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'Revenge Porn' Bill Passes Through House, Moves to Senate

By MELANIE BALAKIT
Capital News Service

Annapolis – A bill that would make it a crime to maliciously post sexually explicit images on the Internet without the subject's consent passed unanimously through the Maryland House of Delegates Friday. The measure, known as the "revenge porn" bill, will now move forward to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

"I call it the dark-side of technology," said Delegate Luiz Simmons, D-Montgomery, who co-sponsored the bill with Delegate Jon Cardin, D-Baltimore County. The bill had 44 other sponsors in the House.

"People break in phones or computers and steal these photos, or have photos and understand that they are private, and post them to the Internet anyways," said Simmons.

The bill would make maliciously posting sexually explicit images on the Internet without the subject's consent a misdemeanor punishable by up to two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

Simmons said that people, mostly women, are put into difficult situations when they are threatened with the possibility that their photos would be posted online.

"The bill would deter cyber criminals," said Simmons, referring to people who threaten others with posting sexually explicit photos online.

Sexually explicit photos are often shared with an intimate partner according to a legislative analysis of the bill. The recipient can post the photos online after the relationship ends. Victims can face difficulty pursuing criminal charges because the photos were shared willingly.

Annamarie Chiarini became a victim of revenge porn when her ex-boyfriend posted explicit photos of her online to intentionally harm her. Chiarini is now an advocate for Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, a non-profit organization that raises awareness about the issue of online harassment.

"I could have lost my job, my home, custody of my children, but the person who did this to me is still living his life," Chiarini testified last month, according to the House Judiciary Committee video of the hearing. The Towson woman is a single mother who works at a community college as an English professor.

Chiarini said when the incident happened, she received no support from family or friends. She even attempted suicide.

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Lawmakers Target Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Renewable Energy Costs

By BRIAN COMPARE
Capital News Service

College Park – With six years left until the state meets its self-imposed deadline for greenhouse gas reduction, projections show the state will miss its target without legislation to promote increased use of renewable energy sources.

The state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, passed in 2009, requires a 25 percent reduction in 2006 greenhouse gas levels by 2020.

James McGarry, chief policy analyst for Chesapeake Climate Action Network, said the state has done a good job of reducing emissions but will need more from policy makers to meet the goal in time.

Under current state policies, the amount of greenhouse gases in 2020 will be about 16 percent lower than 2006 levels, according to state estimates based on a 2011 inventory of greenhouse gases.

Two bills in the General Assembly could help the state reach its target by 2020, McGarry said.

The Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards bill, HB1149, would require electricity suppliers in the state to produce a high percentage of the state's power from renewable energy sources. Under the bill, the percentage would rise at a faster rate every year, starting in 2017.

The bill would raise the target for 2017 from 13.1 percent from renewable sources to 15.65 percent. The end goal



PHOTO: THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS
A display of 2,600 solar panels are displayed atop the Severn building at the University of Maryland. Photo courtesy of the University of Maryland Office of Sustainability Communications

for 2025 would be 40 percent from renewable sources, with at least 4 percent of total energy use from solar power.

Prioritizing greenhouse gas reduction can have positive effects on the state economy, McGarry said. Local companies get business by upgrading energy efficiency in homes, and increased energy efficiency lowers energy costs for consumers. Also, the portfolio standard bill would create 3,700 jobs annually in construction and related supply chain fields, he said.

Greenhouse gas reduction is a process that reaches well beyond just this state, and McGarry said the state can be a national leader in demonstrating how policies can have visible impacts on emissions reduction.

"When you're putting investments into a growing market segment, you're going to

get the jobs that are necessary to build that and you're also positioning the state to be a leader in this field that's the fastest-growing energy field in the country," he said. "Somebody has to go out there and actually do that."

But Ariel Lager, director of renewable energy services for Customized Energy Solutions, an energy services company, told the House Economic Matters committee Thursday that the renewable portfolio standard would result in higher electricity costs for state residents and businesses.

Another bill, HB747, would remove subsidies going to facilities that produce black liquor, a byproduct of wood pulp production that can be burned to produce energy. In what McGarry

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Maryland Requests ESEA Waiver Extension for Teacher-Principal Evaluations

PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

Annapolis, Md. – Maryland is moving forward with new education initiatives to further strengthen teaching and learning statewide in the nation's top school system – implementing higher standards, better assessments and new teacher and principal evaluation systems. To ensure these important new education initiatives are successful, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) presented a plan to the State Board of Education today to request an extension of its implementation timeline from the U.S. Department of Education.

"Over the last seven years, we made the better choice to invest in Maryland's top-ranked schools, and today, we continue our support of educators and children by giving them the time they need to get this transition right," said Governor O'Malley. "This waiver extension would allow Maryland to complete three important transitions – new standards, assessments and evaluations while being respectful of the demands on students, teachers and school leaders."

The three-year process for implementing the new Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, developed from the Common Core State Standards, began in 2010. Maryland is piloting new assessments using the online Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The state's teachers and administrators also are learning a new evaluation system for improving teacher effectiveness and school leadership.

"Improving and ensuring fair evaluations for teachers and prin-

cipals is perhaps the most difficult and important stage of this progression. We want to do this work well to accelerate student learning and to support teachers and school leaders during this transition, particularly as they learn to use these new tools for professional growth," said State Superintendent Lillian Lowery.

Through its previous federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility request, MSDE obtained flexibility to avoid double-testing and hold schools harmless for one year from federal accountability sanctions when field testing new state assessments for the 2013-2014 school year.

The ESEA waiver extension application recognizes that school year 2014-15 is the baseline year for PARCC implementation and data from the second test administration in school year 2015-16 would be available to use in evaluations in 2016-17.

"The majority of Superintendents in Maryland support the language of the proposed flexibility waiver. We recognize that this is a fluid and dynamic reform that requires adequate time to refine the processes and the products that are being established for the teacher/principal evaluation models. The additional time will help to ensure that the evaluation systems are fair and valid measures designed to support effective teacher/principal practices and enhanced student learning," said Dr. Michael J. Martirano, Superintendent in St. Mary's County and President of the Public School Superintendent Association of Maryland.

Data Breaches Common at Universities, Other Educational Institutions

By ILANA SHULEVITZ
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON – The recent data breach at the University of Maryland is only one of hundreds at educational institutions across the country over the past few years.

The Identity Theft Resource Center, a non-profit based in California, said there were more than 50 data breaches in the educational sector just last year involving names plus Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, medical records, or a financial record or credit card information. Those included occurrences at K-12 schools, colleges and universities.

The breach of more than 300,000 University of Maryland staff, student and graduate records is one of at least two disclosed this month involving Social Security numbers stolen from a large university. At In-

diana University, the Social Security numbers and other personal data of 146,000 students and graduates may have been breached.

And this week, the University of Northern Iowa began investigating a possible data breach after some employees reported being the victims of tax fraud.

"Universities tend to have a more open information technology architecture," said Paul Stephens, director of policy and advocacy at the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. "You have various parties operating within the system — you've got students, you have teachers, you have faculty, you have administrative staff, and so on."

Stephens emphasized that the long retention periods for student records is problematic at many schools.

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Some Hope New Gas Tax Will Help Fix Deteriorating Bridges

By AMBER LARKINS
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS – Republican Sen. Richard Colburn of Dorchester voted against Maryland's recently passed gas tax increase, but now hopes some of the new money will go to replacing the Dover Bridge in his district.

The new taxes, initially expected to raise prices at the pump by 4 cents a gallon this July, might help to expand funding for the rehabilitation and replacement of Maryland's deteriorating bridges.

As of April, 87 of the 2,572 Maryland State Highway Administration maintained bridges were structurally deficient, which doesn't mean they are unsafe, but that they have areas that need to be repaired or replaced, according to data from the State Highway Administration.

Another 373 bridges maintained by the State Highway Administration are functionally obsolete, which means they



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY AMBER LARKINS.
The Dover Bridge is an 80-year-old mechanical swing bridge over the Choptank River that connects Talbot and Caroline Counties.

have lanes that are too narrow or are otherwise not built to current standards, according to the 2012 National Bridge Inventory Database compiled by the Federal Highway Administration.

"It's a major public safety concern," Colburn said of the Dover Bridge, which is consid-

ered functionally obsolete because of its narrow lanes.

In 2011, 39 states had a higher percentage of deficient bridges than Maryland, according to a report by the Transportation for America Coalition, an organiza-

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INSIDE

Lt. Governor Brown Tours Pre-K Programs For Read Across America Day

Anthony G. Brown highlighted the importance of expanding high-quality prekindergarten (pre-K) to more Maryland children by visiting pre-K programs in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties where he toured the facilities and read to pre-K students.

Community, Page A3

The Value of the Department of Health and Human Services Decades of Data collecting

The program managers, researchers, scientists and analysts at the Department of Health and Human Services have been collecting data for decades on the nation's health, demographics, social services, and scientific research.

Commentary, Page A4

Mikulski Calls for Kills Switches on Cell Phones

The Smartphone Theft Prevention Act that Mikulski is supporting would require carriers to have a security feature on all cell phones that would allow victims of theft to deactivate the device from a website and remove personal information.

Business, Page A5

Movie Review: "Ernest & Celestine"

Celestine is a young mouse who lives in an orphanage where the caretaker tells scary stories about the evil nature of the bears that live in the outside world. In her travels she encounters a bear named Ernest who attempts to eat her. When she convinces him not to and leads the way to a cellar full of food, an unlikely bond forms between the two.

Out on the Town, Page A6

Earth Talk

Dear EarthTalk:

Should those of us who care about our health and the planet be concerned about the new trend in genetic engineering called synthetic biology?

— Chrissy Wilkins,
Bern, NC

Features, Page A7

Towns and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301 735 3451

Longtime Morningsider welcomes great-grandchild

Ruth Sanford, one of Morningside's founding residents, called with the good news that she has a great-great-granddaughter, Sophia Grace Shives, born Feb. 13 to Megan and Cory Shives of Hagerstown. Little Sophia is the granddaughter of Teresa and the late Craig Crowl, the great-granddaughter of Ruth's daughter Margie and John Crowl, and now the first great-great grandchild for Ruth.

Ruth has lived on Allies Road in Morningside since 1947, which is two years before Morningside became a municipality.

In other family news, she told me that her daughter Janet and her husband John Hemming, of Herndon, Va., are in a time-share in Aruba., due back March 15.

Neighbors

Dwight Holloway, Skyline's favorite VIP, has been released from rehab and came home to Maria Avenue to a feast prepared by one of his attending health aides. He called me to report that he's home and that his wife Ruby is also home after being hospitalized. The Holloways, both in their 90s, have been very active members of the Skyline community.

