

# The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY Since 1932

Vol. 85, No. 14 April 6 – April 12, 2017

Prince George's County, Maryland

Newspaper of Record

Phone: 301-627-0900

25 cents



PHOTO COURTESY MGM NATIONAL HARBOR

## The Conservatory at MGM National Harbor Celebrates Spring Awakening With Cherry Blossom-Inspired Display

By PRESS OFFICER  
MGM National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD—Welcoming the arrival of a new season, The Conservatory at MGM National Harbor's

spring display celebrates the iconic and cherished cherry blossom trees synonymous with the Capital Region.

Curated by renowned event designer Ed Libby, "Hope Springs Eternal: A Spring

Awakening" offers an unforgettable fairytale experience with whimsical splendor, sparkling with a multitude of pearl white, pink and lavender floral décor.

The display comes to life through three distinct flower beds,

each reflecting all that is beautiful about spring, while highlighting the "blossoming" of love through the reemergence of nature.

See MGM SPRING Page A5

## Rushern L. Baker, III Presents Proposed FY 2018 Budget

By PRESS OFFICER  
PG County Government

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—Today, Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III, in accordance with the Prince George's County Charter presented his FY 2018 Proposed Operating and Capital Budgets. The proposed FY 2018 budget for all operating funds is \$3.84 billion, an increase of \$130.7 million or 3.5% over the FY 2017 budget. The General Fund accounts for 84.1% of all spending in FY 2018 and will increase by \$113.6 million or 3.6%. This

fund supports most County government services and programs including education, public safety, general government, public works, the environment and other critical services. The FY 2018 proposed budget is framed by a growing economy that is experiencing growth in both the real estate and job markets as well as the impact of a full year of MGM National Harbor related revenues.

Overall, the FY 2018 General Fund forecast represents an increase of \$113.6 million or 3.6%

See 2018 BUDGET Page A3

## PG County Board of Education Approves Resolutions in Support of Immigrant, Muslim and Transgender Youth

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—The Prince George's County Board of Education approved resolutions Tuesday in support of immigrant, Muslim and transgender youth in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS).

The resolutions express commitment to protecting students' rights and providing a "safe and

welcoming learning environment for all students."

"As a person who shares a deep commitment to equity and social justice, I enthusiastically support these resolutions and the message they send to our community," said Dr. Segun C. Eubanks, Board Chair. "Regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orienta-

See RESOLUTIONS Page A8

## PGCPS to Launch Final Phase of Water Quality Program

School System to Conduct System-Wide Sampling and Testing in Collaboration With WSSC

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) will launch the final phase of its water quality program in April.

Starting mid-month, PGCPS will conduct comprehensive sampling and testing of drinking water sources at all schools and centers for water quality, including lead, working with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) and an independent laboratory. The testing timetable—originally scheduled to begin this summer—was moved up in response to public inquiries about PGCPS water quality.

"Over the past 13 years, we have worked diligently to address water quality throughout the system. We are confident that our buildings have safe drinking water and we want the public to have no doubt," said Dr. W. Wesley Watts Jr., Chief

Operating Officer. "WSSC has offered to assist with this effort. We appreciate the community advocacy on this issue and the support from WSSC and our government partners to complete this work."

An estimated 3,000 sources in all schools and centers—more than 200 sites—will be tested.

WSSC will conduct tests to detect lead level in water samples collected by PGCPS at targeted school sites; PGCPS will handle the remaining schools in collaboration with the independent lab. In addition, PGCPS will begin installing filtered water fountains this summer at all schools.

Water supplied by WSSC meets or exceeds all federal and state water quality regulations and falls well below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Action Level for lead. The water utility completed an exten-

See WATER QUALITY Page A3

## Prince George's County Financing Community To Inject Millions Into the Economy

By R. JOSHUA REYNOLDS  
PGCEDC

LARGO, MD—Yesterday, Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation President and CEO, Jim Coleman, participated in a panel discussion hosted by FSC First. The 'Economic Development and Bank Financing Forum' provided a platform for leaders in economic development and bank financing to provide updates on exciting projects that are under way as a result of strategic lending partnerships between banks and financial institutions. These institutions provide both traditional and non-traditional loan options to local businesses. Mr. Coleman highlighted the fact that companies in Prince George's County are looking to increase their financing to complete various projects during 2017.

"Together, we are creating high paying jobs!" said Coleman. "By coming up with creative ways to inject financing into Prince George's County's businesses, we not only grow our businesses, but we give our

hard working citizens a chance to work in a high paying job. This year, we expect over 30% of companies to finance between \$5,000 and \$50,000 while almost half of our companies are looking to finance well over \$50,000. This is a great opportunity for tools like the County's Economic Development Incentive Fund to partner with FSC First and other dedicated banks to ensure the success of Prince George's County's business community!"

FSC First President and CEO, Shelly Gross-Wade, hosts the 'Economic Development and Bank Financing Forum' to provide a platform for the local financing community to share successes and opportunities with each other. In addition to Mr. Coleman, the panel included Prince George's County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Tom Himler; Revenue Authority of Prince George's County Chief Real Estate Officer, Donny Jones; Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County, Howard Ways; and U.S. Small Business Administration Dis-



PHOTO COURTESY R. JOSHUA REYNOLDS

EDC President and CEO Jim Coleman shares the good news about economic development with the financing community.

trict Director, Antonio Doss. Ms. Gross-Wade, was excited to share the successes that FSC First and its partners have seen this year.

"We are extremely excited about all of the loan products that we are able to offer at FSC First," said Gross-Wade. "I'm happy to announce that as of March 10th, FSC has cleared \$10 million in loan approvals and we are looking forward to

empowering more businesses throughout the course of this fiscal year. The success of the various projects in the County wouldn't be possible without our partnership with participating banks."

To learn more about the loan products available at FSC First, please visit [www.fscfirst.com](http://www.fscfirst.com). For more information about the EDI Fund, please visit [www.pgcdec.com](http://www.pgcdec.com).

### INSIDE

#### The Undeclared staff: Let Athletes Be Political, Because They're People Too

Merida, who came to *The Undeclared* after a long editorial career at *The Washington Post*, added that many of his staff come from working in more traditional reporting jobs, where they've built relationships of trust with important sources.

Community, Page A3

#### A Time for Penance and Action To Help Our Immigrant Brothers and Sisters

Children's Defense Fund-Texas Associate Director Dr. Laura Guerra-Cardus, a medical doctor, was among those who testified that family jails are not child care facilities and that children held there with their mothers are not physically or mentally safe.

Commentary, Page A4

#### EDC Motivates Returning Citizens To Prepare for Local Workforce at Criminal Background Seminar

Through the events scheduled for ReEntry Month, the EDC is hoping to give a second chance to returning citizens who have the desire and will for their lives to change, but have not been given the opportunity.

Business, Page A5

#### Movie Review: *The Great Wall*

Set around 1000 A.D., *The Great Wall* is about two European mercenaries, William (Matt Damon) and Tovar (Pedro Pascal), who are searching for the "black powder" that China is rumored to have invented, when they're attacked by a strange creature, barely escaping with their lives.

Out on the Town, Page A6

#### Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

If Neil Gorsuch is confirmed to fill the vacant seat on the Supreme Court, what will be the implications for environmental and climate policy?

—Jim Metcalf,  
Newark, DE

Features, Page A7

# Towns and NEIGHBORS

## In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

### Morningside welcomes marchers for 4th of July Parade

Do you have a vintage car or truck, a Scout troop, majorettes or a school band? Do you know a clown? How about a fraternal organization? An old fire engine? I'll bet any of these would enjoy being in a parade.

Morningside is getting ready for their annual Independence Day Parade on—when else?—Tuesday, July 4. They'll be kicking off from the Morningside Fire House about 11, and marching up the hill, past the VFW and on into Morningside to Benjamin D. Foulis Academy.

A Family Fun Day, with games and food, will follow.

For information about participation in the parade, call the Town Hall at 301-736-2300 between 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday.

Also, Parade Chairman Susan Mullins and her committee are seeking help with the parade and the Fun Day activities. High-schoolers in need of volunteer hours can call the Town Hall, 301-736-2300.

At dusk Morningside, as usual, will have a great fireworks display.

### Nancy still reads my column!

Thank you to Nancy Stacey for the obituary of Margaret Loveless (listed below). She was a longtime neighbor of the Loveless family when she lived in Forestville.

Nancy retired as a Deputy Sheriff Sergeant after 24 years' service with the Prince George's County Office of the Sheriff and now lives in Palm Coast, FL. She writes, "I still subscribe to the *Enquirer Gazette* ... When the paper arrives, the first thing I read is your column. I enjoy reading about folks I know."

### Applause

Aminah Majied, a senior at Suitland High School, was named Sentinel Student of the Month. An outstanding student, she plans to attend Drexel University in Philadelphia.

The Mount Calvary Cougars varsity boys' basketball team, defeated Our Lady of Lourdes 62-49 on March 4 and St. Columba on March 5 to win the

CYO 2017 14U Boys' Mid-Atlantic City Championship.

### Coming up

Women of Union United Methodist Church are hosting United Methodist Women's Day on Sunday, April 23, beginning with 10am worship. Guest speaker will be Lay Minister Pearl E. Chase. The church is at 14418 Old Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro.

St. Philip's 57th annual Mother-Daughter Breakfast will be held Sunday, May 7, in the Parish Hall, following 9am Mass. For information or to get tickets, contact Ligia Rojas, 301-899-7789.

By the way, the St. Philip's Sodality's first Mother-Daughter Breakfast was held April 3, 1960 at Wallace's Restaurant in Marlow Height. Alma Broderick, of Skyline, was chairman.

### Changing landscape

Prince George's County has temporarily waived licensing fees for food trucks in an effort to increase the number of them operating in the County. Between April 3 and April 14, they are allowing up to 45 mobile units to apply without the usual \$800 registration fee. Fees will be reinstated after that period.

The Library has announced that they "listened to you" and extended hours at several branches, effective April 2. They are: Baden Branch, Fridays 10am-6pm; Greenbelt Branch, Thursdays 10am-9pm; South Bowie Branch, Mondays 10am-9pm; and Spauldings Branch, in Suitland, Wednesdays 10am-9pm.

