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Government, Community and Healthcare Leaders Attended Ribbon Cutting of New Care Center

By Press Officer Weiss PR

Lanham, MD – On July 8, government, community and healthcare leaders attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Doctors Community Rehabilitation and Patient Care Center. A Genesis Healthcare and Doctors Community Hospital collaboration, this new rehabilitation and transitional care facility will provide high-quality and comprehensive services to short-term-stay patients and long-term residents – people who need additional care prior to transitioning from hospital settings to their home environments. Guest speakers included Maryland's Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford and Prince George's County Council Chair Mel Franklin.

Many hospitalized patients require specialized care prior to going home. When combined with the increasing rates of various chronic medical conditions, transitional care can benefit patients' long-term health. This type of care can include providing comprehensive rehabilitation that improves patients' mobility and specialized clinical services for those who need extended recovery time to address complex wounds or injuries. Simultaneously, transitional care can contribute to the reduction of hospital readmission rates and healthcare costs by helping people receive needed medical services that better prepare

them for the return to their home environments.

During the ribbon-cutting program, Phil Down, president at Doctors Community Hospital, stated that the new center will help with that transition by treating "people in the most cost effective setting and getting them back to their homes, to their jobs; and we're going to be able to do it here. This would have, in the past, been done in the hospital at a much higher cost. So, we want to drive the hospital cost down, give better care and have better outcomes for the patients."

"What is going on here, on this campus, is the future of health care. We have a lot of discussions going on nationwide with very big acute care systems, academic medical systems, but I will tell you, there is no acute care organization that is further along, not just in talking about what they want to do, but actually bringing it to life," elaborated Mike Reitz, chief operating officer at Genesis HealthCare. "The continuity of care and the transition of care as people move through the system — move from the acute care setting to post-acute and home is critical — and typically not well done. What Phil and his leadership team are doing [at Doctors Community Hospital] is breaking down those barriers, making sure when somebody goes to that

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CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY KATHY OWENS

Janice Jackson has used MTA Mobility for 31 years, and she said recently the service has been the worst she has ever seen it. Jackson, who is an incomplete quadriplegic, uses the alternative transportation service to go to work, meetings, meet friends and go shopping, which is why its reliability is crucial for her and thousands in the area.

Paratransit Riders Frustrated, MTA Under Scrutiny

By GRACE TOOHEY Capital News Service

BALTIMORE — Janice Jackson sat outside Walmart waiting. She had a ride scheduled with Maryland Transit Administration's Mobility, the paratransit service for people with disabilities in the Baltimore area, to pick her up at 2:30 p.m. so she could make it to a meeting in Towson.

She waited the 30-minute leeway, and at 3 p.m. she rang Mobility's call center to inquire about her late ride.

"They said it would be there in 10 minutes," Jackson, 55, said. It wasn't.

About four and half hours later, after the call center continued to tell Jackson 5 or 10 more minutes, after a phone call and visit with the police, after her phone died and she soiled her pants for fear of missing her ride to go inside to use the bathroom—a Mobility bus picked her up. She missed her meeting by hours.

"In 31 years, this is the worst I've ever seen Mobility," said Jackson, who is an incomplete

quadriplegic and executive director of Women Embracing Abilities Now, a mentoring program for young women with disabilities that focuses on their abilities. "We are in the process of being neglected and abused by the system every day."

And she is not alone. The Maryland Disability Law Center and the AARP Foundation filed a class action lawsuit in January against the state's transit administration and the Maryland Department of Transportation for improperly denying eligibility and access to paratransit services,

thus a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

What is Mobility?

Because of her disability, Jackson is one of about 25,000 residents who are qualified and certified to use Maryland Transit Administration's Mobility services as an alternative to fixed-route systems, like the local bus, light rail system or metro/subway lines. A paratransit option is federally mandated

See RIDERS Page A5

PGFD Firefighters Extinguish Fire, Rescue Two Pets and Ensure Quick Veterinarian Treatment

By PRESS OFFICE PG County Fire/EMS

Prince George's County Firefighters quickly extinguished a fire inside of a Landover Hills home and rescued two pets found inside. At around 11:15 am, on July 13th, a neighbor called 911 and reported smoke was coming from the attic of a home in the 4900 block of 78th Avenue in Landover Hills.

Firefighters from the Landover Hills Fire/EMS Station 830 were the first to arrive and encountered light smoke from the attic of a single family home. A fire in the kitchen was found after forcing entry into the house.

The fire was quickly extinguished. The house was charged with high heat and thick smoke with searches yielding no human occupants being located, however, a dog and a cat were removed from the house. The cat quickly regained her senses once removed to fresh air and appeared fine. The dog, "Blueberry" — an older Beagle mix, was suffering from burn injuries



PHOTO COURTESY THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS

and smoke inhalation. The cat was given to a neighbor for safe keeping and the dog was being treated by Firefighter/Medics on the scene, however, "Blueberry" was in need of immediate veterinarian care. A smaller dog escaped when firefighters entered the home and is being searched for within the community.

After 15 minutes of providing oxygen by Firefighter/Medics to

"Blueberry" he showed no signs of improvement and a decision was made that Firefighter/Medics would transport the dog to a nearby veterinarian hospital on Annapolis Road in Lanham. Veterinarians immediately started to work with Blueberry, who, as it turns out,

See RESCUE Page A3

Prince George's County Council Seeks Blue Ribbon Commission Members

By Press Officer PGCPSS

The Prince George's County Council is currently accepting resumes from County residents with expertise in matters of budget, finance or public policy, to serve as members of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Addressing Prince George's County's Structural Deficit.

The Blue Ribbon Commission, established by Council Resolution 26-2015, will propose policies to the

County Council and the County Executive over the next year to address the County's structural deficit — the imbalance caused when normal government spending exceeds tax revenues on an annual basis. The commission will collect, review and discuss comparative budget data and information regarding Prince George's County's fiscal health; policies and practices that affect Prince George's County's revenue structure and the strength of its tax base; the structure and

fiscal dynamics of Prince George's County's government; and feedback from community stakeholders concerning the County's budget and tax structure.

"The Council received a very loud and clear message from residents during the most recent budget process," said Council Chairman Mel Franklin. "We need to get the County's fiscal house in order and create more confidence in

See BLUE RIBBON Page A5

Tips for Beating the Heat

By Press Officer PG County Government

LARGO, MD — According to the National Weather Service the air quality index will be unhealthy for individuals who are at risk of heat related illnesses due to high heat and humidity in Prince George's County.

"Everyone is vulnerable to heat-related illnesses when their bodies are unable to properly cool themselves. In such

cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly and may damage the brain and other vital organs," said Pamela B. Creekmur, Health Officer. "We encourage all residents to check on the elderly, neighbors, family and friends."

The Office of Emergency Management would also like to remind citizens who are in need of relief from the heat to seek shelter in air-conditioned facilities such as shopping

malls, libraries, grocery stores or movie theatres. We also encourage citizens to utilize one of the designated Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Recreational Cooling Centers to seek relief. These neighborhood facilities are open to County residents during normal business hours.

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INSIDE

State Fire Marshall Offers Grilling Safety Tips for Marylanders

Increased outdoor activities also result in an increase of outdoor fire risks; therefore the Office of the State Fire Marshal is providing a few common-sense tips that will help Marylanders enjoy a safe grilling season.

Community, Page A3

Off To The Races: How Will 2016's Presidential Candidates Save Our Cities?

Rather than recite our problems, rather than fall into the trap of recycling failed solutions for today's and tomorrow's challenges, we will unite in Florida to deliberate on solutions and fresh ideas to the economic and social troubles plaguing our cities.

Commentary, Page A4

Farmers Markets: Important Sales Outlets for Organic Farmers

Producers pursue organic certification for a variety of reasons, and there has been consistent growth in certified organic operations in the U.S. Last year alone, the total number of domestic certified organic operations increased by over five percent to a total of 19,474.

Business, Page A5

Movie Review: "Balls Out"

Our hero, a likable fifth-year senior named Caleb Fuller, is about to graduate, take the LSAT, and get married. He's not sure he actually wants to do all of those things. Fondly recalling the intramural football team he captained freshman year before it was riven by tragedy, he resolves to get the boys back together for one last pre-adulthood hurrah.

Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

I recently heard about a cafe in the Netherlands that harvests so-called "kinetic" energy from its revolving door to power its interior lights. Is there potential for "kinetic" energy to provide significant amounts of electricity to help replace fossil fuels?

— Doug Mola Boise, IDA Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

New medical care facility to open in Clinton

Patient First Urgent Care is under construction and due to open soon at 9000 Woodyard Road in Clinton.

Among its services: on-site x-rays, lab testing and prescription drugs; walk-in care for routine injuries and illnesses; and primary care for patients without a regular physician. No appointment necessary.

Hours and bios of medical personnel will be available when it open.

Former Skyline President running for Congress

Dr. Alvin Thornton, Howard University professor, former Skyline resident and president of the Skyline Citizens Association, 1983-84, has announced his bid for the 4th Congressional District seat, joining a crowded field in the race to succeed Rep. Donna Edwards in the House of Representatives.

He is a former member of the County School Board, and is known for The Thornton Plan, which he developed. Although we usually just call it "Thornton," the plan is The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002, which established a state school aid formula to ensure that schools and school systems have the resources necessary to provide every child with an adequate and equitable education.

Dr. Thornton officially declared his candidacy July 21 at the Glenarden Municipal Center.

