date & Time: Tuesday, June 16, 2015 6-8 pm  
Description: The Trails Master Plan will guide the development of the countywide park trail system that supports recreation opportunities and connectivity while balancing resources (staff/funding) to maintain and expand the system. The open house is an opportunity for you to help develop a long-term plan for creating a diverse and extensive trail system for the residents of Prince George's County.  
At the Open House, participants will:  
• Learn about the trails master plan and what it hopes to achieve.  
• Show us where you want trails in Prince George's County.  
• Tell us what types of trails—paved, unpaved, hiking, biking, fitness, equestrian, etc.  
• Tell us how trails should be designed, i.e. what amenities are important, how they should connect to neighborhoods and cross arterial roads.  
• Learn about existing trails near you and tell us how we can improve them or create better access to them.  
Cost: Free  
Ages: All ages welcome  
Location: Lake Arbor Community Center  
10100 Lake Arbor Way, Mitchellville 20721  
Contact: 301-699-2522; TTY 301-699-2544

## EARTH TALK ... How Can Teachers Integrate Sustainability Topics Into Their Curricula?

Dear EarthTalk:

What resources are out there for helping teachers integrate sustainability topics into their curricula?

—Melinda Zullo,  
Toronto, ON

Teaching our kids about sustainability and green living is one of the most important things we can do to safeguard the future of humanity and the planet we inhabit. The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) reports that environmental education teaches children how to learn about and investigate their environment and to make intelligent, informed decisions about sustainability. Furthermore, learning about the environment is multidisciplinary, so it allows teachers a rare opportunity to integrate different parts of their curriculum while challenging students to think about the big picture. Thankfully, teachers today have a plethora of resources for incorporating sustainability in their lessons and activities.

One great resource is Green Teacher, a quarterly magazine dedicated to helping educators promote environmental awareness among young people aged six through 19. The magazine offers perspectives on the role of education in creating a sustainable future and provides lots of ready-to-use activities. Green Teacher has also released a series of books, including Teaching Green:

The Elementary Years, Teaching Green: The Middle School Years and Teaching Green: The High School Years, each which contain over 50 of the best teaching strategies and activities published in the magazine over the past decade. These books contain kid-tested ideas contributed by educators from across North America and cover a wide spectrum of environmental topics, from biodiversity to resource consumption to green technology. Another one of Green Teacher's books, Teaching in the Outdoors, is a practical guide for getting students outside and includes helpful suggestions for maximizing their learning experience when they get there.

Another great resource is the U.S. Energy Information Administration's "Energy Kids" website, which provides teachers with energy related stories, hands-on activities and research articles for their classrooms. Free, easy-to-access lesson plans allow students from K-12 to have fun learning about different forms of energy and why some are better for the environment than others. The website also offers biographies of scientists that discovered the energy sources we use today, energy timelines that show how different energy sources and technologies have evolved, and stats on topics like what renewable fuel the U.S. uses most.

A more "hands-on" approach to getting students involved and concerned about their environment is to start a school garden—planted and tended by the kids themselves. According to Kids-



CREDIT: GOTTFRIED NOT BOUILLON, FLICKRCC  
**Planting and tending a schoolyard garden is a hands-on way for students to learn about sustainability, the environment and healthy food choices.**

Gardening.org, school gardens build an understanding of and respect for nature and our environment while motivating kids to eat and love fruits and vegetables. Gardening also teaches children to nurture and care for other living things while developing patience. KidsGardening.org provides a full step-by-step guide to help any teacher get a school garden off to a great start.

Meanwhile, more than 5,000 K-12 schools worldwide have teamed up to network about and integrate environmental best practices into their curricula, administration and facilities through the non-profit Green Schools Alliance (GSA). Membership in GSA is free, but requires a commitment to take action on any or all of three tracks: (1) reducing the member school's climate and ecological impact; (2) educating and engaging the local commu-

nity; and (3) connecting to nature and place. No doubt, GSA is right when it asserts that schools are "hubs of their communities that build resilience, transform markets and policy, shift behavior, and prepare the next generation of innovators to become environmental stewards."

CONTACTS: Green Teacher, www.greenteacher.com; EIA Energy Kids, www.eia.gov/kids; NAAEE, www.naaee.net; KidsGardening.org, www.kidsgardening.org; Green Schools Alliance, www.greenschoolsalliance.org.

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(www.emagazine.com).  
Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

### EmPOWER from A5

would be enough to power almost 3 million (about 2,983,333 homes) for a year.

Of the \$106 million spent on residential programs in 2014, 75 percent went toward audit and discount programs, like Baltimore Gas and Electric's Smart Energy Savers Program, that provide rebates and discounts to customers who recycled appliances, used energy-efficient light bulbs and retrieved a portion of

their electricity from alternative energy sources.

