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VERSE OF THE WEEK -

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Brochin submits bill to restrict developer campaign donations



Senator Jim Brochin, who represents Towson and northern Baltimore County, announced his legislation Monday to restrict campaign contributions from developers in Baltimore County.

Article & photo by Devin Crum -

State Senator Jim Brochin (D-42) announced on Monday, Jan. 16, a bill he submitted to the state legislature in Annapolis which would prohibit what he sees as "pay-to-play" political contributions from developers in Baltimore County.

The legislation says that developers or their "agents" seeking a zoning change, a zoning variance, a planned unit development (PUD) approval or any Master Plan change may not have contributed funds to the county executive's or any County Council member's election campaign in the preceding three years. If the developer seeking approval had contributed money to any of them, that person would have to return those funds.

The bill, Brochin said, is modeled after a Prince George's County law which passed in 1992. And he said he spoke with someone in the Maryland Building Industry Association who told him they no longer make political donations in that jurisdiction.

"Development is based on its merits, and it's not a pay-to-play system there," he said. "We're trying to get rid of a system that's frustrating all of us."

Brochin said that system was exemplified by the county's sale of the Towson fire station to build a Royal Farms, as well as the sale of the North Point Government Center in Dundalk to a private developer with connections to County Executive Kevin Kamenetz.

Senator Johnny Ray Salling (R-6), who represents Dundalk, is a co-sponsor of the bill.

Brochin noted that the Frederick County delegation is also currently working on a similar initiative for their jurisdiction.

"Almost every jurisdiction sees there's a problem," the senator said. "For some

reason, the [Baltimore County] Council people now and the county executive don't think there's a problem."

He acknowledged that the problem precedes the current county executive and County Council members and that his bill will not fix everything.

"This is an institutional problem in Baltimore County and somebody has to say enough is enough," Brochin said.

He said the system has been frustrating to the community members who do $% \left\{ 1,2,\ldots ,n\right\}$ not feel like they are being heard when it comes to development because the developers pay for their prime access to the decision makers.

"Where does the power rest, with the developers and big money or with the people?" Brochin asked. "There is no doubt in my mind that the developers have the key to Baltimore County right now."

- see PAY TO PLAY on page 7 -



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NEWS

State will not fund Back River midge treatments without county money

- By Devin Crum -

The State of Maryland has backed away from a plan to fund larvicidal midge treatments this year on Back River, saying its share of the money will not be available without participation from Baltimore County.

Last fall, Governor Larry Hogan and other state officials extended an offer to Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz to evenly split an estimated \$1.4 million cost for several applications of midge larvicide on the river to help alleviate the issues caused by midges.

Midges - non-biting, mosquito-like insects - are present in such numbers in and around Back River that they pose a swarming nuisance to businesses and

residents in the area. The larvicide treatments would have killed midge larvae in the water at the points where their numbers are highest.

Kamenetz, by way of county Environmental Protection and Sustainability Director Vince Gardina, promptly rejected Hogan's offer, claiming the waterway to be state jurisdiction and, therefore, state responsibility. He also called into question the state's cost estimate, saying it was too low to do the job adequately.

Following the rejection, State Senator J.B. Jennings (R-7) helped organize a socalled "midge summit" in late October between state and county officials and the Back River Restoration Committee, which has advocated for the treatments.

According to BRRC President Sam Weaver, his understanding after the midge summit was that the state had agreed to put forth its half of the funding regardless of if the county would participate. That way they could still fund some of the treatments and see how far those funds would go.

But Weaver said he recently found out from another state official, who was not involved in any decision making on the issue, that the funding of midge treatments on Back River is now "completely dead."

He said he had to find out from this state official because he was the only one who would return Weaver's calls about it. He added that he got no response from officials in the Maryland Department of Agriculture, which was to be the source of the funding, nor from the governor's office. And he said the two state senators involved were not aware of the issue.

"I've been told the money is available," Weaver said, "but somebody's got to put their stamp on it.

"I can't believe they sat there with 18 people in that room and said what they said and now all of a sudden it's all in the toilet," he said, referencing the midge summit.

But MDA spokesman Jason Schellhardt said in order for the state funding to move forward they would need the county to agree to participate in the program.

"It's always been a we-need-them-toparticipate kind of deal," Schellhardt said, adding that the state did not agree to put up its half of the funding without county involvement. "I was in that meeting and I don't think that was ever said.

"It's always been the kind of deal where we're willing to work with the county on this but we need their participation for our funding to work," he added.

But Jennings and Sen. Johnny Ray Salling (R-6), the other state senator involved, each said they were unaware that the state's money was contingent on the county chipping in.

"This is news to me," Jennings said.

"It was my assumption with what the governor said at the Board of Public Works press conference [when he announced the offer]... that the state was still at least going to put up half to do half the treatments and do what they could to lessen the severity of what's taking place down there."

Jennings also said he recalled state representatives specifically stating in the midge meeting that they would fund their half of the treatments regardless of the county's involvement.

"I rehashed it several times - because I chaired that meeting - that it would be taken care of," he said.

Likewise, Salling said he was not previously told that state funding would not come through without the county agreeing to put up the other half. He and Jennings would be sending a letter to Hogan to see if they will get the funding, "which we were promised," he said.

Salling also recalled state representatives at the midge meeting agreeing to come through with their half of the funding with or without the county's.

That's why we were there; they did say that," he asserted. "We're going to try to find out through the governor's office where we're at because we thought we were getting the finances."

The state's half of the funds would have covered two or three larvicide applications, according to Salling.

Additionally, Salling is planning to introduce another funding bill in the state legislature to allocate money for the treatments through the state budget. He introduced a similar bill last year which passed the State Senate but stalled in the House of Delegates.

"We're seeing if we can get the funding and if we can get the help," Salling said. "We're trying to go through the state to get the applications done to take care of the problem that we've had for years now."

He said he has support for the bill from senators on both sides of the aisle.



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NEWS

Days Cove landfill preparing to discharge treated leachate from treatment plant

- By Devin Crum -

The Days Cove Rubble Landfill in White Marsh expects to have its newly-constructed leachate treatment plant up and running within the next month so they can begin discharging the treated liquid directly from the facility, according to company officials.

Darren Hunt, manager of the Days Cove Reclamation Company which operates the landfill, said the treatment plant is still in "start-up mode" and engineers continue to inspect and calibrate the equipment in anticipation of the plant's opening.

"We're getting close, but we're still not to the point where we're ready to discharge," Hunt said. And when they are ready, they will still have to go through a sampling protocol and submit the data to the Maryland Department of the Environment to be sure it meets the discharge requirements.

The leachate is currently trucked to the Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant in Dundalk for treatment at that facility.

Leachate - the liquid that first enters the landfill as rain and eventually permeates through to the bottom - is collected and will be treated by the treatment plant on the landfill property. The treated leachate will then be discharged from the plant via a two-inch underground line to an open storm water collection pond on the property.