Coming up

Night Out Against Crime picnics will be held in Morningside and in Skyline on Tuesday evening, August 4.

St. Philip's is hosting its annual Crab Feast, 1 to 5 p.m. on

August 8: \$30 for adults, \$15 for children (8-15), and \$75 for a family of four.

First day of school for students, Tuesday, August 25. (Teachers and some grades meet earlier.)

Andrews Air Show, Sept. 18 & 19

Pope Francis begins his pastoral visit to the U.S. with arrival at Joint Base Andrews the afternoon of Sept. 22.

African dance for children

Children's African dance and drum classes are being offered Saturdays through Aug. 22, 10 a.m. to noon, at St. Michael's Truth/OSLC, 4915 St. Barnabas Road in Temple Hills. Classes are free. For information, call 301-894-3556 or go to www.saintmichaelstruth.org or www.facebook.com/stmichaelstruth.

Morningside memories

When we moved to Maryland in 1958, most of the schools—both public and private—didn't have kindergarten. But in Morningside we were fortunate to have Mrs. Irene Smith and her Morningside Co-operative Kindergarten, which met at the old Town Hall, corner of Woodland Road and Forest Drive. Over the course of seven years or so, five of my children attended Morningside Co-op.

Officers for the year 1960-61 were: Doris Goode, president; Doris Gardiner, vice-president; Mary McHale, treasurer; Nancy Smith, recording secretary; and Alma Broderick, juice chairman. Other chairmen were Mary Colledge, Mildred Stanley, Margaret Bresnahan, Virginia Rosch and Hazel Loughmiller.

These remembrances come from the Morning-Side-Lines newsletter, published by The

Women's Civic Group. There were three on the editorial staff: Gertrude Langford, Arletta Jennings and Blanche McCormick.

May they rest in peace

Jeanne W. Hayes, 94, long-time volunteer at the Oxon Hill Food Pantry, died a year ago, July 8, 2014, at her home in Ridewood Retirement Village, Silver Spring. A native Washingtonian she earned her Juris Doctor degree at the Washington College of Law (now part of American University), and a BA from George Washington University. She was a female pioneer in the convention and exposition business and the first woman president of the National Association of Exposition Managers. She also volunteered with Meals on Wheels and Independence & Information for the Blind. She was the widow of D.C. Police Detective Sgt. John W. Hayes. Survivors include sons Stephen and Warren, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Walter Eugene Lattimore, 74, Senior Pastor of Victory Church International in Ft. Washington, died July 8. He is survived by his wife Apostle Dr. Carmen Lattimore; six children, 12 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Bill Curcio and Thomas DeGraba, July 25; Florence Cray, Agnes Koch and Jennifer Booth, July 26; Floyd Shields, Connie Robbins and Patricia Rosetta, July 27; Matthew Gryskewicz, Kenny Hunt and Jason Nichols, July 28; Gary Barnes, July 29; Helen Rawlett and Helen Cordero, July 30; John Short, Paula Boxley and Howard C. Booth, July 31.

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

2015 LEGISLATIVE WRAPUP

Delegate Michael A. Jackson (Your Voice in Annapolis) event will be Tuesday, July 28, 2015 from 6:30 PM-9:00 PM. Delegate Jackson's district covers parts of Brandywine, Upper Marlboro, Cheltenham in Prince George's, Dunkirk and Owings in Calvert. Invited Guest will be Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr. President of Maryland Senate.

2015 Legislative Wrap Up (\$27.00 per person) at Mama Lucia 10136 Southern Maryland Blvd. Dunkirk, Maryland 20754. RSVP by Tuesday July 21, 2015 at 240-753-6002. Friends of Michael A. Jackson, Damiana K. Murphy, Treasurer (Labor Donated).

HIDEAWAY HORSE CENTER

Hideaway Horse Center is a full service equestrian facility owned and operated by Bridget Rice located on 43 acres at 12301 Cross road Trail Brandywine, Maryland. Telephone number is 301-782-3200. The Center offers horseback riding lessons, boarding, showing and summer camp.

CASINO TIME

IT'S CASINO TIME to Delaware Park Raceway and Casino Wilmington Delaware Sunday, August 9, 2015. Bus will leave Park-N-Ride, Clinton, Maryland at 10:30 AM and St. Philip's Church at 11:00 AM. The bus will return at approximately 8:00 PM.

Fun package includes a \$30.00 rebate 50/50, music and a bagged lunch. All tickets must be purchased by August 2, 2015. Donation is \$40.00. Absolutely no refunds. Contact Shirley A. Cleaves (302) 690-4260, Ruby E. Hinnant (301) 637-1235, Michele K. Chase (301) 888-2510 or Vivian F. Rich (804) 301-9530 for tickets. Benefit: Peter A. Gross, Sr., Scholarship/Memorial Fund.

UNITED METHODIST MEN

The United Methodist Men Washington East District Prayer Breakfast Meeting (Increasing Territory for Ministry) will be 9:00 AM September 21, 2015 at Asbury United Methodist Church. The church is located at 4400 Accokeek Road, Brandywine, Maryland. Donation is \$10.00. Please RSVP to UMWED President Cary Montgomery 301-627-0028 or Cman77@verizon.net.

STROKE SUPPORT GROUP

Join us for a free Stroke Support Group on the fourth Thursday of every month at 5:00 PM-6:30 PM in Southern Maryland Hospital Library. Registration is required. Call 301-877-5858. Hospital address is 7503 Surratt's Road, Clinton, Maryland.

MARYLAND HORSE and PONY SHOW

The Prince George's Equestrian Center is hosting the indoor Maryland Horse and Pony Show Wednesday-Sunday, September 9-13, 2015 at 8:00 AM. The address is 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. Cost is free for spectators. Contact 301-952-7900; TTY 301-952-7998.

BADEN COMMUNITY CENTER

Baden Community Center is a good place where you can go and exercise. The Center includes a fitness center with Nautilus and five stations of cardio equipment and dumbbell hand weights. The Center is located at 13601 Baden-Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland. Telephone number is 301-888-1500; TTY 301-203-6030.

nouncement provides ample basis for the State of Maryland, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, the University of Maryland, non-profits, labor unions, faith-based organization, businesses, and neighborhood associations, to return to the table and sign the Purple Line Community Compact—a series of commitments to policies to preserve and strengthen

local communities that were negotiated at the end of last year. "We support a future where today's visionaries have used Purple Line construction to reduce sky-rocketing rents, create a well-trained and well-compensated labor force, and preserve small businesses in our local struggling communities," said Father Jacek Orzechowski, Parochial Vicar at St. Camillus Church.

CASA Applauds Decision on Purple Line

By PRESS OFFICER
CASA

(Langley Park, MD) — CASA applauds the decision by Governor Hogan today to move forward planning and negotiations on the Purple Line, calling the decision "a win for every-day Marylanders."

While details remain to be finalized, the Governor's an-

Neighborhood Events

Edwards Reintroduces S.O.S. Act to Curb Overdose Epidemic

Washington, D.C. — Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-4) reintroduced the Stop Overdose Stat (S.O.S.) Act in conjunction with Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and with the support of 25 of her colleagues in the House. The Act will establish a grant program that funds efforts to educate and train the public, first responders, and caregivers of those at risk of overdose on how to administer naloxone, a drug that reverses the effects of heroin and opioid overdoses until proper medical care can be provided.

"Since I first introduced this bill in 2009, nearly 140,000 Americans have died from opioid-related causes, including more than 4,000 from my home state of Maryland," Edwards said. "While I remain encouraged by the Obama Administration's priority of expanding naloxone access across our nation, it is Congress's role to appropriate funding. I thank Sen. Reed for leading this effort on the Senate side, showing lawmakers that we have a responsibility to fund programs that make a real difference in treating and preventing overdose, and ultimately saving lives. And while I understand that there is much work to be done in order to address substance abuse before it gets to the point of overdose, each year hundreds of Maryland families and tens of thousands of American families need immediate assistance."

"We can't let more young people fall victim to heroin and opioid abuse. This is a serious public health and safety problem in Rhode Island and every type of community across the country. Opioid dependence and overdose is a growing problem that cuts across social and economic boundaries and we need to take action or it will continue to get worse," warned Senator Jack Reed. "The Overdose Prevention Act will establish a comprehensive national response to this epidemic. It emphasizes collaboration between state and federal officials and employs best practices from the medical community. And it invests in community programs and treatments that have proven effective in combating this startling national trend. This is an emergency and it requires a coordinated and comprehensive national response. The Overdose Prevention Act brings together federal authorities, first responders, medical personnel, addiction treatment specialists, social service providers, and families to help save lives and get at the root of this problem."

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report credits overdose prevention programs with training more than 150,000 potential bystanders who successfully reversed more than 26,000 overdoses using naloxone and other rescue techniques. The medical community and the CDC support efforts to expand overdose prevention programs. A recent New York Times article highlights the effectiveness of naloxone in reviving people who have overdosed. However, as it stands, the drug overdose epidemic is only getting worse.

The S.O.S. Act is cosponsored by: Reps. Carney (DE-



Congresswoman
Donna F. Edwards

AL), Cartwright (PA-17), Clark (MA-5), Conyers (MI-13), Cummings (MD-7), DeLauro (CT-3), Ellison (MN-5), Foster (IL-11), Keating (MA-9), Lee (CA-13), Lewis (GA-5), Lujan (NM-3), Maloney (NY-18), McGovern (MA-2), Moore (WI-4), Norton (DC), O'Rourke (TX-16), Pingree (ME-1), Rangel (NY-13), Rush (IL-1), Ryan (OH-13), Tonko (NY-20), Van Hollen (MD-8), Watson-Coleman (NJ-12), Welch (VT-AL).