Stephen Manning called from Amisville, Va., to say that he still reads my column in The Enquirer-Gazette. He is retired as Deputy Clerk of the Court in Upper Marlboro. He was also Court historian and used to write a column for the Enquirer-Gazette.

Jody Nyers emailed that her mother-in-law, Bernadette Nyers, formerly of Suitland and Upper Marlboro, recently moved to Conway, S.C., to be near son Larry and Jody.

Larry Nyers, who graduated from Suitland High in 1973, is retired from the Census Bureau. And, by the way, his wife Jody graduated from Central in '74.

Class, club and grief support

Oxon Hill crochet class has a professional instructor who

teaches teens and adults how to crochet and knit. Classes are Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at noon, at the Oxon Hill Library, 6200 Oxon Hill Road. Information: 301-839-2400. And it's free!

District Heights chess club meets at Spauldings Library, 5811 Old Silver Hill Road, Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Learn to play or improve skills. Free! Information: 301-817-3750.

Grief Support Group is for those age 18 and older who are grieving the death of a loved one. It's at the Chesapeake Life Center, 9500 Arena Dr., Suite 240, in Largo. Free, but registration required. Phone 410-987-2129.

Changing landscape

County Executive Rushern Baker, and Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown were among the dignitaries who met for ribbon-cutting and a press conference announcing the opening of the Global Vision Community Health Center in Capitol Heights on March 6. This is the first of five Health Enterprise Zones set to open in the County and will provide primary care to infants, children and adults.

Let's R.O.C.K. Outreach Ministries has opened at 6701 Suitland Road, in Morningside. Their mission: "Reaching our community and kids, family by family." Sunday School is 9:30 to 10:45 a.m.; Sunday Service, 11 a.m. Rev. Floyd O. Durham and Apostle Deborah L. Durham are the ministers. For information, call 301-735-6865.

May they rest in peace

Kenneth John Oliver, 67, a 1964 graduate of Suitland High School, died Dec. 11. During his high school years he loved classic cars. He entered a model-car magazine contest which featured his design, "The Four-Eyed Vicky," on the front cover. He served with the Army in Vietnam, was injured in battle and awarded the Purple Heart. He graduated from what is now Excelsior College, in New York, and received his

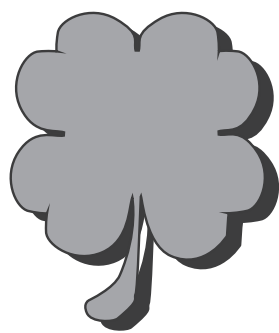
master's from the University of Virginia. He retired in 2012 from the Department of Navy/Marine Corps at Quantico. In recent years he lived in Woodbridge, Va. Survivors include his wife of 36 years, Mary Bonita "Bonnie" McCarthy Oliver; parents, Robert and Rita Oliver; brother Michael and sister Cathy.

Maurice Paul Lucchesi, 95, longtime District Heights resident and member of Mount Calvary Church, died Jan. 1. A son of Italian immigrants, he was born in Washington, graduated from McKinley Technical High School, and helped run his family's deli on Florida Avenue. He closed it down after being shot in a 1965 robbery. With training through a U.S. government program, he reinvented himself as a computer programmer, retiring in 1987 after 20 years at the Census Bureau. His wife of 56 years, Corine, died in 2009. Survivors include sons Michael, Steve and Rob; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Milestones

Happy birthday to my Texas daughter Therese Gallegos and to Belinda Benavidaz, March 14; Jacob Thompson, Jose Gryskewicz and Jonathan Capps, March 15; Constance Bennett and my great-grandson Riley McHale, March 16; Sharon Ryan, Helene Williams, Judy Bornman and Alysha Perez, March 18; Kristopher Calhoun and Audrey Pridgen, March 19.

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY



TO THE IRISH
WHO READ MY COLUMN!

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Ruth Turner 301 888 2153

AFTER-SCHOOL BIKE RODEO

Attend the After-School Bike Rodeo for ages 6-12 on Thursday, May 22 at Baden Community Center from 4:00 PM-5:00 PM. Learn how to keep your bike in good shape. Practice rules of the road on the riding course and receive giveaways. Please register by May 16. Space is limited to the first 40 registrants. The Center is located at 13601 Baden-Westwood Road Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Please call 301-888-1500; TTY 301-203-6030 to register.

WAKE UP UPPER MARLBORO

Saturday, May 31 at 9:00 AM come take a nice stroll through the historic town of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The walk will start at Upper Marlboro Community Center and walk through the business district. Ages 8 and up can participate. Please register by May 17. The Center is located at 5400 Marlboro Race Track Road Upper Marlboro Maryland 20772. Telephone number is 301-627-2828; TTY 301-203-6030.

COMMUNITY DANCE

Attention all Dancers and Non-Dancers. St. Philip's Church will be having Fun Night with Line and Hand Dancing. The Community Dance will be on Friday March 21, 2014 from 7:00-9:00 PM at St. Philip's Church, Baden Parish Fellowship. The address is 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland, 20613-8426. Admission is \$2.00. Come out and get in the groove with the latest dances and have some fun.

PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary Solo and Ensemble Festival (Instrumental) is being held at Kenmoor Middle School Saturday April 5, 2014 from 8:00 AM-4PM. The address is 2500 Kenmoor Drive, Landover, Maryland 20785. Grades 4 through 6 will be participating. For more information, please call 301-333-0963.

ANNUAL DINNER

St. Philip's Church, Baden Parish Annual Dinner will be on Saturday, April 12, 2014 12:00 noon until all dinners are sold. Pre-orders are accepted and ap-

preciated. Chick Dinner cost \$11.00, Barbeque Spare Ribs Dinner- \$13.00, Fish Dinner \$13.00, Pig Feet Dinner \$13.00. Combination Dinner (any two (2) meats cost \$18.00. All dinners include potato salad, sweet potatoes, green beans, cake and bread. Benefit: Philip's Church, Baden Parish. The address is 13801 Baden Westwood Road Brandywine, Maryland 20613-8426. Telephone number is (301) 888-1536.

JOHN ISABELLE ACRES FARM, INC

John Isabelle Acres Farm, Inc. in Brandywine, Maryland has hay for sale. Contact Frank Deville, Manager for reasonable priced quality hay for horses, cows and goats at 301-466-8360.

CLEARWATER NATURE CENTER

Attractions at Clearwater Nature Center include the Natural Treasures exhibit hall. You will be able to watch fish and turtles swim in the large indoor pool. Natural hiking trails allow visitors to explore the fauna and flora of Prince George's County. Call for more information 301-297-4575; TTY 301-699-2544.

Neighborhood Events

Governor O'Malley Announces New Tree Program for Maryland Landowners

Governor Martin O'Malley today announced an exciting new stewardship program to help Marylanders who own one to four acres of land convert unused lawn to forest cover at no cost. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service and the Arbor Day Foundation have partnered to launch Lawn to Woodland, which will kick off as a pilot in select central counties this spring.

"Healthy forests are our greatest defense when it comes to improving air and water quality, and reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are disrupting our climate," said Governor O'Malley. "Our new Lawn to Woodland program will provide landowners with trees, tools and technical assistance for planting and maintaining a healthy tree canopy that will support a myriad of environmental, economic and recreational benefits for a smarter, greener, more sustainable Maryland."

The program will be piloted this spring to eligible Arbor Day Foundation members in Baltimore, Carroll, Montgomery and Howard counties, because these areas contain the most unused lawn. Later this month, these landowners will receive information by mail about the many benefits of the program and how to enroll. The opportunity will be expanded first to non-Arbor Day Foundation members in these counties, and later to eligible landowners statewide in subsequent planting seasons.

In addition to free trees, program participants will receive expert advice, planting and monitoring assistance for their new woodland from the DNR Forest Service at no cost. The Maryland Department of Transportation has provided \$500,000 from its mitigation requirement reserves to fund the launch.

"With the amount of turf acreage in Maryland increasing, this is the ideal time to launch this program," said Steve Koehn, director of DNR Forest Service. "By planting trees, landowners can reduce the time they spend mowing, lower energy costs, and create sound and visual buffers on their property. I hope many qualifying landowners will take advantage of this opportunity that will benefit not just their personal properties, but the entire State."

Lawn to Woodland supports Maryland's Forest Preservation Act of 2013, legislation that ensures the State maintains its current level of tree cover 40 percent. This first of its kind legislation signed into law by Governor O'Malley last May, establishes new and expanded reforestation incentives and tools to help landowners and local governments meet and surpass the statewide goal.

"Converting turf to trees in rural and suburban areas can make an enormous difference in the quality of the land, the water resources and the lives of people in Maryland," said John Rosenow, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Natural woodlands are a hallmark of the Maryland landscape and this innovative DNR Forest Service program provides wonderful support for people to take an active part in preserving that heritage."

In July 2013, Governor O'Malley released Maryland's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent by 2020. Under Governor O'Malley's leadership, Maryland has become a national pioneer in sustainability practices. Over the past four years, citizens have planted more than 100,000 trees through his Marylanders Plant Trees program, and Maryland inmates have planted more than one million trees on public lands through the Forest Brigade. All Maryland State forests have also received dual certification, recognizing the State's commitment to sustainable forestry practices and the green jobs the forest industry supports. It is initiatives and efforts such as these that earned Governor O'Malley the Arbor Day Foundation's first ever Vision Award in 2012.

To qualify, citizens must own one to four acres of land. Landowners who would like to learn more and join the program when it becomes available in their area should visit dnr.maryland.gov/forests or call 888-448-7337.

Maryland Makes It Eight Years In A Row As Number One In Advanced Placement Success

Maryland students have led the nation in success on the Advanced Placement (AP) exams for eight straight years, according to a new report from the College Board.

The percentage of Maryland seniors who earned a score of 3 or higher on one or more AP exams reached 29.6 in 2013, the highest percentage in the nation and an increase over the 28.1 percent tallied in 2012, according to the College Board's "10th Annual AP Report to the Nation." A score of 3 or better is the threshold at which many higher education institutions award college credit for high school students in an AP assessment.

Connecticut is ranked second in success, with 28.8 percent of its seniors earning a 3 or higher, followed by Virginia, with 28.3 percent.

The College Board said that Maryland "has led the nation in improving student access and supporting student performance in AP." The percentage of Maryland graduates scoring a 3 or higher on an AP test has increased nearly 12 percent points from 17.7 percent in 2003.

"Strengthening and growing the middle class is the North Star of everything we do as an Administration. And because there is no greater ladder to opportunity than education, we've made the better choice to invest in our children -- today's results are another indication that our choices are paying off," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "The AP program offers one of the most important pathways to a better future, and we are committed to preparing our students for college and career success globally. Our hardworking students, dedicated educators, and outstanding parents deserve our congratulations and support."