Twenty-five percent of the money spent went toward the Quick Home Energy Checkups statewide, according to the Public Service Commission.

Yet participation rates in the no-extra-cost program remain low. Even though it's more than 5 years old, Pepco has the highest rate at 23.5 percent of residents receiving the Quick Home Energy Checkup, and Delmarva has the lowest at 10.4 percent.



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY JAMES LEVIN

**Greg Abbe, an Elysian Energy auditor, changes a lightbulb on a chandelier in an Olney home on Friday, April 3, 2015. Elysian Energy is one of many contractors connected to the EmPOWER Maryland Program that aims to reduce energy consumption statewide.**

### Uprising from A6

they should do. In other words, if you had said two weeks ago—in the battle of prominent Baltimore Caucasians—that Orioles Manager Buck Showalter would represent himself better than David Simon, I think many would have been surprised. But his comments also revealed far more than was intended. The idea that David Simon, praised as someone with an ear to these Charm City streets like no one since H.L. Mencken, could look at what was happening in the Baltimore of 2015 and not see the social movements and organization beneath the anger, makes me wonder how much he truly "saw" when producing the show. That David Simon could tell people with bricks in their hand to "go home," and have no direct words of condemnation for the violence displayed by the police made me remember my friend Dashon—from Baltimore—who told me he would never watch The Wire because he believed it to be "copaganda,"

since it was created not only by Simon but by longtime Baltimore police officer Ed Burns.

Now, I cannot help but recall all my favorite Wire moments through a lens that has me wondering if the show was both too soft on the police and incredibly dismissive of people's ability to organize for real change. In the season that took place in the public schools, where were the student organizers, the urban debaters, and teacher activists I've met this past month? In the season about unions, where were the black trade unionists like the UNITE/HERE marchers who were—in utterly unpublicized fashion—at the heart of last Saturday's march? In the season about the drug war and "Hamsterdam," where were the people actually fighting for legalization? In the stories about the police, where were the people who died at their hands? It all reveals the audacity—and frankly the luxury—of David Simon's pessimism. Perhaps this pessimism, alongside the adrenalizing violence, created, as Jamilah Lemieux put it in Ebony,



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY JAMES LEVIN

**Greg Abbe, an Elysian Energy auditor, collects tools and supplies from his car outside of an Olney home on April 3, 2015. Elysian Energy is one of many contractors connected to the EmPOWER Maryland Program that aims to reduce energy consumption statewide.**

Homeowner and Kensington resident Aurelio Baca-Asher said he decided to have the Quick Home Energy Checkup service performed in December because he heard about it from a friend and wanted to be environmentally conscious.

"It was something we wanted to have done for our house because we know we have some points we could improve on, and we wanted some help," Baca-Asher said. "It's helped slightly -- nothing like I'm saving a ton

of money each month, but a little bit here and there -- I have seen some savings."

But, as Abbe wrapped up his 90-minute, free energy audit, he said that even if homes are upgraded to become more energy-efficient, customers need to learn how to live economically energy-wise, too.

"If after all that work is done you then think, 'Oh, well my house is so much more efficient that I can turn my thermostat up to 70 in

a show steeped in the voyeurism of "Black pain and death" for a liberal white audience that "cried for Stringer Bell and a burned out CVS, but not Freddie Gray."

I am not saying that art should conform to a utopian political vision of struggle like some dreck from the Stalinist culture mills. But I am asking a question that I wasn't before: Why were those fighting for a better Baltimore invisible to David Simon? I don't mean those fighting on behalf of Baltimore—the (often white) teachers, the social workers, and the good-natured cops who are at the heart of The Wire—but those fighting for their own liberation? Why was The Wire big on failed saviors and short on those trying to save themselves? And if these forces were invisible to David Simon, shouldn't we dial down the praise of the show as this "Great American Novel of television" (Variety!) and instead see it for what it is: just a cop show? There's no shame in that. I'll even call it the greatest cop show

ever, a cop show with insanely brilliant dialogue, indelible performances, and more three-dimensional roles for black actors than 99 percent of what comes out of Hollywood. But all the same—still just a cop show.

After reading stories like this, I think I'm done with cop shows for now. There's a line from the Bible that says, "When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things." In the wake of the Baltimore uprising, The Wire's pessimism seems childish to me, and I'm going to put it away for a while. I could see myself revisiting it in the future, maybe amidst a more dreary political moment. But that moment isn't now. Baltimore in 2015 shows that we can do more than just chronicle the indignities imposed by entrenched urban power structures—we can challenge them. David Simon should listen to the folks who are engaged in that collective project. As Cutty said, "The game done changed."