The S.O.S. Act is supported by: American Association of Poison Control Centers, Fraternal Order of Police, Maryland Council of Emergency Nurses Association, National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators, Inc., Drug Policy Alliance, Harm Reduction Coalition, Trust for America's Health.

County's Completes Rehab of First Net Zero Energy House

Selected As 2015

Educational Tour Site by Green Build International

Largo, MD — The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County (RDA) has completed the renovation of the County's first Net Zero Energy house at 3413 Glenn Drive in Suitland, MD and will be holding a series of Open Houses for interested in home buyers to take a look at the numerous features that make this home the ultimate in energy efficiency. This one-of-a-kind, 100 year-old home is designed to provide superior energy savings, water efficiency and a healthy living environment. The home produces annually as much energy as it consumes in a year, minimizing the utility bill to virtually zero. The house meets Energy Star and LEED Platinum Standards. Visitors and potential home buyers will see why this home has been selected as a 2015 Green Build Offsite Educational Tour Site by Green Build International Conference and Expo.

During the 2015 Housing Fair on Saturday, June 13th, a free shuttle bus will take housing fair attendees on a tour of the County's Net Zero Energy Home at 11:00 a.m. The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County spearheaded the renovation of this home over the last 9 months, making the home highly insulated, highly efficient and designed to produce as much energy as it consumes. During the tours and open houses, experts will be on hand to talk about solar panels and solar hot water heaters, cutting utility costs with energy efficient fixtures, installing rain barrels and planting trees and utilizing environmentally friendly building materials.

"We are very pleased with the results of this renovation," said Howard Ways, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's

County. "In addition to its efficiency, the house is located within walking distance to the Suitland Metro Station and the Suitland Federal Center."

The net zero energy house is priced to sell at \$320,000 and includes: 3 Bedrooms and 2 full baths, solar panels as the renewable energy source, an HVAC mini-split system and energy efficient windows and doors, fixtures and appliances, a solar hot water heater, bamboo floors in the living and dining room areas, 42 inch kitchen cabinets with granite counter tops, cultured marble double sinks, tub and separate shower, his and her closets, patio doors that lead to a deck and back yard and more.

For more information on the County's first Net Zero Energy Home, please contact Patricia Omondi, Senior Construction Advisor/Special Projects Administrator for the Redevelopment Authority at: paomondi@co.pg.md.us or (301) 883-5300.

PG County Implements New Temporary County-based Certification for Local Businesses

LARGO, MD — The Prince George's County Supplier Development & Diversity Division announces that a new resolution to the Jobs First Act is in effect that allows the County to issue temporary County-based certifications to businesses whose principle place of operation is located in Prince George's County. The purpose of the temporary certification is to consider local businesses with certain existing business certifications to be certified County-based businesses for a period of one year, while undergoing the normal County-based business certification process.

"The County recognizes that the introduction of new business certification processes can be confusing and often requires a significant period of transition," said Sharon Moore Jackson, acting executive director, Prince George's County Supplier Development & Diversity Division. "We want local businesses to have every opportunity possible to take advantage of the benefits of the County-based certification."

Once issued, the temporary certification will be in place for a period of one year, giving sufficient time to complete the standard County-based certification process. Companies interested in temporary County-based certifications must be headquartered in Prince George's County and must have an existing Minority Business Enterprise/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MBE/DBE) certification with at least one of the following organizations: Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT); Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA); Maryland-District of Columbia Minority Supplier Development Council (MD-DC/MSDC); U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); Women Presidents' Education Organization (WPEO); U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA); and/or certified with the U.S. Small Business Administration as a social or economically disadvantaged business or as a HUBZone small business.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Nathaniel Sillin

Building a Back-to-School Budget

Back-to-school spending isn't just about clothes and markers anymore.

In 2014, Forbes reported that Accenture estimated (<http://newsroom.accenture.com/images/20020/Graphic.pdf>) that nearly half of respondents reported they would spend \$500 or more on back-to-school expenses, including not only clothes and desk supplies, but electronics as well.

Yet there's one more aspect of back-to-school spending that's growing and can add hundreds — and sometimes thousands — to a family's overall K-12 education budget. Since the 2008 economic crisis, many public school systems have tried to make up for funding shortfalls by adding first-time or expanded fees for sports, extracurricular activities and specialized academics.



This means that back-to-school budgeting, even for families with kids in public school, now requires a more holistic, year-round approach to all back-to-school expenses.

Given their potential dollar amounts, parents should examine school fees first. Public education has never been completely free of charge beyond local taxes — parents have traditionally paid extra money to support their kids' participation in sports, music or other extracurricular activities. However, many school systems are adding fees for a broader range of offerings including after-school activities, top-level courses, lab-based instruction and even Advanced Placement (AP) classes. So before you start spending money on clothes and supplies that can be bought off-season, on sale or possibly used, get a handle on how applicable instruction and activity fees might affect your budget. (<http://www.practical-moneyskills.com/budgeting/>). Parents in financial need may qualify for public aid or grants to cover such fees; if not, choices will need to be made.

Consider turning back-to-school shopping into a money lesson. Most kids like to have certain kinds of clothes, shoes or supplies. Those "wants" can be turned into a discussion about spending priorities, value, choice and comparison shopping. Using the Back to School Budget (<http://practical-moneyskills.com/calculators/calculate/backToSchoolBudget.php?calcCategory=family>) calculator with your kids can help them learn how to create a budget before shopping for essentials. As kids get older, the discussion can expand to cover bigger-ticket purchases like smartphones, computers and fees for special courses and activities they want to pursue. Some of these issues might evolve into a discussion about earning money through chores or a part-time job.

Once priorities are decided, every expense should be tracked, including a child's round trip school transportation, meals, tutoring fees or immunization and healthcare expenses not covered by insurance. And once that budget is set, it means a constant search for smart ways to cut. Some ideas may include:

- Car pooling (track your costs to make sure you're not adding significantly to your overall transportation budget)
- Packing lunches at home
- Working with school administrators to raise outside donations or grant funding to cover parents' out-of-pocket costs
- Organizing school supplies in one place to avoid purchasing duplicates
- Renting equipment, supplies or instruments used until a child's interests are established
- Scouting garage sales, thrift shops and online marketplaces for used, required-edition textbooks, instruments, electronics, sports equipment, clothes and other supplies you'd otherwise buy new; online resources shouldn't charge shipping or return fees
- Reviewing school and classroom supply lists before buying essentials
- Bulk- and group-buying supplies and services with other parents to get volume prices
- Consolidating back-to-school shopping during tax-free days (if your state offers them)
- Swapping used supplies and equipment with other parents
- Checking retail memberships for any back-to-school savings they offer
- Watching for print and online coupons or special discount offers through your school
- Listening to your kids — they might spot money-saving ideas faster than you can

One final secret budget item — rewards. Saving money on back-to-school expenses can help parents meet a number of financial goals, but kids' academic or activity success deserves recognition. Consider setting aside a little of those savings for a reward they can enjoy.

Bottom line: When setting your back-to-school budget this year, think beyond the supplies. Consider every possible fee and expense associated with your child's school year and plan accordingly.

Proudly Serving Prince George's County Since 1932

State Fire Marshal Offers Grilling Safety Tips for Marylanders

By PRESS OFFICER
MD State Fire Marshal

STATEWIDE — As the summer months unfold before us, families across Maryland continue to venture outside to the beach, the mountains or maybe just to their backyard. Increased outdoor activities also result in an increase of outdoor fire risks; therefore the Office of the State Fire Marshal is providing a few common-sense tips that will help Marylanders enjoy a safe grilling season.

Outdoor Cooking Safety Tips for Gas Grills:

- Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders should always be transported in the upright position on the floor of the vehicle with all windows open. Never transport cylinders in the trunk of a car. Remove the

cylinder from the vehicle as soon as possible.

- Ensure all connections are tight. Check all connections with soapy water. The appearance of bubbles indicates leaks, retighten leaking connections.

- Make sure grease is not allowed to drip onto the hose or gas cylinder.

- Store the cylinder (including those attached to barbecues), outdoors in a shaded, cool area out of direct sunlight.

- Read thoroughly and follow manufacturer's instructions for gas grill use. Save the instructions for later reference! Outdoor Cooking Safety Tips for Charcoal Grills:

- Use only a small amount of charcoal starter fuel. A little goes a long way! Consider using charcoal that does not require starter fuel for ignition.



PHOTO COURTESY MD STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Metal Ash Can w/Lid

- Once a fire has been started, never add more starter fuel! Fire can easily follow the stream of fluid back to the container causing an explosion and potential serious bodily harm.

- Use great caution in disposing of ashes. Ashes may contain live coals that can start a fire if not disposed of properly. The safest method is to wet the ashes thor-

oughly with water before emptying the barbecue. Only transport ashes in a metal container.

Please be reminded that other than one and two family dwellings, no use or storage of hibachis, grills or other similar devices used for cooking shall be located on any balcony, under any overhanging portion or within fifteen feet of any structure.

With any outdoor cooking equipment, never be tempted to use them inside — not even in a garage with the door open or on a porch or a balcony. "Outdoor grills produce carbon monoxide, an odorless, colorless, and poisonous gas which even in small quantities can cause injury or death. LPG cylinders that develop a leak indoors can cause an explosion with devastating results," stated State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci.