Trevor Packer, the College Board's senior vice president who leads the Advanced Placement program, said that Maryland's number one ranking is clearly a team effort.



PHOTO: BY AVI BENDER

"The state's legislators and educators are obviously deeply committed to broadening AP access while increasing AP Exam performance," Packer said. "We congratulate Maryland on their successes and encourage them as they move forward to ensure that all students have the same opportunity to reach their full potential."

The percentage of Maryland graduates taking an AP exam has nearly doubled over the past decade. In 2003, 25.7 percent of Maryland graduates had taken at least one AP exam during their high school career. By 2013, nearly half of all graduates had taken one of the rigorous exams—47.4 percent. Only the District of Columbia (55.7 percent) and Florida (53.1 percent) had a higher rate of participation.

"Maryland schools are focused on preparing our graduates for higher education or career, and the AP program provides students with a strong foundation upon which to build," said State Superintendent of Schools Lillian Lowery. "Our students continue to make steady progress, but there is plenty of room for improvement. We must eliminate gaps in achievement between student subgroups, making certain all of our students have the best opportunities."

"The 10th Annual Advanced Placement Report to the Nation," the College Board's analysis of the college-level assessment program, gives many high marks to efforts taking place in Maryland schools. For example:

- Maryland has seen a big increase in the percentage of Black/African American students having success on the AP assessments, as 11.7 percent of students receiving a grade of 3 or better in Maryland were Black/African American. That percentage ranks third to Mississippi (13.6) and Louisiana (12.2) among states in the nation. The percentage of Black/African American test takers is also increasing.

- Hispanic students in Maryland continue to perform well on the AP exams. Hispanics accounted for 9.3 percent of the Maryland graduating class last year, and 8.8 percent of the seniors who scored 3 or higher on the AP exam were Hispanic.

- In raw numbers, there were 13,315 Maryland students who took an AP exam in high school in 2003, and 9,184 received a 3 or better. By last year, 27,370 students took an AP exam, and 17,111 scored a 3 or better.

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program, which began in 1955, allows students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Students of different interests and backgrounds can choose from more than 30 courses to demonstrate their knowledge of rigorous academic curriculum. Complete results are available at <http://apreport.collegeboard.org>.

COMMUNITY

Practical Money Skills

By Jason Alderman

Money-Saving Tips for Seniors

We all love a good bargain, no matter what our age. But if you're a senior citizen on a fixed income, finding discounted goods and services can mean the difference between making ends meet and going without.

The good news is that tons of senior discounts are available — often for people as young as 50. One caveat right up front: Although many senior discounts are substantial, you sometimes can find better bargains — especially on travel-related expenses like airfare, hotels and rental cars. So always do your research first before requesting the senior rate.

Here's a roundup of some of the best senior discounts I've found:

An AARP membership costs only \$16 a year for anyone over age 50, including free membership for spouses or partners (www.aarp.org). AARP's discounts website features discounts on dozens of products and services including rental cars, hotels, restaurants, clothing and department store chains. AARP also offers an inexpensive driver safety course for drivers over 50 (members and nonmembers alike) that can lower auto insurance premiums by up to 10 percent or more.

Popular AARP discounts include:

- ❑ 20 percent discount on installation or upgrades to ADT home security systems.
- ❑ 45 percent off membership to Angie's List.
- ❑ 20 percent off purchases from 1-800-FLOWERS.com.
- ❑ Up to 25 percent off car rentals from Avis and Budget.
- ❑ Up to 20 percent discount at many hotel chains including Hyatt, Hilton, Wyndham, Best Western, Days Inn and Ramada, among others.
- ❑ 10 to 20 percent off at many restaurant chains, including Claim Jumper, Denny's and Outback Steakhouse.
- ❑ 15 percent off many Geek Squad services from Best Buy.
- ❑ A free 45-minute consultation with an Allstate Legal Services Network attorney, as well as 20 percent off member attorneys' fees.

A quick Google search will uncover numerous other senior discount resources. One popular site is SeniorDiscounts.com, an online directory of more than 220,000 U.S. business locations that offer discounts to people over 50. Registration is free, although they also offer a \$12.95/year premium that offers members-only discounts and other perks. Other good sites include Brad's Deals, Sciddy.com and Savvy Senior.

Other commonly available senior discounts include:

- ❑ A 15 percent discount on the lowest available rail fare on most Amtrak trains for travelers over age 62.
- ❑ Greyhound offers a 5 percent discount on unrestricted fares (over 62).
- ❑ Southwest Airlines offers senior fares (over 65). Although not necessarily their lowest available rates, Southwest's senior fares are fully refundable.
- ❑ The U.S. Geologic Survey senior pass (over 62) provides free lifetime access to more than 2,000 government-managed recreational sites (including national parks), as well as discounts on camping and other amenities. Senior passes cost \$10 in person or \$20 by mail (<http://store.usgs.gov/pass/senior.html>).
- ❑ Verizon Wireless offers discounted mobile phone service for subscribers over 65.
- ❑ Both Walgreens and Rite Aid offer monthly senior discount days for members of their rewards programs when most non-prescription items are 15 to 20 percent off. Ask your neighborhood pharmacy if they offer similar programs.

In addition, many restaurants, department stores, movie theaters, museums, theme parks, banks, credit card issuers, utilities (including gas and electric, water, garbage, telephone and cable) and other businesses offer special discounts or promotions for seniors. Always ask before your purchase is rung up.

Bottom line: Abundant resources are available to help seniors save money on purchases large and small. You just have to do a little research — and ask whether senior discounts are available. Remember, 10 percent here and 20 percent there can really add up.

Revenge from AI

It's also difficult to pursue criminal charges against websites that publish sexually explicit photos without the subject's consent. Under the federal Communications Decency Act of 1996, these websites are not legally responsible for the content because they received it from a third-party source, according to the analysis of the bill.



PHOTO: EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Lt. Governor Brown Tours Pre-K Programs For Read Across America Day

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Lt. Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown highlighted the importance of expanding high-quality prekindergarten (pre-K) to more Maryland children by visiting pre-K programs in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties where he toured the facilities and read to pre-K students. The Lt. Governor was joined by State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Lillian Lowery and other state and local officials for the visits, which coincided with Read Across America Day.

"Our children's futures start in our classrooms, and investing in high-quality pre-k is an important part of giving all of our children the opportunity to learn, grow, and reach her or his potential," said Lt. Governor Brown. "In programs like CentroNia and the Greenbelt Children's Center, we're laying the foundation on which all of our efforts in education are based, and building a brighter future for all of Maryland's children."

During this year's legislative session, Lt. Governor Brown is leading efforts to pass the Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014 (SB 332/HB 297). This Administration bill will build on the State's existing pre-K system and expand the number of pre-K slots available to include Maryland children whose families make up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The bill represents the first step toward expanding pre-kindergarten to all Maryland children by establishing a competitive Pre-Kindergarten Expansion Grant Program and Fund through which local school systems and local providers can apply to expand and enhance existing pre-kindergarten programs and establish highly effective Judy Centers. The proposed FY15 budget invests \$4.3 mil-

lion to fund the Program, which is expected to support half-day or full-day pre-kindergarten programs for approximately 1,600 children across the state.

"Research shows that children who are reading on grade level by third grade are less likely to dropout and graduate at higher levels, particularly among students living in poverty," said State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery. "However, if children fall behind early, it becomes increasingly more difficult to catch up. The achievement gap often walks through the doors of our schools in kindergarten. If we can provide children with strong early learning programs, we can significantly improve a child's chances for success in the future. We all benefit from this investment."

The Lt. Governor visited two sites that are part of the Maryland Preschool for All pilot program, which includes a total of 13 sites around the state. CentroNia in Takoma Park and the Greenbelt Children's Center are both community-based nonprofit early childhood education programs that receive funding from the State's Judith P. Hoyer Early Care and Education Enhancement Preschool Services Grant which supports the Preschool for All pilot program.

As highlighted in the 2013 program report, through a collaborative partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), CentroNia, located in Takoma Park, provides access to a full-day, high quality pre-K program for twenty children who will transition into surrounding kindergarten programs in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The program creates a dynamic environment promoting children's development in all areas, particularly for low-income and English Language Learners.



PHOTO: EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Lt. Governor Anthony Brown visits CentroNia Pre-K Program.

"For the past 5 years CentroNia, with the support of MSDE has been able to provide high quality bilingual PreK services to over 100 children," said Renata Claros, Senior Director of Early Childhood Education, CentroNia. "With the goal of transitioning to Kindergarten ready to learn, collaboration with school systems and parent engagement are critical components to the success of our program. We support the Administration's proposed pre-K expansion that will create additional pre-K opportunities that meet the diverse needs of Maryland children and their families."

The 2013 report also describes the collaborative efforts of Prince George's County Public Schools and the Greenbelt Children's Center, which have resulted in a successful partnership operating a prekindergarten service to low income children and their families in the Greenbelt community. The partnership has allowed PGCPSS to serve an additional 20 children full-day and year round in an accredited prekindergarten program.

"Child care and public schools can work beautifully together to expand pre-k to more children," said Flora Gee, Di-

rector, Greenbelt Children's Center. "MSDE has been supporting this collaboration at our program for fourteen years, and by passing the Pre-K expansion bill this year, we can see these kind of partnerships continue to develop throughout the state. This legislation takes an important step toward ensuring that more of Maryland's younger children can have a strong start in education."

Despite making more cuts to state spending than any previous administration, Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown have chosen to protect targeted investments in priorities like education and job creation. The proposed FY2015 budget builds on Maryland's #1 school ranking and paves the way to global competitiveness for our children. It includes a record \$6.12 billion investment in K-12 education, which is an increase of 37 percent compared to FY2007. In addition to the \$4.3 million for additional Pre-K opportunities, the Administration will invest \$289 million for the Public School Construction Program, bringing the O'Malley-Brown Administration's average annual investment to the highest ever at \$345 million.

Unique Student-Run High School Teaches Financial Literacy

By TAZEEN ASIYA
Capital News Service

IVERDALE PARK — The Capital One Bank located in Parkdale High School is not your average bank: the students operate it.

Parkdale High School was one of four schools chosen for the Capital One student-run bank branch, and the only one in Maryland. It opened its doors in October 2011.

The other three schools are Theodore Roosevelt High School in the Bronx, N.Y.; Thurgood Marshall Academy in Harlem, N.Y.; and West Side High School in Newark, N.J.

The Parkdale bank is open to students and faculty every Monday, Wednesday and Friday to withdraw, make deposits and open accounts.