As per their permit, the plant will discharge roughly 13,000 gallons of treated leachate per day, which, Hunt said, "is like leaving a garden hose running."

Hunt assured that the leachate will be cleaned and treated by the plant to the same standards as drinking water. "So the water that's coming out of this treatment plant will not be discharged unless it's the same water that's coming, technically, through the tap at your house because it's the same standards with the same limits," he said.

He noted that the leachate being treated and discharged is strictly from the rubble landfill - separate from the adjacent Eastern Sanitary Landfill used for general trash from the county - and said their leachate is "fairly benign to begin with" as compared to the garbage landfill.

Due to their solid waste permit from MDE, most of the materials handled at the rubble landfill are construction materials like stone, gravel, brick and wood, which is the only organic material they deal with. Metals and plastics can be recycled and are not landfilled.

Should the collection pond fill up with

treated leachate or during a rain event, the water would spill over into a drainage ditch allowing it to freely infiltrate into the ground in a wooded area on the site, according to Hunt. And the point where the water would enter the woods is about 1,000 yards from the nearest shoreline, he said.

Hunt said that, according to MDE which wrote their discharge permit, any water discharged by the plant will infiltrate into the ground before it has any chance to reach surface water. Additionally, much of the water would simply evaporate from the collection pond in the summer and it would not discharge at all in warm, dry weather.

"It potentially could reach this pond in the winter months when everything is saturated or frozen," Hunt said. "But the

- see **DISCHARGE** on page 6 -



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NEWS

Almond visits Riverside Democrats as she mulls county executive run

- By Patrick Taylor -

While we may have just finished up with an election cycle, another is on the horizon. With term-limited Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz leaving office and reportedly eyeing a run for governor, his seat will be up for grabs. There's plenty of speculation about who will contend for the seat, but one name is all but certain: Vicki Almond.

Almond, a Democratic councilwoman from Reisterstown, told the Riverside Democratic Club of Essex last week that she's "strongly looking to make a run for county executive."

Members of the club told Almond that they have felt ignored by the Kamenetz administration during his two terms in office. They cited the sale of the North Point Government Center and lack of speed on school air conditioning installation, as well as a Republican sweep of the souteast area in the 2014 election, as reasons for displeasure.

Almond told the group that, stylistically, her approach to management is much different than Kame-

"My style certainly is different," Almond said. "It's

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about bringing together the best and brightest people we can find and let them run their departments, let them be creative, let them bring ideas to the table.

"Do I know everything there is to know about budget, about public works, about environment? No, and I won't stand here and tell you that I do," she continued. "But I'm a good judge of people. I can bring on the best and the brightest and let them do their jobs, encourage them to do their jobs."

Councilwoman Cathy Bevins (D-6), who introduced Almond to the Riverside Democratic Club, vouched for Almond's leadership and noted that she frequently manages to find palatable compromises.

"There's a word in our vocabulary that hasn't been in other people's, and that's 'compromise,'" Bevins said. "This job is about compromise. And if you're someone who has a my-way-or-the-highway mentality, that's just not a way to govern. And I can tell you that Vicki doesn't govern that way."

Almond billed herself as a someone who listens to what communities want. She cited a development project in her district that called for 250 homes to be built. The plan infuriated members of the surrounding community and eventually the number was whittled down to about 130 homes. She also got the developer to make improvements that often go overlooked when dealing with developers, such as new signage

Bevins also recalled that millionaire developer Howard Brown dumped a lot of money into the campaigns of Almond's opponents, whom they viewed as more development-friendly. Bevins went through a similar situation with developer David Cordish.

"They didn't get their way and they didn't like it," said Bevins. "They put a lot of money into a lot of opponents to run against us; they didn't get what they wanted.'

The group told Almond that historically, Demo-

cratic clubs on the east side tend to endorse members of the community that have been visible in volunteer efforts. "If you build a relationship with the community, the community will support you," said one member.

- see **ALMOND** on page 7 -

DISCHARGE -

- continued from page 4 -

chances of that are highly unlikely."

The "pond" he referred to is the former Campbell quarry next to the landfill which has a small link to the waters of Days Cove and, therefore, to the tidal Gunpowder and Bird rivers.

"I keep hearing [rumors] that we're discharging directly to the Bird River, and that's just not the case," Hunt said.

He conceded the discharge could potentially reach the river through ground water. "But there's no pipe dumping treated leachate into Bird River," he said.

The rubble landfill is estimated to remain open for eight more years, Hunt said, at which time it will be closed and capped. The amount of leachate needing to be treated will then decrease over time because the cap will prevent new rain infiltration. However, it can take up to 10 years for all of the moisture to fully permeate through.

"Once you close out the landfill, you cap everything off with the closure material... there are two five-year monitoring plans that are part of our permit, which basically ends the landfill," Hunt explained.

The first five-year period consists of ground water sampling, erosion control and leachate treatment, he said.

"So at the end of that five-year period, if you're not generating any leachate and you have no environmental issues, then the landfill closes out," Hunt said.

If it continues to produce leachate, the landfill will be closed at the point during the second five-year period when the leachate ceases.

Following the closure of the rubble landfill, the area will be converted back into a state park for use by the public. It is slated to include walking trails, a swimming area in the former quarry and wildlife habitat creation. Work on the park would begin with the closure of the landfill in 2025.



An aerial view of the Days Cove Rubble Landfill showing its proximity to the former quarry to the north and Days Cove to the east. The treated leachate will be discharged toward the north of the property.





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PAY TO PLAY

- continued from page 1 -

However, some saw the move as politically motivated because Brochin is widely viewed as a candidate for Baltimore County Executive in 2018.

Several County Council members were less than enthused with the criticisms that came with the announcement and returned fire with jabs at Brochin's own acceptance of political donations.

"Any reader of the *East County Times* knows that I have regularly opposed developers when I disagreed with their projects, and that we downzoned thousands of acres of land to lighten school overcrowding and preserve green space," said Councilman David Marks (R-5) who represents Towson and Perry Hall. "But the larger issue is that, by statute, the County Council already does not accept contributions when rezoning property."

Marks was referring to the law that bars council members from taking political contributions during the yearlong Comprehensive Zoning Map Process.

"I look forward to Senator Brochin introducing legislation at the state level that applies restrictions to the Judicial Proceedings Committee on which he sits, a body whose members have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from trial lawyers and special interests," Marks said.

Councilman Todd Crandell (R-7), who represents Dundalk, said he found it ironic that the General Assembly would target the Baltimore County Council when some of its own members are facing campaign finance violations and accusations of conflicts of interest.

"I don't care if this legislation passes or not," Crandell stated. "My decisions are based on what is best for our district, period. This is and will always be the only determining factor."