Heat from A1

Please be mindful that extreme heat can be dangerous and even deadly if precautionary measures for protection are not taken.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness that occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature and is unable to cool down. With the potential for body temperature to rise to 105 degrees or higher, individuals may begin to exhibit symptoms such as red dry skin, disorientation, delirium, and nausea.

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several hours of exposure to high tem-

peratures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include muscle cramps, dizziness, weakness and/or headaches.

Children, the elderly and those that suffer from chronic heart or lung conditions are particularly vulnerable to heat-related illness because they are unable to adjust to sudden changes in temperatures.

Even in cool temperatures, cars can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. Do not leave children, infants or pets in cars any length of time, even if the windows are cracked. Children who are left unattended in parked cars are at the greatest risk for heat stroke, and possibly death.

When working in the heat, monitor the condition of your co-workers and have someone do the same for you. Limit heavy exertion when high levels of heat and humidity are present and avoid the hottest period of the day between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

At Work

- Avoid the heat
- Reduce activity
- Drink plenty of water
- Adjust your schedule to start earlier if you work outdoors (if possible)

Outdoors

- Wear light colored clothing, a hat and sunscreen
- Drink plenty of water

- Take frequent rest breaks in the air conditioning or shade

At Home

- Check on relatives and friends, especially the elderly
- Increase time spent in air-conditioned environments like libraries, malls, and movie theatres
- Eat smaller meals, more often
- Take cool baths
- Make sure pets have access to water and shade

For more information about heat-related illness visit <http://www.cdc.gov/extreme-heat/warning.html> or <http://dnhm.maryland.gov/extremeheat>

Rescue from A1

is a regular patient at that facility.

The fire caused an estimated \$5,000 in fire damage. Blueberry is expected to make a full recovery thanks to the quick thinking and fast actions of personnel getting him to the appropriate facility. It's hard enough learning that your home sustained some fire damage, however, there is a huge sense of relief to learn that your family member pets are all Okay.

The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department has partnered with the Anne Arundel County SPCA to set up the Sparky Fire Fund. When firefighters encounter an injured pet in a home fire that requires immediate vet

care and the owner cannot be found or does not have the resources to pay for vet care then the "Sparky Fire Fund" would assist in paying a portion of the bills. Anyone interested in donating to the fund may do so by visiting the website at <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/AACSPCA>. Be sure you designate the Sparky Fire Fund. The fund was not needed in this case.

The following images of "Blueberry" being treated by Veterinarians were captured by Andrew Pantelis, IAFF Local 1619 President. Pantelis and IAFF 1619 Treasurer John Wiseman assisted an ambulance crew in transporting the injured canine to the vets.



PHOTO COURTESY THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS

Care Center from A1

hospital, they get the right care there and move very quickly, very safely, very successfully through the continuum."

The ribbon-cutting ceremony included guest speakers Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford and County Council Chair Mel Franklin. They spoke of the importance of this new center and Doctors Community Hospital to the community.

Lieutenant Governor Rutherford stated, "Doctors has built a legacy over the years of being a trusted neighborhood facility, neighborhood hospital providing high-quality health care to the citizens of Prince George's County and Maryland." "The opening of the Rehabilitation and Patient Care Center, in collaboration with Genesis Health systems, is building on that proud legacy that was already established by Doctors; and patients will come here to receive specialized care that they need. They will receive treatment from top medical professionals and access to



PHOTO CREDIT: RICK REINHARD

Mayor Frederick Robinson, City of Bowie; Delegate Tawanna Gaines, District 22; Delegate Anne Healey, District 22; Mayor Emmett Jordan, City of Greenbelt; City Councilmember Konrad Herling, City of Greenbelt; Chief Operating Officer Mike Reitz, Genesis HealthCare; City Councilmember Henri Gardner, City of Bowie; President Phil Down, Doctors Community Hospital; Senator Paul Pinsky, District 22; Delegate Alonzo Washington, District 22; and Chief Executive Officer Gene Ransom, Maryland State Medical Society.

the most modern equipment; and its convenient, comprehensive and quality care that will be provided to everyone that crosses those doors. This is a

success for the county; it's a success for Maryland."

Prince George's County Council Chair Mel Franklin went on to state, "Doctors has

provided this caliber of care for years and years and years, of-

See CARE CENTER Page A6

COMMENTARY

Cong. Steny H. Hoyer House Democratic Minority Whip



Hoyer, Cardin, Mikulski Write Veterans Affairs Secretary Expressing Concern, Urging Action Regarding Impending Closure of Greenbelt VA Clinic

WASHINGTON, DC — Congressman Steny H. Hoyer and U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski (all D-Md.) have sent a letter to Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert McDonald expressing their concern over the forthcoming closure of the Greenbelt, Md., Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in northern Prince George's County. The space that houses the VA-leased clinic will be sold by the private owner at the end of September 2015. The VA has yet to find a suitable replacement CBOC in the immediate area. In FY14, the clinic had more than 6,400 encounters, of which more than 1,700 were unique. Currently, the clinic is at maximum capacity due to the high concentration and needs of veterans in the area.

The members of Congress write: "Our understanding is that starting on September 14, 2015, the Greenbelt facility will transfer their doctors and services to an existing CBOC in Camp Springs, MD, approximately 16 miles away. We have asked regional officials for their plans to replace the Greenbelt CBOC. However we are extremely concerned that no such plans exist beyond an open-ended assessment of the location to replace the clinic. Permanent closure of the Greenbelt CBOC would not only make access to services, including mental health serv-

ices, more difficult for our veterans, but it would cut the number of exam rooms in the region from 16 to 13."

"Congress has been clear in our message to the VA — that it must do more to reduce barriers to care for our nation's veterans. Eliminating the Greenbelt CBOC without a plan to replace it is a step in the wrong direction," the letter continued.

The letter to Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald follows here:

July 9, 2015

The Honorable Robert McDonald
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

We were recently notified by regional VA leadership that the Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) located in Greenbelt, MD, will close by the end of September 2015 as a result of the property owner's decision to sell the VA-leased space. While the sale of the property is

See VA CLINIC Page A5

Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



Off To The Races: How Will 2016's Presidential Candidates Save Our Cities?

"You must register. You must vote. You must learn, so your choice advances your interest and the interest of our beloved Nation. Your future, and your children's future, depend upon it, and I don't believe that you are going to let them down."

— President Lyndon B. Johnson, Remarks on the Signing of the Voting Rights Act, August 1965

For four days beginning in July, political, business, and community leaders will convene in Fort Lauderdale, Florida for the 2015 National Urban League Conference. Conference attendees should expect to engage in thought-provoking discussions with leaders and experts in a variety of areas, including economics, entertainment, civil rights and politics. This year, following a long-standing tradition of major-party presidential candidates addressing the conference, the National Urban League counts several 2016 presidential hopefuls—Republicans and Democrats alike—as invited guests. The candidates, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, will share their respective vision and strategies to save our cities.

The candidates' plenary session, "Save Our Cities: Education, Jobs + Justice," falls under the umbrella of the National Urban League's "Save Our Cities" campaign—an unprecedented mobilization to influence public policy through grassroots political action.

As we know far too well, our country faces tremendous challenges. Rather than recite our problems, rather than fall into the trap of recycling failed solutions for today's and tomorrow's challenges, we will reunite in Florida to deliberate on solutions and fresh ideas to the economic and social troubles plaguing our cities. These are discussions that are too important to take place in silos. The solutions to our challenges are stronger with buy-in, engagement and resources from all concerned stakeholders. So, it is vital that those contending for the highest office in the land be a part of that conversation.

The ravages of inequality on American families—particularly among those in African-

American and Latino communities—continues to rip our nation apart. We must question and listen to any candidate's proposals to reverse this ever-widening trend of inequality. An educated citizenry is best prepared to choose the candidate who will advance his or her interests, and ultimately, the interests of a stronger, healthier and more inclusive nation. During his remarks on the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Lyndon Johnson said, "The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men." The stakes are too high for us, and for future generations, not to have these discussions together.

In this year's analysis of the state of Black America, the National Urban League found that while strides have been made in Black and Brown communities, tremendous gaps continue to leave us with a crisis in education, jobs and justice. In the case of justice, a series of horrific acts—from the deaths of Black men and women at the hands of police, to the racially motivated murder of nine people in a South Carolina church, to the legislative efforts in some states to rob Americans of their constitutional right to vote—cries out for serious and immediate reform. While our economy is improving after the recession, the bounce back has not been as evident in many Black and Brown communities. For too many Americans, the recession is alive and well. As Congress continues to debate reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we, along with a diverse coalition of policy-makers, families and community activists, are fighting to ensure that any new legislation adopted protects civil rights and promotes equity, equality and accountability in education.

These conversations are indispensable in this moment in which we as a nation find ourselves of perhaps the greatest social and economic upheaval in a generation. Choose to be a part of our discussion and conversation, or choose to get involved in the discussions and conversations that are happening, or will happen in your communities—every voice and vote matters.

The Benson-Hammond House



Open to the Public

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTO BY: PUBDOG

THE BENSON-HAMMOND HOUSE

The Anne Arundel County Historical Society continues to operate the house as the only remaining example of what was once a thriving business in Northern Anne Arundel County — truck farming. The rooms of the house display antique furniture and textiles of the Victorian era. The third floor of the house is a museum displaying implements of farm life in the late 19th century and rotating exhibits on the second floor give visitors an opportunity to see portions of the Society's large collection of quilts, clothing, cooking utensils and other artifacts. The third floor also houses the Society's large collection of antique dolls. There is a museum shop on the first floor. Open to the public from March through December on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free for members of the Historical Society; non-members are asked to donate \$3.00 per adult.

