

The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Since 1932

Vol. 83, No. 41 October 8 — October 14, 2015 Prince George's County, Maryland Newspaper of Record Phone: 301-627-0900 25 cents

Why Being There Matters

By PRESS OFFICER
NOCO

On our planet, more than 70 percent of which is covered by water, being there means having the ability to act from the sea. The Navy is uniquely positioned to be there; the world's oceans give the Navy the power to protect America's interests anywhere, and at any time. Your Navy protects and defends America on the world's oceans. Navy ships, submarines, aircraft and, most importantly, tens of thousands of America's finest young men and women are deployed around the world doing just that. They are there now. They will be there when we are sleeping tonight. They will be there every Saturday, Sunday and holiday this year. They are there around the clock, far from our shores, defending America at all times.



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS COREY T. JONES/RELEASED

U.S. Navy Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Ericson Ramirez from Oxon Hill, Md. participates in a general quarters drill aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Lassen (DDG 82). Lassen is on patrol in the 7th Fleet area of operation in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Residents Are Reminded to Sign-Up for Alert Prince George's, the County's Notification System

By PRESS OFFICER
PG County Government

LANDOVER, MD—The Prince George's County Office of Homeland Security, reminds residents to sign up for Alert Prince George's. Formerly, Notify Me Prince George's, Alert Prince George's offers residents businesses and visitors an opportunity to receive timely and secure emergency notifications and alerts during a major crisis or event. In addition, Alert Prince George's provides various updates regarding severe

weather, utility problems, severe traffic or major road closures.

Alert Prince George's offers customizable features that allow registrants to set personal account preferences. You may opt to receive information about a specific neighborhood such as your home or workplace or your child's school. You can also select your preferred delivery method such as text, email or a phone call. Users can also create

See ALERT Page A6



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY SHARADHA KALYANAM

Congressman Chris Van Hollen addressing the media at the Baltimore County Courthouse as Attorney General Brian Frosh looks on.

Van Hollen: Nation Must Adopt Maryland's Gun Laws to Lower Homicides

By SHARADHA KALYANAM
Capital News Service

TOWSON, MD—Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Kensington, said Wednesday that Maryland's handgun licensing law must be expanded nationwide to reduce gun homicides.

"We can pass laws that will reduce gun deaths here in Maryland. But we can reduce them even more in Maryland and around the country if other states follow suit," Van Hollen said at a

press conference at the Baltimore County Courthouse.

He and other Maryland officials spoke on the eve of the second anniversary of a sweeping Maryland gun control law that outlawed assault weapons, limited ammunition magazines to 10 rounds and tightened handgun licensing requirements. The law was passed in response to the December 2012 mass shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., that killed 26 people.

Van Hollen has proposed a federal bill that would encourage states to require handgun buyers to have permits. So far, the bill has seen no action in the House.

Van Hollen added that his legislation would authorize funding and resources for other states to adopt gun safety laws similar to those in Maryland.

The congressman said that two recent studies by the Center for Gun Policy and Research at Johns Hopkins Uni-

versity's Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore found a connection between licensing laws and firearms-related deaths.

Data from Connecticut and Missouri were used in these studies.

Gun-related homicide rates in Connecticut dropped by 40 percent during the first 10 years after the handgun licensing law was implemented

See GUN LAWS Page A3

Filmmakers Team With Prince George's County Memorial Library System to Develop "The Prince George's Memorial Project: Capturing Our Legacy With Home Movies & Photographs"

By PRESS OFFICER
PGMP

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System will provide strategic counsel and support services to the PRINCE GEORGE'S MEMORY PROJECT, a community heritage and arts project that has been developed by local filmmakers O.F. Makarah and Matthew White. Through the use of home movies, photographs, and other visual artifacts from County residents and institutions, this project will tell the story of the County through the lens of amateur filmmakers and photographers.

"We will be showcasing the County's complex and rich history through very personal visual materials and memories," said O.F. Makarah, a co-Director of the Memory Project and an internationally renowned filmmaker who founded the Heritage Film Festival in Bowie,

Maryland. "The community will contribute to the creative process by digging deep into their basements and attics for films and photographs, and by providing personal memories of their interactions within Prince George's. Next summer, we'll all enjoy this in a series of film screenings and workshops throughout the County."

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System will help community members participate in the project by scanning photographs, assessing the restoration and digitization of home movies, and providing "drop off" locations throughout the County for the submission of archival media to the Memory Project. In addition, the Library System will have information about the project and its development. Library facilities are in the following locations: Accokeek, Baden, Beltsville, Bladensburg, Bowie, Fairmount Heights, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hillcrest Heights,



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S MEMORY PROJECT

Hyattsville, Largo Kettering, Laurel, Mount Rainier, New Carrollton, Oxon Hill, South Bowie, Spaldings, Surratts Clinton, and Upper Marlboro.

"We have equipped our community libraries with new digital media tools that will be particularly helpful in support of this project," said Robin Jacobson, Director of Community Engagement for the Prince George's County Memorial Li-

brary System. "We encourage the preservation of our County's visual media heritage, and look forward with great anticipation to the revelation of treasured images and artifacts of our community's history."

Prince George's County, named for Prince George of

See FILMMAKERS Page A6

October 18 is Jr. Journalists Day at the Laurel Museum

By PRESS OFFICER
Laurel Historical Society

LAUREL, MD—Sunday, October 18, 2015 is Jr. Journalists Day at the Laurel Museum. The Jr. Journalists will create their own front page—using news from their own lives, or historical information they've discovered. Hands-on activities will include exploring historic print and newly digitized versions of the Laurel Leader covering the years 1897–2008. The program is designed to provide an afternoon of fun, with an underlying goal of demonstrating the critical role newspapers play in saving history—especially in small communities. The free program will run from 1:30-3:30 pm.

Jr. Journalist Day is part of "The Rest of the Story" a program series designed to complement *Ripped from the Headlines: Laurel in the News*, the current exhibit at the Museum, which runs through December 21. The Laurel Museum is open Wednesdays and Fridays 10-2, Sundays 1-4. Group tours by

appointment. Admission is free. The John Calder Brennan research library, which includes newly digitized copies of The Laurel Leader from 1897-2008 is open by appointment Monday-Friday. The Laurel Museum is located at 817 Main Street, Laurel, Md. Contact info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org or visit www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org.



PHOTO COURTESY LAUREL MUSEUM
1972 Laurel News Leader Reporting Hurricane Agnes

INSIDE

Maryland Sets Path For Release of New Assessment Results

The new assessment data will help tell parents and teachers what younger students need to know to advance to the next grade. For older students, the information will help gauge if they are learning what is necessary to graduate ready for college without needing remediation.

Community, Page A3

Project Ready: A Pipeline to Post-Secondary Success

Project Ready students make academic progress, benefit from cultural enrichment opportunities and develop important skills, attitudes and aptitudes that will help them make the transition from high school and position them for post-secondary success.

Commentary, Page A4

Limited Access to Primary Care Could Be Crowding Maryland's Emergency Rooms

According to the CDC, the flu vaccination offered reduced protection this season. The number of alerts from the first three months of 2015 is already greater than the number of alerts for the first half of 2014 in 11 hospitals in the state.

Business, Page A5

Movie Review: "Z for Zachariah"

In the wake of a nuclear war, a young woman survives on her own, fearing she may actually be the proverbial last woman on earth, until she discovers the most astonishing sight of her life: another human being. A distraught scientist, he's nearly been driven mad by radiation exposure and his desperate search for others.

Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

Are the California redwoods in danger because of the drought?

— Jesse Pollman,
Seattle, WA

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

It's Adopt-A-Dog Month: Check out savings on dog purchases at Animal Services Facility

Celebrate National Adopt-A-Dog Month by finding your new BFF (best friend forever) at the Animal Services Facility in Upper Marlboro. Throughout the month of October, the Animal Management Division is reducing adoption fees to \$125 (normally \$225) for anyone who adopts a dog from the Prince George's County Animal Services Facility.

There are dogs of every size and breed available for adoption at the Facility, and their helpful staff will support you every step of the way—from finding the best dog for your family and lifestyle to scheduling a spay or neuter surgery.

To view all the dogs and other pets available at the Animal Services Facility, visit www.princegeorgespets4us.com. You may also see the pets in person by visiting the Facility at 3750 Brown Station Road in Upper Marlboro.

The reduced adoption fee covers microchipping, pet licensing fee, rabies, distemper and bordetella shots, heartworm medicine and spay/neuter surgery cost.

Call for adoption hours or other information at 301-780-7200.

Help Skyline School restore their greenhouse

Skyline School has a greenhouse in much need of repair. If you are a graduate—or just a friend—of Skyline School, consider sending \$10 towards landscaping. A check can be made out to Skyline Elementary School and mailed to 6311 Randolph Road, Suitland, MD 20746. Include a note with your name and, if you are an alum, the year of graduating from the school. Specify: "For the greenhouse."

Neighbors

The Morningside Volunteer Fire Department was honored by Senator C. Anthony Muse of Maryland's 26th Legislative District, for its more than 70 years of service to the community, at the Sept. 16 meeting of

the Skyline Citizens Association. The Senator presented the Official Citation to Fire Chief Michael Poetker and other members of the Department.

Senator Muse mentioned that he loved cutting a car open (for rescue) at the Morningside VFD Open House last year.

Herbert Smith, of Skyline, has retired from the D.C. Police Department after 20 years' service.

Coming up at the K of C

The Knights of Columbus, St. Pius X Council, is hosting two special events in October:

The first is a presentation on Identity Theft by an expert, on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 7 to 8 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

The second is the Children's Halloween Party on Sunday, Oct. 25, 2 to 4 p.m. The party includes a Haunted House, hotdogs, candy, crafts and FUN!