Councilwoman Cathy Bevins (D-6), who represents Middle River and White Marsh, came under fire in 2015 when she introduced a bill to ease the path for the Paragon outlet mall in White Marsh and state campaign finance records revealed that she had taken a combined \$5,000 from Paragon executives prior to her last election in 2014.

Bevins was adamant, however, that the campaign donations did not influence her decision to submit the bill.

"It doesn't influence me," she said at the time. "I've said 'no' many times to people who have contributed to my campaign."

Bevins did not comment for this article, but she has also faced campaign opposition from developers who supported opposing candidates they saw as more sympathetic to them.

She told the Riverside Democratic Club in Essex on Jan. 12 about her run-ins with billionaire developer David Cordish, who poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into an opponent's campaign after a zoning decision she made to allow redevelopment of a dilapidated property in Middle River threatened one of his shopping centers nearby.

Common Cause Maryland, a government watchdog group, released a statement in support of Brochin's legislation after analyzing spending on local campaigns around the state. The group found that developers are consistently the interest group investing the most in these campaigns - "because they have the most invested in the outcomes," said Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, CCM's executive director.

"Focusing on developer dollars at the county level makes sense - land use decisions are the most consistent policy our councils make, second only to the county budget in importance," she said.

The bill will be heard simultaneously in the Baltimore County delegation and the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee in Annapolis, and Brochin's office will give advance notice of the date of those hearings for those interested in testifying.

If passed, the bill would take effect Jan. 1, 2019.

ALMOND

- continued from page 6 -

"That's why I'm here 18 months before the election," Almond told the group. "I want to form relationships on the east side."

Almond told the group that she got involved in Parent Teacher Associations when her children were in school, and from there she began volunteering. She's worked on a campaign with Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger and worked as chief of staff for Senator Bobby Zirkin among others.

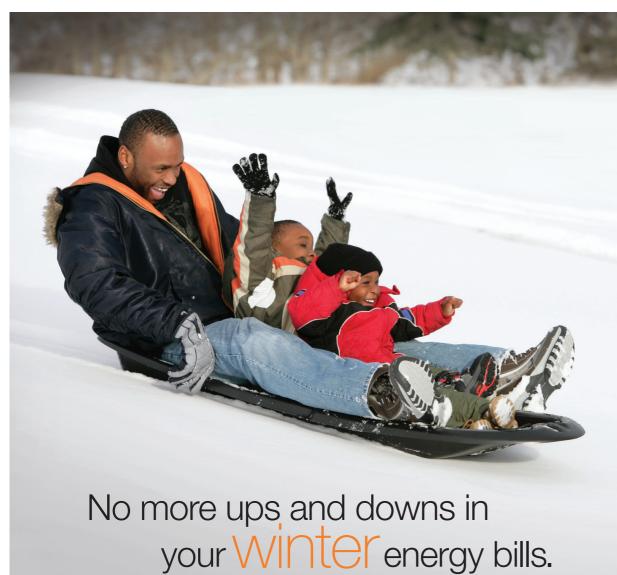
In her first race for a seat on the council, Almond faced stiff competition, including three women and a relative of Ruppersberger's. She pointed to her entrenched relationships in her area through years of service as the reason for her victory.

After spending six years on the Baltimore County Council and seeing how things work at the state and federal level, she said she could only imagine working at the local level.

"I don't feel comfortable calling myself a politician though you do have to have some of that in you," said Almond. "I have been a public servant for so many years, and part of being a public servant is listening. I don't know more than you do about your community and I won't pretend to, but I need to learn and I need you folks to help me learn that. And that's truly important to me. Running a county will be a whole lot different than a district, so I have to learn and be a part of every single part of Baltimore County."

NPVCA Meeting

The next meeting of the North Point Village Civic Association will be Thursday, Jan. 26, at 7 p.m. in the Southeast Regional Recreation Center, 4021 North Point Blvd. in Dundalk. Note the location change.



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NEWS

Restaurant Week offers culinary delights and deals

- By Marge Neal -

Foodies looking to spread their culinary wings have plenty of room to fly as Baltimore County kicks off its semi-annual Restaurant Week.

Beginning Jan. 20 and running through Feb. 4, participating eateries will offer a variety of two-, three- and four-course lunch and dinner specials featuring both signature and experimental dishes ranging from pasta to filet mignon.

"Foodies and patrons alike look forward to Restaurant Week - it's a great time for them to experience places they've been meaning to try at a big savings," said Baltimore County Exec-

utive Kevin Kamenetz in a published statement.

Thirteen eastern Baltimore County restaurants are participating, granting local foodies the opportunity to sample a wide variety of meals at prices ranging from \$13.17 to \$35 per person. Patrons can dine informally on soup and a sandwich for lunch or plan a special event around prime rib, filet mignon or chicken Chesapeake for dinner.

"We get excited about Restaurant Week every time it comes around we've participated since Brian Boston started it," said Pete Triantafilos, general manager of Dundalk's Costas Inn. "It gives us the opportunity to offer new dishes we'd like to try and provides motivation for customers to come out to eat after the holidays are over."

Janaury and February are normally the slowest months of the year, according to Triantafilos, and the restaurant promotion helps to noticeably improve business.

"Absolutely, we really notice the increase in customers who tell us they came out specifically for the Restaurant Week specials," he said. "The customers enjoy the deals and our cooks really get excited about being able to create new dishes and new or different presentations of meals."

Costas is offering a two-course lunch for \$20 and a three-course dinner for \$35. Lunch selections include a five-ounce crab cake, soft crab sandwich, crab and shrimp omelet, buffalo burger and seafood mac and cheese with lobster. Dinner choices include prime rib, crab cakes, crab imperial, steak and cake or soft crab and seafood marinara. The lunch special includes a choice of Maryland crab or cream of crab soup and the dinner special offers a choice of several salads in addition to the soups. Dinner also includes a dessert (choice of cheesecake or rice pudding).

While Restaurant Week organizers promote meals that range in price from \$15 to \$35, Pizza John's in Essex is inviting patrons to build their own

pasta meal and finish it with a dessert at the bargain price of \$13.17. Diners can choose spaghetti, rigatoni or shells with meatballs, meat sauce or sausage, satisfy their sweet tooth with plain cheesecake or a cannoli and wash it all down with a medium soda, coffee or tea.