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Redlined for Failure and the Prison Pipeline

Ndume Olatushani is an artist, organizer, and a passionate advocate for justice who works with the Children's Defense Fund's Nashville organizing team. He helps us fight to keep children and people of color, especially Black boys, out of the Cradle to Prison Pipeline™ and mass incarceration system which will trap 1 in 3 Black boys born in 2001 sometime during their lifetime. He also combats zero tolerance school discipline policies that push Black children, especially Black boys, out of school and criminalize children of color. I met Ndume soon after he was freed as an inmate wrongly convicted of murder who served almost 28 years in prison, 20 on death row, before his release June 1, 2012. He's a gentle, forgiving man. Long before that, Ndume was a small Black boy trying—and failing—to survive the violence, poverty, and low expectations that surrounded him.

Not long after his release from prison, he wrote his story:

"My name is Ndume Olatushani. I was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. I currently reside in the Nashville, Tennessee area. I spent my early years in the notorious Pruitt-Igoe Projects where the best and worst of human behavior were always on display. Because the Pruitt-Igoe Projects had become so lawless they were the first to be torn down by the federal government in the 1970's.

"At a young age I was exposed to all kind of things that no child should ever be exposed to. At the age of five I witnessed my first murder, which was of a young black man. At the time, I did not realize how this tragic event would help shape me but, like any child exposed to violence over a sustained period of time, I gradually became desensitized to violence. In some ways I became the people who stood around at the site of the playground murder, laughing and joking, as the young man took his last breaths.

"Though I officially dropped out of school in the eleventh grade, I had checked out of school mentally years earlier. In the newly integrated schools I attended, I experienced hostility from my white peers and dis-

couragement from my teachers. My fourth grade teacher who was white asked my class what we wanted to be when we grew up. When I told her I wanted to be a veterinarian, her response was that I should instead aspire to do something with my hands, like construction.



PHOTO COURTESY CILD WATCH
Ndume Olatushani

"Years later, when I was sitting in a prison cell assessing my life, I understood the significance of her statement. As a child I did not understand the effect her statement had on me psychologically, and I did not understand the pathology of racism. Of course I do not lay the misguided decisions I made on her doorstep, but she was a part of the thread that weaved the quilt of my life. It was her and so

many small but significant events that I was exposed to as a child that contributed to the trajectory of my life's decisions.

"As a young man, I began making some bad decisions that landed me in jail and prison on a range of felony charges. I have seen the inside of jails and prisons in four states. While I was making the decisions that landed me in all those jail and prison cells, I had no idea that the criminal record I was developing would lead to me being falsely accused and wrongly convicted of a robbery murder. I was 26 years old when, in 1985, I was wrongly convicted and sentenced to death for a murder that took place in Memphis, Tennessee, a state I had never even stepped foot in before standing trial there.

"It took 28 years—20 of which I spent on death row—for me to finally prove that I was innocent. In December of 2011, a court overturned my conviction in the face of overwhelming proof that the prosecutors in my case had buried a mountain of evidence demonstrating my innocence. The bulk of the buried evidence showed that an entirely different

See WATCH, Page A12

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Making A Summer Road Trip More Enjoyable

It's summer vacation time, which for lots of us means piling in the family car and heading off, hopefully, for fun and adventure. Unfortunately, all too often that summer road trip can become a source of family stress and frustration. It doesn't have to be that way.

Yes, being locked in the back seat of a car for hours on end can be boring, but here are a few ideas to minimize the boredom.

A good starting point is to make sure that everyone is going to be well fed and hydrated during your road trip. A cooler full of drinks and a bag full of healthy snacks can help achieve that goal. And yes, make sure the snacks are healthy. Load the kids up on high-sugar drinks, candy and snacks and you're looking forward to a surge of sugar-fueled energy followed by a big post-sugar crash. Neither of these work well in the confines of a car.

It's also a good idea to plan for stops along the way, especially if you have younger children in the car. Those stops, whether to see an attraction or have a bite to eat (maybe a picnic in a roadside park?), can break up the trip for the kids and the adults as well.

Think about making the journey, not just the destination, a positive and enjoyable part of your trip. Before leaving, check out some tour books for places you might visit along the way. They don't always have to be large tourist attractions. Often the simpler things (an old historic farm, a small museum, somebody's giant ball of string) can be interesting experiences for a brief visit, will usually be crowd-free and give everyone a chance to stretch.

Today's technology can also help keep the car's occupants entertained. MP3 players, portable CD players, handheld games, portable DVD players... the list is long and with earbuds for everyone (including Mom or Dad in the front passenger seat) each can enjoy their own personal entertainment without disturbing anyone else.

Equipped with maps, tour books, snacks, electronics, art projects for young kids, books for older children and anything else that will fight boredom, you'll find that even a long road trip doesn't have to be stressful and frustrating. A little planning and preparation can make the journey as much fun as the final destination.

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

Blue Ribbon from A1

how the County manages taxpayer dollars. We encourage our best and brightest residents to consider serving as a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission as we work to address our long-term budget challenges."

The Blue Ribbon Commission will consist of 15 members appointed by the County Council in consultation with the County Executive. Commission members will serve a term of one year.

VA Clinic from A4

out of the VA's control, the VA must ensure that the services provided at the Greenbelt CBOC be restored in northern Prince George's County.

As you may know, the Greenbelt CBOC serves a large number of veterans in the Northern Prince George's County Region. In FY14, the facility had 6,406 encounters of which 1,714 were unique. And in FY15 to date, the facility has had 4,240 encounters of which 1,559 were unique. According to the regional VA officials we met with, this facility is considered to be at maximum capacity. As we are sure you would agree, being at maximum capacity indicates there is a great need for a CBOC in this area.

Our understanding is that starting on September 14, 2015, the Greenbelt facility will transfer their doctors and services to an existing CBOC in Camp Springs, MD, approximately 16 miles away. We have asked regional officials for their plans to replace the Greenbelt CBOC. However we are extremely concerned that no such plans exist beyond an open ended assessment of the location to replace the clinic. Permanent closure of the Greenbelt CBOC would not only make access to services, including mental health services more difficult for our veterans, but it would cut the number of exam rooms in the region from 16 to 13.

We recognize that it would take some time and effort to find a new location for the Greenbelt CBOC, but the veterans in northern Prince George's County depend on the services provided there. Congress has been clear in our message to the VA—that you must do more to reduce barriers to care for our nation's veterans. Eliminating the Greenbelt CBOC without a plan to replace it is a step in the wrong direction.

We are asking that you look into this matter personally, and provide us with a plan to identify a suitable replacement CBOC in that immediate area. We appreciate your time, and consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Farmers Markets: Important Sales Outlets for Organic Farmers

By PRESS OFFICER
USDA

Across the nation, farmers markets continue to be great places for communities to gather, shop for fresh, healthy food, and get to know local farmers and ranchers. Farmers markets are also important outlets for the sale of organic agricultural products.

In fact, more than 40 percent of organic operations report direct sales to consumers. As consumer demand for organic and local food increases, farmers markets offer important opportunities for organic producers to enter new markets and grow their businesses.

The National Organic Program (NOP) — part of the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) — plays a critical role in the continued growth of organic agriculture by ensuring the integrity of certified organic products. We do this by developing clear standards, overseeing the certification of organic operations, and ensuring compliance with the USDA organic regulations.

If a farmer or vendor at a farmers market uses the word "organic" to describe their products or practices, they must comply with the USDA organic standards and regulations. The organic label indicates that the product has been produced through approved methods that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.

Synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering may not be used. Additionally, all organic producers must accommodate the health and natural behavior of their animals. The organic regulations require that livestock have year-round access to the outdoors and be raised per animal health and welfare standards.

Producers pursue organic certification for a variety of reasons, and there has been consistent growth in certified organic operations in the U.S. Last year alone, the total number of domestic certified organic operations increased by over five percent to a total of 19,474. Most farmers and businesses that grow and handle organic agricultural products must be certified. There is an exception for organic producers and handlers who sell less than \$5,000 in gross revenues per year. However, even if an operation is exempt from organic certification, it still must comply with organic standards and regulations if it labels and sells products as organic.

If you or a farmer you know is interested in becoming a certified organic producer and/or selling your organic products at a local farmers market, we have some helpful resources. You can visit the NOP website to download a Farmers Market Fact Sheet, learn more about organic production requirements, and determine whether organic production is an option for



PHOTO COURTESY USDA

If a farmer or vendor at a farmers market uses the word "organic" to describe their products or practices, they must comply with the USDA organic standards and regulations. The organic label indicates that the product has been produced through approved methods that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.

you. For information about AMS services related to farmers markets, you can visit the AMS webpage dedicated to farmers markets and local food marketing, where you will find USDA's National Local Food Directories.

Earlier this month, USDA joined producers and local stakeholders to discuss local food opportunities in the Hudson Valley's organic market. With over 60 people in attendance, the event included a lively panel discussion and meet-and-greet with

USDA and local agricultural service providers, plus an extension training session.

Whether consumers purchase organic products at a wholesaler, supermarket, or farmers market, they can be confident that the NOP is ensuring the organic integrity of the products from farm to market. We look forward to continue to serve you, the organic community, and American consumers.

Riders from A1

under the ADA to provide comparable transportation for people with disabilities.