### Remember when we had columns?

Going through piles of papers, I came upon one of the last columns by the remarkable *Enquirer-Gazette* columnist Wynona Skinner, dated Jan. 1, 1987.

Among her newsy offerings was a list of neighborhood columnists as they were published 55 years ago. Here's a sampling:

Morningside News by Jan Stocklinski, Suitland Scraps by Ann Brown, Camp Springs Items by Alice H. Cribbs, Forestville Newsletter by Mrs. Rose Greene,

District Heights Items by W. R. Blackman, Hillside Items by Madeline Williams, Temple Hills Topics by Mary D. Faust, and In And Around Croom by Wynona L. Skinner. I'll list a few more 1962 columns next week.

Those neighborhood columns brought our communities attention and pride. It also helped to sell the *Enquirer-Gazette*. At that time, by the way, columnists were paid 10¢ a column inch for a maximum of 15 inches.

### May they rest in peace

Margaret Edmondson Loveless, 95, who retired as a school nurse at Surrattville High School, died Feb. 11. She was a native of Windsor, Missouri. In time, she and her husband Earl moved to Forestville and to Upper Marlboro before retiring to Catonsville. She was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. Margaret was preceded in death by her husband Earl M. Loveless in 2008 and by five brothers. Survivors include sons Leonard and Carl, a sister, two grandsons and three great-grandchildren. Burial was at Trinity Memorial Gardens in Waldorf.

Catherine Virginia Reed "Kitty" Porter, 93, a member of the Oxon Hill Democratic Club and the Homemaker's Club, died March 4 in Plano, Texas. A native Washingtonian, she grew up in Berwyn Heights, married Louis Dalton Porter and settled in Oxon Hill where she was involved in PTA, Girl Scouts and St. Columba Church where she sang in the choir. Kitty was predeceased by her husband of 61 years, Louis, and six siblings. Survivors include her daughter Carole, a granddaughter and a great-granddaughter. Burial was at Cheltenham.

### Milestones

Happy birthday to Debbie Callison, April 8; Donna Wood, April 11; (Darlie) Fay Norton and Donald Brown Jr., April 13; Ruth Nanney, Jean Osterkamp, Donald Brown Sr., Sarah Shipman, Autumn Williams and Father Jeffrey Samaha, April 14.

Happy anniversary to Chuck and Laura Smith Jenkins on April 10; and to Tex and Rickie Beardmore who were wed April 11, 1964.

## Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301 888 2153

### HARAH'S SLOTS CASINO

It's our Pre-Mother's Day Casino Slots Fun bus trip to Harrah's Slots Casino Saturday, May 13, 2017. Bus will leave St. Philip's Church, Brandywine, Maryland at 9:00 AM and Clinton Park-N-Ride, Clinton, Maryland at 9:30 AM and returns at approximately 7:30 PM.

Fun package includes a \$30.00 slot play rebate with other amenities. Oldies, 50/50 raffle and cake sales. Donation is \$45.00. Absolutely no refunds. Tickets must be purchased by April 30, 2017. Benefit: St. Philip's Church Annual Bull Roast.

Contacts for tickets are Doretha Savoy (301) 233-3136, Roland Turner (202) 674-8021, Shirley Cleaves (302) 690-4260 and St. Philip's Church (301) 888-1536. Name with an e-mail address is requested for the manifest list.

### MATH HELP

Count On Us math help is available on Comcast channel 96 and Verizon channel 38 Mondays and Wednesdays. The two-hour call in show provides mathematical instruction to elementary and middle school

students seeking homework help. Students can submit their math questions by emailing cou@pgpcs.org

### 2017 SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS

Make summer memorable for students in grades 2-8 by enrolling them in a summer program that offers activities for grades 2-8. For more information, visit the website at [www.pgcc.edu/go/summeryouth](http://www.pgcc.edu/go/summeryouth) or call 301-546-0158.

### BRANDYWINE COMMUNITY CENTER

Join us Friday, May 5, 2017 for free family fitness fun from 6:00 PM-8:00 PM. Come and jump for joy, fun and fitness. Professional traveling jump rope sports team; Greenbelt S.I.T.Y. Stars will help the Center to celebrate May as Family Fitness Month. The S.I.T.Y. Stars were honored to perform at the White House and film a public service announcement for Nicholodeon with First Lady Michelle Obama promoting Worldwide Day of Play.

There will be demonstrations, interactive participation, nutritional fitness tips, smoothies and strength test. Register

early and win free jump ropes/Family Fitness Pack. The Center is located at 13601 Baden-Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Telephone number is 301-888-1500 and TTY 301-699-2544.

### CLINTON UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The women at Clinton United Methodist Church will be doing some exciting things this year. They will sponsor a Dinner Sale and Mother's Day Bazaar on April 29, 2017. More information to follow in a later edition.

### PHILLY COLLEGE TOUR

Join us for a college tour of Cheyney University, Temple University and University of Arts in Philadelphia Wednesday, April 19, 2017 from 8:00 AM-11:00 PM. Lunch will be provided. Download permission slip on [pgxtremeteens.com](http://pgxtremeteens.com). The tour is for ages 14-18 years. Fee is \$50 residents and \$65 non-residents. Register today at SMARTLink #1673109. Pickup location is Suitland Community Center, 5600 Regency Parkway, Forestville, Maryland 20747. Telephone number is 301-203-600 and 301-699-2544.

## Neighborhoods

## Two Bond Ratings Agencies Affirm Highest Ratings for Bowie, Maryland

*The City's Finances Are Stable and Its Credit Position is Outstanding*

BOWIE, MD—Moody's Investor Services and Fitch Ratings reviewed the City of Bowie's financial situation recently and concluded that the City still deserved their highest bond ratings. These ratings were reaffirmations of prior assessments by the agencies.

Both agencies noted strong fiscal management, a diverse regional economy, low debt, substantial reserves, and a predictable revenue stream as being factors in their ratings. The Moody's announcement, which was made on March 2, 2017, said that, "Bowie's credit position is outstanding, and its Aaa rating is notably stronger than the median rating of Aa3 for cities nationwide. Key credit factors include a robust financial position and a small pension burden with an exceptionally low debt liability." Fitch Ratings announced a AAA rating for the City of Bowie on March 14, 2017. The Fitch assessment noted that, "The City retains an exceptional capacity to manage risks associated with a normal economic cycle given the combination of its substantial reserves, prudent budgetary management, and legal revenue-raising capacity."

H. Byron Matthews is director of the City's Finance Department. He credits careful management of expenses and a keen eye on the bottom line across the organization, as key reasons for the City's continued financial success. Mayor G. Frederick Robinson echoed the Council's strong emphasis on careful spending in his 2017 State of the City Report when he said, "We remain in excellent financial shape, due to careful budgeting and management. My colleagues and I recognize the importance of setting priorities, formulating budgets based on those priorities, and then living within the limits we set."

Bond ratings are important indicators of an entity's economic health and ability to withstand financial challenges. They also influence the cost of borrowing; a top bond rating allows the City to sell bonds at a low interest rate. This will be important as the City issues bonds to pay for a portion of the planned indoor sports facility.

### Whole Foods Market Riverdale Park to Open April 12

*First Whole Foods Market store in Prince George's County offers highest quality natural and organic products* Rockville, MD—Whole Foods Market will open its first Prince George's County, Maryland store on Wednesday, April 12, at 6621 Baltimore Avenue in Riverdale Park. Opening day shoppers will be greeted with door-buster deals and an array of product demonstrations and samples.

The store, designed for self-service ease in all departments, will offer the highest quality natural and organic products, including fresh produce, meat, seafood and prepared foods.

"We're excited to join Riverdale's vibrant and growing community with the opening of our first Whole

Foods Market in Prince George's County," said Pia DaSilva, the Riverdale store's team leader. "The store will include many new and locally sourced and seasonal products that meet our high quality standards. Whether you come for the hand-tossed pizza, the custom acai bowl bar or the six types of cold pressed juice on draft, the store will be a great addition to Riverdale and a new gathering place for the community."

Every item sold in the store meets Whole Foods Market's rigorous quality standards and is free of artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners, preservatives and hydrogenated fats.

The 40,000-square-foot store includes:

- Self-serve fresh brewed coffee and espresso, plus cold brew coffee and tea.

- Six varieties of cold pressed juice on tap, including single flavors such as apple and pineapple, as well as store blends like "Sweet Green" and "Deep Beet."

- Numerous in-house specialties: scratch bread made daily, smoked fish and hand-tossed, wood-fired pizza.

- A real-time feedback feature that allows customers to text concerns and compliments to Whole Foods Market Riverdale on their way out the door—no forms, no surveys.

- Custom superfruit acai bowl bar and self-serve mochi.

The community is invited to join store and company leaders for a traditional bread-breaking ceremony at 8:45 a.m. on April 12.

Community members can register for the opportunity to take a preview tour of the store here. Further details about the store opening will be shared through social media. Members of the media seeking additional information should contact the Mid-Atlantic press office at [MAmedia@wholefoods.com](mailto:MAmedia@wholefoods.com).

### Local Strength, Youth Leadership Program

HILLCREST HEIGHTS, MD—Teens in Local Strength are not just talk; they are all about taking action. Local Strength teens are in the process of learning how to code in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). In a few months, they will be able to create a website for a local domestic violence nonprofit. Members of the group are also writing a grant in order to implement an awareness campaign that combats youth homelessness. Moreover, these teens completed a six-week Job Readiness training to prepare for summer employment opportunities with the Prince George's County Summer Youth Employment Program.

What is Local Strength? In Local Strength, teens are given experiences, tools and knowledge to become leaders within their communities. The program teaches youth how to identify, prioritize and create problem solving models that address community needs. Teens also gain valuable interpersonal and work skills as they collaborate with each other and guest presenters to complete service learning projects. This youth leadership program offered by the Hillcrest

Heights Branch of the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is for youth ages 13-18 and meets Thursdays, 4-5:30 pm.