Both events are free and open to the public, and will be held at 3611 Stewart Road in Forestville.

Congratulations!

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) recently won the prestigious 2015 National Gold Medal Award for excellence in Parks and Recreation Management—the highest award given to parks and recreation agencies.

Changing landscape

Every Monday and Thursday evening during October the Capital Wheel at National Harbor will use its 1.6 million, fully-programmable LED lights to display the color purple in Recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* Playground had its grand opening Sept. 25 at Watkins Regional Park in Upper Marlboro. The six different play areas are: Dorothy's farm, Munchkin Land, the Emerald Forest, Emerald City, the balloon escape and ruby slipper slides.

Maryland State Highway Administration recently started construction on a 2.2-mile project on Pennsylvania Avenue between Forestville Road and Silver Hill Road. Road excavation, repair and concrete replacement

will cause temporary lane closures. Also, new sidewalks, bike paths, traffic signals and lighting will be added.

Morningside memories

Fifty-five years ago, October 1960, the Post Office began house-to-house mail delivery. No longer did Morningsiders have to go up Suitland Road to pick up their mail.

Thirty-five years ago, October 1980, Cable TV came to town, after the Morningside Council approved the franchise with Jones Television Cable Company.

Remembering Sarge and Alice Kofink

James C. Kofink Sr. and his wife of 61 years, Sophie Alice Decker Kofink, died this year, James on Feb. 22 and Alice on July 6. They both died in their home of 55 years in Forest Heights.

James "Sarge" was born in Scranton and Alice in Philadelphia, where they met. He served with the Army during the Korean War and then worked as a sorter at the Main Post Office in Washington. He bowled with the Postal Bowling League. Alice was a volunteer guide and interpreter for the blind, lunch lady at Flintstone Elementary, and a Sunday school teacher for 47 years. Together they helped with youth programs including the DC Youth Orchestra, and at Oxon Hill Children's Farm where they hand-cranked ice cream and made cornhusk dolls. Survivors include four children, nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

James and Alice donated their bodies to science through the Maryland State Board of Anatomy. A memorial service was held for them July 25 at Forest Heights Baptist Church.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Greta Chambers, Oct. 9; Marvin Burkhart, his 97th (!) on Oct. 10; Mary Deans, Oct. 11; and Tj Foster, Oct. 12.

Happy 62nd anniversary to Daisy and Ralph Young on Oct. 15.

Oxon Hill, Maryland will be the speaker. Thursday, October 29, 2015 Rev. Dr. William H. Curtis from Mt. Ararat Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania will be the speaker.

Westphalia United Methodist Church is located at 9363 D'Arcy Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland, 20774. If additional information is needed you can visit www.westphaliaum.org or call 301-735-9373.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT & VENDOR FAIR

Please join other crafters by participating in the Christmas Craft & Vendor Fair on December 5, 2015 from 8:30 AM-2:30 PM. Crafter/Vendor Set-ups 7-8:30 AM, Saturday, December 5th. Location is our Family Life Center of New Hope Fellowship-Nottingham Myers United Methodist Church. Address is 15601 Brooks Church Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 (located 9 miles off route 301). Over 100 families in our Cooperative Parish. To reserve your space or get more information please email Newhopeevent@gmail.com or call 301-627-0028. You must bring your own table.

Neighborhood Events

Edwards Statement on Pope Francis' Historic Address to Congress

Washington, D.C.—Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-4) issued the following statement regarding the historic address to a Joint Meeting of Congress by Pope Francis of the Holy See.

"For the first time in our nation's history, a pontiff addressed a Joint Meeting of Congress. It was a historic event that was equaled by The Holy Father Pope Francis' inspirational message of peace, tolerance, hope, and a call to action. I was particularly grateful to hear him stress the importance of working together to end poverty, embrace immigration reform, abolish the death penalty, and address the threat of global climate change. As someone who has worked for many years on U.S.-Cuban relations, I appreciated his words 'When countries which have been at odds resume the path of dialogue—a dialogue which may have been interrupted for the most legitimate of reasons—new opportunities open up for all.'"

"In the days ahead, Congress must act on several critical issues, which includes avoiding another government shutdown. It is my sincere hope that partisan politics can be put aside, and that we can take inspiration from Pope Francis' words here today to build bridges and work together in the best interest of the American people."

Edwards Statement on Another Republican Bill That Limits Women's Health Care Choices

Washington, D.C.—Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards (MD-4) issued the following statement regarding H.R. 3495, the Women's Public Health and Safety Act. The bill passed the House 236-193.

One of the first acts of the Republican House majority in 2011 was to drive us to the brink of a government shutdown over defunding Planned Parenthood. Now, four years later, they are once again ignoring their responsibility to govern in order to appease the most conservative wing of their caucus and are back to threatening another Republican government shutdown over Planned Parenthood. For many low-income women and women of color, Planned Parenthood is the only place in their local community where they can go and receive care. I was one of those people who went to Planned Parenthood when I didn't have other primary care options during college. Whether it is primary care or preventive care, including lifesaving cancer screenings or testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), this is about much more than just women's access to birth control.

It has been federal policy for many years that federal funds cannot be used for abortion, except in cases of rape, incest, or when the mother's life is threatened. This legislation aims to deny women's reproductive choices and limit critical health care services for millions of women across the country, many from our most vulnerable communities.



Congresswoman
Donna F. Edwards

With less than 32 hours until yet another Republican government shutdown, valuable time was lost today on this purely ideological bill, while House Republicans wait for the Senate to act on a continuing resolution to fund the federal government. Once again, working families deserve better, and the Republican leadership must do better. Let's work together to move the country forward by ensuring the federal government stays open, protecting jobs by reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank, and passing a long-term infrastructure bill."

WSSC Bonds Receive "AAA" Ratings

Finance Office Also Receives Industry Recognition for 21st Consecutive Year

Laurel—WSSC has earned "AAA" bond ratings by all three ratings agencies: Fitch Ratings, Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investor Service. Fitch Ratings said in a statement, "The 'AAA' rating primarily reflects the wealth and extraordinary diversity of Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission District's bi-county tax base, Montgomery and Prince George's counties."

In another achievement, earlier this month, WSSC received the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 21st consecutive year. "This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting and represents a significant achievement" by the WSSC Finance Office, the association said in a statement.

"The AAA bond ratings and GFOA award confirm our commitment to fiscal responsibility and producing a budget that is informative and transparent for our customers," said Jerry N. Johnson, WSSC General Manager/CEO. "I commend our Finance Office for their dedication to maintaining the highest possible standards in carrying out their vital role for the Commission, and the 1.8 million residents we serve on a daily basis."

The GFOA award was presented to the WSSC Budget Group for its Fiscal Year 2016 budget. To qualify for the award, WSSC had to meet guidelines that judge how well the budget document served as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide and communications device. Budget documents must be rated "proficient" in all four categories, as well as 14 mandatory criteria within those categories to receive the award.

The GFOA of the United States and Canada is a non-profit professional association serving more than 17,500 governmental finance professionals throughout North America. The GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards program is the only national awards program in governmental budgeting.

The bond rating news comes as WSSC prepares to issue \$390 million of Consolidated Public Improvement Bonds to fund capital improvement projects. That is expected next month. This will allow WSSC to continue addressing its aging infrastructure through reconstruction programs.

County Council Introduces Legislation Endorsing a Statewide, Mandatory Sick and Safe Leave Requirement

Legislation will make a Statewide Sick and Safe Leave Law among the Council's Highest 2016 General Assembly Priorities

The Prince George's County Council, during Council session on Tuesday, September 15, 2015, introduced CR-52-2015, legislation endorsing a statewide requirement for Mandatory Sick and Safe Leave for residents in Prince George's County and across the State of Maryland. This legislation was proposed by Council Chairman Mel Franklin (D) – District 9, Council Vice-Chair Derrick Leon Davis (D) – District 6, Council Member Andrea Harrison (D) – District 5 and Council Member Todd Turner (D) – District 4, and co-sponsored by Council Member Deni Taveras (D) – District 2.

If the General Assembly follows the proposed endorsement of CR-52-2015, workers across the State of Maryland would have access to earned sick and safe leave at a rate of one (1) hour for every thirty (30) hours an employee works in the County, up to at least fifty-six (56) hours or seven (7) work days in a calendar year. According to CR-52-2015, "The lack of paid sick and safe leave forces Marylanders across the State to come to work when ill or send sick children to school or day care because they have no ability to earn paid sick and safe leave." The benefit of a statewide sick and safe leave standard is the business community in each jurisdiction would be on a level playing field in competition between jurisdictions.

The legislation also supports a requirement that "survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking be able to use earned sick and safe leave to seek medical care, shelter, legal assistance, and services from domestic violence service providers." CR-52-2015 will make the establishment of a statewide standard for earned sick and safe leave "one of the Prince George's County Council's highest legislative priorities in the Maryland General Assembly's 2016 legislative session."

CR-52-2015 has been referred to the Council's Planning, Zoning and Economic Development (PZED) Committee to evaluate the economic impact of the proposal.

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

ACADEMIC FAIRS

Prince George's County Public Schools will host two Academic Fairs. One Academic Fair will be held Wednesday, October 14, 2015 from 6:00 PM- 8:00 PM at Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr., High School. The school is located at 12650 Brooke Lane, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772.

At the Fair you will learn more about the PreK-12 Academic Programs available to students and Career Academics. You will be able to talk with program directors, teachers and students. Learn how and when to apply for/register your child for these programs. Take away informational brochures and flyers. To obtain more information visit <http://www1.pgcps.org/academicfair> or e-mail academicfair@pgcps.org.