Mobility buses operate in Baltimore City, Anne Arundel County and Baltimore County anywhere within ¾ of a mile radius of a fixed-route transportation system.

Riders are supposed to pre-schedule their rides, either with the Mobility call center or through an online system, which has a program that works to organize about 7,000 daily rides. Each ride isn't considered late until it extends beyond the 30-minute scheduling window.

"I think we're doing well but we can do better," said Dan O'Reilly, MTA Mobility director. "We just got through a couple bad months, the weather was the definite impact."

The on-time performance goal for Mobility is 90 percent, which the service regularly meets, said Rob Barnes, senior deputy administrator for MTA. Barnes served as the interim MTA administrator until Gov. Larry Hogan's appointee, Paul Comfort, took over the position May 11. But in the last few months the on-time performance percentage has dropped to the low-to mid-80s, Barnes said.

"We are proud of the services we offer, serving the 7,000 trips every day. Yes, there are areas of improvement," Barnes said.

The parties to the lawsuit have been in settlement talks for weeks, and are expected to continue, Maryland Disability Law Center litigation director Lauren Young said, but no one can comment on the status of the case. Representatives from the transit agency also declined to comment on the lawsuit.

The lawsuit focuses on two issues: the certification procedure clients must go through to use Mobility, and its phone services. Young explained that a flawed re-certification process has been denying people the service who desperately need it, and busy, long holds or dropped calls make scheduling rides impossible.

"It's critical for people, so what's promised to them under the law is what we want," Young said.

However, Barnes and O'Reilly talked about some of their proposed improvements, like the addition of 36 new Mobility buses to the fleet of more than 400, getting a health check on their scheduling system and expanding their call center to increase staff by 20 percent.

"It's a matter of implementing those and most importantly (making sure they are) executed and monitored," Barnes said.

Comfort has a background in paratransit services from a previous job as assistant project manager and director of operations for MV Transportation, which was contracted by the Washing-



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY GRACE TOOHEY

Cheryl Gottlieb, 30, waits for her ride from Maryland Transit Administration's Mobility service in Towson so she can go to an art class. Gottlieb has spastic cerebral palsy, which makes it difficult for her to stand for long periods of time or walk without support.

ton Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's paratransit option, MetroAccess, and is one of the three contractors for Mobility.

"My goal is to make sure that the new resources MTA has invested in Mobility are used as effectively and efficiently as possible as we continue to meet increasing demands for paratransit services," Comfort wrote in an email.

Beyond Complaints

MTA Mobility has a system in place to take, respond and react to complaints, O'Reilly said, but after listening to customers at a monthly Citizens Advisory Committee for Accessible Trans-

portation on April 16, O'Reilly said he needs to follow up with the customer service manager because people said they never hear back.

The service received more than 15,000 complaints since 2012, the majority of which focused on a no-show ride or a late ride, but many people also complained about a discourteous vehicle operator or a scheduling issue.

"We take those complaints very seriously; as a part of our process we want to know the details of every one because we in-

See RIDERS Page A6

2015 New Volunteer Award

By PRESS OFFICER
PG County Government

Please join the Office of Ethics and Accountability (OEA) in congratulating Ms. Linda Foreman, the recipient of the 2015 New Volunteer Award from the Department of Family Services, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Ms. Foreman has been working for the OEA for approximately 7 months and we are impressed by the exceptional quality of administrative support she provides. We are thankful to have her on our team.



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review "Balls Out"

Balls Out

Grade: B-

Rated R, some profanity and a lot of vulgarity
1 hr., 38 min

Plenty of movies deal with high-profile college athletics, but why hasn't anyone made a comedy about intramural sports? Any situation where the stakes are low but emotions are high is ripe for mockery, and that's intramural play in a nutshell. Fortunately, this gap has now been filled by "Balls Out" (originally called "Intramural"), a loose — some might say sloppy — underdog comedy that has some solid laughs and just the right amount of heart (almost none).

Our hero, a likable fifth-year senior named Caleb Fuller (Jake Lacy), is about to graduate, take the LSAT, and get married. He's not sure he actually wants to do all of those things. Fondly recalling the intramural football team he captained freshman year before it was riven by tragedy, he resolves to get the boys back together for one last pre-adulthood hurrah. As he puts it, "This is our last chance to do something that doesn't matter."

What was the tragedy that ended the team four years ago? As we saw in the film's tone-setting prologue, it was that Caleb's best friend Grant Rosenfalis (Nick Kocher) was hit by a late tackle during the championship game and paralyzed "from the balls down." They haven't spoken since. The other players went their separate ways, but Caleb easily reunites the lovable losers: dumb Vinnie (Gabriel Luna), weirdo magician Chance (Brian McElhaney), nerdy George (Will Elliott), and fat, opera-singing cowboy Jimmy (Sam Eidson). Caleb's current roommate, the generically irresponsible Hank



ROTTENTOMATOES

With graduation, marriage, and an uncertain future on the horizon, fifth year senior Caleb Fuller (Jake Lacy) decides to do the one thing he vowed to never do again: get the ol' flag football team back together. Now with the help of his Panther teammates and unorthodox head coach Grant Rosenfalis (Nick Kocher), Caleb must defy all odds in the hope of achieving the glory he once had. Set in the highly popular world of college intramural sports, BALLS OUT is the epic sports movie for the guys who don't deserve one.

(Nicholas Rutherford), rounds out the squad.

And Grant (yes, his last name is pronounced "Rosen-phallus"), now wheelchair-bound and living like a hermit, returns as the "crusty yet affable veteran" to coach the team, an acknowledged reference to the beloved sports movies of yesteryear. Bradley Jackson's free-wheeling screenplay has a lot of that kind of meta-humor — I'd be surprised if Jackson isn't a fan of "Community" — right down to a pair of announcers (Jay Pharoah and D.C. Pierson) who do play-by-play commentary on the games, without microphones, in the empty bleachers, evidently for their own amusement.

The team's rivals, the Titans, are a bro-moerotic group led by Dick Downs (Beck Bennett), a hy-

per-aggressive jerk who takes intramural football far more seriously than he should (which is to say, at all). Dick's sister, Meredith (Nikki Reed), becomes Caleb's new potential love interest, wooing him away from his clingy, cartoonish fiancée (Kate McKinnon), who the movie clearly only intended to be a placeholder anyway. There are training montages and faux-inspirational speeches, which coach Grant delivers in a Charlton Heston-y voice.

Directed by Andrew Disney, the film's humor is mildly satiric at times, but mostly it's broad and farcical, grounded in relatable conflicts and characters but not limited by the constraints of reality. George the nerd gets shot in one scene, stabbed in another, but is always OK the next time

we see him, and there are sequences with a rollerskating gang from out of an '80s post-apocalyptic movie. Beck Bennett goes all-out nutso as the douche villain, a potential break-out performance for the up-and-coming "SNL" star, while his castmate Kate McKinnon is amusing but misused as the grating fiancée.

Most of the leads are less well-known than that. Their fresh-faced anonymity actually works in the movie's favor, reinforcing the underdog motif and inviting us to root for them. Some of the dead-end gags would have been excised or rewritten if this were a stricter production, but it's funny more often than it isn't. And while a more disciplined approach might have rendered a tighter, more polished film, its shaggyism is appealing.

About Doctors Community Hospital

Doctors Community Hospital is a 182-licensed bed medical and surgical hospital. A non-profit hospital that was founded in 1975, some of its high-quality and comprehensive services include: Bariatric and Weight Loss Center; Center for Comprehensive Breast Care; Center for Ear, Nose and Throat; Center for Wound Healing and Hyperbaric Medicine; Comprehensive Orthopedic Services; Doctors Regional Cancer Center; Emergency Department; Imaging Services; Infusion Center; Joslin Diabetes Center; Metropolitan Medical Specialists; Rehabilitation Services; Sleep Center and Vascular Health Program. For more information, visit DCH-web.org or call 301-DCH-4YOU (301-324-4968).

Care Center from A3

ten times not getting the recognition that Doctors deserves. But I'm here today to say Prince George's County loves Doctors Community Hospital. We believe that this kind of facility is the caliber of facility we want to see all across our great county."

Other ribbon-cutting attendees included Mayor Frederick Robinson, City of Bowie; Delegate Tawanna Gaines, District 22; Delegate Anne Healey, District 22; Mayor Emmett Jordan, City of Greenbelt; City Councilmember Konrad Herling, City of Greenbelt; City Councilmember Henri Gardner, City of Bowie; Senator Paul Pinsky, District 22; Delegate Alonzo Washington, District 22; and Chief Executive Officer Gene

Ransom, Maryland State Medical Society.

About Doctors Community Rehabilitation and Patient Care Center

A Genesis HealthCare and Doctors Community Hospital collaboration, this new facility will provide high-quality and comprehensive care for short-term-stay patients as well as long-term residents — all within a compassionate and nurturing environment. Located on the campus of Doctors Community Hospital in Lanham, Maryland, this new 77,000 square foot center has: 130 beds and 84 private rooms; 3,500 square foot rehabilitation gym; Two cafés offering restaurant-style dining and culinary-trained chefs; Four private lounges for patient and family activities; Two enclosed ther-

apeutic and recreational courtyards; Flat-screen televisions and bedside telephones; Wi-Fi access and laptops for patients; Beauty salon; Ample parking For more information, call 301-552-2000.