Local Strength was created by PGCMLS staff member Janyel "Jam" Jenifer in the fall of 2016. Her passion for working with marginalized groups led her to create this teen-centered program which is modeled after her experience as a volunteer with the Peace Corps. In her time as a volunteer, Jenifer worked with women's groups in starting entrepreneurial initiatives that they could use to gain skills to support their families. Jam now channels what she learned in the Peace Corp into the Local Strength youth.

Upcoming events include: CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) training, HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus / acquired immune deficiency syndrome) discussion and a session on education with Aaron Gilchrist from NBC 4 News. Also, the Prince George's County Chamber of Commerce President and CEO and PGCMLS management staff will address the teens with respect to business plan development. Jenifer plans to add a second weekly meeting date for Local Strength members in response to their demand.

### Contributors:

Janyel Jenifer and Andrea Bell-PGCMLS staff

### Camp Accomplish Empowers Youths and Teens of All Abilities

*Registration now open for day, overnight, and specialty programs at the Melwood Recreation Center*

UPPER MARLBORO, MD—Melwood announced this month that registration is open for its unique overnight and day summer camps for individuals with differing abilities. One of the largest organizations of its kind in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, Melwood advocates for and empowers people with differing abilities to transform their lives by providing employment, job training, life skills improvement, and recreation services.

Camp Accomplish is unique among summer camps in that it strives for inclusion of all campers, regardless of their abilities. Camp activities include swimming, therapeutic horseback riding, wall climbing and ropes courses, archery, creative arts, sports, canoeing, and more. The Melwood recreation center is a partner of the National Inclusion Project, which works with a variety of communities to promote the practice of inclusion.

"Creating a camp that's open to children and teens of all abilities allows us to share our message that our differences make us unique and valuable—and that we work best when we work together," said Cari DeSantis, president and CEO at Melwood. "The feedback that we get from families is what drives us. The camp is situated on over 100 acres of land that provides a serene environment—enabling

See CAMP Page A3

# COMMUNITY

## Practical Money Skills

By Nathaniel Sillin

### Practical Financial Planning for Parents-to-Be

Planning for a baby is exciting and sometimes a little frightening for expectant parents, especially first-time parents. The months will fly by and soon you'll be at home embarking on an adventure along with the newest member of your family. Welcome to the excitement, exhaustion, fascination, bewilderment and love that is parenthood.



Along with the joy and fulfillment that a new baby brings, you'll have new financial responsibilities. Some costs are unavoidable, while others may largely depend on your discretion. Sticking to a financial plan could help you provide wonderful opportunities and experiences for your child while keeping your family's costs under control.

**Preparing for the cost of birth.** Paying down debt, creating a new budget, building an emergency fund, setting up automated personal finance software and reviewing the beneficiaries on your accounts could all be on your pre-birth checklist. You might not have the time or energy for these tasks once you're a parent.

You'll also want to review your health insurance policy and get a clear understanding of your coverage during prenatal care, labor and delivery. Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and Medicaid plans always cover pregnancy and birth, but copays, coinsurance, deductibles and maximum out-of-pocket amounts can vary. You might not be covered at all if you have a grandfathered plan.

You can change to a new Marketplace plan, and add your child, after the birth as you'll be eligible for a Special Enrollment Period.

**Saving money during the first few years.** As you adjust to life as a new parent—sleepless nights, bath times and diapers galore—you'll likely be tempted by a wide range of childcare products. Some are necessary, but there are many ways to save on everyday infant purchases.

Ask at the hospital, research online and check with pediatricians for free childcare samples. They may not last long, but having a stockpile of various sample-size products can come in handy. Also ask about a free breast pump, which you may have a right to with an ACA healthcare plan.

Consumables, such as formula, diapers and wipes, can be bought in bulk at warehouse stores or shipped to you via a subscription from an online retailer. Either option could provide long-term savings compared to buying as you go.

**Discuss childcare options.** Some families need the income from two working parents, others can choose to stay at their job or become a full-time parent.

Weighing the pros and cons of leaving work can be difficult as you'll want to consider a variety of ancillary costs and benefits. In the end, the decision may not be entirely financial. You could value extra parent-child time over a second income, even if it means living with a tighter budget. But even if you're unsure of daycare, you may want to sign-up for local centers' waitlists now because it can take years to get a spot.

**Plan for the worst-case scenario.** As a parent, you're responsible for the wellbeing of your child. Now may be the time to prepare or revise a will and consider appointing a guardian. Also, if you don't have life insurance, this is a good time to start shopping for a policy. If something happens to you, life insurance can help provide financial support for your child in the coming years.

Whole or permanent life insurance policies will cover you for as long as you pay your premium while term life insurance covers you for a specific period, such as 10 or 20 years. Premiums on term policies may be lower than on whole life insurance, and this could be the better option if you're only looking for coverage while you support your child.

**Bottom line:** A new child will bring great joy to your family, and when wants or needs arise, you will want your finances to be in order. Whether you're early in the planning process or already expecting, it's never too early to prepare for the cost of raising a child. After all, a new addition to your family is the best gift and the start of an amazing adventure.

### Camp from A2

participants to go through life-enhancing experiences that they share with us each year."

Camp Accomplish is offered in weekly increments throughout the summer, but specialty camps like the Intermediate or Advanced Equestrian Overnight Camp or the Adventure Overnight Camp are offered only on specific dates.

Teens 13 to 18 years of age have the option of participating in the Teen Program, which aims to help campers achieve independence, develop personal relationships, leadership skills, and gain critical work experience in a fun, safe, and accept-

ing environment. Its curriculum encourages teens to advocate for themselves, as well as prepare for college and ultimately job interviews.

Camp Accomplish is American Camp Association-accredited, and the equestrian program is a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, an international organization dedicated to the promotion of excellence in equine-assisted activities and therapies.

The first camp at Melwood Recreation Center in 2017 begins on June 19. Visit [www.melwoodrecreation.org/camp/](http://www.melwoodrecreation.org/camp/) for more information and to register.

## The Undefeated Staff: Let Athletes Be Political, Because They're People Too

By MIA O'NEILL  
Capital News Service

COLLEGE PARK, MD—The rise of the 24-hour, instant news cycle has given sports figures, like other celebrities, unprecedented power to comment on current events. Now more than ever, people are looking to athletes to weigh in on the latest news, both through social media and in conversations with reporters.

But with the current political climate being what it is, what they say (and how they say it) has never come under more scrutiny.

Last fall, Colin Kaepernick's flag protest - and ensuing expressions of solidarity from fellow athletes—earned sharply contrasting reactions from fans and media alike, from overwhelming praise to bitter rebukes and insistence that those involved should "stick to sports."

Elsewhere, athletes like Tom Brady have been criticized for not being more open about their political views and alliances.

Due to the public nature of contemporary celebrity culture, it's become something of a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation, according to Kevin Merida, Editor in Chief of *The Undefeated*, ESPN's new site covering the convergence of sports, race and culture.

"We're not going back to sports being the one place where there's only what happens in front of you on the playing field," Merida said during a recent talk at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism.

Because of today's high-speed, media-driven world, he said, there's unprecedented demand for athletes to weigh in on current issues.

But he added, "I do think that there's some divide out there. (Some fans) wish that their athletes were just people who played the sports, and their coverage was highlights and press conferences and statistics."

In other words, when something big happens in the news, athletes are expected to either respond or intentionally not respond, then are scrutinized over their reactions.

For some of Merida's contemporaries, this fusion of sports figures and politics has been something revolutionary and new.

"Athletes, especially famous ones, are less likely to be left to stand alone as ciphers of sporting excellence," Jay Caspian Kang wrote in a *New York Times* article last month. "Their images will be shaded by their politics, even if these have to be assigned to them."

Kang, like *New York Magazine's* Reeves Wiedeman, suggested that the political awakening of athletes over the last few years has been a radical movement, one which has provided drastically more avenues and platforms for discussions of issues such as civil rights.

"What has emerged is a generation not only willing to shine a light on injustice but prepared to make concrete demands," Wiedeman wrote in an article published last month. He cited instances like Kaepernick's protest and Carmelo Anthony's support for Black Lives Matter - both of which grew into powerful movements that influenced fellow athletes, retail companies and even the NBA.

But Merida, and his colleagues present at the talk, suggested fans look at modern athletes' political statements less as something radically new, and more as part of a right sports figures should have had from the beginning: to express themselves beyond the playing field.

*The Undefeated* website, which celebrates the experience of African-American athletes in relation to society and popular culture, is comprised of writers and editors who believe that an athlete's essence goes beyond just sports and that all of it is worth sharing.

That includes political beliefs.

"Athletes have always just been regular people who have regular experiences," said *The Undefeated* senior editor Danielle Cadet, who also spoke at Merrill College alongside Merida and staff writer Justin Tinsley. "It's just that we're not (traditionally) talking about them as much."

Now things have changed, Merida said. Due to the rise of social media, he explained, not only are athletes more under the microscope, they're also becoming more culturally aware and more apt to take action.

"Athletes are becoming citizens of the world," Merida said. He cited sports figures like LeBron James, who hasn't been shy about making overt political statements in the last few years—from his protest over Trayvon Martin's 2012 killing while a member of the Miami Heat, to his support for Hillary Clinton in last year's presidential election.

And Merida sees *The Undefeated* as the perfect outlet for these kinds of stories.

Looking on *The Undefeated* website, one finds articles about today's biggest sports news.

But there are also features on social issues, the music scene, newsworthy black films, and the "44 most influential black Amer-



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY MIA O'NEILL  
*The Undefeated's* Editor-in-Chief, Kevin Merida, and senior editor, Danielle Cadet, speak at the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism on Feb. 21, 2017.

icans in history." For *The Undefeated*, Merida and his colleagues suggested, sports is just one aspect of a rich, all-encompassing narrative of African American life, and life in general.

One of the most important elements that sets *The Undefeated* apart, its staff believes, is the publication's commitment to understanding its subjects as people. Tinsley's writing for the publication has covered topics varying from a profile of LeBron James to a charitable meetup between the Chicago Bulls' Jimmy Butler and Chance the Rapper. He explained that in order to produce stories that offer more than just numbers, a journalist must earn his subjects' confidence.