THE GREAT JACK O' LANTERN CAMPFIRE

Saturday, October 24, 2015 from 7-8:30 PM, rain date October 25, 6:00 PM visit Darnall's Chance House Museum and enjoy popcorn, hot cider and marshmallows. Children can win a prize on a hunt for glowing Jack o'lanterns. All ages/fee: \$4 per person (Cash Only). If

you need additional information please call 301-952-8010; TTY 301-699-2544.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Happy Birthday to Gerald Adams, Denette Chew, Terrence Chew, Wanda Contee, Curtis Eugene, Anthony Lewis, Regina McGlone-Smith, Crystal Savoy, Sean Simms, Cynthia Wilkerson and Jameka Williams who are celebrating their birthdays during the month of October.

REVIVAL WEEK

Join us for our Revival at Westphalia United Methodist Church. Rev. Dr. Timothy West, Senior Pastor beginning Monday, October 26, 2015 thru Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 7:30 PM each night. Monday, October 26, 2015 Rev. Dr. Jerry Carter from Calvary Baptist Church, Morristown, New Jersey will be the speaker. Tuesday, October 27, 2015 Rev. B. Kevin Smalls from Queens Chapel United Methodist Church Beltsville, Maryland and Ebenezer United Methodist Church, Washington, DC. Wednesday, October 28, 2015 Rev. Daryl Williams from S. Paul United Methodist Church,

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Nathaniel Sillin

10 Open Enrollment Mistakes to Avoid

How much time do you spend reviewing your benefits before open enrollment each year?

If your answer is “not much,” you’re not alone. A recent survey by insurer Aflac (<http://workforces.aflac.com/about-the-study.php>) says that 90 percent of Americans choose the same benefits year after year and that 42 percent forego up to \$750 annually by making poor choices.



Rushing through annual benefits updates or making such uninformed decisions in insurance, retirement or other workplace-based benefits are actually part of a bigger story. Open enrollment is just one part of an overall financial plan: Unfortunately, too many employees see it as the only financial planning they have to do all year.

In reality, a safe financial future depends mostly on the savings, investing and spending decisions you make outside the workplace. As many employers are looking to shrink or discontinue the retirement and health benefits they offer, it’s time to take a fresh look at open enrollment.

Here are 10 benefits mistakes you might want to avoid.

- 1. Not having an overall financial plan.** Your company may offer excellent benefits now. However, the Labor Department reports that average worker tenure at U.S. companies is only 4.6 years, so the biggest open enrollment mistake might be assuming your current benefits assure your financial future. It’s important to work alone or with qualified advisors to determine the right work-based benefits as part of overall spending, savings and investment activities throughout your lifetime.
- 2. Making choices at the last minute.** Your benefits are important and deserve time for consideration. Put your open enrollment dates on your personal calendar with a reminder a few weeks ahead of time to coordinate with qualified advisors if you have them.
- 3. Forgetting to coordinate with your spouse or partner.** Many employers are planning big changes to spouse/partner benefits. While the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) lets parents keep children on their health plans until age 26, more employers are instituting “spousal surcharges” or excluding spousal coverage altogether if they already have access to employer health insurance.
- 4. Ignoring your state’s Health Insurance Marketplace.** Even if you have employer health insurance, things change. If you lose a job or cannot stay on your spouse or partner’s health plan, it might be worthwhile to familiarize yourself with your state’s ACA-mandated health insurance marketplace ahead of time.
- 5. Underestimating how big life events might affect your benefits.** Salary changes, marriage, divorce, serious illness or starting a family are big signals to check your benefits, preferably well in advance of open enrollment. Think through every potential situation you might face and ask questions about how those changes might affect your benefit selections.
- 6. Passing on flexible spending accounts (FSAs) and health savings accounts (HSAs).** FSAs are workplace-based accounts that allow you to set aside money on a pre-tax basis to help you pay for healthcare and dependent care expenses during the calendar year. HSAs, if you qualify, also allow you to set aside pre-tax dollars in a qualified investment or savings account for long-and-short term medical expenses not covered by insurance. They don’t require you to spend out those funds every year. Your workplace benefits counselor, qualified financial advisor and Internal Revenue Service Publication 969 can assist with eligibility, types of accounts, contribution limits and tax issues associated with these choices.
- 7. Leaving retirement selections unchanged.** As the Aflac data indicates, many individuals don’t change their investment focus in self-directed retirement plans for years. That’s why reviewing options in advance is essential.
- 8. Overlooking wellness options.** Many employers pay for exercise, cholesterol screenings, weight loss, smoking cessation, immunizations or related benefits that can make you healthier, save money and possibly lower health premiums.
- 9. Bypassing transportation breaks.** If you drive or take public or company-sponsored transportation to and from work, you may qualify for specific discounts or tax deductions. IRS Publication 15-B covers these programs and how to use them most effectively.
- 10. Forgetting education benefits.** If an employer is willing to train you to advance in your career, don’t pass it up. However, get advice on the possibility of tax liability for these benefits. Separately, check out employer-sponsored education grant or scholarship awards for you or your kids—that can be free money.

Bottom line: Open enrollment is just one piece of a well-organized financial puzzle. Make sure your employer provided benefits choices compliment savings, investing and spending decisions you’re making on your own.

Maryland Sets Path For Release of New Assessment Results

High School Data in October; Elementary & Middle in December

By PRESS OFFICER
MSDE

BALTIMORE, MD—The Maryland State Department of Education will unveil the first round of state-level data from new state assessments in October.

Officials will release statewide data on the high school tests in algebra and English 10 at the October 27 meeting of the Maryland State Board of Education. State data for the elementary and middle school assessments in mathematics and reading/English language arts will follow at the December 8 state board meeting. Home reports will be issued in November for high school students and December for elementary and middle school students.

“This will be baseline data, and will provide educators and parents with a snapshot of where Maryland students are at this point in time on this assessment,” said Dr. Jack Smith, Interim State Superintendent of Schools. “State assessments are just one measure to use when viewing student progress; they

provide Marylanders with an important data point from which to build.”

These will mark the first data release involving Maryland students who took the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests given last spring for the first time. As with any major new assessment, the test results were subject to a performance level setting process, which took place late this summer. Future PARCC test results will be available sooner as more students are assessed online. More than 82 percent of students took online assessments during the first administration. Paper-pencil assessments are available as needed in the first three years.

The PARCC assessments are aligned to Maryland’s College and Career Ready Standards, which set a higher bar for student learning. The tests go beyond the old “fill in the blank” model of standardized tests, and include more writing and analytical thinking.

PARCC represents a complete reset of Maryland’s ac-

countability program. Data on the new exams will not be comparable to results of the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), which the State used for a decade. The MSA results were based on the previous academic standards, which have not been in use since 2013–14. Some systems began implementation of the new College and Career Ready Standards as early as 2011–12.

The new assessment data will help tell parents and teachers what younger students need to know to advance to the next grade. For older students, the information will help gauge if they are learning what is necessary to graduate ready for college without needing remediation, or are prepared for more complex and higher paying jobs. A low score on PARCC does not mean a child is failing to learn, but rather that improvement is needed to reach new grade-level expectations.

Thirteen Maryland educators were involved in the performance setting process on the new test late this summer, dur-

ing which experts set the following levels:

- Level 5
Exceeded Expectations
- Level 4
Met Expectations
- Level 3
Approached Expectations
- Level 2
Partially Met Expectations
- Level 1
Did Not Yet Meet Expectations

The MSA had just three performance levels and were set at a less rigorous target. The result: most students were considered proficient in the subject matter when Maryland adopted the plan for higher standards and more advanced assessment in 2010. This pattern of raising standards and creating new assessments has been in place in Maryland since the 1980s.

The new PARCC assessments are designed to eliminate the need for additional coursework before students take credit-bearing courses beyond high school. Levels 4 and 5 indicate readiness for postsecondary education.

Gun Laws from A1

in 1995, according to one Hopkins study published in the American Journal of Public Health.

Dr. Daniel Webster, director of the Hopkins center who co-authored the study, said that Connecticut laws requiring background checks and a permit to buy a gun were very effective in preventing illegal gun use.

“There are roughly two firearm suicides for every four firearm homicides across the board in the United States,” he said.

Webster said that there was a two-fold increase in the diversion of guns into illegal use and a 25 percent increase in gun-related murders over the three years after a permit law was repealed in Missouri, a fact underscored in the Hopkins study.

“We saw no change whatsoever in homicides committed by other means associated with that law,” Webster said, talking about another study he co-authored and published in the Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine.

Webster said that the single largest contributor of illegal handguns to Maryland was Virginia. Van Hollen added that Pennsylvania and West Virginia were also contributing.

Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh said that he would send the results of the studies to attorneys general across the country to encourage them to pass what he called “common sense” legislation like Maryland’s.

This step to encourage other states to implement gun laws identical to Maryland comes

weeks after former Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley called for cutting the deaths due to gun-violence in half over the next decade.

O’Malley said that the national age requirement for all handgun purchases and possession should be increased from 18 to 21.

A candidate for the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination, O’Malley said that a national arms registry should be set up to track guns associated with violence and death. He discussed a comprehensive strategy with gun control advocates and people affected by gun violence at a roundtable in New York earlier this month.

Opponents of the legislation argued that past handgun safety laws have proven ineffective.

John Josselyn, legislative vice president of the Associated

Gun Clubs of Baltimore, said that Van Hollen’s legislation would not fix the problem of firearms violence.

Van Hollen and gun control advocates noted the role poverty plays in handgun violence, Josselyn said. “It’s the breakdown of the American families. That’s where the crime comes from. It isn’t the firearms,” he said, talking to reporters after the press conference.