About Genesis HealthCare

Genesis Healthcare, Inc., (NYSE: GEN) is a holding company with subsidiaries that, on a combined basis, comprise one of the nation's largest post-acute care providers with more than 500 skilled nursing centers and assisted/senior living communities in 34 states nationwide. Genesis subsidiaries also supply rehabilitation and respiratory therapy to more than 1,800 healthcare providers in 47 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit genesishc.com or call 866-745-CARE (866-745-2273).

Riders from A5

investigate each and every complaint," Barnes said.

Over the past four years, the relative number of complaints per every ride has slowly decreased, as the annual number of rides has continued to increase: The complaints remain around 4,000 each year.

But for some people, complaining has become useless.

"We never got a call back, never get feedback, but the problems still exist," Jackson said. "We are beyond filing complaints."

Call for Action

In more than three decades of riding Mobility, Jackson said, this is the first time she's ever felt the need to really stand up for her rights—because she said she cannot "let them win."

"No other service in MTA would take this abuse, there has to be something done," she said. "It's our lifeline, without paratransit, we couldn't do anything, work, doctors, appointments... the use of transportation is our livelihood."

President and CEO of the League for People with Disabilities David Greenberg said Mobility is a great service for many Marylanders giving people the opportunity to work and socialize and participate in civic affairs, but he said right now it is struggling to meet the needs of its customers.

"There are some problems with Mobility that have worsened over the last year or 18 months," Greenberg said.

Jackson has decided to form the MTA Coalition—creating a new acronym for the letters:



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY GRACE TOOHEY

Cheryl Gottlieb prepares for her ride from Mobility with ride cards she has purchased through MTA, so she doesn't have to worry about exact change—or losing money. Each card costs \$1.85, which is the price of a ride.

"Make Them Accountable." She said she is forming partnerships with all different kinds

of groups who are affected by Mobility's shortcoming to make a real difference.

Jackson's first rally for the coalition was on May 2 at the World of Possibilities Expo in Baltimore, where she hoped to call attention to the issue and gain excitement for their movement, she said. She hopes to eventually call the attention of the governor, legislators, and taxpayers to the injustices in Mobility.

"Everybody needs to put this on their radar," Jackson said. "It's going to take a village, we're going to make a difference now."

"I don't have many as many problems"

See RIDERS Page A7

The Edge of Sports by DAVE ZIRIN

The Irresistible Realness of Dusty Rhodes



Tributes are pouring in for the late Virgil Runnels Jr. the influential pro wrestling impresario who passed away on Thursday at the age of 69. This is not a tribute to Mr. Runnels. This is a tribute to his alter ego, the man who "dined with Kings and Queens and slept in alleys eating Pork 'n' Beans" otherwise known as "The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes.

Pro wrestling is a morality play, a violent opera that splices together broad characterization and physical action to create a unique form of mass entertainment. At its nadir, which is often, it is racist, sexist, homophobic trash, not to mention unbearably boring. At its best, you would find the prime of Dusty Rhodes: the antithesis of "this business" at its worst.

He was shaped like a Russian Matryoshka Doll, had a pronounced lisp, and dressed like someone who found the only clothes that could fit his fluid full-figured physique at Goodwill and made the best of it. The character and the man behind him grew up dirt-poor in Texas and, like all the best wrestling characters, his on-screen persona was an amplification of his true self. That meant in a 1980s cultural landscape dominated by entertainment like Dallas and Dynasty and the male body-images of Schwarzenegger and Stallone, he was an actual and undeniable working class shape and voice.

Dusty Rhodes was the most public expression about surviving in the Reagan 1980s: a Jonathan Kozol book in tights armed only with a sharp tongue and a bionic elbow. Remembering this Dusty Rhodes matters because the historical amnesia about the Reagan years has been so total. An extremely well-funded right-wing campaign has whitewashed the truth of the era: that Ronald Reagan left a body count of victims due to an indifference as callous as it was calculated. The Reagan backlash spared no one, least of all industrial workers: the people who worked with their hands and sent children to college on a single union wage, without student loans. It sounds like another world, and it was: a world that Reagan's agenda—with no small help from congressional Democrats—destroyed. Dusty Rhodes was the voice of the person getting crushed under the weight of Reagan and keeping his head held high, dignity not only intact but non-negotiable. No, he wasn't a labor leader or trying to do any kind of protest. He was a voice: a fake character with an authentic presence, fighting in the ring for the people being left behind. This was seen most famously in what is known as his "Hard Times" promo.

Dusty Rhodes's nemesis was the "limousine riding, jet flying" Ric Flair. Speaking to Flair through a camera lens, Rhodes said,

You don't know what hard times are, daddy. Hard times are when the textile workers around this country are out of work, they got 4 or 5 kids and can't pay their wages, can't buy their food. Hard times are when the autoworkers are out of work and they tell 'em to go home. And hard times are when a man has worked at a job for thirty years—THIRTY YEARS—and they give him a watch, kick him in the butt and say "hey a computer took your place daddy," that's hard times! That's hard times! And Ric Flair you put hard times on this country by takin' Dusty Rhodes out, that's hard times. And we all had hard times together, and I admit, I don't look like the athlete of the day supposed to look. My belly's just a lil' big, my heinie's a lil' big, but brother, I am bad. And they know I'm bad.

But Dusty Rhodes was no caricature, the working-class version of "Kamala the Ugandan Headhunter" or anything so ugly. Shining through "Dusty Rhodes" was Virgil Runnels, who not only grew up "Texas poor" but in the back pews of ramshackle black churches. He had something unique to the rural South, seen in the connective tissue of the Southern Baptist church: poor white people who learned how to preach from watching the black masters of the art. This was Virgil Runnels who, not unlike Jerry Lee Lewis, would sit in the black church, drawn by the energy, and soak up what he saw. Dusty Rhodes then translated that experience, bringing it to the wrestling world and in authentic fashion, had a Southern poor man's cadence that a black audience instantly identified. This meant that Rhodes had a mass following among not only poor whites but poor blacks in the South. I remember watching Dusty Rhodes when I was a kid traveling through Georgia, staying at a hotel, and everyone—guests, workers, black and white—standing and just watching him cut his promos on a lobby television. It is no exaggeration to write that if you were trying to find points of unity in the post-Jim Crow South in the 1970s and 1980s, Dusty Rhodes was on the short list.

But this is where the story gets ugly. His "realness" in the Southern territories was mocked mercilessly in meta-fashion

See DUSTY Page A7

Calendar of Events

July 23 — July 29, 2015

Xtreme Teens: Painting Night

Date and Time: Thursday, July 23, 2015 4-6 pm
Description: Tonight, teens will learn basic painting skills for acrylic paint on canvases. Show off your skills, don't miss the fun!
Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
Ages: 10-17
Location: Mt. Rainier Nature Center
4701 31st Place, Mt. Rainier 20712
Contact: 301-927-2163; TTY 301-445-4512

Southern Maryland Quarter Horse

Date and Time: Friday-Sunday, July 24-26, 2015 8 am
Description: The Prince George's Equestrian Center will host the Southern Maryland Quarter Horse show.
Cost: Free for spectators
Location: The Show Place Arena
14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, MD
Contact: 301-952-7900; TTY 301-952-7998

Safe Summer: Print-n-Press T-Shirt Workshop

Date and Time: Friday, July 24, 2015 10 pm-12 am
Description: Teens will enjoy a night of creative fun creating t-shirts. Choose a design, then print and press your design.
Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
Ages: 12-17
Location: Good Luck Community Center
8601 Good Luck Road, Lanham 20706
Contact: 301-552-1093; TTY 301-445-4512

Xtreme Teens: Bowling Trip

Date and Time: Friday, July 24, 2015 4-6 pm
Description: Teens will travel with to AMF Lanes in College Park for a night of bowling. Departure is at 6 pm with a return time of 9 pm. Please wear socks; teens must have their signed specialized permission slips by a parent or guardian to attend.
Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
Ages: 10-17
Location: Mt. Rainier Nature Center
4701 31st Place, Mt. Rainier 20712
Contact: 301-927-2163; TTY 301-445-4512

Shakespeare in the Parks

Date and Time: Friday, July 24, 2015 7:30 pm
Description: Come hear many of Shakespeare's most beloved words spoken with a freshness and honesty unmatched to any other theatre. In this truly "edge-of-your-seat" performance, you'll experience thrilling stagecraft, star-crossed lovers and the joy and heartbreak of Romeo and Juliet. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy the free performance at your favorite park.
Rain location: City of Hyattsville Multipurpose Room
4310 Gallatin St., Hyattsville 20781
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Magruder Park
40th Avenue & Hamilton Street, Hyattsville 20781
Contact: 301-446-3232; TTY 301-699-2544

Basket Weaving

Date and Time: Saturday, July 25, 2015 10 am-3 pm
Description: Learn how to weave a basket using reed and other natural materials. This is for students of all skill levels, from beginners to advanced. Materials will be supplied by the instructor.
Cost: Resident: \$30; Non-Resident: \$36
Ages: 13 & Up
Location: Patuxent River Park Visitors Center
16000 Croom Airport Road, Upper Marlboro, MD
Contact: 301-627-6074; TTY: 301-446-3402

Mousetrap

Date and Time: Saturday, July 25, 2015, 12 noon
Description: Design and build your own Mousetrap Racecar for the second event in our Engineering Challenge Series. Using a standard Victor mousetrap, see how far you can make your car travel. Entrants will be awarded points for distance and creativity. Prizes will be awarded. Call the museum for more information and a complete set of rules.
Cost: FREE for contestants.
Ages: 8-18
Location: College Park Aviation Museum
1985 Cpl. Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD,
Contact: 301-864-6029, TTY 301-699-2544