Dale Skinner, area market president for Capital One, said every year students apply to the program and go through a round of rigorous interviews before the final class of eight to 10 seniors are chosen to operate the bank.

"We are looking at the students to not only run the branch entirely, but to teach their fellow students about money management skills such as savings and budgeting," Skinner said.

As a part of the class, the students will provide peer lessons



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY NICOLE JONES.
Student Teller Joe McCulley and Student Bank Branch Leader Jumoke Akinfe assist a student with opening an account at the school-based branch of Capital One Bank.

to their fellow classmates of Parkdale about identity theft, wise use of credit and savings.

Ivan Diaz-Cruz, 18, student teller, said being a part of the program has been a life changing experience.

"I use to be a kid who wasn't motivated, but this program has switched me around and done a 180 for me. People in the program have helped me and changed my mind. It made me want to go to college and be the best I can," Diaz-Cruz said.

Sitra Adem, 18, another student teller, said she has become more confident due in part to working as a team.

Working with my team is what I look forward to. I don't ever feel uneasy about work,

I feel secure because I have a strong team behind me," Adem said.

In addition to learning the importance of financial literacy, the student tellers are also preparing for college.

Susan Baudoin, class instructor, said in November, the class took a trip to St. Michael's College in Vermont where several of the students are interested in attending.

"The students visited St Michael's in order to experience a college visit and to really see what college life was about," Baudoin said.

Currently, all of the student bankers have applied to at least one college and several have already received acceptance letters.

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COMMENTARY

By Kathleen Sebelius,
*Secretary, Health and Human Services
of the United States*



One Thousand Data Sets and Counting

The program managers, researchers, scientists and analysts at the Department of Health and Human Services have been collecting data for decades on the nation's health, demographics, social services, and scientific research. But what's the value of all that data if it isn't used?

That's why we launched the HHS Health Data Initiative three years ago, a department-wide effort to gather up and make our vast troves of data available — in one place online — to private sector innovators, researchers, and the public. In addition to publishing new and existing data at HealthData.gov, we've also focused on making the data easier to use — while rigorously protecting privacy. This is part of the President's government-wide Open Data initiative to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency. I'm pleased to announce that the initiative recently hit a major milestone: cataloging the one-thousandth data set on HealthData.gov.

These 1,000-plus data sets include data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the National Institutes of Health, the Administration for Children and Families, and other agencies. Additionally, nine states have made their own data available, with more to come.

Our goal has been to unleash the power of private-sector innovators and entrepreneurs to use HealthData.gov data to create applications, products, and services that help consumers, care providers, employers, local policymakers, and communities in ways that no one organization could possibly imagine. We've already seen some exciting examples of how innovators can put accessible government data to use in their efforts to improve health care quality, guide individuals to available health care and social services, and inform health policy:

- Project Tycho, a University of Pittsburgh initiative, has unlocked the data in CDC weekly reports on contagious diseases going back to 1888. One analysis of the data on eight diseases allowed researchers to estimate that about 100 million cases of illnesses had been prevented by immunization efforts.

- Aidin, a small startup, is using data from CMS on quality health facilities and nursing homes to help provide patients with specific discharge guidance about their options for post-acute care.

- iTriage, a mobile and web platform, uses HHS health facility locator databases to help patients make informed health decisions and find nearby care providers.

Along with President Obama's Open Government initiative, the Affordable Care Act authorizes HHS to release new data resources that advance transparency in the health care provider and insurance markets in significant ways. The law authorizes CMS to evolve how it pays care providers, shifting from quantity to quality of care. This shift is creating strong incentives for health care providers to leverage data and technology to help reduce errors, cut avoidable hospital readmissions, improve care coordination, and engage patients in new ways, while helping to restrain health care cost growth.

The Affordable Care Act is also investing in data collection and research that will help us better understand and find solutions for health disparities in different communities across the country.

By encouraging transparency and market-based innovation around health data, we are playing to America's strength to solve our most pressing problems.

Marc Morial, President and CEO
National Urban League



What the Dunn Verdict Says About Our Culture — and the Value that We Place on Young Black Males in America

On November 23, 2012, Michael Dunn, a 47-year-old white man, fired ten rounds into a parked SUV after arguing over loud rap music coming from the vehicle with Jordan and three other unarmed African American teenagers inside. Jordan Davis was killed at the scene. Like George Zimmerman, Michael Dunn claimed self-defense and used Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law to bolster his justification of the killing, as his lawyer stated in his closing argument, "His honor will further tell you that if Michael Dunn was in a public place where he had a legal right to be, he had no duty to retreat and had the right to stand his ground and meet force with force, including deadly force." Dunn claims Jordan Davis brandished a gun so Dunn shot first. But there is one big problem with his story. Jordan Davis had no gun and neither did anyone else in the SUV.

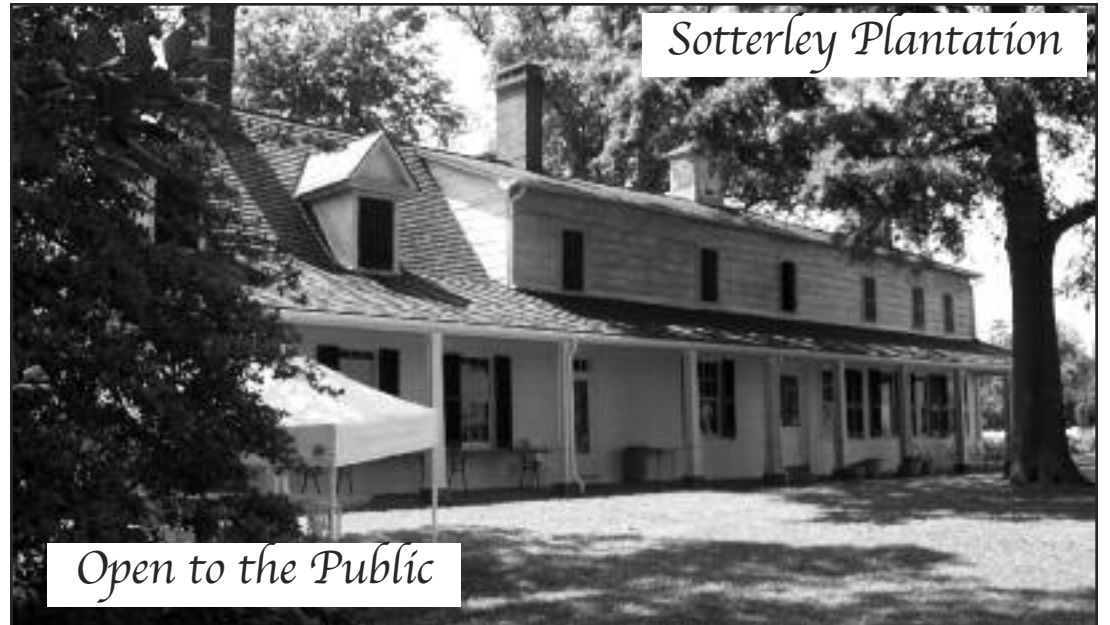
On Saturday night, a jury found Dunn guilty of four counts, including three for the attempted murders of Jordan's three friends. But they deadlocked on the fifth count — first-degree murder in the killing of Jordan. Dunn may spend the rest of his life in prison for the four lesser counts. But the failure to convict him of murdering Jordan Davis raises critical questions about the devaluing of the lives of young Black males in America and confirms the need for a repeal of Florida's repugnant Stand Your Ground law which sanctions the use of deadly force by anyone who merely thinks — or claims — they are in danger from a perceived assailant. Regardless of whether Dunn or Zimmerman chose to fully exercise Stand Your Ground provisions in their defense, this law was very clearly at the center of both cases. It is even clearer that the "shoot first" laws across the country are contributing to needless bloodshed and are ripe for unequal application based on race.

A recent Urban Institute analysis found that in Stand Your Ground states, "When the shooter is white and the victim is black, the justifiable homicide rate is 34 percent. When the situation is reversed and the shooter is black and the victim is white,

shootings are ruled to be justifiable in only slightly more than 3 percent of cases." Last September, the National Urban League, in collaboration with the bipartisan Mayors Against Illegal Guns coalition and VoteVets, issued a report showing that in the 22 states with "Stand Your Ground" laws, the justifiable homicide rate has risen by an average of 53 percent in the five years following their passage. In Florida, justifiable homicides have increased by 200 percent since the law took effect in 2005.

These statistics and their underlying racial disparities, tell us that expansive self-defense laws such as Stand Your Ground are doing more harm than good, and when coupled with implicit racial bias and unfounded preconceptions, young Black males are especially at risk. Dunn's own bigoted words in letters from jail clearly show his disregard for their lives, as he wrote: "The jail is full of blacks and they all act like thugs. This may sound a bit radical but if more people would arm themselves and kill these (expletive) idiots when they're threatening you, eventually they may take the hint and change their behavior." and "The fear is that we may get a predominantly black jury and therefore, unlikely to get a favorable verdict. Sad, but that's where this country is still at. The good news is that the surrounding counties are predominantly white and republican and supporters of gun rights!" This view and those like it are why we must commit today to action against the devaluing of our young Black lives.

Even as the Michael Dunn trial was getting underway, we learned that Trayvon Martin's killer, George Zimmerman, had planned to capitalize on the death of a young Black male by participating in a "celebrity" boxing match — when his only claim to fame is killing an unarmed Black teenager — and getting off. Such a blatant disregard for the value of a Black male's life should be a wake-up call to all Americans. We must intensify our fight against Stand Your Ground laws — and the underlying mentality — that justify the killing of young Black men whose only "offense" is being Black.



Sotterley Plantation

Open to the Public

PHOTO BY PUBDOG COURTESY WIKIMEDIA

Sotterley Plantation

Sotterley Plantation is the only Tidewater Plantation in Maryland open to the public that offers visitor activities and educational programs. Visitors can tour the early 18th-century mansion, an original slave cabin, a customs warehouse, smokehouse, necessary and corn crib, as well as a formal Colonial Revival garden. The property comprises 95 acres (380,000 m²) of rolling fields, gardens, and riverfront located at 44300 Sotterley Lane, St. Hollywood, Maryland 301-373-2280. Hours of operation are 10 am to 4 pm Tuesday through Saturday, 11:45 am to 4 pm on Sundays. Self guided tour day pass is \$3, children under 6 are free. Visit us on the web at: www.sotterley.com

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Honoring Septima Clark

During this Black History Month I was deeply honored to be inducted into the South Carolina Hall of Fame at the same time as Mrs. Septima Clark—the woman Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called the "Mother of the Movement." Readers familiar with Brian Lanker's marvelous book *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America* will recognize Mrs. Clark as the proud, strong, and beautiful woman with silver braids whose portrait graces the front cover. Brian captured her indomitable spirit a few weeks before her death in 1987 at age 89 and called me with excitement saying he knew after a very few moments and a few shots that he had found his cover. Throughout much of her long life Mrs. Clark was often at odds with South Carolina leaders and made other enemies as she traveled throughout the Deep South pioneering literacy and citizenship education for Black Americans. Yet her richly deserved Hall of Fame induction symbolizes just how far South Carolina and the nation have come—in part thanks to the work of citizen heroines like Mrs. Clark.