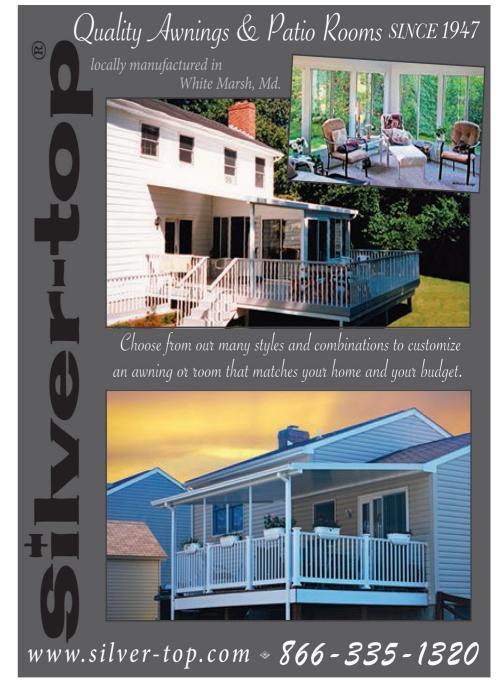
On the other hand, diners at By the Docks in Middle River can enjoy a fourcourse dinner for \$35.17. First course choices include bleu cheese wedge salad, Shrimp Meuniere (shrimp sautéed in a sherry sauce with a hint of garlic) or Taste of the Docks (a seafood sampler that includes one oyster Rockefeller, one clam casino and one bacon jam scallop). The second course offers Maryland crab soup. Third course selections include two crab cakes, a New York strip steak "a la Chesapeake," seafood imperial and red snapper Newport. For dessert, diners can choose devil's fudge cake or cannoli.

Other local participating eateries include Perry Hall's Basta Pasta, Bill Bateman's Bistro in the North Plaza Shopping Center, Conrad's Seafood and The Harp, both on Belair Road, Jimmy's Famous Seafood in Dundalk, River Watch in Essex and Dock of the Bay in Edgemere.

A complete list of participating restaurants and their special offerings can be viewed at <u>www.baltimorecounty</u> restaurantweek.com.







SPORTS

Perry Hall rallies in fourth, slips past Lake Clifton in overtime

- By Patrick Taylor -

If your team wants to make a claim for the best in the area, you have to show that your team has the ability to win even with the deck stacked against them. Perry Hall did just that last week as they took down Lake Clifton by a score of 63 - 60.

Lake Clifton (the No. 2 team in the Baltimore Sun's poll heading into last week's contest; Perry Hall was ranked No. 4) usually puts out a strong team, and this team is no exception. They have size and athleticism to match solid shooting. They show a lot of discipline and patience. Before last week, the No. 2 designation was fitting.

Things didn't look good for the Gators. They were without talented big man Anthony Higgs due to illness. Their other monster forward, Laquill Hardnett, struggled with fouls for most of the game, limiting his time on the court.

But Perry Hall fought the whole way. Despite being without the heart of their team for most of the game, the Gators never once looked out of it. They actually played at such a high level that a loss might have been considered "blowing it," even without the usual help from their bigs. It takes a lot of character - and great coaching - to manage a win in those circumstances. But it seems like all this team knows how to do is win.

It looked hopeless with the clock winding down in the fourth quarter of the game, but the Gators managed to overcome an eight-point deficit in the final minutes of regulation to push the game into overtime and secure a win.

With Higgs out for the contest, much of the interior work for Hardnett. For much of the game, Hardnett was contained. He still managed to grab plenty of boards and a few blocks while shutting down the lane on defense, but offensively he wasn't able to get in rhythm. That was fine for most of the game though, as Darrell Green put up 24 points to lead the way for the Gators.

Lake Clifton started off the game slow, putting up only six points in the first quarter while Perry Hall put up 12. At one point Perry Hall went up 13 in the

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second quarter, but early foul trouble for Hardnett opened things up for Clifton, and the two teams entered halftime with Perry Hall up by a score of

In the third quarter, Hardnett had to spend a bit more time on the bench due to foul trouble, and Lake Clifton took a seven-point lead into the fourth.

The teams traded baskets for the first half of the fourth quarter, but in the final 3:30, Perry Hall came storming back. They caused turnovers and Clifton missed a few key free throws that allowed Perry Hall to chip away at the lead before tying it up.

In overtime, Hardnett came to life, scoring eight of his team's ten points in the extra period. Hardnett finished the game with 16 points to his name.

Lake Clifton took a one-point lead into the final minute, but an easy Green layup gave the Gators the lead. On the ensuing possession, Clifton turned the ball over at half-court and Hardnett threw down a monstrous dunk with less than three seconds left to give the Gators a 63 - 60 lead and the win.

The Gators now sit at 11 - 1 on the season and will undoubtedly be moving up in the polls. They've won

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five straight and are firing on all cylinders. After this gutsy win over Lake Clifton, you can easily make the case that Perry Hall is the team to beat in the entire Baltimore area. The Gators will face Franklin and Largo in their next two contests.

Around the league

Sticking with Perry Hall but flipping over to the girls, the Gators ended last calendar year and began the new one with losses. Since those losses the girls have throttled each of their opponents, winning four straight by an average margin of 16.5 points. The girls are now 8 - 4 on the year and are looking like they're hitting their stride. They take on Franklin on Friday before facing Woodlawn next week.

The Chesapeake High School girls had a bit of a rough week last week, losing to Perry Hall and Franklin before bouncing back against Randallstown. The two losses were Chesapeake's first of the year, and they now sit with an 8 - 2 record overall.



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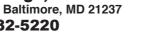
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to Social Security Disability Claims





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There are so many details that go into making your day the ultimate experience, so we've comprised everything into one place to keep the excitement of planning stress free.

For a successful turnout, master the wedding save-the-date

Many couples' weddings take more than a year to plan. Couples want all of the special people in their lives to witness their vows, and giving guests advance notice can ensure as many loved ones as possible attend the ceremony.

To be certain that guests have ample notice to clear their schedules, many couples now turn to save-the-date cards, which announce weddings well in advance of the actual wedding day.

Save-the-date cards once were reserved

only for weddings that required travel or special circumstances, such as destination weddings. But such cards have now become commonplace for all weddings. That's because many people plan vacations or business trips anywhere from four to six months in advance. Busy people require plenty of notice to include this important date on their calendars, particularly when wedding dates fall during popular travel seasons or around the holidays.

Kleinfeld Bridal, a premiere New York

bridal boutique, says that save-the-date cards are typically mailed six to eight months prior to the wedding, though some are sent as early as a year before the big day. Once a date and a location is secured, save-the-dates can be ordered and mailed.

Save-the-date cards require couples to assemble guest lists well in advance of the wedding. The leading bridal resource The Knot notes that everyone who will get a wedding invitation should also receive a save-the-date card. There's no turning back once cards are sent, so couples will need to be certain everyone they want to attend is getting advanced notice.

It's acceptable to mail save-the-date cards even if some wedding day details are still up in the air. Guests really only need to know the date and location of the wedding. Couples also can use the save-the-date card to direct invitees to a wedding website where guests can learn the details of the wedding as they unfold.

RSVP information does not need to be included on the save-the-date card.

Save-the-date cards are much less formal than invitations, so couples can have fun with them. They can showcase couples' clever personalities or funny quirks. Keep in mind it is in poor taste to mention gifts or registries on save-the-date cards. There will be plenty of time to direct guests to registries later on.