Arts on the Waterfront: Lahla Hadiya

Date and Time: Sunday, July 26, 2015 6-7:30 pm
Description: Join us for our final Sunday concert this season with the Neo Soul/R&B songs of Lahla Hadiya.
Cost: Free
Ages: All ages welcome
Location: Bladensburg Waterfront Park
4601 Annapolis Rd, Bladensburg, MD 20710
Contact: 301-779-0371; TTY 301-699-2544

Safe Summer: Roller Skating

Date and Time: Monday, July 27, 2015 10 pm-12 midnight
Description: Tonight, teens will participate in a roll bounce skating party. So, bring a friend and come skate to the sounds of DJ Richard.
Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
Ages: 12-17
Location: Bladensburg Community Center
4500 57th Avenue, Bladensburg 20710
Contact: 301-277-2124; TTY 301-445-4512

Safe Summer: Boys 2 Bowties

Date and Time: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 10 pm-12 midnight
Description: Boys will join the Xtreme Teens mentoring group, Boys 2 Bowties. At this mentoring group, they'll learn how to deal with personal issues, make new friends and have fun.
Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
Ages: 12-17
Location: Bladensburg Community Center
4500 57th Avenue, Bladensburg 20710
Contact: 301-277-2124; TTY 301-445-4512

EARTH TALK ... Can Kinetic Energy Replace Fossil Fuels

Dear EarthTalk:

I recently heard about a cafe in the Netherlands that harvests so-called "kinetic" energy from its revolving door to power its interior lights. Is there potential for "kinetic" energy to provide significant amounts of electricity to help replace fossil fuels?

—Doug Mola
Boise, ID

Physicists define "kinetic" energy as the energy of motion (as opposed to potential energy, which represents an object's stored energy). While there is not much that is practical that we can do with potential energy, kinetic energy is another matter. We can capture energy from all sorts of everyday activities, and entrepreneurs around the world are working hard on ways to make kinetic energy more accessible. But we may be decades from realizing any serious fossil fuel displacement from this age-old energy source, and by then other alternative energy sources may have already made coal, oil and natural gas things of the past.

While the cutting edge revolving door at Natuurcafé La Port in Beerschoten, Netherlands (about 30 miles southeast of Amsterdam) may be one of the best examples of repurposing the kinetic energy that humans generate through their

movement into electricity to power their stuff—the door connects the cafe to an adjoining train station and generates some 4600 kWh of electricity annually—it's far from the only one.

The Soccket is a soccer ball that was designed by Harvard undergraduates for a class project—and since incorporated as the company Uncharted Play—that harvests energy when it is kicked around and can then be used to power an included energy efficient 3-LED lamp that runs for up to three hours after just 20 minutes or so of soccer. "The more the ball rolls, the more power that's generated," reports Uncharted Play, which got the idea for the ball as a way to help eliminate the use of kerosene. The company also makes the Pulse, a portable, emergency battery charging jump rope designed to promote physical activity and spread awareness about the global energy problem. While the Pulse is a jump rope just like any other, it is also a portable battery charger that can be powered up from a power outlet or even better from using it. For every Soccket or Pulse purchased (\$99/each), Uncharted Play donates one to a kid in a developing country who might not otherwise have access to electricity to provide a light to read at night.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY EARTHTALK

Uncharted Play's Soccket soccer ball doubles as a kinetic energy power source for an integrated high-efficiency 3-LED lamp.

Another innovative application of kinetic energy is from Pavegen, which produces floor tiles that absorb kinetic energy when people walk on them. The tiles are made with recycled materials and contain small LEDs that light up to show they are working. Meanwhile, KinergyPower is applying the same principal to harnessing the kinetic energy from vehicles through designed road surfaces that turn vehicle motion into electricity.

But while kinetic energy shows lots of potential for helping transition away from fossil fuels, it may never become more than a novelty if we continue to focus our energy resources on other proven clean renewables like solar ar-

rays and wind farms. Regardless, get used to seeing more and more kinetic energy harvesting from flooring, sidewalks, soccer balls, jump ropes and who knows what else. Going through a revolving door never felt so good.

CONTACTS: Uncharted Play, www.unchartedplay.com; Pavegen, www.pavegen.com; KinergyPower, www.kinergy-power.com.

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Riders from A6

Cheryl Gottlieb, 30, has been fighting Mobility, trying to hold them accountable, for months. She said she is tired of being late to work, missing opportunities to meet with friends, or getting home hours later than necessary.

But, she said, she doesn't have the worst situation because she knows how to book rides online, can find the numbers of people who work for Mobility and has figured out to schedule by necessary drop off time as opposed to pick up time.

"The vast majority of mobility users are senior citizens, (or have) cognitive disabilities," Gottlieb said. "I don't have as many problems."

That's not to say she isn't frustrated with Mobility, her main form of transportation. Gottlieb has spastic cerebral palsy, which affects her ability to stand and wait for buses and walk long distances, as well as a visual processing issue, which makes it difficult to read bus schedules. Living in downtown Towson helps because she can use her power chair to travel to local places, but to get to work, meetings, outings with friends—it's not easy.

"I have to assume that it's going to take me an hour and a half anywhere," she said. "I usually end up places late or 40 minutes early ... It's always a game."

She said that she can be almost to her destination and then the driver will turn around or head the opposite direction because the scheduling system picked up another ride.

Dusty from A6

by his expanding Northern-based competition, the World Wrestling Federation (now the WWE), operated by boss Vince McMahon. As David Shoemaker writes in his terrific history of wrestling, *The Squared Circle*, McMahon created a black "slave" character named "Virgil", owned by "The Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase, as a way to mock Dusty Rhodes for "acting black" in speech and mannerisms." (This was an innocent pre-Internet era when few wrestling fans could have told you that Dusty's real name was Virgil Runnels.)

Then in 1989 when Rhodes was—like almost everyone—sucked into the WWF universe, he was dressed in yellow polka

Not worth it

And that "game" just isn't worth it for Mat Rice, who also lives in Towson. He went to the Maryland School for the Blind, where he learned how to use paratransit services, and at first he was really impressed. Now, not so much.

"Paratransit was really not a reliable way to get around," Rice said, citing almost typical 5- to 7-hour waits. "There would be situations where I would show up late to meetings, meetings would be ending."

When Rice started working for People on the Go, a group of advocates with intellectual and developmental challenges working toward recognition, he often traveled to Annapolis to lobby and talk with state leaders, but Mobility ended up being more of a hassle for him, and sometimes a barrier.

He now chooses to ride with his support staff driving his vehicle, instead of waking up hours early and getting back very late, and this way he never worries about being left behind or watching as drivers leave without him.

"You don't really experience full community inclusion because you literally have to second guess whether you're going to make it there," Rice said.

A fight for rights

The disability rights movement has been growing since the second half of the 20th century, and though there are many laws in place to protect people with disabilities, like the Americans with Disabilities Act, it's not always that simple.

dots and McMahon had him plunging toilets and yukking it up with a black woman known as "Sapphire." The name "Sapphire" has a long history in minstrelsy dating back to the 19th century. As described at the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, it marks the black woman playing "rude, loud, malicious, stubborn, and overbearing."

In the hands of the WWF, Dusty Rhodes was turned from working-class hero to working-class minstrel. McMahon, a decade later, became a wrestling character himself, the evil boss man Mr. McMahon. He was so effective at that because it was—not unlike the old Dusty Rhodes—the amplification of his true self. Vince McMahon is a ruthless right-winger with a



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY GRACE TOOHEY

Damon Briggs, 39, cracks a joke in his home in Silver Spring where he lives with his parents. Briggs has moderate to severe cerebral palsy, which affects his ability to walk and grasp small objects, but he explains that it doesn't impact any of his cognitive abilities or social skills, which is why it frustrates him that transportation issues limit his ability to go out into the community.

"When you have a service like paratransit, that is unfortunately the only game in town for some people," Rice said. "Paratransit really thinks they can get away with the stuff that they pull."

There are some private businesses that offer more reliable transportation services, but they are overwhelmingly pricey, especially for people on a fixed income from the government. Mobility costs riders \$1.85 per ride no matter the distance, while many private companies will have a flat rate of at least \$50.

Damon Briggs of Silver Spring refuses to use paratransit services. He could use MetroAccess, which serves Montgomery and Prince George's counties, but the stories he said he heard from friends made him opt out—

which means many days he's stuck at home.

"I'm always wanting to go out, because I like to meet people and I like to talk to people," said Briggs, 39, who has moderate to severe cerebral palsy. When he has his personal support staff with him, which is three days a week, they will go out in his staff's car or in a taxi.

"I'm a person first, I have a right to want to be socially included in society," Briggs said. "We want to be recognized as a help to society instead of as a hindrance."

Briggs is working on jump-starting a non-profit, the National Organization for the Physically Challenged, to ensure people with challenges are in-

See RIDERS Page A12

Again, this piece is not about Virgil Runnels. It's about the power of Dusty Rhodes in very dark times to make a fake character as real as can be: the last gasp of a multiracial working-class culture being smothered to death by neoliberal economics and deindustrialization. Yet if Virgil Runnels had to die, Dusty Rhodes never will. He lives on in the form of a new wrestler with a big belly and big heinie named Kevin Owens, currently taking this world by storm. He also lives on anywhere that the poor of every color can find common space and language in a culture that thrives on division. In this world of sports fakery, he was real as hunger. He was "The American Dream" Dusty Rhodes, and in so many ways, more real than the dream itself.