Mrs. Clark was born in Charleston in 1898, the second of eight children born to a former slave father and laundrywoman mother. She graduated from Avery Normal Institute in 1916 with a teaching certificate, but because the city of Charleston would not hire Black teachers, she found a job in a rural community on Johns Island, South Carolina. The White teacher in that community had only three White students but was paid \$85 a month, while the Black school had two teachers for 132 children and the two Black teachers were paid a combined salary of \$60. It was the first of many injustices throughout her long career. But as time went on she started speaking out even when others around her would not. As she put it simply years later: "They were afraid, but I wasn't."

In 1919 Mrs. Clark returned to Charleston, where she volunteered for a NAACP petition effort that ultimately changed the local law prohibiting Black teachers. For the next several decades she taught primarily in Charleston and Columbia while continuing her own education in the summers—at Columbia University in New York; at Atlanta University, where W.E.B. DuBois was one of her profes-

sors; at Benedict College, where she finally received a bachelor's degree; and at Hampton Institute; where she earned her master's. She fought for equalization of salaries for Black and White teachers in South Carolina. After Federal District Court Judge J. Waties Waring, following the law rather than White southern mores, ordered equal pay for teachers and also ruled that Black citizens must be permitted to vote in primary elections, he and his wife and Septima became friends and social pariahs in their communities. But after forty years her career as a South Carolina public school teacher came to an abrupt halt in 1956 when the state legislature ruled that state employees could not belong to the NAACP. Mrs. Clark refused to resign or lie about her membership, and was dismissed.

Mrs. Clark signed her name to a letter to 726 other Black teachers asking them to protest the law, but only 11 of them agreed to attend a meeting with her and the superintendent, and on the day of the meeting only four showed up. She later said that effort was the big failure of her life, and she believed it failed because she tried to push the other teachers into something they weren't ready for. The lesson she learned was that people needed to be trained first so that they would be prepared to act—

and the trainings she went on to develop helped shape the course of the civil rights movement.

Mrs. Clark had already attended several meetings at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, the legendary grassroots education center devoted to social justice. In the summer of 1955 she led a workshop at Highlander on developing leadership whose participants included a shy, quiet NAACP member from Montgomery, Alabama, Mrs. Rosa Parks. After Mrs. Clark was fired from her teaching job in 1956, Highlander's extraordinary director, Myles Horton, invited her to be Highlander's full-time director of workshops, where she pioneered innovative programs that combined literacy education for adults with citizenship and voter education. When the state of Tennessee forced Highlander to close in 1961 Mrs. Clark continued the same work as director of education and teaching for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)'s new Citizen Education Program. Her workshops formed the basis for the Citizenship School movement she helped establish across the South.

In addition to teaching basic reading skills using familiar materials like the Sears catalog and

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The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

What To Do When You Believe a Friend Needs Your Help

We human beings are social creatures. We all have relationships with many other people in our busy lives. The relationships that matter most are those we have because we want to have them. They are people we truly care about, but that very act of caring can sometimes pose relationship problems.

There may be times when we find something troubling about how a friend is behaving. In such cases, we may struggle over whether to share our opinion with this person out of fear of jeopardizing the relationship, even when the "friend" is a spouse or other close relative.

Is it possible to approach that person with our concerns and to do it in a way that minimizes the chance of hurting the relationship?

One way is to use a "caring confrontation," a "one - two" approach.

It starts by making sure you're in a private place and that the conversation is only between the two of you. You begin by describing the behavior that concerns you. You want to be objective and offer facts, rather than simply personal opinion. You might say something like, "I noticed you seem short-tempered at work lately," rather than "You sure are getting crabby and I don't like it."

It also helps to make your description positive, rather than negative and accusatory. Rather than saying "You sure are depressed these days," it's just as easy to say, "You don't seem to be quite as happy now."

The second part of this "one - two" approach is to ask whether your friend agrees with your observation and to offer an invitation to discuss it.

This "one - two" approach provides an invitation for the friend to talk without positioning you as an authority trying to "fix" the problem. You may find you've opened up your friend's eyes to something about which he or she was unaware, or your friend may have an explanation totally unrelated to your original thoughts.

If your friend does verify your concern, simply talking out the problem may help. However, there may be serious issues that would benefit from professional help. If you think a professional counselor could assist, make that observation in a positive way.

Your goal is not to be confrontational, but to give your friend the encouragement and support he or she needs to get professional help and get on with a positive life.

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

Business Spotlight

Bill Introduced for Law Enforcement Officers Museum

WASHINGTON, DC — Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) and Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) today introduced H.R. 4120, which would allow construction to proceed on the National Law Enforcement Officers Museum by extending authorization for the non-profit National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF).

In 2000, Congress passed the National Law Enforcement Museum Act to authorize the building of a museum to honor federal, state and local law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. An extension of this authorization was passed in 2010 to continue construction after the original bill's authorization expired. This bill would extend authorization for the construction of this project by three years so that the project can continue.

"The brave men and women who serve and protect our communities put their lives on the line every day, and it is our duty to honor and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice," said Congressman Hoyer. "I'm pleased to introduce this bipartisan legislation today, which will ensure that we may do so by allowing construction of the National Law Enforcement Officers Museum to proceed. I thank Rep. Wolf for working with me to introduce this bipartisan measure and I urge Congress to take action as soon as possible so that we may pay tribute to our fallen heroes."

"As the son of a police officer, I understand the danger these brave men and women face every day. I also am well aware of the they sacrifices they make and the sacrifices their families make. They deserve to be honored," said Rep. Wolf.

The National Law Enforcement Officers Museum will be built next to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Judiciary Square, which is operated and maintained through a partnership between the NLEOMF and the National Park Service. The Memorial recognizes the almost 20,000 local, state, and federal law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice on the Memorial Walls.

Moving forward with the Museum would create more than 325 construction jobs with an additional 40-50 jobs once the Museum is open and operating.

Mikulski Calls for Kills Switches on Cell Phones to Protect Consumers' Data

By TAZEEN ASIYA
Capital News Service

LANDOVER - Maryland Sen. Barbara Mikulski wants to give control back to consumers when it comes to protecting personal and financial information stored on mobile devices by requiring manufacturers to install a "kill switch" that would render phones useless if stolen.

Mikulski announced legislation to that effect Thursday in the wake of a surge in cell phone thefts at Washington Metro stations.

The Smartphone Theft Prevention Act that Mikulski is supporting would require carriers to have a security feature on all cell phones that would allow victims of theft to deactivate the device from a website and remove personal information.

A similar measure is being considered in the House that will make tampering with the unique identification number of a cell phone a federal offense punishable by jail time.

"This is a new crime and it is dangerous," Mikulski said. "When they can go from cell phone theft to identity theft you have a big problem."

Metro Police Chief Ron Pavlik said Metro has seen a 50 percent increase in cell phone thefts in the past year. The top 10 Metro stations for cell phone theft in 2013 were all located in Washington, with Deanwood in the lead with 35 thefts, followed by Gallery Place with 30 and Brookland with 28.

While not ranking in the top 10, two Metro stations in Maryland had a significant number of thefts - Capitol Heights with 14 and West Hyattsville with 12.

Pavlik's advice to Metro riders is to "get your head out of your phone, keep it out of sight as much as possible and when using your device always maintain an awareness of what is going on around you."

Mikulski's appearance comes on the heels of a data security breach at the University of Maryland on Tuesday in which more than 300,000 personal records of faculty, staff and students were compromised.

Similar data breaches came to light over the holidays when both Target and Neiman Marcus announced massive security breaches that compromised the personal data of millions of consumers. The cyber attacks have put pressure on legislators to take action.



CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE PHOTO BY TAZEEN ASIYA AHMAD.
Sen. Barbara Mikulski on Thursday announces legislation requiring cell phone manufacturers to provide "kill switch" technology to protect victims of cell phone theft.

Cell phone thefts have risen sharply across the country according to the Federal Communications Commission. It is estimated that nearly one-in-three robberies in the nation involve cell phone theft.

Thieves targeting smartphones not only get a high resale value, but also a treasure trove of personal and financial information they can misuse to disrupt the lives of their victims.

"It is estimated that in the United States of America this is a \$30 billion dollar industry that is four times the budget of the FBI," Mikulski said.

Apple has already started making kill switches available on its phones, and other companies are working on similar plans.

She said that more debate is needed as we enter a "new age of techno crime," which includes coming up with ways to protect consumers and personal privacy while following the Constitution. She also emphasized the need to work with the private sector, saying that it will be in their interest to have these reforms in place.

"I think there is an opportunity for coalitions, common sense and civility to move this legislation forward," Mikulski said.

Bipartisan Tax Relief measures Proposed in Maryland

By SARAH TINCHERA
Capital News Service

Maryland residents could see relief from the state income, sales and estate taxes as the General Assembly tackles measures that propose lower tax rates and raise estate tax exemption thresholds.

State lawmakers are facing a largely bipartisan effort to lower some of these taxes in order to keep Maryland's residents, businesses and money in Maryland. But Gov. Martin O'Malley, who ultimately must sign any approved cuts into law, did not propose any sweeping tax changes in his annual budget.

While the House Republican Caucus is making a push to lower taxes during the 2014 session, the overall effort to decrease income and sales tax rates has received support from both sides of the aisle, with significant Democratic support to raise the estate tax threshold.

"I don't think it's a matter of Democrats and Republicans," said Delegate Frank Turner, D-Howard, who co-sponsors several tax bills. "All bills have a chance. We're going to sit back and we're going to discuss it, and ... we're going to see what is in the best interest of the state."

One measure, before the House Ways and Means Committee, is the Republican-sponsored Income Tax Relief Act of 2014, which would gradually reduce the state's personal income tax by 10 percent over three years.

Primary bill sponsor Delegate Andrew Serafini, R-Washington, recently told the committee that reducing the personal income tax would make things better for Maryland families, small businesses and the economy.

Serafini's testimony — which saw little testimony in opposition — centered around the idea that decreasing taxes allows residents to keep the money they earn, increases consumption, drives the economy and leads to more state revenue.