"It's all just about establishing that level of trust," Tinsley said of talking on-on-one with athletes and other celebrities.

"They are humans," Tinsley continued. "They aren't just machines who throw out on the baseball field or football field or basketball court. These people actually have real feelings, and they actually want to talk about these things."

Merida, who came to *The Undefeated* after a long editorial career at the *Washington Post*, added that many of his staff come from working in more traditional reporting jobs, where they've built relationships of trust with important sources. Now they are finally able to make more use of them, he said.

He cited *Undefeated* contributor Mark Spears, in particular, with bringing some key sources to the publication—relationships that, for example, helped *The Undefeated* produce a diary series with Golden State Warriors power forward Draymond Green during last year's NBA Playoffs.

Some colleagues in the sports journalism world have questioned whether *The Undefeated* needs to be its own site.

During a visit to the University of Maryland in February, ESPN baseball correspondent Tim Kurkjian said that while he admired the site's content and focus on celebrating African American culture, he felt that relegating many such stories to their own space was unnecessary when they deserved to be on the outlet's main site.

But Merida maintained that niche media can do something different: they have the ability to go further in depth and produce stories that illuminate broader themes in society. And that unique ability, he said, was more important now than ever.

"The culture we live in is one where you try to build communities around topics of interest," Merida said.

He added that, while the site was created with the purpose of speaking to the experience of African American fans, it's meant to be enjoyed by people of all backgrounds.

"I hope that everybody comes to it," he said.

### Water Quality from A1

sive lead pipe replacement project approximately 12 years ago.

"WSSC is pleased to partner with PGCPs and lend our nearly century of water-quality expertise to help ensure the safety of drinking water within schools," said Carla A. Reid, WSSC General Manager and Chief Executive Officer. "While we know our drinking water is safe, we also

know that some older buildings may have lead sources within their private plumbing systems. Our tests will help PGCPs identify issues within schools' plumbing systems."

PGCPs launched the 2004 Lead in Water Program as a response to public concerns regarding lead in Washington, D.C. pipes. Since then, PGCPs has implemented several phases of remediation to address drinking water sources with elevated lead levels, as mandated by the EPA. These actions have included flushing the system, replacing pipes and fixtures, and completely shutting off fixtures.

The last system-wide testing for lead was completed in 2009. There are no federal or state mandates for annual testing. Additional tests have been conducted since then as needed; the actions

used to fund most government programs and services, including the County's contribution to the Board of Education, Memorial Library System and Community College. In FY 2018, County sources are projected to be \$1.92 billion, an increase of \$113.6 million or 6.3% over the FY 2017 budget. These revenues account for 59.5% of the total Gen-

eral Fund revenues for FY 2018. To view the Proposed FY 2018 "Budget in Brief" document go to <http://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/Document-Center/View/17960>.

"We did not fixate on past history, we dreamed of a better future and created a way to get there," said Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III. "Well this year's budget shows that our focus on key priorities was the right direction for us to take. I firmly believe, the approach we took is why our economy is getting stronger, our opportunities are greater and our stature around the

taken complied with EPA guidelines. Future plans include retesting schools every three years.

Results from the comprehensive testing will be shared when completed. Remediation efforts will begin once results are known. The school system will also address other water quality issues that arise during the testing.

For more information, visit us at [www.pgcp.org/water-quality-program/](http://www.pgcp.org/water-quality-program/).

### 2018 Budget from A1

over the FY 2017 Budget. The proposed FY 2018 General Fund budget includes \$1.92 billion in County Sources and \$1.31 billion in Outside Aid. County source revenues—taxes, fees, licenses and permits, service charges, use of money and property, etc.—represent resources

# COMMENTARY

## Cong. Chris Van Hollen United States Senator for Maryland



### Van Hollen, Senate Dems to President Trump: Abandon ACA Repeal Efforts, Stop Undermining Health Care System, and Work in Bipartisan Fashion to Improve the Law and Lower Care Costs

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen and Senate Democrats released a new letter to President Trump urging him and his administration to abandon their efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and undermine the United States health care system so they can work in a bipartisan fashion to improve the law and lower the costs of health care for all Americans.

The letter, signed by 44 Senate Democrats, also requests—as a first step—that the Trump Administration rescind the executive order signed on January 20th, 2017, which severely undermined the Affordable Care Act and sparked the efforts to unravel the law thereby undermining the health care system and increasing costs, hurting patients, providers, and families. Senate Democrats also expressed concern with President Trump's recent statement indicating it would be a good thing to make the ACA “explode”—despite the fact that would mean hurting millions of Americans.

The full text of letter is below:

Dear President Trump:

We respectfully request that you abandon your efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and undermine the U.S. health care system so that we can work together to improve the law and lower the cost of health care for all Americans.

To do that, your Administration must commit to putting an end to all efforts to unravel the ACA, undermine the health care system, increase costs, or hurt patients, providers and families. As a first step, we request that you rescind your ACA executive order signed on January 20th.

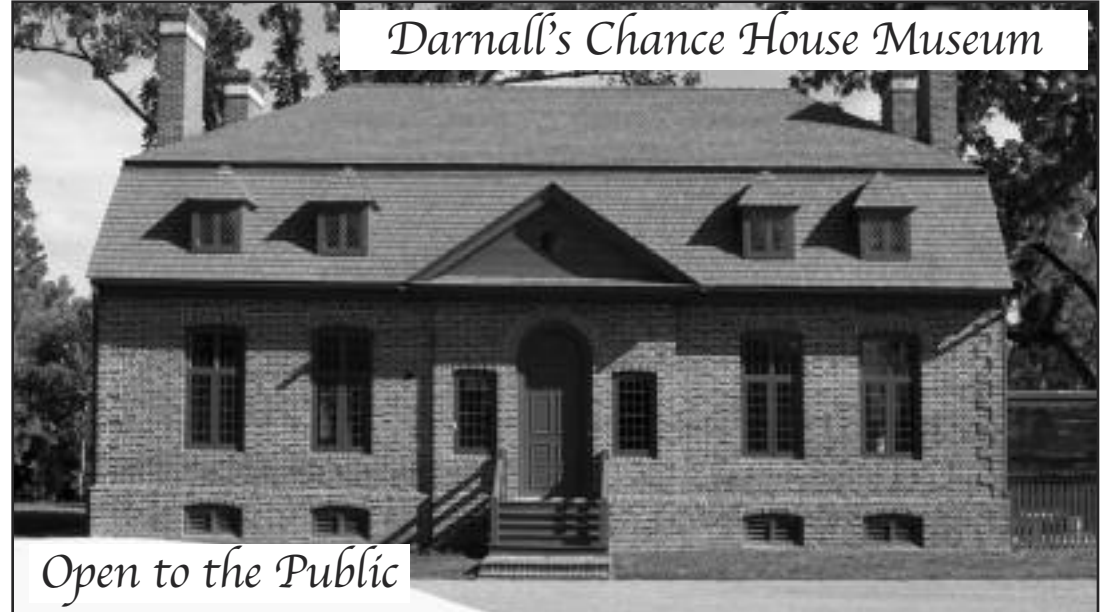
While we would welcome your sincere interest in bipartisan work to improve quality, lower costs, and expand coverage, we are concerned by your recent statement indicating it would be a good thing to make the ACA “explode,” which would hurt millions of Americans. Instead, we urge you to use your executive authority to support a stable, competitive insurance marketplace.

Members of the Democratic caucus remain ready and willing to work with you on policies that would improve the stability of the individual insurance market. We ask that you begin the work of improving health care for millions of

Americans by rescinding your January 20th executive order.

Sincerely,

- Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
- Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
- Michael Bennet (D-CO)
- Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
- Cory Booker (D-NJ)
- Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
- Maria Cantwell (D-WA)
- Ben Cardin (D-MD)
- Thomas Carper (D-DE)
- Robert Casey (D-PA)
- Chris Coons (D-DE)
- Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
- Joe Donnelly (D-IN)
- Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
- Richard Durbin (D-IL)
- Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)
- Al Franken (D-MN)
- Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
- Kamala Harris (D-CA)
- Maggie Hassan (D-NH)
- Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
- Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
- Tim Kaine (D-VA)
- Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
- Patrick Leahy (D-VT)
- Claire McCaskill (D-MO)
- Edward Markey (D-MA)
- Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
- Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
- Chris Murphy (D-CT)
- Patty Murray (D-WA)
- Bill Nelson (D-FL)
- Gary Peters (D-MI)
- Jack Reed (D-RI)
- Bernie Sanders (I-VT)
- Brian Schatz (D-HI)
- Charles Schumer (D-NY)
- Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
- Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
- Tom Udall (D-NM)
- Mark Warner (D-VA)
- Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
- Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
- Ron Wyden (D-OR)



Darnall's Chance House Museum

Open to the Public

PHOTO CREDIT: PG PARKS & RECREATION

#### DARNALL'S CHANCE HOUSE MUSEUM

Opened to the public as a historic house museum in 1988, Darnall's Chance House Museum is dedicated to the interpretation and study of the history and culture of 18th century Prince George's County, Maryland with special emphasis on the lives of mid-18th century women. The Museum will seek to interpret the story of the widow Lettice Wardrop Thomson Sim, who lived at Darnall's Chance in the decades just prior to the American Revolution. The house and grounds will reflect 1760, the year Lettice Wardrop's first husband died and a room by room inventory was taken of the contents of the house. Darnall's Chance will also strive to accurately reflect the African American community on the site and town life in mid-18th century Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

## Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



### A Time for Penance and Action to Help Our Immigrant Brothers and Sisters

During this holy season of Lent in the Christian calendar it's time to reflect and act to help the most vulnerable in our midst. With harsh assaults on undocumented immigrants and refugees who must fear every knock on their door, many American citizen children are afraid to go to school, afraid of being bullied, and afraid to leave their parents who might be arrested at any moment. In Texas, these real fears are intensified with stories about building new walls on the border and about children like their brothers and sisters, refugees from the violence of poverty and gangs and drug lords, locked in residential detention centers in their state.