Couples are increasingly turning to save-the-date cards when planning their weddings to make sure busy friends and family will have enough time to make plans to attend their weddings.

Wedding trivia

According to the 2015 Real Weddings Study from the premier multiplatform wedding resource The Knot, the most popular month for couples to get engaged is December. Sixteen percent of survey respondents became engaged in the final month of the calendar year. The survey also found that the average length of a couple's engagement is now 14.5 months. Where June once was the most popular month of the year to tie the knot, today's couples are now heading down the aisle most often in October. Seventeen percent of weddings now occur in October, closely followed by 15 percent in September. And at what age are couples saying their "I dos"? The average marrying age for a bride is 29 and it is 31 for the groom.

Longevity in marriage is something to be celebrated. Couples who reach fiftieth and sixtieth wedding anniversaries often commemorate those anniversaries with big parties. But there are some around the world who would consider golden anniversary celebrants to still be newlyweds. In December 2015, Karam Chand, 110, and his wife, Kartari Chand, 103, from Bradford, West Yorkshire (originally from India), celebrated their 90th wedding anniversary, becoming the world's longestbetrothed couple. In America, John and Ann Betar, ages 104 and 100, respectively, have been married 83 years as of 2016. The couple eloped in 1932. They have been named one of America's longest-married couples by the Worldwide Marriage Encounter.



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The guide to determining wedding day dress codes

Wedding invitations do more than merely announce that a celebration is on the horizon. Invitations provide key information about the ceremony and festivities to follow. Many details, including the location, time and date of the wedding, are spelled out on the wedding invitations. However, invitations can sometimes leave guests confused about the appropriate style of attire for the occasion.

Even though wedding invitations rarely offer specific information regarding attire, chances are the wording will provide clues that can help guests interpret the

Casual: If the invitation mentions casual attire, it is important to realize that everyday casual is different from wedding casual. Jeans, shorts and tank tops and similar leisure wear are unacceptable unless otherwise noted. Err on the side of caution and go with business casual, which includes chinos, slacks, a polo shirt or button-down shirt for men. Women can wear a sundress or slacks or a skirt and an attractive blouse. If the invitation mentions beach casual, shorts, sandals and even flip-flops are likely acceptable.

Semiformal: Semiformal dress wear, sometimes referred to as "dressy casual," is a step up from casual clothing. Cocktail dresses or a more elegant skirt and top are the norms. Gentlemen generally wear a suit and tie. Guests should coordinate the colors of clothing to the time of day. Fabrics should represent the season. For example, a linen suit will not pass at a winter wedding nor would wool be appropriate for warm weather ceremonies.

Formal: Formal attire is the default dress code for the majority of weddings. When the invitation does not specify a dress code, it is safe to assume formal attire is expected. Men can choose among a dark suit and tie or a tuxedo. Women can opt for a formal cocktaillength dress, a classic suit or a long dress. Select among tones that are gray, black or brown.

Black tie: Black tie events also require formal attire. Black tie typically goes hand-in-hand with an evening wedding. Black tie is more rigid for male guests, who should wear a tuxedo, black bow tie, cummerbund, and patent leather shoes. Women have a little more leeway with their attire at such gatherings. A long evening gown might be preferable. However, a chic cocktail dress also can be acceptable, and darker, neutral colors are most appropriate. Some invitations may reference "Black Tie Preferred." While men may opt for a tuxedo, a black suit also can be worn.

White Tie: The most formal of occasions will request white tie attire. Ball gowns and tuxedoes with tails are the norm, as are dramatic jewelry and hairstyles. White tie attire is akin to what one might see worn to awards shows.

When attending a wedding, it is always better to be overdressed than underdressed. Guests can consult with fellow guests or the bride and groom if they are unsure of the dress code.



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Weddings offer a variety of roles for the father of the bride

Popular movies and televisions shows give the impression that the job of the father of the bride in a wedding is all about making sure the festivities are adequately funded. In the movies, fathers fret about the costs of everything from flowers to photos.

But gone are the days when the father of the bride bankrolls his daughter's entire wedding. The Knot's "2014 Real Wedding Survey" reported that, on average, the bride's parents contribute 43 percent of the total cost of a wedding; the bride and groom contribute another 43 percent; the groom's parents spend 12 percent; the remaining 2 percent of the budget is paid

for by family members or friends. That frees up Dad for other roles in wedding planning. With some creativity, couples can find ways to incorporate the father of the bride into the festivities in more productive ways.

- Wedding sites: Assign Dad the important task of looking at potential wedding reception sites before visiting them yourself. He may have connections through work or attended events at catering halls and other venues. Dad's connections can pay off. Let him use his negotiating skills to find the best deals with the ideal backdrop for the festivities.
 - Wardrobe: Let your father assist the

best man and groomsmen in securing their tuxedos or other wardrobe essentials. Dad also can return rented items following the wedding.

- Beverages: Dad may be want to keep tabs on the bar during the reception, ensuring that guests' needs are met. He also can keep an eye on anyone who needs to take a break.
- Speech: Give your father the chance to shine by letting him make a speech. Remember, this is a momentous day for Dad as well, as he may be trying to come to terms with his daughter starting a new life.
- Father-daughter song: Let Dad pick the father-daughter song and go with his choice even if you had something else in mind.
- *Ceremony:* Even if you prefer a less traditional wedding ceremony, let your father walk you down the aisle. It will be a moment he'll remember for years to come.

Expand the father of the bride's role by assigning him tasks where he can put his experience and excitement to good use.

Wedding trivia

According to The Knot 2015 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding cost, excluding honeymoon costs, in the United States in 2015 was \$32,641, an increase of more than \$1,400 from the year prior. Couples did not figure to fare much better in Canada when tying the knot in 2015. According to the Annual Reader Survey from the Canada-based online wedding resource Weddingbells, couples expected to pay slightly less than \$31,000 for their weddings. But those estimates included honeymoon costs. While no information is available regarding the cost of weddings in specific Canadian cities, the 2015 Real Weddings Study found that couples looking to tie the knot in New York City's Manhattan borough can expect to pay well above the national average. Manhattan weddings cost couples an average of \$82,299 in 2015. That's over \$20,000 more than in Chicago, the next most expensive city in 2015. Couples who want a more affordable place to get married may want to look into saying "I do" in central Illinois, where the average wedding cost was \$21,818, more than \$10,000 below the national average.



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How to manage a wedding with a non-traditional family

Families come in all shapes and sizes. During special events - particularly those steeped in tradition, such as weddings - blended families may have to employ certain tactics to ensure the events go off without a hitch.