"We want consumption," he said. "That's what drives our economy for everybody."

The committee also heard bipartisan legislation that proposes a flat 3.5 percent income tax rate to everyone whose annual income exceeds \$30,000. If passed, Maryland would join the other eight states that have a flat income tax rate, ousting the current law which follows an eight-bracket system that taxes residents between 2 percent and 5.75 percent based on income.

Serafini, who is also this bill's primary sponsor, told the committee the legislation was proposed to make income tax simple, transparent, fair, efficient and stable.

In addition to measures that would change personal tax rates, legislators are also examining the state's corporate tax structure.

Since the end of January, the Ways and Means and Senate Budget and Taxation committees have reviewed a total of six bills — three proposed in both chambers and an additional three in

the House — that propose to lower the corporate income tax rate, which currently stands at 8.25 percent, to rates varying between 4 percent and 7 percent.

Serafini, who sponsored legislation to reduce the corporate income tax rate to 4 percent, said that the state's corporate income tax is relatively uncompetitive, raising \$872 million a year, which represents only 3.2 percent of Maryland's total tax revenues. But as the 14th-highest corporate income tax rate in the country, the tax makes Maryland far less competitive in the business market, he said.

Ben Wilterdink, a research analyst for the Center for State Fiscal Reform at the American Legislative Exchange Council, followed Serafini's testimony in support of the bill: "[The corporate income tax] burden is passed on to the consumer, to the shareholder and even to employees who have to work for lower wages than they otherwise would be. A recent Treasury Department study even found that the laborer bears at least 40 percent of the corporate income tax in the form of lower wages."

Republicans in both the House and Senate would also like to roll back the sales tax from 6 percent to 5 percent, to its pre-2007 level.

In contrast to the numerous legislation that boast application to all residents, both committees have also heard bills regarding estate and inheritance taxes, which only apply to the state's millionaires.

In the first week of February, the Senate and House committees heard several bills that propose to raise the state's current \$1 million threshold at which the estate tax applies. Both committees are also set to simultaneously hear Democrat-dominated bills on March 5, which are backed by Senate President Thomas V. "Mike" Miller, Jr. and House Speaker Michael E. Busch, that would gradually raise the state's estate tax exemption rate to match the Federal level of \$5.34 million over four years.

Ways and Means has also seen one bill to repeal both the estate and inheritance taxes, while a similar bill to repeal only the inheritance tax has also circulated through Budget and Taxation.

Delegate Susan Krebs, R-Carroll, who is the primary sponsor of one bill that proposes to set the estate tax exemption to the federal level, and another that advocates for the repeal of estate and inheritance taxes, said there is a vast amount of wealth leaving Maryland as people move to states with lower tax burdens.

"[The legislation] would make Maryland more competitive with the rest of the country. We are suffering from tax flight. Millions of dollars lost every year as wealthy residents are leaving Maryland," Krebs said. "I believe it would encourage our millionaires and retirees to stay around rather than to relocate to more tax-friendly states."

Energy from A1

called a loophole, black liquor is legally classified as a renewable resource — along with sources such as wind and solar power.

Delegate John Olszewski, D-Baltimore County, the bill's sponsor, said black liquor releases more carbon dioxide into the air than coal and is "super inefficient" as an energy source. In 2011, Olszewski said, 45 percent of renewable energy subsidies from the state went to black

liquor facilities, all but one of which are not in the state.

The bill would redirect that subsidy money from those facilities to wind, solar and other renewable energy sources. The one in-state black liquor facility, Luke Mill in Western Maryland, would continue to receive the subsidies it would normally.

Olszewski said the bill would lead to an annual reduction in state greenhouse gas emissions by about 1.4 million metric tons — a reduction equivalent to

250,000 cars coming off the road, he said.

Jessica McFaul, press secretary for American Forest & Paper Association, said that if funds are available for renewable resources, black liquor should be included. If black liquor is not used to generate energy, it is incinerated, McFaul said.

Although incinerators have controls to limit the environmental impact of the emissions produced by this burning, the energy value of the black liquor is lost, she said.

According to a 2011 Environmental Protection Agency report, mill byproducts such as black liquor will produce the same emissions regardless of whether they are burned for energy or burn or decay elsewhere.

Last year, a similar bill passed the state Senate Finance committee but failed after coming one vote short in the House Economic Matters committee despite having support in the full House, Olszewski said.

OUT ON THE TOWN

ERIC D. SNIDER'S
IN THE DARK

Movie Review

“Ernest & Celestine”

Ernest & Celestine (French)
Grade: A-
Rated PG, some mild
scariness
1 hr., 20 min

Ernest & Celestine is one of those effortlessly charming cartoons where everything is basically very simple -- it's a story about animals that are supposed to be enemies being friends -- yet filled with whimsical details that make it unique. For example, in this world, the mouse population uses discarded bears' teeth as replacements for their own worn-out incisors, and dentistry is mouse society's most noble profession. If you asked me to make up a connection between mice and bears for a children's story, I wouldn't have come up with that in a hundred years.

Based on a Belgian series of books by Gabrielle Vincent, the film opened in Europe at the end of 2012 but has only now come to American shores, first in its original form (which is what I saw) and soon with an English-dubbed version. Most people on this side of the Atlantic had never heard of it until it was nominated for the best animated feature Oscar, beating out supposed shoo-ins like *Monsters University*. The recognition is deserved. This hand-drawn, water-colored French-Belgian concoction is a sweetly deadpan delight.

Mice and bears are the major species in this world. Both live in human-like societies, with the bears above ground and the mice below. They avoid all direct contact with one another. Mice are taught from childhood that bears are fearsome, mouse-eating ogres, and you should run for your life if you ever encounter one; bears, meanwhile, consider mice to be vermin and would never let a rodent in their house, let alone befriend one. Despite the supposed danger,



PHOTO COURTESY LES AMATEURS
The film is based on a series of children's books of the same name published by the Belgian author and illustrator Gabrielle Vincent. Featuring the voices of Lambert Wilson, Pauline Brunner, Anne-Marie Loop, Patrice Melennec and Brigitte Virtudes. English language cast include Lauren Bacall, Paul Giamatti, William H. Macy and Megan Mullally, Nick Offerman and Jeffrey Wright round up the voice cast.

mouse orphans like little Celestine (voice of Pauline Brunner) are sent above ground at night to sneak into bear homes and take the teeth that cubs leave under their pillows, for purposes of mouse dentistry. That's how orphans earn their keep (a rather Dickensian turn).

The opportunity for some much-needed cross-species understanding comes when Celestine happens to cross paths with Ernest (voice of Lambert Wilson), an eccentric vagabond bear known to his community as a street musician, beggar, and local kook. Celestine shows the hungry bear how to break into a candy shop's basement supply room, and then Ernest returns the favor by helping her get a cache of bears' teeth to bring back to her people. Technically, this may be "theft." In addition to that, both communities are

appalled and frightened by Ernest and Celestine's friendship, and they become fugitives, leading to a goofy Odd Couple living situation and an escalating series of adventures.

The dynamic between Ernest and Celestine is the tender, goofy heart of the film. They're less adversarial than Dennis the Menace and Mr. Wilson, less affectionate than Annie and Daddy Warbucks. Both are independent types, not really in need of companionship, and they're unsentimental. When they're apart, the film very nicely draws parallels between their lives, showing us their similar experiences, dreams, and wishes. The message, of course, is that we're all the same under our skin, but the film earns points for not getting preachy or maudlin about it.

The simple themes are complemented by an unshowy style of animation, with line drawings and unfinished details. Things move within the frame, but the frame itself rarely moves, like a comic strip come to life. It was directed by Stephane Aubier, Vincent Patar, and Benjamin Renner, the former two being the insanely creative pair behind *A Town Called Panic*. (Look for a *Panic* poster on the bear cub's bedroom wall.) This film is a lot more sedate, but it has a similar sense of wonder and imagination, and in their uncluttered drawings the directors stage some bits of slapstick that are almost Chaplin-esque. And thanks to their restraint against overselling it, their sublime story captures a few emotions, too.

Breach from A1

"If you don't have a real need for someone's (Social Security) number it should be purged. There shouldn't be a reason the university should retain the information of past, graduated students," Stephens said.

University of Maryland President Wallace Loh said Friday that the school kept old Social Security numbers because they were once used as university identification numbers.

"The problem is that people want to come back and, 10 years later, 20 years later, ask for their transcript," Loh said, in an interview outside a Senate hearing room in Annapolis. "They want information. So that's why you need the Social Security numbers. Now, one could argue, and that's what we're looking into now, is there any way of identifying people without Social Security numbers? Because there were no university ID's back then. Now, we can do that, but you know, the costs are, as I say, very large. But we will look into that, to do the protection."

In a February 25 letter to the university community, Loh said the school suffered from a "sophisticated cyber-attack" that is being investigated by the Secret Service and other

law enforcement agencies. He also said he ordered a comprehensive review of the University's computing and information systems.

Data breaches tracked by groups like the Identity Theft Resource Center include the work of hackers, the theft of laptops and even the accidental exposure of information. In some cases, the data is accessed by outside parties, but in others it is not.

Last year's incidents included an August breach at Virginia Tech University, where a server containing information about more than 144,000 job applicants was illegally accessed. The database did not contain Social Security numbers, but more than 16,000 applicants had listed their driver's license numbers.

In July, the University of Delaware's computer systems were compromised and Social Security numbers and other information for more than 74,000 students, employees and past employees may have been taken.

Other institutions affected by potential or actual data breaches last year included the Maricopa County Community College District in Arizona, Montana State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Terry Kurzynski, a senior partner at the cybersecurity firm Halock Security Labs, agrees that the open culture universities tend to encourage for better information flow is a main reason they remain vulnerable to hackers.

A study conducted by Halock in July reported that of 162 institutions investigated, including Big Ten, Ivy League, community colleges and technical institutes, more than 50 percent allow for the transmission of sensitive information over unencrypted, unprotected email, putting private student and parent data at greater risk.

Kurzynski also cites the employment of inexperienced, transient or student workers in college information technology departments, and budget constraints as key weaknesses in many universities' security systems.

Analysts at the Identity Theft Resource Center say data breaches at educational institutions actually saw a slight decline in the last year.

"Breaches in that area are definitely a threat," said Karen Barney of the Identity Theft Resource Center, which tracks data breaches around the country and how they occur. "But 2013 had the lowest number of incidents in the educational sector since we began tracking them in 2005."

The Edge of Sports

by DAVE ZIRIN

At Long Last, Jason Collins Is the First

"Be your true authentic self and never be afraid or ashamed or have any fear."