A ban on crayons. That's what it came to at the visitors' center at the Karnes County Residential Center in Karnes City, Texas, one of three immigration detention centers that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) currently uses to house mothers and children who've been stopped seeking asylum in the United States. Six volunteer lawyers who work with detained families wrote a letter to ICE explaining why they liked to bring crayons when they met with clients: "Having children color and draw provides a distraction for children while their mothers relate incidents of trauma, violence and abuse. Other children sit outside the interview rooms and draw at the tables, so they are not forced to listen to their mothers' harrowing narratives nor witness their mothers' fragile emotional states during these interviews." But ICE determined some of the children were doing "damage" to tables and walls in the visitors' center while coloring. The crayon ban was just another blow to children already essentially being housed as prisoners by the federal government. The latest memos from the Department of Homeland Security outlining plans for enforcing the executive orders on immigration issued by President Donald Trump mean the numbers of children and mothers being detained this way (in America) will only swell.

Family detention centers are just one way current immigration policies hurt children. The Karnes County center is man-

aged by ICE but owned and operated by the GEO Group, a \$2 billion for-profit private prison company that seeks to double the number of people it can hold there from its current capacity of 532 beds. Across the state the Southwest Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas can hold 2,400 people. Also managed by ICE, that center is owned and operated by Corrections Corporation of America, also known as "CoreCivic," a for-profit company that makes upwards of \$260 million a year housing mothers and children at a rate of \$300 a day, per detainee. In December a Texas court struck down a regulation that would have allowed these two for-profit detention centers to obtain state child care licenses. Children's Defense Fund-Texas Associate Director Dr. Laura Guerra-Cardus, a medical doctor, was among those who testified that family jails are not child care facilities and that children held there with their mothers are not physically or mentally safe. Bree Bernwanger, managing attorney of the Dilley Pro Bono Project, commented, "Yet another court has found that locking up children and their parents is not a

form of 'child care.' It's time for ICE to recognize that detaining families is illegal and these facilities should be closed."

Following that ruling 460 women and children were released from the two Texas detention centers, flooding immigrant support networks in a surprise move officials said was unconnected to the loss in court. Many of those women and children had to be immediately hospitalized due to chronic conditions and other health problems resulting from their detention treatment. The centers have been the source of a number of controversies, including several alleged sexual assault and abuse cases and alleged use of solitary confinement as punishment for hunger strikes at the Dilley center. At the third ICE family center, owned and operated by Berks County, Pennsylvania, a group of 22 mothers imprisoned with their children between 270 to 365 days wrote a letter last year explaining why they were starting a hunger strike:

"We are already traumatized from our countries of origin. We risked our own lives and

See WATCH, Page A5

#### TOWN OF CAPITOL HEIGHTS, MARYLAND NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Mayor and Common Council of Capitol Heights, Maryland proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2017, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by %.04208, from \$252,765,207 to \$263,402,409.
2. If Capitol Heights maintains the current tax rate of \$0.4455 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by .04208% resulting in \$47,388.73 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.4275, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The Town of Capitol Heights is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The town proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.4455 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 0.04211% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$47,388.73 in additional property tax revenues.

Public hearings on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 10:00 AM on April 15, and at 6:00 PM on April 24 at Vivian Dodson Municipal Center, 1 Capitol Heights Boulevard, Capitol Heights, Maryland.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged. Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call (301) 336-0626 for further information.

## The Prince George's Post

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Contents © 2017, The Prince George's Post

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

# BUSINESS

## The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

### Improving Those End Of Year Test Scores

As the end of the school year approaches, most students will be facing a variety of end-of-year tests. Some of them will be routine course exams, while others may be state-mandated standardized tests. But regardless of the type of test, they all tend to increase anxiety and stress for students.

While it isn't possible to remove all the anxiety, or to make test taking fun, there are things any student can do to make himself or herself feel less anxious and stressed out.

An important step is simply to be physically in good shape for test taking. A big test might not seem like an athletic event, but both have much in common. The test-taker needs to be well rested and well nourished to perform well.

The brain is not that different from one's muscles. If a person is overtired, has skipped breakfast, or has been loading up on high-sugar junk foods, studies have shown that mental performance is going to suffer.

It's also important to plan ahead for tests. Experts have found that last minute cramming seldom improves test grades, but often does a great job of increasing test anxiety.

The best advice is to start studying for a test early, and to spread the preparation out over several days. It's also smart to anticipate what will be on the test. No test covers everything about a subject. It helps to review class notes and important sections of the text book. If the teacher hands out a review guide or has a pre-test review class, that's the material to focus on.

It also helps to be mentally prepared for the test. A first step there is simply to try some relaxation techniques as the test approaches. Practice relaxing by closing your eyes, taking several deep breaths and thinking positive thoughts about how well you're going to do on the test. If you feel yourself getting tense during the exam, close your eyes again, take a few big breaths and focus on your posture and breathing before getting back to work.

Doing well on tests isn't magic. It takes planning, studying and relaxing. But if doing all this still doesn't help, you may suffer from moderate or severe test anxiety. In such cases, talk to the school counselor, or consider seeing an outside professional counselor for help in overcoming the problem.

*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

those of our children so we could arrive on safe ground. While here our children have considered committing suicide, made desperate from confinement. The teenagers say that being here, life makes no sense. One of our children said he wanted to break the window to jump out and end this nightmare ... They grab the chord [sic] that holds their ID cards and tighten it around their necks, saying they want to die if they don't get out. And the smallest children, who are only two years old, cry during the night because they cannot express what they feel ... We left our homes in Central America to escape violence, threats and corruption. We thought this country would help us, but now we are locked up with our children in a place where we feel threatened, including by some of the medical personnel, leaving us with no one to trust."

The new executive orders on immigration could mean locking up more families and building more detention centers. This may be fantastic news for the private prison stock business and for-profit prison industry but it is terrible news for the thousands of innocent children at risk of inappropriate cruel and unusual punishment. Now there is another cruel twist: the Department of Homeland Security is considering separating children from their parents at the border. Parents would be detained while their children would be placed in the care of the government or sent to live with relatives in the United States.

It's hard to imagine separating children and families even in familiar surroundings—and certainly not in a new country and in the horrendous situations we have seen these families face. I can still remember the overwhelming panic I felt the day I became separated from my mother at New York's large Abyssinian Baptist Church right before a worship service began when I was about seven. In the bustling crowd going up into the balcony, I let go of my mother's hand. Happily I was among friendly people who summoned an usher who took me down to the pulpit where the preacher embraced me and asked the congregation if anyone knew this child. My mother who had been frantically looking for me in the balcony stood and said yes and an usher reunited us immediately. But I remember the panic and fear. Nothing is worse than feeling abandoned and separated from a parent in a strange place with strangers. Is this how our nation is going to treat "the least of these"—our little ones? Surely we are better than this!

*Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org. Mrs. Edelman's Child Watch Column also appears each week on The Huffington Post.*

## Economic Development Corporation Motivates Returning Citizens to Prepare for Local Workforce at Criminal Background Seminar

More Than 100 Attendees Introduced to Resources to Help Them Move Forward Into the Greatness They Deserve

By LORI C. VALENTINE  
PGCEDC

LARGO, MD—On March 21, the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation continued its ReEntry Month activities by hosting the "Moving Forward: Overcoming a Criminal Background Seminar" at its headquarters in Largo, Maryland. More than 100 returning citizens joined state and local reentry stakeholders to hear about the programs and resources available that can literally change their lives. EDC President and CEO Jim Coleman and the panelists offered not only encouraging words, but practical tools that can be used to secure gainful employment.

"It ain't over!" said Coleman. "Even though you made a mistake in your past, your future is anything you dream it to be. Remember, former President Bush and his Vice-President have DUI convictions that can't be expunged. They continued on to run the country for eight-years. Don't you give up! Your destiny still awaits you."

Panelists for this event included Tom Brown, the CEO of the Training Grounds Initiative and a minister, Constance Parker, Manager of the Maryland ReEntry Initiative and Horace Ellis who is the Co-Chair for ReEntry Roundtable for Prince George's County as well as the Co-Founder of the ReEntry Rights Voting Block. Mr. Ellis shared his moving



PHOTO COURTESY LORI C. VALENTINE

EDC President & CEO Jim Coleman (r) with EDC Workforce Director Walter Simmons (l); Constance Parker, Managing Director of the Maryland ReEntry Initiative; Horace Ellis, Co-Chair ReEntry Roundtable for Prince George's County; Pete Goodson, ReEntry Coordinator, PGCEDC; and Skylar Wyche, Career Consultant, PGCEDC encouraging Returning Citizens at Criminal Background Seminar.

story about how he used positivity and faith to help him achieve greatness.

"I was told that I would die in jail," said Ellis. "But I knew that my mother didn't want this for me. My paradigm shift came when I put the words she told me into action. I started doing everything right, even when I was tempted to do the worst things possible. As a result of grace and mercy, I stand before you a free man. My mission in life is to help other incarcerated brothers and sisters change their mindsets to change their circumstances. But it had to start with me."

Walter Simmons, EDC's Director of Workforce Services emphasized the importance of motivating individuals to do what they are already capable of do-

ing. Through the events scheduled for ReEntry Month, the EDC is hoping to give a second chance to returning citizens who have the desire and will for their lives to change, but have not been given the opportunity.

"The purpose of today's Moving Forward: Overcoming a Criminal Background Seminar was to help people start to shift their life patterns to match their life aspirations," said Simmons. "It was about empowerment, helping them to understand and receive the motivation to move forward, regardless of what they have been through. We also wanted to connect them to the resources that will encourage and help them move forward, and the tools, training and soft skills needed to increase their

chances of securing gainful employment. As one of our panelists said today, 'you are not what happened to you. Don't let your past dictate your future.'"

Constance Parker told attendees about the federal bonding program that she manages and how matching a positive outlook with practical tools has helped many returning citizen get gainful employment, and even a bond for promotion within the company. The purpose of the program is to assist individuals who have criminal backgrounds so that they can achieve their goals. Ms. Parker also explained that registered apprenticeships are also an option for returning citizen to seal the deal for long term employment.