Josselyn questioned the findings from the Bloomberg study because “Michael Bloomberg (the former New York City mayor and philanthropist who donated funds to set up the institute) is a one-man campaign to ban guns.”

“You really think they are going to say anything but what he wants them to say?” Josselyn asked.

New Report Says: 6% of Maryland’s Bridges Are in Need of Repairs

By ALICIA MCELHANEY
Capital News service

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Maryland ranked 13th in the nation in 2014 for lowest percentage of structurally deficient bridges, which officials attribute to the state’s focus on funding and safety inspections.

Although 6 percent of Maryland’s bridges are in poor or worse condition, and while the state and its local governments designate a lower percentage of their highway and transportation funding for bridge repairs than most other states, officials say Maryland’s bridge program is doing well.

“Our bridges are in really good shape,” said Charlie Gischlar, spokesperson for the State Highway Administration. “There are a few that are starting to outlive their natural lives, though.”

The report containing the rankings was released Wednesday by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association, a group that advocates for infrastructure and transportation investment. Of the state’s 5,305

bridges, the report showed that 317 are structurally deficient, which means at least one of the bridges’ parts—the deck, superstructure or substructure—are in poor condition.

The State Highway Administration is responsible for far fewer bridges than the reported number, which includes bridges maintained by the federal and county governments as well as by railroad companies, Gischlar said.

The SHA is responsible for 2,570 bridges, 81 of which are in need of repair, Gischlar said. Of those, 21 already have construction underway, he added, including the most traveled structurally deficient bridge—the inner loop of Interstate 695 over U.S. Route 1, Amtrak and Leeds Avenue.

“If [the bridges] are not under construction, they are awaiting it,” Gischlar said. “Every two years at least we inspect the bridges.”

The state designates 25 percent of highway and bridge contract awards for bridge construction, approximately \$1.01 billion over the past five years

according to the report. On average, a state directs 29 percent of that sort of funding to bridge repairs, according to the report.

“One thing that Maryland is doing right with the initiative they passed years ago [is increasing] funding to transportation,” Alison Black, chief economist at the American Road & Transportation Builders Association, said. “The challenge is that state officials are trying to do the best they can. There is not enough money right now.”

States have been left in limbo, uncertain about how much money transportation departments will see after May 31, as a self-imposed Congressional deadline to renew federal transportation funds looms.

“In addition to putting our families in danger, aging infrastructure drags down economic growth,” said Rep. John Delaney, D-Potomac in a press release. “Marylanders deserve better, and with the Highway Trust Fund on the brink of insolvency, it’s critical that Congress enact a long-term plan to bring our out-of-date infrastructure up to speed.”

And while Congress delays, structurally deficient bridges can, in rare cases, harm drivers.

“Just this past February, a chunk of concrete fell from the I-495/95 Bridge located in Morningside over Suitland Road in Prince George’s County,” Ragina Cooper Averella, Public and Government Affairs Manager at AAA Mid-Atlantic, said in an email. “The bridge was listed on the structurally deficient list. As a result of that incident, Transportation Secretary Pete Rahn ordered the immediate inspection of 27 bridges, a move that AAA Mid-Atlantic applauded.”

While actual hazards like bridge collapses or falling chunks of concrete are rare, Black said, drivers still need to be concerned.

“That’s the extreme case of what happens when we don’t deal with our infrastructure problems,” Black said. “People need to let it be known that they care about investing in infrastructure ... the amount of investment to really move the needle and improve some of the conditions.”

ADVERTISE! in The Prince George’s Post Call Today 301 627 0900

COMMENTARY

Rushern L. Baker, III Executive of Prince George's County



The Passing of William W. Gullett, Prince George's County's First County Executive

Upper Marlboro, MD—Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III released this statement following news of the recent passing of former Prince George's County Executive William W. Gullett, who was Prince George's County's first County Executive from 1971-1974. Mr. Gullett, age 93, died on September 24th. County Executive Baker will also order all Prince George's County flags to be lowered at half-staff in honor of County Executive Gullett.

"My thoughts and prayers, along with my fellow Prince Georgians, are with the Gullett family during their time of grief."

Bill Gullett is an important figure in Prince George's County history. As Prince George's County's first County Executive under a Charter form of government initiated in 1971, Mr. Gullett's administration had to lay a foundation, framework and create precedents that still remain relevant to the citizens of this County over 40 years later. Although the County he governed was very different than what it is today, our Charter form of government has remained and still prevails to best serve the interests of our citizens.

Although he will be remembered as our first County Executive, Mr. Gullett's life was distinguished in many ways. During World War II, he was a B17 Army Air Corp pilot who flew dangerous missions over Europe from his base in England. After the war, Mr. Gullett returned to civilian life as a chemical engineer; with 21 patents in the field of metallurgy. He then turned his skills to politics, becoming a three term Mayor of the City of College Park before winning the first election ever for Prince George's County Executive. As the first County Executive, Mr. Gullett succeeded in making the new form of charter government work for the citizens of this County while overcoming the political challenges that he, as a Republican County Executive, had with a Democratic controlled County Council during an incredibly tenuous time period both in Prince George's County and national politics.

For his fortitude to lead this County as the first County Executive during difficult times, and for his gracious assistance as an advisor to Prince George's County Executives that followed him, Prince George's County is eternally grateful for the service of William W. Gullett."



The Carousel at Watkins Park

Open to the Public

PHOTO BY LEGUSTA FLOYD, JR.

ANTIQUA CHESAPEAKE CAROUSEL & MINIATURE TRAIN

Watkins Regional Park features an authentic, hand-carved, hand-painted, 80-year-old carousel which has a rare combination of 45 animals including a kangaroo, jackass, goat, and seahorse. Do not miss the train as it passes through the lovely, wooded surroundings nearby. The park is located at 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD. The carousel and train are open Memorial Day–Labor Day, Tues.–Sun., 10 a.m.–7 p.m. • 301-218-6761.

Child Watch by Marion Wright Edelman



The Piercing Cry of Child Poverty in Economically Rich But Spiritually Poor America

"Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry."
—Pope Francis

"Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings."
—President Nelson Mandela

Pope Francis speaks out faithfully and forcefully against poverty and has been called "the pope of the poor." But on his first visit to the United States there was demoralizing news about poverty, especially child poverty, in our nation—the world's largest economy.

Despite six years of economic recovery, children remain the poorest group in America. Children are poor if they live in a family of four with an annual income below \$24,418—\$2,035 a month, \$470 a week, \$67 a day. Extreme poverty is income less than half this. New Census Bureau data reveal that nearly one-third of the 46.7 million poor people in the United States in 2014 were children. Of the more than 15.5 million poor children, 70 percent were children of color who already constitute the majority of our nation's youngest children and will be the majority of all our children by 2020. They continue to be disproportionately poor: 37 percent of Black children and 32 percent of Hispanic children are poor compared to 12 percent of White, non-Hispanic children. This is morally scandalous and economically costly. Every year we let millions of children remain poor costs our nation over \$500 billion as a result of lost productivity and extra health and crime costs stemming from child poverty.

The Black child poverty rate increased 10 percent between 2013 and 2014 while rates for children of other races and ethnicities declined slightly. The Black extreme child poverty rate increased 13 percent with nearly 1 in 5 Black children living in extreme poverty. Although the Hispanic child

poverty rate fell slightly, Hispanic children remain our largest number of poor children.

Shamefully the youngest and most vulnerable children are our poorest during their years of greatest brain development. Nearly 1 in 4 children under five is poor and almost half live in extreme poverty. More than 40 percent of Black children under five are poor and nearly 25 percent of young Black children are extremely poor.

Children's chances of being poor depend partly on the lottery of geography which is why a national safety net for all our children to escape poverty is essential. God did not make 50 different classes of children and Mississippi's children are as precious as Massachusetts' children and all of their basic survival needs, health care and nutrition and housing, should be provided.

New state data show child poverty rates in 2014 remained at record high levels across 40 states, with only 10 states showing significant declines between 2013 and 2014. In 22 states, 40 percent or more Black children were poor. In 32 states, more than 30 percent of Hispanic children were poor. And in 24 states, more than 30 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native chil-

dren were poor. Only Hawaii had a Black child poverty rate below 20 percent while only two states, Kentucky and West Virginia, had White, non-Hispanic child poverty rates over 20 percent.

The rates are staggering, especially when we know there are steps Congress could take right now to end child poverty and save taxpayer money now and in the future. In CDF's recent Ending Child Poverty Now report based on an analysis by the non-partisan Urban Institute, we proposed nine policy changes which would immediately reduce child poverty 60 percent and Black child poverty 72 percent and lift the floor of decency for 97 percent of all poor children by ensuring parents the resources to support and nurture their children: jobs with livable wages, affordable high-quality child care, supports for working families like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), and safety nets for basic needs like nutrition, housing assistance and child support.

Yet Congress is perilously close again to making the wrong choices that would make many more children and families poor

See WATCH, Page A5

Marc Morial, President and CEO National Urban League



Project Ready: A Pipeline to Post-Secondary Success

"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

—Malcolm X

Our nation's high schools are in a state of troubling crisis. Too many of our students are graduating ill-equipped for the academic rigors of college and, ultimately, the challenges and needs of today's global, high-tech economy.

For many of our high school graduates, earning a college degree will be their first step on the path towards the "American Dream" of the job, the house and future economic security. And the data consistently points to this traditionally accepted conclusion: those who earn a college degree are more likely to attain higher-skilled and better paying jobs than their peers who only have a high school diploma. But a recent report points to a concerning reality, one where insufficient college readiness is cutting off large numbers of students from a critical conduit of future opportunity and success—and because of historic disparities in education between white students and Black and Latino students, students of color are impacted in greater numbers.