When planning their weddings, couples must give consideration to the ceremony and celebration.

needs of their families. Even though a wedding is about the union of two people, oftentimes couples engaged to be married must contend with the politics of divorce or other familial issues. This includes if and how to incorporate stepparents and stepsiblings into the

There are no traditional rules regarding how to handle blended families, so brides- and grooms-to-be can customize their decisions based on their own unique situations. Even when families - see PLANNING on 15 -





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Wedding tips for a special mother/son dance

Weddings celebrate the unions of couples ready to pledge their lives to each other. In theory, the wedding day spotlight should be shared equally by brides and grooms. But brides often eclipse their grooms, as guests are drawn to stunning bridal gowns.

Though grooms might play second fiddle for much of their wedding days, there is one moment when all eyes are on the groom. The mother/son dance is a wedding tradition that many grooms embrace as the chance to show their mothers how much they love and appreciate them. The dance is an ideal time to create a special moment, and the following are some tips to personalize the dance.

- Precede the bride and her father. Make your own tradition and switch up the timing of the dances. Be the first to take a spin on the dance floor and set the tone for the other traditional songs to come
- Create a photo montage. Work with an entertainment company or photographer to create a slideshow of images showing you and your mother together and separately. If possible, include some

photos that were shot during the wedding ceremony, asking the photographer to capture the look on your mother's face during pivotal moments of the ceremony.

- Show off your dance skills. One increasingly popular wedding trend is for fathers and brides to choreograph the father/daughter dances. Grooms and their mothers can follow suit, particularly if you both have some stellar dance moves.
- Let Mom choose the song. Give your mother the opportunity to express her sentiments to you, as mothers of the groom do not typically toast their sons during weddings or even rehearsal dinners.
- Invite other son/mother duos up. If the idea of dancing alone with your mother is a bit intimidating, give other mothers in attendance an opportunity to share the spotlight. Celebrate all mothers in attendance, encouraging any mothers and sons who are present to dance together.

Grooms may not garner the bulk of guests' attention on their wedding days. But they can take steps to make their special dances with their mothers more memorable and unique.

Lodging tips for out-of-town guests

Couples about to tie the knot often arrange for discounted hotel rooms for their wedding guests. Many hotels offer substantial discounts to wedding parties, but some guests and bridal party members might still want to examine their options before booking rooms. The following tips can help guests find the right room so they can enjoy their loved ones' wedding weekends to the fullest.

- Don't overlook the wedding hotel. Many couples put a lot of thought into the hotel where their guests will be staying. Couples may have already done the legwork with regard to finding a hotel that's closest to the wedding ceremony and receptions sites and still within arm's-length of other attractions guests can enjoy while in town. Give ample consideration to the hotel or hotels affiliated with the wedding prior to beginning your search, even if the hotel is a chain you have never used before or have not liked in the past.
- Prioritize proximity. It's important to consider factors aside from cost when searching for a place to stay for a loved one's wedding. The most affordable option

is not always the most ideal. Proximity to the ceremony and reception venues should be a priority, as guests won't save much money, if any, if their hotel is so far away from the weekend's activities that they must rent cars or take taxis all weekend.

- Share rooms to reduce costs. If the wedding rates are unaffordable, float the idea of sharing rooms with fellow guests. Splitting the cost of a double room instead of booking a single room by yourself can save substantial amounts of money. And staying in the hotel with many of the other guests will make you feel like you are not missing out on anything during your stay.
- Look for lower rates in the wedding hotel. Room rates are locked in once couples choose a particular hotel or hotels, but guests might be able to find more affordable rates at the same hotel by

waiting to book and perusing discount hotel websites and apps.



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There are so many details that go into making your day the ultimate experience, so we've comprised everything into one place to keep the excitement of planning stress free.

PLANNING

- continued from page 13 -

have been happy through the years, the unique circumstances and traditions surrounding the nuptials can dredge up former insecurities, and certain aspects may require extra patience and tact. Here's how to navigate the process.

- Consider stepparents and stepsiblings VIPs. Brides and grooms who are not particularly close to their stepfamilies still have to recognize the role they play in the family dynamics. These people are still family, so respect and courtesy should be offered. If there is any lingering animosity, extend the olive branch on this day and try not to let anyone be made to feel as if they are unimportant. A simple announcement of who stepparents are at the wedding reception or inclusion of their names on wedding itineraries can help smooth over any potential bumps.
- Put others' needs before your own. While the wedding may be about you and your future spouse, you must consider the feelings of others. Biological parents and stepparents may act defensively if they feel uncomfortable or hurt, and that can create an air of negativity to the day. Try to avoid this by considering potential areas of conflict. For example, mothers might be hurt if their ex-husbands' new girlfriends are asked to be in a group family photo. Instead, select separate times to have

everyone included. Remember to give parents and stepparents priority seating as well, and they each should be seated next to someone they love and someone with whom they can converse comfortably. You may think everyone can play nice, but it's best not to push the issue just to make a point at the wedding.

- Recognize that some families break the mold. Recently, a father made waves on the Internet when a video of him pulling the bride's stepfather up to assist in walking her down the aisle went viral. This was a wonderful image of families making it work despite their differences or the awkwardness that can result when brides or grooms have parents and stepparents in attendance. Although this scenario might not play out for all, find ways to impart a special touch, especially if you're close to both your biological parents and your stepparents. For example, your biological father may walk you down the aisle, while your stepfather may enjoy the first dance.
- Order flowers and gifts for all. Purchase flowers and wedding party gifts for all of the special people in your lives, including your stepfamily.

Weddings can be complicated affairs when factoring in blended families. With patience and compassion, such families can enjoy a beautiful and happy day.

Make your proposal special and successful

A marriage proposals is a couple's first official step toward the altar. Tradition dictates that men pop the question, with their surprised - and hopefully soon-to-be-fiancées - ultimately deciding if wedding bells will be on the horizon.

Proposing marriage can be nervewracking. However, if the time seems right and love is in the air, popping the question can be exciting. Regardless of who is proposing marriage, the following strategies can help make proposals memorable and successful.

Turn the tides

An old Irish tradition known as "The Lady's Privilege" was established in the fifth century by a nun named St. Brigid. She decided to create an opportunity for women to propose marriage. This day fell on every leap year, February 29. Centuries later, women can still use this tradition as the impetus to take the marriage reigns into their own hands. Now, many women view proposing as an empowering action that is tied to the evolving view of independent women.

Choose a sentimental location

Couples will remember the proposal for the rest of their lives. So choose a

proposal location that has sentimental connections. Think about where the first "I love you" was uttered or where a first date occurred.

Note her style

Engagement rings play a big role in many couples' proposals. One person's style is not necessarily what his partner will like. Bigger isn't always better. Rather, choose a ring that reflects your partner's preferences and personality. Take your partner jewelry shopping and see which types of jewelry he or she is most drawn to.

Ask for the family's blessing

Men no longer need to ask their girlfriends' fathers for "permission" to wed their daughters. However, asking your partner's family for their blessing is a sign of respect and can add a romantic and heartfelt touch to the proposal.