"What Pete Goodson and the One Stop Career Center staff have been doing to assist people with criminal backgrounds has been tremendous," said Parker. "To see so many justice involved individuals, who are motivated to make the necessary changes and get the necessary resources so that they can advance and move to the next level is absolutely marvelous. Prince George's County is really doing it, and showing the region what is necessary to help people make significant changes in their own lives. This was one of the most wonderful events I have ever attended."

For more information on the Expunging Criminal Record Services Clinic, contact Rev. Joyce Pugh at 301-352-0320, extension 455.

### MGM Spring from A1

"Each year in the nation's Capital, the blooming of the cherry blossom trees and the arrival of spring are much-anticipated events," said Libby. "In imagining our springtime creation, I wanted to take a romantic and whimsical approach, so each garden would be thought-provoking and give guests a playful, emotional experience."

Suspended from the 85-foot glass-topped atrium are three 30-foot artistically crafted cherry blossom branches, covered with three feet of leaves and over 20 cherry blossoms. These oversized branches give a nod to the artwork seen throughout the resort, and serve as a beautiful entryway into the magical display that waits below.

Stepping down from the grand staircase into the Conservatory, guests are greeted by an iconic fabled character, familiar to

young children and the young at heart. Crouching beneath the 36-foot-tall cherry blossom tree, atop an 8-foot-wide emerald lily pad, sits a spectacular 6-foot pink floral frog. Complete with a gilded crown, he sits with puckered lips awaiting a lucky guest to turn him into a prince with a gentle kiss. A babbling pond is close by featuring a 12-foot-long bridge.

Visitors will embrace the charming sentiment of the season as they cast their eyes on a 24-foot-wide floral wreath, created with 300 flowers sculpted by hand, accompanied by a spectacular 8-foot-wide swing. Just above the swing, an 8-foot butterfly with wings that resemble stained glass windows, can be seen here resting gently atop the floral wreath, while below an oriole toppers sips water from an oversized bird bath.

As Conservatory visitors continue their journey through the display of spring sights and

sounds, they will encounter another floral masterpiece—a 5-foot butterfly perched atop the branch of a 40-foot-tall cherry blossom tree. Beneath the tree, a beautifully designed oversized blossom made of 14,000 pink carnations appears to sprout from the earth. The grand abstract flower, accompanied by another 24-foot cherry blossom tree, becomes even more awe-inspiring when seen upstairs from the resort's lobby.

To complete the spectacular display, gentle melodies of jazz ballads and woodland sound effects envelop guests, allowing them to immerse themselves in the elegance of spring.

Melwood, a local nonprofit workforce development organization for people with differing abilities, supplied more than 9,000 flowers for The Conservatory's spring display as part of its ongoing partnership with the resort. Headquartered in Upper

Marlboro, Maryland, Melwood provides employment, career training, life skills improvement and recreational services to more than 2,000 individuals each year.

MGM National Harbor is also a Sakura Sponsor for the 2017 Cherry Blossom Festival taking place in Washington, D.C. Each year this celebration takes place in commemoration of the 3,000 cherry blossom trees gifted to Washington, D.C. in 1912. As a part of the sponsorship, MGM National Harbor will participate in the annual parade with a 25-foot float featuring Grammy-nominated R&B singer Blu Cantrell as its entertainment. They will also debut a 40-foot long helium balloon in the shape of the iconic MGM lion, which will require 32 people to escort it through the parade route.

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

### 2018 Budget from A3

region and in the state have risen. We have made our communities and neighborhoods safer by significantly reducing overall crime by 55% over the last 6 years. We have seen historic levels of economic development activity with over \$9 billion in development projects that have taken place or are in the pipeline. Housing values are up 61% since 2010. Unemployment has dropped 50% since 2010. We have created 15,100 new jobs in the County since 2013 and when the MGM's 3,600 new jobs are added, that will be over 18,000 new jobs. The results we are seeing are what happens when we make key investments and channel resources where they will have the greatest impact. Today, our financial position is stronger and we are

clearly back on the right path. And for that, we are optimistic about what lies ahead."

The FY 2018 proposed budget reflects adherence to our economic strategy over the last six years of building a stronger financial foundation upon which we are now able to "dream for tomorrow." The proposed budget provides additional resources for critical core services and targets expansion into new programming. The County's regional stature has risen and our economy is improving. The historic level of economic development has created 15,100 new jobs in the County since 2013, and unemployment is down to 4%. Similarly, housing values have increased 61% over the past six years.

The County's positive progress is not limited to the traditional financial indicators; we

continue to have safe neighborhoods with the overall crime rate down by 55% since 2010. We also have seen a rise in high school graduation rates by 10%, and have witnessed a decrease in the number of uninsured residents. These measurable outcomes are the result of the resource investment strategy of channeling funding where it can have the greatest impact.

The FY 2018 proposed budget maintains our priority focus on growing the economy, improving academic performance in K-12 education and lifelong educational opportunities, providing safe and environmentally sustainable communities, assisting our residents in achieving healthy outcomes and social well-being, and providing high performing government operations.

The FY 2018 proposed budget includes the following specific proposals and allocations:

#### EDUCATION:

• As such, the FY 2018 proposed budget includes \$1.96 billion in funding to the Board of Education, an increase of \$39.1 million or 2.0% over the FY 2017 budget. Funding for the Board constitutes 60.8% of all General Fund spending in the FY 2018 budget. The County's contribution totals \$738.6 million and represents an increase of \$40.3 million over FY 2017 and exceeds the Maintenance of Effort requirement by \$29.5 million. The proposed budget supports the system by focusing on the strategic focus areas of aca-

# OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S  
IN THE DARK  
Movie Review

## The Great Wall

The Great Wall  
Grade: B  
Rated PG-13, abundant fantasy  
action violence, much shedding  
of green blood  
1 hr., 43 min

That long wall they've got over there in China has inspired many stories, some true and some fictional. "This," says the title card at the beginning of *The Great Wall*, "is one of the legends." The fantastical nature of Zhang Yimou's first English-language film would have been clear as soon as the hordes of reptilian monsters appeared anyway, but it's good to know up front that *The Great Wall* (despite its educational-sounding title) is more concerned with large-scale entertainment than with historical accuracy. It gives us license to relax and enjoy the extravaganza.

Set around 1000 A.D., *The Great Wall* is about two European mercenaries, William (Matt Damon) and Tovar (Pedro Pascal), who are searching for the "black powder" that China is rumored to have invented, when they're attacked by a strange creature, barely escaping with their lives. They're subsequently captured by an elite, resourceful military unit called the Nameless Order, commanded by General Shao (Zhang Hanyu) and tasked with defending the Wall. Shao and his advisers want to know how William was able to hurt the monster so easily, and why there were monsters at all: they weren't expecting them for several days yet. It turns out these ferocious green rhino-sized devils—ravenous, razor-toothed beasts called tao tei—have been a secret plague on China for centuries, reemerging every 60 years to try and overtake the Wall and enter the capital. William may have unwittingly found a way to defeat them. Magnets are involved!

Do not think for a moment, however, that this is a story about Westerners showing up somewhere to teach the poor benighted



ROTTENTOMATOES

**Starring global superstar Matt Damon and directed by one of the most breathtaking visual stylists of our time, Zhang Yimou (*Hero*, *House of Flying Daggers*), Legendary's *The Great Wall* tells the story of an elite force making a valiant stand for humanity on the world's most iconic structure. The first English-language production for Yimou is the largest film ever shot entirely in China. *The Great Wall* also stars Jing Tian, Pedro Pascal, Willem Dafoe and Andy Lau.**

locals how to solve their own problems. For one thing, Tovar isn't interested in helping, only in finding the gunpowder and fleeing. (William is more heroic than that.) But more to the point, the Nameless Order is amazingly well prepared and disciplined, all of its members trained since childhood in the Order's highly advanced (for 1000 A.D.) methods of defense. When swarms of screeching tao tei, guided telepathically by their queen, besiege the Wall, trebuchets affixed to the Wall itself launch fireballs to create a perimeter while platoons of archers shoot arrows at the tao tei that make it through. For close combat, there's the crane corps, an all-female army whose members essentially bungee-jump from the Wall with a spear in each hand, stabbing monsters on the ground for a second or two before being yanked back up. These battle sequences are exhilarating, shot on a grand digital scale similar to *Lord of the Rings*, with Zhang (*Hero*, *House of Flying*

*Daggers*) happily in his wheelhouse. In one breathless scene, a thick fog prevents the people on the Wall from seeing the tao tei—whose intelligence is evolving—on the ground below.

The leader of the crane corps, Commander Lin (Jing Tian), speaks English, having been taught by a European named Ballard (Willem Dafoe) who came here 25 years ago looking for gunpowder and never left. Lin is thus able to serve as translator for William, whose archery skills and mysterious accent are both borderline supernatural. (The film addresses the language barrier more realistically than it addresses anything else, letting the Chinese people speak subtitled Mandarin when appropriate rather than having everyone be magically fluent in English.) Lin and her fellow cranes kick all manner of butt, as do the other squads, as does William. When they emerge victorious, it's because they have cooperated with mutual respect.

A number of superfluous, half-formed ideas bubble up in the plot, and Willem Dafoe's shadow-dwelling character doesn't amount to anything. There's some schmaltz, too, in the form of a scared young soldier whom William takes under his wing. These may be the consequences of the script being the work of six different men: three are credited for the story, three more for the screenplay. Details about the monsters' origins and nature are dorky-cool, but there's nothing in the dialogue worth remembering, nor are the characters drawn with any particular skill. Zhang is all about the spectacle—fear-some beasts, massive color-coordinated armies, experimental hot-air balloons, and, yes, some gunpowder. He delivers this with gusto, unconcerned with whether the finer points of the narrative make sense. It's Matt Damon and Jing Tian (you don't know her yet but you will) fighting rhino-velociraptors. What else do you want?