The ACT testing company, which administers a popular, nation-wide college admissions and placement test, published a report that showed that one in three students who took the ACT are not ready for college course work. In fact, just over six in ten students met the test's college-ready benchmarks in English, math, reading and science. The data points to a disturbing performance gap when you compare the results of Black and Latino students to their white peers. For white high school students who took the ACT in 2014, 76 percent tested competent for college-level English courses and 52 percent tested competent for math. Only 34 percent of Black high school graduates tested competent for college-level English courses, and just 14 percent were ready to tackle college-level math. For Hispanic students, 47 percent were prepared for college-level English and 29 percent were ready for college-level math courses.

As we face a nationwide challenge to prepare all of our students for post-secondary academic success, it must be acknowledged that students of color are feeling the impact of the failure to prepare our students in far greater numbers. This failure not only hurts the individual student by curbing job prospects and higher earning potential, it weakens our nation and our standing as a strong competitor in a global marketplace that values the knowledge and skills that come with schooling and training beyond high school

Understanding that time-tested correlation between educational opportunity and future economic empowerment, The National Urban League has developed Project Ready, a signature programming initiative that prepares African-American students and other urban youth for college, work and life. The project works with 8th to 12th grade students—along with their families—to increase college awareness; improve navigational and life skills; and raise confidence and self-awareness around decision making. The National Urban League wants more than increased enrollment numbers, we want students to go to college and thrive in college. That can only happen with preparation.

Project Ready students make academic progress, benefit from cultural enrichment opportunities and develop important skills, attitudes and aptitudes that will help them make the transition from high school and position them for post-secondary success. Students are immersed in an environment that offers academic, social and cultural supports and opportunities designed to develop college readiness. Progress is monitored in a variety of subjects, including STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) courses, to ensure students achieve a level of expertise that can take them beyond their high school classrooms.

Since 2006, more than 7,000 students have participated in their local community's Project Ready program. In 2011, Urban League affiliates with Project Ready programs reported that at least 96 percent of participating students would be promoted to the next grade or were accepted into a two- or four-year college. In a 2012 survey of middle- and high-school students enrolled in programs in selected cities, 93 percent of students who responded said they had learned what it takes to succeed in college. Another 81 percent said they did activities to get ready for college and 75 percent said they attended college tours.

I rest assured that numbers like these, numbers that demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning and future success, are the kinds of numbers we want to see for all of our nation's students. But before we can meet the challenge of cultivating a future American work force prepared to compete in our fast-paced, information-driven economy, we must ensure that our students are prepared to enter, prosper and grow in institutions of higher learning. Project Ready stands as ready proof that when we commit to putting our children first by directing our time and resources to their success, you will find many students ready to meet the challenge.

The Prince George's Post

The Prince George's Post
P.O. Box 1001 15207 Marlboro Pike
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-3151
Phone: 301-627-0900 • Legal Fax: 301-627-6260
Email: pgpost@gmail.com
Contents © 2015, The Prince George's Post

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

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

BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Sometimes The Kids Need To Know

As parents we want to protect our children not only from physical danger but also from the emotional pain that life can bring. While we accept that small hurts will happen -- a disagreement with a sibling or friend, the loss of a toy -- we usually believe we're helping our children by sheltering them from the bigger problems.

Unfortunately, being overly protective can do harm. Kids are usually more aware of bad news than we suspect but often get the details wrong and may even feel responsible for the problem.

Most children know when a family is having problems, even if nothing is said directly to them. But kids frequently get the news in bits and pieces that add up to an incomplete, confusing and even frightening picture.

The solution is to share information with your children. No child needs all the gory details of a job loss or a troubled marriage, but he or she should have enough age-appropriate information to feel included and part of something important to the family.

Start by reassuring your children that what is happening is not their fault. Kids are used to being blamed for messing up and often assume that when trouble happens, whether it's work woes or marital strife, it's usually because of something they did.

Reassure your children that you, their parents, are on top of things and are working to fix the problem. Let the kids know it's okay to ask about what's going on, especially if they see you upset, worried, angry or crying. Children feel reassured when they know they can ask questions, get information and feel included.

Of course, how much information you share depends on your children's ages. A young child doesn't understand economic issues associated with a job loss, but will know that you're upset, worried, and acting differently. Older children may need more details, both to keep them from blaming themselves for the problem and to help them prepare for changes that may be coming.

Communicating with your children about family problems or possible changes should always be one of your first priorities. A child left in the dark is a frightened child.

If you need help, look for books at your library or bookstore on family communications. Your school counselor can also offer advice on possible approaches to difficult issues. Or seek out a professional counselor in your area specializing in family issues.

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

Watch from A4

by leaving in place draconian budget caps which will cause more deep cuts in many of the very safety net supports evidence proves help poor children and families escape poverty. Pope Francis said earlier this year, "Those who have the task of governing are responsible for children ... When it comes to children, in every case, there should be no utterance of 'After all, we are not a charity,' or 'we're sorry but we can't do anything.' These words do not count when it comes to children."

Congress must make permanent improvements in pro-work tax credits (both the EITC and the CTC), increase the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or food stamps) benefit, and expand housing subsidies and quality child care investments for children when parents work. To complement gains in these areas and to reduce child poverty long term, we must ensure all children comprehensive affordable health care, high-quality early childhood development and learning opportunities to get ready for school and a level education playing field to help all children achieve and succeed in life. It is a great national, economic and military security threat that a majority of all children in America cannot read or compute at grade level and that nearly three-fourths of our Black and Latino children cannot.

New Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) data underscore the continuing effectiveness of these and other key programs in

lifting children and families out of poverty. The SPM counts income and expenses not covered in the official poverty measure. Data show key safety net programs lifted millions of people including children above the SPM poverty line between 2013 and 2014. These supports all reduced child poverty: SNAP (4.7 million people), rent subsidies (2.8 million people), and the Earned Income Tax Credit and the low-income portion of the Child Tax Credit (roughly 10 million people including more than 5 million children). There also is strong evidence these measures will provide long-term benefits for children.

We know how to reduce child poverty but keep refusing to do it. How can our Congressional leaders even discuss spending as much as \$400 billion to extend tax cuts for corporations and businesses while denying more than 15.5 million poor children—70 percent non-White—the opportunity to improve their odds of succeeding in school and in life? If we scrapped the F-35 fighter jet program, which is still not producing fully functional planes, we could use its projected cost to reduce child poverty by 60 percent for 19 years and save billions in lost productivity from school dropout and dependency costs.

We can and must do more right now as children have only one childhood. As Pope Francis has said in the past, "A way has to be found to enable everyone

Limited Access to Primary Care Could Be Crowding Maryland's Emergency Rooms

By DEIDRE MCPHILLIPS
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Donna Wiltrout, 42, had to be at work by 5 a.m. on a recent Tuesday. But at a few minutes to 11 p.m. Monday, she was sitting on a bed in the hallway of Frederick Memorial Hospital waiting to be seen by a doctor.

"There's no way I'm going to make it," she said.

Wiltrout, a school bus driver, said she had driven 20 minutes from her home in Thurmont to Frederick Memorial Tuesday evening with shortness of breath and increasingly severe chest pains.

A few months ago, she sat in the same hallway spot with the same symptoms, she said, but had to leave because the wait had gotten too long—more than five hours.

Wiltrout said she visits her family doctor every three to six months, but she didn't have a scheduled appointment in the time from her last hospital visit and wasn't able to add one.

But that Monday, she said, her symptoms were worse.

With a mostly empty waiting room and few ambulance arrivals, she had been waiting for about three hours.

"You have to be dying to be seen here," she said. "I'm a single mom of two. I can't be sitting here waiting forever."

Hospitals are required by federal statute to offer care to anyone who enters their emergency rooms—even if that means beds have to be out in the hallway, in the corner, by the bathroom.

And they're feeling the pinch. Emergency departments in Maryland are increasingly requesting that EMTs divert their patients in ambulances to other hospitals.

From 2013 to 2014, the number of yellow and red alerts—issued by Maryland hospitals when their emergency departments were overcrowded or when there were no monitored beds available, respectively—increased by 34 percent, according to data maintained by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, or MIEMSS, County Hospital Alert Tracking System, a real-time, computerized system that monitors the status of hospitals and EMS systems throughout the state.

John Donohue, chief of field operations for MIEMSS, an independent state agency, said the first thing he does every morning is review diversions or alerts that were recently issued.

"The guidelines given to hospitals on when to issue these alerts are very soft. You can't tell a hospital when they're busy and not busy," he said. "These alerts are a method for us to help hospitals ensure that each patient is cared for better or at least receives care more quickly."

According to data from the MIEMSS alert tracking system, hospitals in more densely populated areas send yellow or red alerts more often than those in rural areas.

Sinai Hospital of Baltimore sent an average of 251 yellow and red alerts each year from 2010 to 2014, while the average for all hospitals in the state was 66 alerts annually. Queenstown Emergency Center, on the Eastern Shore near Kent Island, how-

ever, averaged just over one alert per year.

But the overcrowding is beginning to spill beyond city lines.

Northwest Hospital in Randallstown falls within 20 miles of Baltimore's city center, which, according to MIEMSS guidelines, is an acceptable distance for EMS diversions.

With 339 alerts, Northwest Hospital had the most in 2014—almost 50 more than second-place Sinai. Northwest is on a similar track for 2015, with 87 alerts in the first three months of the year.

Sarah Liebovitz, an EMT with Branchville Volunteer Fire Company in College Park, said she knows to check the board that shows all of the hospitals that are on alert before she responds to a call.