Capture the moment

Though we live in an age when every moment of people's lives is documented with videos and photographs posted to social media, proposals still stand out as extra special moments. Hire a professional photographer to discreetly capture the proposal and your partner's reaction so it can be cherished for years to come.

Prevent wedding day foot pain

While some couples may get cold feet on their wedding days, there's no reason for anyone, including brides who don high heels in the name of fashion, to endure foot pain.

Foot pain is a common complaint for those unaccustomed to wearing stilettos or formal footwear. Wedding attire is not worn every day, so it's no surprise that wedding footwear may contribute to some aches and pains.

Podiatrists warn that heels between one and two inches in height are the best to maintain foot health. But that heal size does not work for all brides. Brides-to-be, bridesmaids and others can employ these tips to keep their feet pain-free throughout the ceremony and reception.

- Give your feet a break. Swap out a higher heel with a lower one every couple of hours. Do not wait until you start feeling pain to switch to a lower heel or more comfortable shoe.
- Choose shoes that fit and leave a little room. Standing and dancing can cause feet to swell, sometimes as much

- as one half-size larger. Make sure the shoes you plan to wear to the wedding afford potentially swollen feet a little breathing room.
- Slip in a pair of insoles. Stores carry a variety of insoles that can add cushioning, distribute weight and prevent rubbing or chafing of the feet.
- Break in the shoes. It's not a good idea to wear a brand new pair of shoes when you know you'll be on your feet most of the day. Instead, purchase wedding shoes several weeks in advance of the event. Wear them around the house with a pair of socks to stretch out straps and enable them to mold to your foot shape. Wearing them in advance also helps identify spots that rub or are likely to cause blisters.
- Consider wearing stockings. It's now less of a fashion faux pas to attend formal events with bare legs thank it once was, but it may be in your best interest to wear a pair of stockings to a wedding. The thin material will help alleviate rubbing and hot spots from skin-on-shoe direct contact.



OBITUARIES

Swiontek, Alexander M., Jr.



On Dec. 26, Alexander, beloved son of the late Alexander and Theresa Swiontek; dear brother of the late Richard Swiontek; dear friend of Tom Kalinowski. Alex was a devoted member of the Sacred Heart of Mary Church where he

was active in the Holy Name and Ushers Society and the Health Care Ministry. He was a past Grand Knight of the Christopher Columbus Assembly #2272.

Memorial contributions may be made in his name to Sacred Heart of Mary at 6736 Youngstown Avenue in Dundalk.



Scurto, Melvin W., Sr.

Melvin W. Scurto, Sr., 76, peacefully passed away on Jan. 4. Memorial services will be held from 1 - 5 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 21, at Middle River Volunteer Fire Company located at 2000 Leland Avenue in

Middle River.

He was born to Carmelo and Thelma Scurto. He is survived by his sisters Diane Hogan and Jeanette Grace; children Kathleen Harris, Dawn Presnell, Theresa Snyder, Nancy Dorbert and his son Melvin Scurto, Jr. Also survived by his nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, as well as a sister-in-law, brother-in-law and many nieces and nephews.

Pociluyko, Nicholas

On Jan. 12, Nicholas D. Pociluyko Jr. (70 yrs.), beloved husband of Elaine Pociluyko; devoted father of James Pociluyko and his wife Melisa and Janine Field and her husband Brian; loving grandfather of Evelyn, Alex, Owen and Annalise Pociluyko, and Elliot, Willa Anne and Emilia Nicole Field; dear brother of Peter Pociluyko and his wife Shirley and Diane Sender and her husband Eric; he is also survived by many other loving family and friends.

Services provided by Schimunek Funeral Home of Nottingham. Interment at St. Joseph (Fullerton) Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the National Parkinson's Foundation or The Salvation Army.

Bannasch, Lorraine

On Jan. 10, Lorraine Marie Bannasch (nee Liberto) passed away. She was the beloved wife of the late Carl David Bannasch, Sr.; devoted mother of Carl David Bannasch, Jr. and his wife Kristine, and Eric Brian Bannasch and his wife Irina; loving grandmother of Joshua, Matthew, Aaron and Samantha Bannasch; dear sister of Anthony Liberto and Frances Schwartz.

Services provided by Schimunek Funeral Home of Nottingham. Interment at Holly Hill Memorial Gardens.

Nortman, Ernest

On Jan. 10, Ernest L. Nortman Jr.; beloved husband of Anna M. Nortman (nee Ford); devoted father of Kurt E. Nortman and wife Dee and Scott D. Nortman and his fiancee Christina M. Crujeiras; loving grandfather of Justin Griffith and loving brother of Nancy Cairns.

Services provided by the Connelly Funeral Home of Essex. Interment private.

Roberts, Donald M.

On Jan. 12, Donald M. Roberts, beloved husband of Anna M. Roberts; devoted father of Diane and Chuck Vipperman and Vickie and Tom Prete; loving grandfather of Jeff and Kim Vipperman, Tommy and Terri Prete, Deena and Jay Morris, Lee Ann, Janice, Patty and the late Mark Vipperman; great-grandfather of Elizabeth Vipperman, Matthew Vipperman, Ryan Vipperman, Nicholas Vipperman, Josh Vipperman, Tessanna-Bella Prete, Jayden Morris, Isabella Morris, Lauren, Stephen, Omar, Lacey and Dresden. Great-great-grandfather of Elianna and Alexandria. He is also blessed with many nieces and nephews. Donald is a World War II veteran and a member of Jepthah Lodge #222 Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

Services provided by Bruzdzinski Funeral Home.

Collins, Donna Lee

On Jan. 12, Donna Lee Collins (nee Bach), beloved wife of William Perry Collins; loving daughter of Francis Joseph Bach, Sr. and Shirley Ann Bach (nee Weitzel); cherished mother of Jason Collins, Heather Collins and Brittany Collins; dear grandmother of Emma-Lee. Also survived by Jo Ann Stockman, Karen Hidy and Joseph Bach, Jr.

Lichty, Max C.

Max C. Lichty, age 79, of Middle River, passed away on Jan. 15, at his home. Born in Mountain Lake Park, he was the son of Roy B. and Lola Mildred (Taylor) Lichty. He served our country in the National Guard and had worked as a machinist in the steel industry. An avid pilot since the 1950's, he was a member of the Essex Flying Club which was recently renamed in his honor to the "Max Lichty Essex Flying Club." He was a multi-engine instructor and glider instructor with over 10,000 flight hours and had perfectly restored a 1946 Aeronca-7AC Champ three times. He was an Elder at the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church and his life was serving his Lord.

Mr. Lichty is survived by his wife, Margaret L. Lichty; children Kathy (Michael F.) L. Peter, Sandra (late Thomas S.) K. Thrappas, and Donald (Dawn L.) D. Lichty; brother, Sonny Lichty; grandchildren, Robert (Jennifer), Laura (James), Katelyn (Joseph), Megan (James), Jacob, Michael, Jeffrey and Sarah; and great-grandchildren, Elizabella, Selah, Grayson and Penelope. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by sister, Helen Ruth Shaffer.