### 2018 Budget from A5

democratic excellence, a high performing workforce, safe and supportive environments, family and community engagement and organizational effectiveness. The budget funds targeted wrap around services to increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates at four challenged high schools—Bladensburg, Central, High Point and North-western. Additional resources at these schools will support their progress and help lift the entire system. Furthermore, the increased funding to the Board of Education supports expansion of the Pathways in Technology high school program, IB/PSAT program exam fees, child protective services background checks and compensation adjustments for the system's employees.

The County will also make significant investments in a number of school construction projects in FY 2018, including \$100.6 million in County capital funds to support such projects as completion of the construction of the Fairmont Heights High School replacement project, and planning for the renovation or replacement of William Wirt Middle School, the International School at Langley Park, Suitland High School and 38 systemic replacement projects.

In addition, the FY 2018 proposed operating budget includes \$112.5 million for the Community College. The proposed budget funds employee compensation adjustments for employees and supports the core operational needs of the College. The FY 2018 budget also includes \$1.7 million for the Promise Scholarship Program. This program will provide scholarships to pay tuition and mandatory fees, not covered by federal and State aid, for approximately 500 graduates of Prince George's County Public Schools who enroll at the College. In addition, the CIP budget totals \$82.6 million and includes funding for the renovation and expansion of the Queen Anne Academic Center, the renovation of Lanham Hall, and construction of the Culinary Arts Center.

The proposed FY 2018 operating budget for the Memorial Library System is \$29.8 million, an increase of \$1.8 million or 6.6%. The proposed budget provides for salary adjustments for staff and maintains the current operating hours of all branches. With the added resources, the Library will complete technology and infrastructure upgrades throughout the system and promote lifelong learning by launching the "Books from Birth" program. The new program will increase access to

books and encourage early reading by delivering one book per month to children under the age of five with the goal of reaching 7,200 children through the program in FY 2018. Additionally, the FY 2018 CIP funds will support continued construction at the Hyattsville and New Carrollton Branch libraries, planning for Bladensburg and various improvement projects.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

The proposed FY 2018 budget includes \$9 million from the EDI fund to continue investing in the economy. The Economic Development Corporation and FSC First will continue to use the EDI fund, along with other available financial incentives, to retain and attract businesses to Prince George's County. These efforts will be supported by the additional funding provided to the Conference and Visitors Bureau to enhance our branding and marketing efforts.

The FY 2018 budget includes new investments to extend the residential market's recovery and expand the stock of workforce housing opportunities. The proposed budget includes a \$5.1 million investment in the County's Housing Investment Trust Fund. The fund will support two new programs—the Workforce Housing Gap Financing

Program and the Pathway to Purchase Program. The budget allocates \$2.6 million for the Workforce Housing Gap Financing Program and will enable the County to support the development of viable, mixed income communities by providing gap financing for the development of decent and quality workforce housing. The Pathway to Purchase program will provide assistance to approximately 150 eligible first time homebuyers to purchase owner occupied or vacant residential properties in the County. The budget includes \$2.5 million for the program.

In addition, the Non-Departmental budget includes a \$2.0 million PAYGO transfer to the Redevelopment Authority's capital budget to support the various community revitalization programs. The Commercial Revitalization program will provide matching grants to revitalize older shopping centers and the Community Impact Grant program will provide matching funds to non-profit organizations seeking support for community led projects. Additionally, the budget includes \$22 million of funding to complete infrastructure for the new Suitland Town Center development. Phase one of the Suitland Town Center

See 2018 BUDGET Page A7

## Entertainment News and Information

### Easy Ways to Make Your Media Space More Enjoyable



PHOTO COURTESY NEWSUSA

(NewsUSA)—Now is a perfect time to spruce up your home before entertaining friends and family. Whether your guests are coming just to watch the big game or to stay for an extended period of time, your media space will no doubt be a popular gathering spot. The American Lighting Association (ALA) suggests a few ways to enhance everyone's viewing experience.

No matter what kind of space you have, whether it's a dedicated media room, a simple TV nook or something in between, the fundamental components are comfort and appropriate lighting. For the majority of homeowners, most media-related activity takes place in a multi-use space, which means the lighting must have the flexibility to go from everyday activities to TV viewing.

"One of the primary design objectives in a media space is to create the ability to achieve multiple and varied types of experiences, and lighting provides the key element to achieve that goal," says Joe Rey-Barreau, AIA, IES, education consultant for ALA and associate professor at the University of Kentucky's School of Interior Design.

Three necessary elements for the ultimate media viewing experience are the source of light, types and placement of light fixtures, and the use of smart dimmers.

#### Light source

Keep in mind that natural light from outside is as influential as light from indoor fixtures. Multi-purpose spaces generally have windows, which create the need to control that light during the daytime as well as at night when even minor reflections can be distracting.

Erik Anderson, national sales manager for Lutron Electronics Co., says that when it comes to lighting, "the sun is light bulb number one." He suggests using motorized shades, which can be retrofitted to an existing window, as a convenient and effective way to manipulate ambient light. It is important to consider where your light is coming from as well as the time of day and season, which affect not only the amount of incoming light, but also the angle and intensity of the light.

#### Fixture type and placement

The types of fixtures used in a dedicated media room are different from those typically used in a family room. Selecting fixtures for any type of media space can be confusing. To get it right, your best bet is to consult with a professionally trained lighting consultant at an ALA-member showroom.

#### Smart dimmers

Using dimmers may seem like a no-brainer, especially considering they are easy to install and highly impactful. New wireless smart dimmers simply attach to a wall or sit on a tabletop. Anderson explains that Lutron's Caséta Wireless dimmers are designed for simple, do-it-yourself installation. The inexpensive devices can be synced with a phone to control the lights, window shades and room temperature from a remote location.

"It can be inconvenient to turn each thing on and off every time you enter or leave a room," says Anderson. "With Lutron's Caséta Wireless, you can pre-set it to adjust everything at once, so that it all comes to life with one press of a button."

For more ideas and advice for improving your media viewing experience while maintaining functionality in your multi-use space, stop by your local ALA-member lighting showroom or visit [AmericanLightingAssoc.com](http://AmericanLightingAssoc.com).

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**301 627 0900**

# Calendar of Events

April 6 — April 12, 2017

## Farm Craft and Activity

Date and Time: Thursday, April 6, 2017, 10–11 am  
 Description: Enjoy a farm themed story and a craft.  
 Cost: Resident: \$3; Non-Resident: \$4  
 Ages: Ages 2–12  
 Location: Old Maryland Farm  
 301 Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro, MD  
 Contact: 301-218-6702; TTY: 301-699-2544

## Xtreme Teens: Rap Battle Remix

Date and Time: Friday, April 7, 2017, 7–10 pm  
 Description: Remix the lyrics of the most popular songs out with random topics. Who can perform the funniest song?  
 Cost: Free with SmartLink ID  
 Ages: 10–17  
 Location: Good Luck Community Center  
 8601 Good Luck Road, Lanham, MD  
 Contact: 301-552-1093; TTY 301-699-2544

## The Eastern Standard Time Jazz Quartet Featuring Chris Vadala

Date and Time: Friday, April 7, 2017, 8 pm  
 Description: One of the country's foremost woodwind artists, Chris Vadala has appeared on more than 100 recordings to date, as well as innumerable jingle sessions and film and TV scores. Enjoy jazz standards and original compositions from his recent album *Eastern Standard Time* during this performance.  
 Cost: \$25/person; 10% discount for Montpelier members & seniors  
 Ages: All ages welcome  
 Location: Montpelier Arts Center  
 9652 Muirkirk Rd., Laurel, MD  
 Contact: 301-377-7800; TTY 301-699-2544

## Brunch With Bunny

Date and Time: Saturday, April 8, 2017, 11 am  
 Description: Enjoy brunch with the Bunny! He has plenty of fun things in store such as face painting, entertainment, prizes and more! Don't forget to bring your camera.  
 This event is sponsored by College Park Recreation Board.  
 Cost: Free  
 Ages: All ages welcome  
 Location: College Park Community Center  
 5051 Pierce Avenue, College Park, MD  
 Contact: 301-441-2647; TTY 301-699-2544

## Spring Pageant and Egg Hunt

Date and Time: Saturday, April 8, 2017, 11 am–2 pm  
 Description: Come dressed in your Spring best to compete in our Parent and Child Look-A-Like Pageant. Best Dressed sets of "twins" will win a prize basket! Afterward, enjoy crafts, games, face-painting, and a Spring Egg Hunt.  
 Cost: Resident: \$5; Non-Resident: \$7  
 Ages: All ages welcome  
 Location: Deerfield Run School Community Center  
 13000 Laurel-Bowie Road, South Laurel, MD  
 Contact: 301-953-7882; TTY: 301-699-2544

## Annual Easter Egg and Spring Family Fun Day

Date and Time: Saturday, April 8, 2017, 12:30–2:30 pm  
 Description: Join us for our annual Easter Egg giveaway! Enjoy arts and crafts, games, a moon bounce, and more. Have your picture taken with the Easter Bunny (nominal fees will apply). This event will be held rain or shine!  
 Cost: Resident \$10 per child ages 2 & up; Non-Resident \$13 per child ages 2 & up  
 Ages: All ages  
 Location: Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex  
 8001 Sheriff Road, Landover, MD  
 Contact: 301-583-2582; TTY 301-699-2544

## Drop-In Family Time at the Herb Exhibit

Date and Time: Saturday, April 8, 2017, 1–3 pm  
 Description: Families are invited to drop in and do a variety of hands-on activities with herbs, do make-and-take crafts, and visit our current exhibit, *Rub the Oils and Strew the Powders: The Legacy of European Herbs in Early American Medicine and Cuisine*.  
 Cost: \$3.50/person  
 Ages: All ages welcome  
 Location: Montpelier Mansion/Historic Site  
 9650 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, MD  
 Contact: 301-377-7817; TTY 301-699-2544; montpeliermansion@pgparks.com

## Gifts and Spirits Series: Color Me Sangria

Date and Time: Saturday, April 8, 2017, 6–8 pm  
 Description: "Color Me Sangria" is the second in our new Gifts and Spirits Series, featuring cocktails and crafts inspired by our current exhibit, *Rub the Oils and Strew the Powders: The Legacy of European Herbs in Early American Medicine and Cuisine*.  
 You'll create and sip your own personal sangria blend, using fruit, herbs and spices of your choosing (alcohol optional), make a craft with herbs, and relax by coloring a beautiful botanical picture.  
 Cost: Advanced price: \$20/person; Door price: \$25/person  
 Ages: 21 & up  
 Location: Montpelier Mansion/Historic Site  
 9650 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, MD  
 Contact: 301-377-7817; TTY 301-699-2544; montpeliermansion@pgparks.com

## Wellness: Walk and Talk With the Doc

Date and Time: Monday, April 10, 2017, 8:30–9:30 am  
 Description: Walking is good medicine, and it is a great way to connect with others. In this popular FREE program, health care professionals will share information and lead group walks. No registration is required. Just put on your walking shoes and join us!  
 Cost: FREE  
 Ages: 50 & up  
 Location: Tucker Road Community Center  
 1771 Tucker Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744  
 Contact: 301-446-6800; TTY 301-699-2544

# EARTH TALK ... Greens Bemoan Neil Gorsuch as Trump Supreme Court Choice

Dear EarthTalk:

If Neil Gorsuch is confirmed to fill the vacant seat on the Supreme Court, what will be the implications for environmental and climate policy?