But she has had to wait with her ambulance and EMT team at emergency department doors for up to two hours before leaving to respond to another call due to a back-up in the hospital's emergency department, she said. Depending on their condition, the patient could be taken inside to be treated or remain in the ambulance with them while they wait, she said.

Alert rates are consistently higher in the winter months, something that Donohue said is most likely due to the flu, or winter cold season.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the flu vaccination offered reduced protection this season. The number of alerts from the first three months of 2015 is already greater than the number of alerts for the first half of 2014 in 11 hospitals in the state.

But no one that shows up at the emergency room's door is turned away, Donohue said, and "priority one patients"—those facing a life-threatening condition—are never diverted.

"Sometimes there's literally no space to see patients. What do we do? We take care of the patient. We move people around, we prioritize and we just take care of the patient," said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, an emergency room physician in Baltimore. "You do the best that you can, but you can imagine how it affects the quality of care. It's not safe for the patients."

Khaldun said that most of the patients she sees in the emergency room are there for legitimate reasons. Even stomach pain could be a symptom of appendicitis and merits an emergency room visit, she said.

But Gene Ransom, chief executive officer of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society, said that patients considering a trip to the emergency room should think about going to an urgent care facility instead.

"It is important for folks to remember that there are options," he said. "But there has been an increasing number of folks having trouble finding a primary care physician or forming a relationship with their primary care physician."

This lack of access to primary care is worrying to Maryland Delegate Dr. Clarence Lam, D-Howard and Baltimore Counties, a physician in preventative medicine at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

"Chronic illnesses—like diabetes and heart disease—often go undiagnosed and undertreated because patients have a difficult time getting to primary care physicians," said Lam. "(Chronic illnesses) are probably the best kind to be treated in a primary care setting, but they end up squeezing out people in the emergency room who really have emergencies."

The emergency room is often the first point of entry for new patients, he said, like those with chronic illnesses who forget to take their medications or couldn't get an appointment with a primary care physician to get a refill.

Also, because of how the medical school system is structured, there are more doctors applying than there are resources to train them, leading to a long-standing shortage of physicians and other healthcare providers, Lam said.

Khaldun, who served as an emergency room physician in New York before coming to Maryland, said the emergency departments in Brooklyn faced the same challenges with overcrowding as those in Baltimore.

But the Maryland health care system is unique.

In other states, doctors and hospitals are reimbursed at the lowest rate for Medicaid patients. Hospitals in Maryland, however, are reimbursed at the same rate for all patients, thanks to the state's Medicaid waiver.

The waiver is set to expire this year.

State legislators have ensured that funding to maintain the waiver and continue reimbursing doctors serving Medicaid patients at the same rate as doctors serving privately insured individuals is available in the fiscal year 2016 budget, but it is up to Gov. Larry Hogan to determine whether to spend the funds for that purpose.

A study by the New England Journal of Medicine published in January found that increases in Medicaid reimbursements offered to doctors in 2013 and 2014 increased the availability of primary care appointments to Medicaid patients in the 10 states studied. The same increase did not occur for privately insured individuals.

Hospitals in Maryland have been working to develop programs that integrate health care into the community, an important element of the Affordable Care Act, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2010.

Carroll Hospital Center, in rural Westminster, alerted EMTs that they were reaching capacity 25 times in 2014. While far below the state average, that number increased dramatically from the four alerts it issued during all of 2013.

Carroll Hospital Center does not have other hospitals nearby to help when their emergency department gets crowded, said Stephanie Reid, chief nursing officer and vice president of quality. Instead, she said, they have developed a team dedicated to population health clinical integration, programs that are focused on promoting wellness in the communities surrounding the hospital.

"Healthcare now isn't just in the walls of the hospital, it's much more out in the commu-

nity," said Reid. "All clinical integration efforts aim to keep patients well and help them from being readmitted. I'm sure the patients want that as well."

Integration programs are about partnership: nurse navigators working with patients after discharge to make lifestyle changes at home; primary care physicians leaving a few appointment times open each day to allow for last-minute appointments; or schools promoting general health and wellness, she said.

The Maryland Community Health Resources Commission was founded in 2005 to expand access to health care services for uninsured and low-income individuals through partnerships among community health resources and hospitals.

This mission has become increasingly relevant in recent years and grants are awarded to programs that are expected to help achieve this goal, including those that expand access to primary care for underserved populations and those that successfully divert individuals from emergency departments to more appropriate care.

Since its inception, the state's Community Health Resources Commission—an independent state agency with members appointed by the governor—has awarded 143 grants totaling \$49.6 million. In 2012, the Maryland General Assembly voted to ensure a budget of no less than \$8 million for the commission each fiscal year, and with Hogan's approval, the commission will be fully funded in fiscal year 2016.

In 2013, \$200,000 was awarded to Anne Arundel Health Systems to establish a new medical care center in the Morris H. Blum Senior Apartment Complex in Annapolis, housing for low-income senior citizens.

"The emergency department analyzed their data and isolated emergency department admissions and 911 calls from (the senior apartment complex). They found it was a hotspot," said Mark Luckner, executive director of the Community Health Resources Commission. "These patients are dual eligible—Medicaid and Medicare—and it made sense to literally bring the medical care to their doorstep."

The health center has been open in the senior apartment complex for about a year and a half and relationships between the doctors and residents have been formed, helping to reduce emergency department admissions, he said.

Khaldun said that many hospitals have one individual dedicated to assessing bed turnover. While this may improve efficiency, the emergency room will always be an unpredictable place, she said.

"If we get more primary care doctors, it's not that we won't need emergency rooms any more," said Khaldun. "We just need to change the paradigm."

Back at Frederick Memorial, Wiltrout was checked into a room after about four hours of waiting in the hallway. She said she plans to continue seeing her family doctor on a regular basis and hopes this is the last time she'll have to see the inside of a hospital's emergency room.



SUBSCRIBE TODAY
The Prince George's Post
subscription price is only \$15 a year.

CALL
301.627.0900

OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

“Z for Zachariah”

Z for Zachariah
Grade: B+

Rated PG-13, some profanity,
some mild sexuality, brief
partial nudity, intense themes
1 hr., 38 mins

For a change of pace, “Z for Zachariah” is a post-apocalyptic drama that’s not about a zombie infestation or teenagers killing each other (though it does have a romantic triangle, don’t worry). Based very loosely on Robert C. O’Brien’s novel and directed by Craig Zobel (“Compliance”), it’s a curious Garden of Eden, religion-and-science parable, one that’s understated and memorable.

The setting is somewhere in the American South, where a simple preacher’s daughter named Ann (Margot Robbie) is the only human being for miles around. Most of America (the world?) has been irradiated by nuclear fallout, but something about the geography of this lush valley has kept its air breathable and its water drinkable. Ann has a hazmat suit that lets her go into the deserted, radioactive town nearby, to pillage what’s left of supplies; she has a dog to keep her company at home; and she plays the organ in the cottage-sized church her daddy used to preach in. But in truth, she’s barely surviving.

Into the valley comes another survivor, a scientist named John (Chiwetel Ejiofor). When he recovers from radiation sickness, he shows Ann (who prayed for his health) how they could restore electricity to the house with a generator powered by a water-wheel that he could build in a



ROTTENTOMATOES

In the wake of a nuclear war, a young woman survives on her own, fearing she may actually be the proverbial last woman on earth, until she discovers the most astonishing sight of her life: another human being. A distraught scientist, he’s nearly been driven mad by radiation exposure and his desperate search for others. A fragile, imperative strand of trust connects them. But when a stranger enters the valley, their precarious bond begins to unravel.

nearby stream. But the most logical source of wood to build the wheel is Ann’s daddy’s church, which she is reluctant to dismantle. John doesn’t want to press the issue.

The two get to know each other over the course of some days, working amicably to plant food and make other improvements. They share intimate personal moments, like a lovely scene of dancing to a wind-up record player. Zobel directs this and similar scenes with quiet grace — this is not a flashy movie, by any means, though that doesn’t stop it from being compelling.

Soon another survivor shows up, handsome young Caleb (Chris Pine). He’s a Southern boy, with a religious upbringing like Ann’s, and he’s closer to her age than John is. (Ann, who’s appropriately chaste for a preacher’s daughter, seems to be in her late teens. But as John tells Caleb, “She seems older than she is.”) There are a few light moments where John shows romantic jealousy as Ann warms to the new guy, and while the levity is welcome, these moments are too formulaic and mundane for a story that otherwise feels like a fable.

But we’re soon back on course, and these archetypal characters become more and more complex. Though it’s hard to miss the metaphor when the science-minded newcomer in Ann’s life literally wants to tear down her church, Zobel avoids hitting us over the head with any messages. Instead, he delivers a taut, unpredictable story, leaving us to work out for ourselves which characters we relate to, which of their actions we sympathize with, and what the “right” way to live under these circumstances would be.

Filmmakers from A1

Denmark (1653–1708, the husband of the British Queen Anne at the time), was established as a colonial entity in 1696. The first visual records actually go back to days of the Native American Piscataway peoples and English explorer John Smith, who drew a map of the county area in 1608, proclaiming that: “heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man’s habitation.”

Since then, the County has witnessed the birth and development of America at large, home to founding fathers, tobacco merchants, slave plantations, movie stars, and public figures such as Sergey Brin (founder of Google), Kevin Durant (NBA MVP), Jim Henson (The Muppets), Kathy Lee Gifford (Celebrity), and Adam Plummer, who lived nearly 40 years as a slave on the Riversdale Planta-

tion and 40 years a free man on his own property, Mount Rose, all documented in his personal diaries and now a part of the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Museum.