- Jason Collins

Finally, more than fifty games into the 2013-2014 season, Jason Collins is on an NBA team. Finally, ten months after Collins told the world that he is gay, the 35-year-old center took the court for the Brooklyn Nets against the Los Angeles Lakers. Finally, at long last, we have reached the day when an openly gay man played for one of the "big four" US sports. If Collins had never been signed, as some were convinced would be the



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

case, the great question surrounding his "coming out" would have never been answered. The great question was less about Jason Collins than how teammates, coaches and fans would respond to the prospect of an openly gay player.

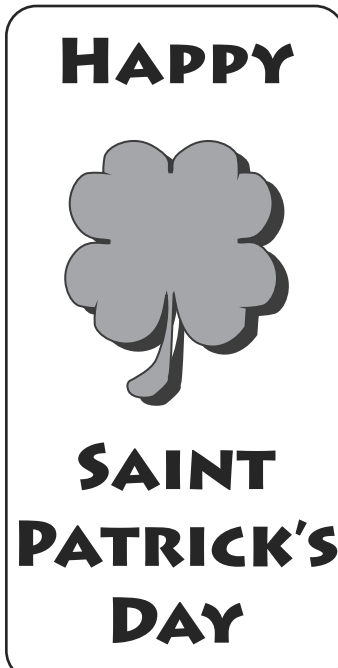
As we all await the coming sociology lesson via SportsCenter, it is hard to think of a better landing spot than Brooklyn. The Nets are coached by Collins's friend and former teammate Jason Kidd and the veteran leaders of the team are Collins's Celtic best buds from last season, Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett. Then there is Brooklyn itself. Just as the borough was the spot where Jackie Robinson blazed a new trail in 1947, it now again gets to be a backdrop to history. Yes, it's no longer the post-war, progressive, working class Brooklyn where my father cheered the exploits of the great Mr. Robinson, and no, the arrival of Jason Collins should not put a progressive patina on what brought the Nets to Brooklyn in the first place: a stew of corporate welfare, gentrification and displacement. But it is still a locale where many LGBT individuals and families live openly and it is a locale that will see this signing as a cause for celebration and solidarity. Perhaps most importantly, the Nets are not trying to make a political statement but truly need Collins, a big seven-foot body, as they begin their stretch run to the playoffs. Their star center Brook Lopez is out for the season and they just traded away broad-shouldered rebounder Reggie Evans. This is the oldest, priciest team in the league and they need Jason Collins to contribute immediately. Judging from his press conference, Collins understands the basketball realities in front of him. He said, "Right now, I'm focused on trying to learn the plays.... I've played for 12 years in the league and I know how to play basketball.... I'm ready. Let's do it."

Reaction around the league has been uniformly positive. (My favorite was Miami Heat All-Star Dwyane Wade who said, "One thing I know about him is he fouled very hard.... Welcome back.") Fans in Los Angeles gave the visiting Collins a warm reaction when he entered Sunday night's game and Lakers coach Mike D'Antoni echoed a view articulated frequently on social media, saying, "I hope one day if a player can play, he can play. If he can't, he can't. That's all what we should be talking about. I know why we don't. But eventually, that's all that will matter. That'll be a good thing."

He is right, but for now, the political implications of this moment are unavoidable. Jason Collins was asked at the press conference if he had a message for other gay athletes and he said, "Be your true authentic self and never be afraid or ashamed or have any fear." Collins also made clear that he would continue to wear number 98, in remembrance of 1998, the year that Matthew Shepard was tortured and murdered.

Collins's very presence should also raise immediate political concerns for new NBA Commissioner Adam Silver as well as the NBA Players Association. Currently the state senate of Arizona has passed a law, SB 1062, that would allow businesses the right to refuse service to anyone they believe to be a part of the LGBT community. Governor Jan Brewer will decide whether or not to sign the bill by this Friday. If she does, what would that mean for Jason Collins on a road trip to play the Phoenix Suns? Doesn't the league and the union have a responsibility to speak out on behalf of not only Jason Collins but their own newly minted policies against anti-gay bigotry? This question also applies to Roger Goodell and the NFL, which is due to bring the Super Bowl to Arizona in 2015. You cannot be a league that welcomes Jason Collins or Michael Sam and then does business in a state where your players can be expected to be treated like second-class citizens. That is a message which needs to be communicated to Governor Brewer posthaste.

But for now, at least, we should just take a moment to recognize and appreciate the hurdle that Jason Collins just cleared. Thanks to his courage, it will be easier for pro athletes yet to come out. It will be easier for young LGBT athletes debating whether or not to tell their "family" in the locker room their truth. It will be easier for apprehensive straight players to get over themselves and embrace any teammate who helps them attain their goals. It may even save lives. I have no doubt we will reach the moment that Mike D'Antoni mentioned and in the future an openly LGBT teammate will be a nonstory. But today it is a story and an inspiring one at that. At long last, after traveling in the brave footsteps of Dave Kopay, Glen Burke, John Amaechi, Wade Davis and so many others, Jason Collins has made history.



Calendar of Events

March 13 — March 19, 2014

Meet Me at the Movies

Date & Time: Friday, March 14, 2014 12 noon-4 pm
 Description: Come travel with us to the Regal Theater in Hyattsville to catch the latest blockbuster movie! Bring additional money for your lunch. Bus departs from College Park Community Center at 11:45 am and returns back to the Center by 4 pm.
 Cost: Resident \$10; Non-Resident \$12
 Ages: 50 & up
 Location: College Park Community Center and Youth Soccer Complex
 5051 Pierce Avenue, College Park 20740
 Contact: 301-441-2647; TTY 301-445-4512

LIVE at Montpelier!- Rory Block, Blues Guitarist/Singer

Date and Time: Friday, March 14, 2014 8 pm
 Description: Join us with multi-award winning blues singer/guitarist Rory Block at this LIVE at Montpelier session! A national treasure, Block is a uncompromising blues artist —and one of the world's most important preservers of the roots of American music. Block is the most celebrated living female acoustic blues artist. Her playing is perfect, her songwriting soulful, and her singing otherworldly, as she presents music steeped in tradition and genuine feeling.
 Cost: Tickets: \$25/person; 10% discount for Montpelier members & seniors
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Montpelier Arts Center
 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
 Contact: 301-377-7800 or 410-792-0664; TTY 301-490-2329

15th Annual Symposium: Lincoln's Assassination: Collateral Damage

Date & Time: Friday-Sunday, March 14-March 16, 2014; Call Museum for time details
 Description: Scholars explore topics such as what imprisonment meant to conspirators; what effects the assassination had on Mrs. Lincoln, son Robert and Henry and Clara Rathbone; and on-screen graveyard tours. Advanced payment and registration required. Bus tours and dinner program available, but priced separately.
 Cost: Resident \$170; Non-Resident \$170
 Ages: 15 & up. Sensitive material is discussed.
 Location: Surratt House Museum
 9118 Brandywine Road, Clinton 20735
 Contact: 301-868-1121; TTY 301-699-2544

Colonial Tavern Dinner

Date and Time: Saturday, March 15, 2014 7-9 pm
 Description: Be our guest as we recreate the atmosphere and flavor of a mid-18th century tavern dinner in Upper Marlborough! Enjoy colonial food and spirits; following dinner, listen to Ship's Company sing sea shanties and tavern songs of the period! Capacity is limited; advance reservations and payment required.
 Cost: Resident \$40; Non-Resident \$48
 Ages: 18 & up
 Location: Darnall's Chance House Museum
 14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro 20772
 Contact: 301-952-8010; TTY 301-699-2544

Global Drumming: Positive Vibrations Youth Steel Orchestra

Date and Time: Saturday, March 15, 2014 8 pm
 Description: The Cultural Academy for Excellence proudly presents Positive Vibrations Youth Steel Orchestra! This steel-drumming orchestra has been sharing its vibrant melodies since 1996, from , Dakar, Senegal to Toronto, Canada. Based in Hyattsville, this is a talented young group you don't want to miss!
 Cost:
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Harmony Hall Regional Center
 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington 20744
 Contact: 301 203-6070; TTY 301-203-3803

Dinner and Movie: The Counterfeiters

Date and Time: Saturday, March 15, 2014 6 pm
 Description: Join us for the annual dinner and a movie film series at Montpelier! We'll have dinner at 6 pm, followed by a screening of the film "The Counterfeiters," a 2007 Academy-Award winner for Best Foreign Language film. Tickets must be purchased by 12 noon on the Friday immediately preceding the Saturday screening. Seating is limited and film only tickets may not always be available.
 Cost: Tickets: \$30/per person (dinner and film); \$15/per person (film only)
 Ages: All ages welcome
 Location: Montpelier Arts Center, 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
 Contact: 301-377-7800 or 410-792-0664; TTY 301-490-2329

Kitchen Guild Open House

Date and Time: Sunday, March 16, 2014 3:30 pm
 Description: Curious about joining our Kitchen Guild? Step into the warmth of the open hearth kitchen and chat with members, while sampling an array of seasonal soups from period recipes! Registration required by March 14.
 Cost: Free
 Ages: 18 & up
 Location: Riversdale House Museum
 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park 20737
 Contact: 301-864-0420; TTY 301-699-2544

Montpelier's Spring History Lecture Series: History Through a Drinking Vessel

Date a& Time: Wednesday, March 19, 7:30 pm
 Description: This is the first of three history lectures on the beverages, libations and social culture of 18th century life. In this talk, Rod Cofield, Executive Director of Historic London Town and Gardens, will speak on taverns and travel in colonial America.
 Cost: Free
 Ages: 12 & up
 Location: Montpelier Mansion/Historic Site
 9650 Muirkirk Road, Laurel 20708
 Contact: 301-377-7817; TTY 301-699-2544; montpeliermansion@pgparks.com

EARTH TALK ... Should those of us who care about our health and the planet be concerned about the new trend in genetic engineering called synthetic biology?

Dear EarthTalk:

Should those of us who care about our health and the planet be concerned about the new trend in genetic engineering called synthetic biology?