—Jim Metcalf,  
 Newark, DE

Environmental leaders aren't particularly jazzed about Neil Gorsuch as Donald Trump's nominee to fill the vacancy left on the U.S. Supreme Court following the death of Antonin Scalia in February 2016. For starters, the name Gorsuch brings back bad memories of the 1980s when Anne Gorsuch (Neil's mother) slashed federal environmental funding by 22 percent as head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Ronald Reagan. Greens at the time accused her of placating polluters and trying to dismantle the very agency she was hired to run. (And it's *deja vu* all over again at the EPA with Scott Pruitt now at the helm.)

But it would be unfair to judge a son based on his mother's doings some four decades ago. Nevertheless, environmentalists aren't finding much to like from Neil Gorsuch either. According to Billy Corriher of the Center for American Progress, Judge Gorsuch made his way onto candidate Trump's radar as a potential Supreme Court nominee in August 2016

after writing a "controversial manifesto arguing that it should be easier for corporations and individuals suing federal agencies to have courts strike down regulations and overrule decisions by experts at agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency." Gorsuch contends that the judiciary should be able to overrule how federal agency experts interpret how a given law should be implemented. In the case of global warming, the Obama EPA interpreted carbon dioxide as a harmful pollutant worth regulating under the Clean Air Act based on the recommendations of the very agency experts Gorsuch would potentially seek to overrule.

Like Trump's cabinet picks, Gorsuch favors the shrinking of federal bureaucracy and an increased reliance on the states to handle their own problems. This antipathy toward federal regulations is another reason Gorsuch could be a disaster for the climate in the case he casts the deciding vote on the Supreme Court against implementing the Clean Power Plan, an Obama-era effort to ratchet down carbon emissions from the utility sector by moving away from coal. Without the Clean Power Plan—currently cooling its heels in judicial review and likely headed for the Supreme Court later this year—there's little hope of the U.S. meeting its Paris climate accord emissions reduction commitments.



CREDIT: JOE RAVI, CC

**Environmentalists worry that Neil Gorsuch will be dismissive of advocacy groups and could cast the deciding vote against implementing the Clean Power Plan.**

Another concern is Gorsuch's historically dismissive posture toward the standing of public interest groups as plaintiffs (defined as their right to file suit given direct injury or harm). According to EnviroNews, Gorsuch dismissed a 2015 case brought by a hunters and anglers group against the Forest Service for allowing motorcycles to access trails in Colorado's San Juan National Forest due to lack of direct harm. Likewise, he barred three leading environmental groups from joining a 2013 suit regarding where off-road vehicles could travel in New Mexico's Santa Fe National Forest.

Greens, still hopeful that the judiciary can be the last check on the conservative-dominated legislative and executive

branches, are crossing their fingers that Democrats can block Gorsuch and send the Trump administration back to the drawing board for someone more to their liking.

CONTACTS: Center for American Progress, [www.americanprogress.org](http://www.americanprogress.org); Clean Power Plan, [www.epa.gov/cleanpower-plan/clean-power-plan-existing-power-plants](http://www.epa.gov/cleanpower-plan/clean-power-plan-existing-power-plants); EnviroNews, [www.environews.tv](http://www.environews.tv).

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**Send questions to:** [earthtalk@emagazine.com](mailto:earthtalk@emagazine.com).

## 2018 Budget from A6

project, the Town Square at Suitland Federal Center, will begin in FY 2018 with the construction of 219 urban town homes.

- Progress will continue in terms of growing the economy by improving efficiencies in the permitting and inspection processes. To support these efforts, the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement budget includes funding for continued implementation and hardware for the new permitting and licensing system and funding to support previously unfunded vacant positions.

### PUBLIC SAFETY:

- The respective proposed budgets for Public Safety agencies and Courts provide the resources necessary to meet the response time needs of an ever-growing base of residents and businesses. Taken together, they represent \$709.1 million of the FY 2018 proposed budget, an increase of nearly \$47.8 million or 7.2% over the FY 2017 budget level.

- Specifically, the additional funds will allow for the following new personnel—200 police recruits, 115 firefighters, 25 deputy sheriffs and four new positions in the warrant processing and records management units, 70 correctional officers and seven new correctional treatment coordinators to support the Work Release Center, and funding for all dispatcher and call taker positions.
- The FY 2018 proposed budget for the Circuit Court and the Orphans Court totals \$18.0 million, an increase of \$1.7 million or 10.2% above the FY 2017 budget. Included in the proposed funds for the Circuit Court is funding for all vacant positions and enhancements for staff retention to support the delivery of services. The Orphans' Courts budget includes funding for a new law clerk to support daily operations.

- The Office of the State's Attorney proposed FY 2018 budget total \$18.0 million, an increase of \$1.4 million or 8.6% over the FY 2017 budget. Funding will

support retention pay for Assistant State's Attorneys, new positions including an information technology project coordinator and information technology manager to support the body camera technology programs implemented by the Police Department and County municipalities. Additionally, the budget includes resources for two law clerks and additional contractual funding to support various special prosecution units including the child abuse and cold case units.

- The CIP budget includes funding for: the completion of the new Police Department Administrative Headquarters and construction for the new Forensics Lab; completion of the Hyattsville and Oxon Hill Fire/EMS stations, land acquisition for the Beechtree and Laurel stations, and planning of the Training and Leadership Academy and Kentland #833 station; renovations at the correctional center medical unit, detention housing units and planning for the Central Control/Administrative Expansion project. Additionally, funding is allocated to complete renovations at the combined Public Safety Training facility and limited renovation of various Court facility areas.

### ENVIRONMENT:

- In FY 2018, the County continues its investment in various environmental programs to improve quality of life and support federal and State mandates. The proposed FY 2018 funding for the Local Watershed Protection and Restoration Enterprise Fund is \$14.8 million and remains flat with the FY 2017 budget. This fund continues to support planned activity for impervious area restoration through retrofit stormwater controls. The County's investment in the Stormwater Management Fund increases in FY 2018 by \$3.5 million or 5.2% for a total of \$71.1 million to support various water quality programs. The FY 2018 CIP budget includes \$49.8 million for the Clean Water partnership.
- The proposed Solid Waste Management fund budget totals

\$98.5 million, an increase of \$0.9 million or 0.9% over the FY 2017 budget. This fund will continue to support the promotion of recycling which will improve the trash to recycling diversion rate. The FY 2018 CIP program continues to encompass operational and facility improvements and repairs, closure and post-closure requirements for Brown Station Road and Sandy Hill landfills and continued construction of the Organic Composting Facility.

### HEALTHCARE AND HUMAN SERVICES:

- The proposed budget to the respective human service agencies remains a priority in FY 2018. General Fund support to these agencies total \$35.1 million, an increase of \$6.5 million or 22.9% above the FY 2017 budget. The increase provides the necessary resources to improve core service delivery, build upon the improvements in our health standards and allow for new programming.
- Funding in the Department of Family Services supports new initiatives and expanded services and programs in the area of disability and aging services. In FY 2018, resources are provided to support the implementation of a Disabilities Apprenticeship Training program. The program will provide 10 County residents with developmental, intellectual and physical disabilities a meaningful paid job training experience with a County agency. Additionally, the budget provides funding for expanded options counseling services to help County residents make informed choices about community based options and services that best meet their long-term support needs.

- The Health Department continues to direct their efforts towards chronic disease prevention, treatment and providing expanded access to healthcare to County residents. In FY 2018, funding is provided for the new Health Alliance Program to assist healthcare stakeholders throughout the County. The program will provide a care man-

agement solution that will help community health workers and other health care professionals provide wrap around and clinical care coordination. Also, additional general fund support has been provided to maintain behavioral health services as it transitions to a fee for service program due to the elimination of the Ambulatory Funding Grant. In FY 2018, the County will support 17 new positions and continue to provide outpatient substance abuse treatment and prevention services to County residents.

- Protecting our children continues to be a priority for the Department of Social Services. Resources are provided to support five positions for the Child Protection Education Unit. The unit is dedicated to training the entire community about protecting children against abuse, including sexual abuse. Additionally, the department will continue to support afterschool and family economic stability programs as well as the TNI @ School program.
- Notwithstanding the new programming throughout these agencies, the County will continue focused intervention efforts for vulnerable populations to include reducing the occurrences of violence among children and adults, domestic partners, sexual assault, and/or human trafficking. Resources are deployed to continue collaborative partnerships with County entities such as the Courts, State's Attorney, and public safety agencies, community partners, and advocates.

- The CIP budget includes funding for the new Regional Medical Center in Largo which will break ground in the Fall 2017, and continued support for the Regional Health and Human Services Administration Building. This will improve residents' access to health and human services.

Adhering to the Prince George's County Charter, the FY 2018 Proposed Budget must be submitted by March 15, 2017 to the Prince George's County Council. The Council must adopt the FY 2018 Proposed Budget on or before June 1, 2017.

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