“Home movies and personal photographs provide us with a primary source of identity and memory,” said Matthew White, a co-Director of the Memory Project and a filmmaker who is now co-Producing a film using home movies about the Beatles concert tours (directed by Ron Howard). “These are fragile records of our communities and of our hopes and ambitions; it’s important that we identify these materials, preserve them, and share them with each other and with future generations.”

The Memory Project is now accepting visual media that was captured in Prince George’s County, and recently held “Collection Days” at the Smithsonian’s Anacostia Community Mu-

seum (July 12), Community Forklift (September 12) and the Greenbelt Public Library (September 19). A schedule of upcoming Collection Days is available at Prince George’s public libraries and below. Home movies, photographs, illustrations, maps: all visual materials are welcome. For more information on the project, please visit: <http://princegeorgesmemoryproject.org>

About the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System provides materials and information for study and personal enrichment. The libraries offer strategies for lifelong learning through access to varied media and professional guidance by library staff. In addition, the library system focuses all resources on the needs of library customers. <http://www.pgmls.info>

seum (July 12), Community Forklift (September 12) and the Greenbelt Public Library (September 19). A schedule of upcoming Collection Days is available at Prince George’s public libraries and below. Home movies, photographs, illustrations, maps: all visual materials are welcome. For more information on the project, please visit: <http://princegeorgesmemoryproject.org>

About the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System

The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System provides materials and information for study and personal enrichment. The libraries offer strategies for lifelong learning through access to varied media and professional guidance by library staff. In addition, the library system focuses all resources on the needs of library customers. <http://www.pgmls.info>

Alert from A1

“quiet periods and do not disturb” timeframes to limit when you receive message and manage their personal profiles via a downloadable “Everbridge” App.

Alert Prince George’s is available to anyone who lives, works, plays or visits Prince George’s County. To sign-up for the system, visit Alert.mypgc.us to register your information. Current subscribers are also encouraged to log-in and update their existing account.

If you are interested in receiving alerts from other jurisdictions within the National Capital Region, please visit CapitalAlert.gov to register for these services.

For more information about Alert Prince George’s, please log-onto Alert.mypgc.us or email Alertsupport@co.pg.md.us.

The Edge of Sports

by DAVE ZIRIN

Today’s Sports News Would Boggle the Mind of a 1965 Sportswriter



Imagine with me. You are a sportswriter who for reasons entirely unclear entered a hermetically sealed chamber in 1965 only to wake up in 2015. After shaking off the cobwebs, taking a much-needed shower, and having a stiff drink, you are immediately confronted with two stories fighting for space in the sports pages. One involves a new stadium being built in Milwaukee for the NBA’s Bucks. The other is the account of college football players at Northwestern trying to build a union. You learn that the 21st-century Bucks owners aren’t exactly a Midwestern mom & pop shop. Today’s owners are a consortium of billionaires who made their fortunes heading something called “hedge funds,” a byzantine financial entity you only understand in so far as you know they are not garden-related.

As for Northwestern, you are starting to understand that, during your deep sleep, college football has morphed into a multi-billion-dollar business, not to mention a financial life-support system for many of the nation’s top schools. In your day back in 1965, a typical top head football coach was making maybe twenty grand a year. Now they earn more than five million, easily making them the highest paid public employees in their states. You also learn that the financial and emotional pressure put on these young athletes has changed as dramatically as the salaries of the coaches. Even little Northwestern, not much of a football powerhouse in either 1965 or 2015, pulls in more than \$70 million a year in revenue.

Coming from 1965, you would think two things immediately about the direction these stories were headed: Surely these “hedge fund” billionaires would be paying for their own stadiums and, without a doubt, the United States government in the form of the National Labor Relations Board would step in and as a matter of basic fairness say that college football players have every right to organize a union.

Neither of these things, you learn, took place this past week. In Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker—you won’t believe this guy—after cutting \$250 million from Wisconsin’s system of higher education, handed roughly the same amount to the hedge-funders who own the Bucks to finance their new stadium. The Northwestern players, getting no respect from either their school’s administration or the NCAA, turned to their government for redress and were smacked down by the NLRB on the argument that granting them union rights would somehow “destabilize” the system.

Emerging from 1965, you can only conclude that all of the bedrock logic that you had taken as self-evident has been turned on its head.

By this time you’ve had a panic attack as you try desperately to crawl back into your pod. But there is no returning to 1965. After you’ve calmed yourself and taken a mild sedative, I give you two books that on the surface have nothing to do with sports. They would be *The Shock Doctrine*, by Naomi Klein, and *Upside Down World*, by Eduardo Galeano. I’d point out this quote by Galeano that defines our times on the nose. He wrote:

The worst violators of nature and human rights never go to jail. They hold the keys. In the world as it is, the looking-glass world, the countries that guard the peace also make and sell the most weapons. The most prestigious banks launder the most drug money and harbor the most stolen cash. The most successful industries are the most poisonous for the planet.

Galeano in his poetry and Klein in her brutal prose are describing the economic orthodoxy we live under known popularly as “neoliberalism.” This phrase “neoliberalism” is something used, reused, and misused so often we sometimes forget what it is even supposed to mean. Basically, it means a free market on steroids. (Not sure if you know what steroids are, so imagine Popeye’s spinach jammed into a syringe.)

Its true-believer adherents would argue that the actions of the NCAA, a cartel suppressing the free-market ability of college players to earn, or of the Milwaukee Bucks, crony capitalists gaming the public till, are the antithesis of neoliberalism: that the “hidden hand of the free market” would correct these injustices, if it was only allowed to operate. I would argue that these adherents need to get their heads out of textbooks and see how their orthodoxy plays out in the real world. In reality, neoliberalism’s hidden hand will always play second fiddle to its heavy fist. This heavy fist acts on behalf of the powerful to smash all opposition (especially unions) and will use any tool—cartels, government cronyism, the military—to increase its ability to profit and vanquish its enemies. Their argument—espoused by free-market apostles like Wisconsin’s Governor Scott Walker—is that this actually serves a greater good for all of us because the higher the concentration of wealth at the top, the more money that will eventually reach the rest of us. As former President Ronald Reagan famously said, this wealth “trickles down.” (Yes, Reagan becomes president. Please just stay with me.)

Yet more often than not, as unions and public dissent are crushed in the pursuit of profit, wealth has trickled up instead of down. This can create great anger and frustration among

See SPORTSWRITER Page A7

You Can Be an Everyday Hero in the Fight Against Suicide.

Partner with us as an event sponsor for the
2015 Prince George’s County **FIRST Out of the Darkness Walk**
October 17, 2015

at Rosaryville State Park Upper Marlboro, Maryland
7805 W. Marlton Avenue in Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772.

Why support the FIRST Prince George’s County Out of the Darkness Walk?

Every year suicide claims more lives than war, murder, and natural disasters combined. It is estimated that 85% of people in the United States alone will know someone who has died by suicide, and that one out of every five of those losses will be a close friend or relative.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention leads the fight against suicide.

Funds raised from The Out of the Darkness Walks allows to fully achieve its mission.

We have several 2015 sponsorship opportunities and benefits. You can also consider giving a monetary donation, creating a team, or being a virtual walker. We also have several volunteer opportunities to set-up: registration, breakdown, and cheerleader team to encourage the walker.

For more information, please contact:

Alnicia Gibson at 240-424-7123 or email us at: blessed2begifted@gmail.com

Calendar of Events

October 8 — October 14, 2015

Mounted Games Across America

Date and Time: Friday-Saturday, October 9-10, 2015, 8 am
 Description: The Prince George's Equestrian Center will host the Mounted Games Across America 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

Art After Work: Art Night Out

Date and Time: Friday, October 9, 2015, 6:30-9 pm
 Description: The "Art After Work Series" is back and better than ever! Abstract expression, realism, or whatever your style suits you, join us for an evening of creative fun. Art Night Out at the Brentwood Arts Exchange will be an evening of mixing, mingling, and making art hands-on with other art enthusiasts. From novices to aspiring phenoms, come alone (or bring a friend), it's time to let your creative side out. All materials and refreshments provided.
 Cost: \$25/person at the door
 Ages: 21 & up
 Location: Brentwood Arts Exchange
 3901 Rhode Island Avenue, Brentwood 20722
 Contact: 301-277-2863; TTY 301-699-2544

Xtreme Teens: Open House

Date and Time: Friday, October 9, 2015, 7-10 pm
 Description: Meet the staff, get information on upcoming event and trips for the year, and meet new people at the Xtreme Teens Open House.
 Cost: Free with M-NCPPC Youth ID
 Ages: 10-17
 Location: College Park Community Center
 5051 Pierce Avenue, College Park 20740
 Contact: 301-441-2647; TTY 301-699-2544

Elijah Jamal Balbed Quintet featuring Paul Bollenback

Date and Time: Friday, October 9, 2015, 8 pm
 Description: Saxophonist and composer Elijah Jamal Balbed is an award-winning musician in the Washington, DC area. His quintet will be joined by special guest, Paul Bollenback on guitar. Elijah brings with him a deep sense of tradition, but one also hears a kaleidoscope of free flowing ideas, delivered on a golden platter, replete with a burly, and easy sound" - Craig Handy, Saxophonist/Educator (Roy Haynes, Herbie Hancock, The Cookers)
 Cost: \$25/person;
 10% discount for Montpelier members & seniors
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Montpelier Arts Center
 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
 Contact: 301-377-7800; TTY 301-699-2544

Montpelier Fall Festival

Date and Time: Saturday, October 10, 2015, 11 am-2 pm
 Description: Celebrate fall at the third annual Montpelier Fall Festival! Paint pumpkins, create autumn-themed crafts, have your face painted, skate in the skate mobile, and have loads of family fun. You'll go home with a bag full of souvenirs to remember this day of art! Cost: Free; (bring your own pumpkin and large brown paper bag to decorate and carry projects)
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Montpelier Arts Center
 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
 Contact: 301-377-7800; TTY 301-699-2544