— Chrissy Wilkins, Bern, NC

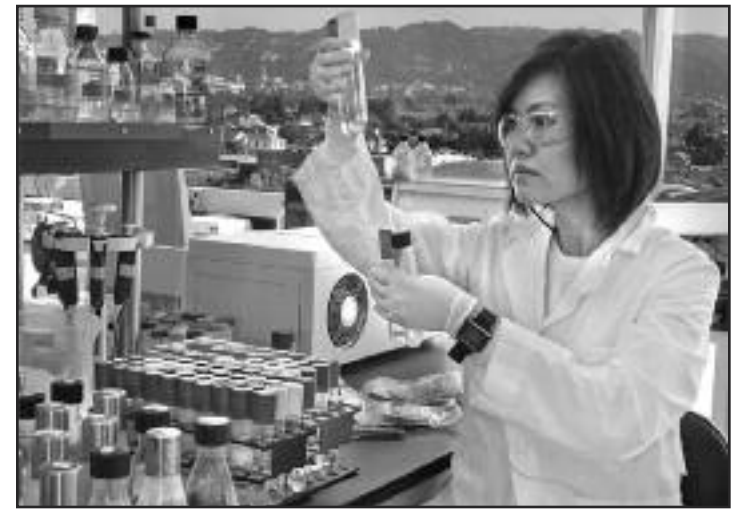
"Synthetic biology" (or "synbio") refers to the design and fabrication of novel biological parts, devices and systems that do not otherwise occur in nature. Many see it as an extreme version of genetic engineering (GE). But unlike GE, whereby genetic information with certain desirable traits is inserted from one organism into another, synbio uses computers and chemicals to create entirely new organisms.

Proponents of synbio, which include familiar players such as Cargill, BP, Chevron and Du Pont, tout its potential benefits. According to the Synthetic Biology Engineering Research Center (SYNBERC), a consortium of leading U.S. researchers in the field, some promising applications of synthetic biology include alternatives to rubber for tires, tumor-seeking microbes for treating cancer, and photosynthetic energy systems. Other potential applications include using synbio to detect and remove environmental contaminants, monitor and respond to disease and develop new drugs and vaccines.

While these and other applications may not be widely available for years, synthetic biology is already in use for creating food additives that will start to show up in products on grocery shelves later this year. Switzerland-based Evolva is using synthetic biology techniques to produce alternatives to resveratrol, stevia, saffron and vanilla. The company's "synthetic vanillin" is slated to go into many foods as a cheaper and limitless version of real vanilla flavor. But many health advocates are outraged that such a product will be available to consumers without more research into potential dangers and without any warnings or labeling to let consumers know they are eating organisms designed and brought to life in a lab.

"This is the first major use of a synbio ingredient in food, and dozens of other flavors and food additives are in the pipeline, so synbio vanilla could set a dangerous precedent for synthetic genetically engineered ingredients to sneak into our food supply and be labeled as 'natural,'" reports Friends of the Earth (FoE), a leading environmental group. "Synthetic biology vanillin poses several human health, environmental and economic concerns for consumers, food companies and other stakeholders."

For example, FoE worries that synbio vanilla (and eventually other synthetic biology additives) could exacerbate rainforest destruction while



CREDIT: LAWRENCE BERKELEY NATIONAL LABORATORY/ROY KALTSCHMIDT
Proponents of synthetic biology tout its potential for bringing about great advances in medicine, energy and cheaper foods. But health advocates worry that the risks to health and the environment may be too great. Pictured: a researcher using "synbio" to engineer new microbes as an alternative to yeast for turning complex sugars into biofuels.

harming sustainable farmers and poor communities around the world. "Synbio vanilla... could displace the demand for the natural vanilla market," reports FoE. "Without the natural vanilla market adding economic value to the rainforest in these regions, these last standing rainforests will not be protected from competing agricultural markets such as soy, palm oil and sugar." Critics of synbio also worry that releasing synthetic life into the environment, whether done intentionally or accidentally, could have adverse effects on our ecosystems. Despite these risks, could the rewards of embracing synthetic

biology be great? Could it help us deal with some of the tough issues of climate change, pollution and world hunger? Given that the genie is already out of the bottle, perhaps only time will tell.

CONTACTS: SYNBERC, www.synberc.org; FoE, www.foe.org; Evolva, www.evolva.com.

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Gas Tax from A1

tion dedicated to transportation reform. Pennsylvania had the highest percentage of deficient bridges.

Maintenance and replacement of the State Highway Administration's bridges is mainly funded by the federal government, but Maryland's Transportation Trust Fund takes on about 20 percent of the cost, said David Buck, spokesman for the Maryland Department of Transportation.

The Transportation Trust Fund is used to pay for transportation infrastructure projects and maintenance. About one-fifth of the fund's revenue comes from the gas tax. The rest comes from sources such as vehicle titling and registration fees.

Before the new gas tax, known as the Transportation Infrastructure Investment Act of 2013, passed, the fund was projected to run out of money by 2018. The increased gas tax is expected to yield more than \$116 million in additional revenue in its first year, which should help fund projects such as mass transit and road maintenance.

There are approximately 60 major bridge rehabilitation or replacement projects underway on state maintained roads, Buck said.

Bridges are considered structurally deficient once the superstructure, substructure or deck receives a rating below five on a scale of 0 to 10, Buck said.

The deck is the roadway. The superstructure supports the deck and the substructure reaches the ground, supporting the superstructure.

Of the 2,572 state-maintained bridges, 567 had a deck, superstructure or substructure value just one level above structurally deficient, according to the 2012 National Bridge Inventory Database. The State Highway Administration is not responsible for the other half of Maryland's more than 5,000 bridges.

The Dover Bridge, an 80-year-old mechanical swing bridge over the Choptank River bordering Talbot and Caroline counties, received a rating of five for its deck, which means the primary structural elements

are sound, but the bridge may have section loss, cracking, spalling or scour, according to the Recording and Coding Guide for the Structure Inventory and Appraisal of the Nation's Bridges.

The superstructure received a satisfactory rating of six, as did the substructure, according to the database.

Buck said a rating of five may mean there are cracks or potholes, but because each bridge is different it's hard to come up with a standard explanation for what goes wrong.

Colburn said it would cost about \$45 million to replace the bridge, which swings horizontally into the channel to allow boats passage.

Buck said the State Highway Administration is fully aware Eastern Shore legislators would like to see the Dover Bridge replaced, but the money is not available now.

Although the bridge is functionally obsolete, "it isn't a top priority from a structural perspective," Buck said.

But Colburn and others worry that ambulances on the way to the hospital in Easton might be delayed in emergencies because the Dover Bridge's antiquated drawspan sometimes gets stuck.

He's also concerned because the lanes are only 11 feet wide and it is not uncommon for two trucks to pass each other and clip off each other's mirrors.

Ken Decker, the Caroline County administrator, agrees the Dover Bridge is too narrow.

"If two tractor trailers pass on the bridge, you're going to have to butter the fenders to get by," Decker said.

Decker said engineering for a new bridge has been underway for about two years, but "there's a big jump from engineering to construction funding."

He thinks it's too soon to tell whether the increased gas tax will help fund projects like the Dover Bridge, but ideally construction would begin soon after engineering is completed.

The 87 deficient bridges maintained by the State Highway Administration are all in the process of being replaced or repaired, Buck said.

Thirty-two are under construction or soon to be under construction, and the rest are in design, Buck said.

Money from the gas tax funneled through the Transportation Trust Fund helps pay for projects like the Crosstown Bridge in Cumberland, which is currently under construction, Buck said.

The Crosstown Bridge in Cumberland, a long bridge elevated overtop neighborhoods and businesses, will cost \$17.3 million to clean, repair and paint, in conjunction with another bridge project on Maryland 51 over the CSX Railroad and Canal Parkway.

The bridge needs a complete remodeling, said Sen. George Edwards, R-Allegany.

The bridge's deck, superstructure and substructure all received satisfactory ratings of five, according to the 2012 National Bridge Inventory Database.

Although the majority of bridges worked on are structurally deficient, non-deficient bridges are also worked on for reasons such as widening to accommodate traffic, or to extend the bridge's longevity, Buck said.

One example is a \$3.2 million cleaning and painting project currently underway for two bridges on I-695 over the Patapsco River

and over Hammonds Ferry Road in Anne Arundel County.

Buck said scraping the existing paint down to bare metal and putting on three coats of new paint helps to keep the beams in good health for 20 to 30 years.

"We clean and paint bridges all the time, not because they are structurally deficient, but because our engineers have determined that it increases the lifespan of the bridge," Buck said.

Twenty bridges were fixed or replaced by the State Highway Administration last year. In that time, 10 more bridges became structurally deficient.

Since 2007, 121 state-owned bridges classified as structurally deficient have been rehabilitated, according to the Maryland Department of Transportation Consolidated Transportation Program.

Stephen Davis, deputy communications director for Transportation for America, said his coalition works to make sure there is a greater focus on fixing current infrastructure rather than working on new projects.

"That would certainly be the hope," Davis said, of how the gas tax might help increase repairs of deteriorating bridges.

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Watch from A4

covering practical topics like how to write checks, these "schools" taught basic civics and citizenship rights and focused on the arcane voting requirements specific to each local community that were being used to disenfranchise Black voters. Classes met on evenings and weekends in churches, store backrooms, and other available spaces. Lessons were written on dry-cleaning bags in place of blackboards. They relied on training local citizens to teach other community members; Fannie Lou Hamer was among the local leaders who volunteered. Mrs. Clark eventually helped establish and recruit and train teachers for hundreds of Citizenship Schools: "They were in people's kitchens, in beauty parlors, and under trees in the summertime. I went all over the South, sometimes visiting three Citizenship Schools in one day... One time I heard Andy Young say that the Citizenship Schools were the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built. And that's probably very much true." Rosa Parks also said that while she may have sat down once, Mrs. Clark kept on working and building: "I am always very respectful and very much in awe of the presence of Septima Clark because her life story makes the effort that I have made very minute. I only hope that there is a possible chance that some of her great courage and dignity and wisdom has rubbed off on me."

As a woman in the movement, Mrs. Clark said she felt the men around her often did not do a good job of listening to or including her or other women. Yet she observed that it was largely women who got things done: "In stories about the civil rights movement you hear mostly about the black ministers. But if you talk to the women who were there, you'll hear another story. I think the civil

rights movement would never have taken off if some women hadn't started to speak up." Even later in life Mrs. Clark was never hesitant to speak up. One of the injustices after her 1956 firing was that South Carolina refused to pay the pension she had earned for her forty years of teaching or the pay she would have earned in the few years before her retirement if she had not been dismissed. She did not give up on waiting for those wrongs to be righted, and in 1976 the governor reinstated her pension and in 1981 the legislature approved paying her back pay.

Although her signature accomplishment may be the programs she established for Black adults, she never lost her original and enduring passion for educating children. She celebrated her 78th birthday by becoming the first Black woman elected to the Charleston School Board. Near the end of her life she said: "Education is my big priority right now. I want people to see children as human beings and not to think of the money that it costs nor to think of the amount of time that it will take, but to think of the lives that can be developed into Americans who will redeem the soul of America and will really make America a great country." Let's honor Septima Clark's legacy right now by making this priority our own with urgency and perseverance.

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

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