Artists Talk: Ellen Cornett and Allen Alexopulos

Date & Time: Saturday, October 10, 2015, 2-4 pm
 Description: Ellen Cornett, winner of the 2014 Project America's Next Top Master Artist competition, will discuss the inspiration behind her artwork—both paintings and drawings. Ellen will be joined by Front Window Featured Artist Alexopulos as he explains his creative process utilized in his artwork.
 Cost: Free
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Brentwood Arts Center
 3901 Rhode Island Avenue, Brentwood 20722
 Contact: 301-277-2863; TTY 301-699-2544

Concert: Mud Morganfield

Date & Time: Saturday, October 10, 2015, 8 pm
 Description: Drawing on the legacy of his father, the legendary Muddy Waters, Mud Morganfield's rich baritone voice, excellent timing, and engaging stage presence have made him a blues star. Backed by some of the best blues musicians in the business, he performs both classics and original songs.
 Cost: \$30/person (general admission)
 \$25/person (students, seniors or groups of 20 or more)
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Publick Playhouse Cultural Arts Center
 5445 Landover Road, Landover 20784
 Contact: 301-277-1710; TTY 301-699-2544

Seasonal Selections: From Field to Forest

Date and Time: Sunday, October 11, 2015, 12 noon-3:30 pm
 Description: Stop by to watch the Kitchen Guild demonstrate 19th century foodways using seasonal produce from the gardens and orchard. Today's recipes will feature native game and late fall vegetables.
 Cost: FREE; regular fee for house tours
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Riversdale House Museum
 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park 20737
 Contact: 301-864-0420; TTY 301-699-2544

Bob Brown Puppets: Panda-monium

Date & Time: Thursday, October 15, 2015, 9:30 am & 11:15 am
 Description: Master Puppeteer Bob Brown's enchanting new production presents a delightful cast of adorable, multi-talented pandas and other Chinese circus performers in a 45-minute extravaganza of skill.
 Cost: \$5/person
 Ages: Pre-K - Grade 1
 Location: Publick Playhouse Cultural Arts Center
 5445 Landover Road, Landover 20784
 Contact: 301-277-1710; TTY 301-699-2544

EARTH TALK ... Are the California Redwoods in Danger Because of the Drought?

Dear EarthTalk:

Are the California redwoods in danger because of the drought?

— Jesse Pollman,
 Seattle, WA

California is home to two of the three redwood tree species: coast redwoods and giant sequoias. The coast redwood is the Earth's tallest tree, growing more than 360 feet tall, with a trunk that can extend to 24 feet wide. The "General Sherman" giant sequoia tree at Sequoia National Park in California's southern Sierra Nevada mountain range is the "undisputed King of the Forest," being not only the largest living tree in the world, but the largest living organism, by volume, on the planet. General Sherman is 2,100 years old, 2.7 million pounds, 275 feet tall and 100 feet wide at its trunk.

Redwood forests offer shelter to many animals, including mountain lions, American black bears, Roosevelt elk and mountain beavers. According to the National Park Service, approximately 280 species of birds have been recorded within the boundaries of redwood national and state parks. Just over 800 bird species occur in all of the United States, so that equates to approximately one third of the country's birds.

"Redwoods are an iconic key species," said Anthony Ambrose, a postdoctoral researcher with the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of California (UC), Berkeley. "They're the tallest, oldest, and largest trees in the world. Everybody around the world knows about them. People love them, even if they've never visited them. They're beautiful forests and beautiful trees."

For the past four years, California has been suffering a grueling drought. Agricultural economists at UC Davis recently calculated that the drought will cost the state \$2.74 billion in 2015. Drought can reduce tree growth rates and may even lead to tree death. Coast redwoods receive up to 40 percent of their water supply from fog, which is created from warm, moist air rising from the cold surface waters of the Pacific. Giant sequoias grow in mountain habitats where an abundant winter snowpack recharges the groundwater they depend upon and use in the summer. However, during the past two winters, much of the giant sequoia range had little to no snowpack. As a result, groundwater levels have dropped, sometimes below the roots of immense giant sequoias that are greater than 1,000 years old, says Todd Dawson, a UC Berkeley Professor of Integra-



PHOTO COURTESY EARTHTALK

These days California's redwood trees occupy only about five percent of their original range, and researchers worry that the epic drought there might push the iconic trees over the brink.

tive Biology who's been studying redwood ecology and physiology for over 25 years.

For the coast redwood, the drought impacts are not as severe as they seem to be for the giant sequoia. Trees at the edges of the coast redwood range, including the southern end of the range in the Santa Lucia Mountains south of Big Sur, seem to be the most affected. Here, young trees have lost a lot of their leaves, and have not grown very much, if at all, Dawson said.

"Many trees are experiencing the highest levels of water stress we've ever measured. We've not seen much tree mortality, but many trees have thin crowns and do not look healthy," Dawson said. "Our biggest question is just

how far can these trees be pushed? If the winter does not bring good rainfall and a normal snowpack throughout the state I am not sure how our state trees will do. We are likely to see some mortality as we are seeing in some of the pines and firs in California. But how bad this will be—only time will tell."

CONTACT: Save the Redwoods League, www.savetheredwoods.org.

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

Sportswriter from A6

those not blessed by the hidden hand, which as Klein points out, then generates "other features of the corporatist state [that] tend to include aggressive surveillance, mass incarceration, shrinking civil liberties and often, though not always, torture."

But if there is one area of life where the "trickle down" theory has worked, and workers have seen their salaries dramatically expand since your deep sleep, it's sports. However, it required strong unions, amidst the neoliberal bloodletting of labor, to pry open the wallets of owners and

get players paid something close to the wealth that they generate.

But far more than wealth, it's the logic of neoliberalism in the sports world that now nests in the minds of reporters, fans, and taxpayers. The owners of the Bucks try to vacuum as much public wealth as they can because... they can. The NCAA—ostensibly a nonprofit that makes billions—tries to crush players unions because unions exist to be crushed. The NLRB rules in their favor because neoliberalism's logic is also their logic. Sports, from an economic perspective, is now a true neoliberal fantasyland. It may lack the free markets described in a ne-

oliberal economics textbook, but it possesses something even more precious: a perfectly social-justice free zone.

Before you start huffing paint in despair, the prospects for change are also very real. This billionaire's theme park has an Achilles heel, and it resides with the ones who keep the turnstiles moving: the players themselves. Athletes, whom owners have spent a generation trying to get to see themselves as brands, are getting restive. Stars want more say in the operation (you gotta check out this guy named LeBron). College athletes are being exploited. Their pro counterparts are seeing the faces of their broth-

ers, sisters, and cousins getting slammed by our system of mass incarceration and increasingly martial inner city police forces. Everything that makes the system of sports so profitable also makes it vulnerable. In its vulnerability lies something that approaches hope.

By this time, it would be very understandable if you wanted to crawl back into your hermetically sealed chamber and come out again in 2065. Please don't. We have a lot of work to do—starting with fighting for every college athlete who raises their voice and working against every sweetheart stadium scam. Stick around. The game has just begun.

Department of Environment Improves Regulatory Climate For Oyster-Growing Operations

By PRESS OFFICER
 MDE

BALTIMORE, MD—The Maryland Department of the Environment is changing water discharge regulations to remove an unnecessary requirement for businesses, including some aquaculture operations.

The amendments remove a requirement to obtain a water discharge permit for businesses that discharge only water that is passed through without added pollutants. The amendments would not reduce environmental protections but would remove an unnecessary burden to business. In particular, oyster-growing operations are expected to benefit from the proposed change.

"This change advances one of the Hogan administration's

top priorities: removing unjustified regulations in order to boost Maryland's business climate while maintaining important environmental safeguards," said MDE Secretary Ben Grumbles. "We are changing Maryland for the better by rooting out unnecessary requirements and strengthening our commitment to aquaculture and other sectors that grow our economy and protect our environment."

"Aquaculture has become a real success story in Maryland as more people and businesses continue to invest in this innovative economic opportunity," said Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary Mark Belton. "Anything our state can do to encourage and expand aquaculture, including


reforming this regulation, will aid Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts and boost Maryland's economy."

The original proposal was published in the July 10, 2015, of the Maryland Register, and a public hearing was held on Aug. 10. Today's edition of the Maryland Register includes A Notice of Final Action stating that the amendments have been adopted as proposed, with an effective date of Sept. 28.

Current regulations automatically require a water discharge permit for discharges greater than 10,000 gallons per day—regardless of whether there is a discharge of pollutants. The current requirement is more stringent than federal requirements. Under the amendment, the automatic requirement

based on an arbitrary flow volume will be eliminated. Any facility that discharges pollutants to State waters will still be required to obtain a discharge permit and comply with that permit's terms.

Oyster operations, including the growing of larvae and spat-on-shell operations, are flow-through systems that use estuarine water to promote the growth of the organisms through the metabolization of nutrients already present in the water. Once the oysters are large enough, they also serve as natural filtration for sediment. Not only do the oyster operations represent no added pollution to waters of the State, increasing the oyster population is a mechanism for improving overall water quality.



LOWER YOUR ENERGY BILL

Increasing insulation around your home, investing in energy efficient appliances and installing a solar panel system are just some of the many ways you can lower your energy bill.

Energy providers such as PEPCO and BGE provide special energy savings programs and discounts. Visit PEPCO at www.pepco.com/my-home/save-money-and-conserve-energy/ and BGE at www.bge.com/smartenergy/smart-energy-rewards/pages/energy-savings-day-tips.aspx for more great energy saving tips.