A graveside service will be held at Holly Hill Memorial Gardens on Monday, Jan. 23, at 10 a.m., followed by a Memorial Service at noon at the Bel Air Church of the Nazarene in Bel Air, with Rev. James Connolly officiating. Condolences may be left on the guestbook at mccomasfuneralhome.com.

Taylor, Carolyn Ida

On Jan. 8, Carolyn Ida Taylor (nee Zahradka), beloved wife of Arlie R. Taylor; loving mother of Alice Granruth and her husband Randy, Joe Taylor and the late Darrell Taylor; cherished grandmother of Steven Regino; dear sister of Sharon Garey and Elizabeth Friend. Also survived by a host of loving family and friends.

Services provided by Bruzdzinski Funeral Home. Interment at Holly Hill Memorial Gardens.

Hirsch, Lorraine Gertrude

Beloved wife of the late Jacob "BUD" Hirsch, devoted mother of Richard "RW" Hirsch and his wife Bette, Margaret Wrightson and her husband Joel, Thomas Hirsch and his wife Debra and the late Joann Hirsch; loving grandmother of Jessica, Alex, Christina and Dawn. Also survived by her great-grandchildren. Lorraine is preceded in death by her eight siblings.

A private cremation was held. A memorial mass is to be held in the near future. Services provided by Bruzdzinski Funeral Home.

FRANCIS JOSEPH PAWLAK, JR. 12/24/1942 - 1/9/2017

Francis Joseph Pawlak, Jr. was a dedicated husband, father, grandfather, son, brother and friend to many people. He was married to Sandra K. Pawlak



for 55 years, and fathered four children - Veronica, Sandra, Francis and Noelle. Our father loved everyone he came in contact with and they all loved him. He had no enemies in this world. Our family never wanted for anything. He made sure of that by working endlessly to provide for us. If our father touched anyone in this life, you were very lucky. He was devoted to his church, Essex United Methodist Church, throughout his life. Our father was also dedicated to his family of Boy Scout Troop 745. He loved his boys as he loved his family. For our father was the best man I have ever known. Rest well, our angel.



911

Parkville High School SRO receives award

Officer Buie, the School Resource Officer for Parkville High School, has been given a Commanders Award by Parkville Precinct Commander Captain Steve Troutman. The reward is in recognition for his work with students at the school and his efforts to reach out to students who primarily spoke other languages.

"Officer Buie truly cares about each and every child that attends Parkville High School," said Troutman. "He has expressed, on many occasions, that he believes in every child, and that not one is to be considered a lost cause. He is such a positive mentor and we are honored to have him as part of the Special Operations Unit for Precinct Eight."

Back in October of last year, Buie worked tirelessly to figure out ways to reach students from different cultural backgrounds whose primary language is not English. He contacted officers from around the Baltimore County Police Department who were from different countries and spoke Spanish, and many of those officers were willing to help Buie.

With the help of school administration and police officials, a Multicultural Assembly was held where those Spanish speaking officers met with groups of students. The focus of the meetings was to discuss career advancement, the value of a good education, law enforcement, family values and success. Students were given an opportunity to ask questions and engage in a meaningful conversation.

Officer Carlos Selvi, the Cultural Liaison Officer for the Baltimore County Police Department attended the event and spoke about making the right choices. He said the police in some of the countries these kids come from are very corrupt and "we need to show these kids we are not the bad guys".

Current crime trends

On Jan. 6, just before 6 p.m., County Police responded to a parking lot of an apartment complex in the 7700-block of Hillendale Road in Parkville for a shooting. Police arrived and located a 21-year-old man suffering from a single gunshot wound to the mid-body. The man was transported to a local hospital where he is expected to survive his injuries. Police have no additional details to release at this time.

Since Dec. 27, there have been four street robberies in the area of Southeast Boulevard and Middleborough Road within the Essex Precinct. Two cases occurred on the same street. Cases occurred on various days and primarily between 7 and 8 p.m. One case occurred in the late morning. In two cases, the suspects displayed a weapon and took property. In two cases, force was used to take property. In one case, a weapon was implied, but the victim drove away before the robbery occurred.

Since Dec. 15, there have been five burglaries and one attempt in the Deerborn and Ridge Meadows apartment and townhome communities adjacent to Rossville Boulevard in the White Marsh Precinct. Cases occurred between Thursdays and Mondays, generally during the afternoon and evening hours. Jewelry was the most frequently targeted property.

Attorney, G. Randolph Rice, Jr.

(Former Assistant State's Attorney)

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Police investigate non-fatal shooting in Parkville

On January 6, just before 6 p.m., County Police responded to a parking lot of an apartment complex in the 7700-block of Hillendale Road in Parkville for a shooting. Police arrived and located a 21-year-old man suffering from a single gunshot wound to the mid-body. The man was transported to a local hospital where he is expected to survive his injuries. Police have no additional details to release at this time.

Anyone with information on this crime or these suspects is asked to contact police at 410-307-2020. Anyone with information on this case can also submit a tip to Metro Crime Stoppers at 1-866-7LOCKUP. Metro Crime Stoppers offers rewards for information in connection with felony offenses. Anonymous tips can be sent to Metro Crime Stoppers by phone, text message or online.

Police investigate fatal pedestrian involved crash

The Baltimore County Police Crash Team is investigating a Wednesday afternoon crash that left a pedestrian deceased.

The preliminary crash investigation has indicated that around 1:37 p.m. on Jan. 4, a tractor trailer was traveling east-bound on Pulaski Highway just east of Holly Drive when it struck a man in his 50s who was in the roadway. The man was transported to Franklin Square Hospital where he died. The tractor trailer remained at the scene.

The man was not in a crosswalk. His name will be released after notification of next of kin.

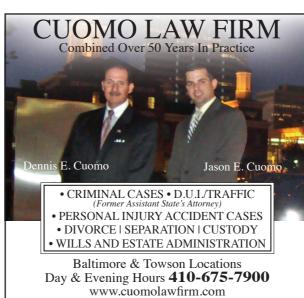
East-bound Pulaski Highway is shut down at Holly Drive while police investigate.

The Crash Team investigation is expected to take several weeks.

Cash, laptops and a dog were also taken.

Since Dec. 4, there have been three auto thefts in the Maple Crest Townhomes community in the Essex Precinct. One vehicle was stolen overnight. The other two were stolen at unknown times. Keys were used in all cases. In two cases, a house was burglarized and keys and wallets and or purses were taken.





Johnson to retire as police chief at end of the month

- By Patrick Taylor -

County Executive Kevin Kamenetz announced last week that Baltimore County Police Chief Jim Johnson will be retiring from his position at the end of the month. Former county chief Terrance B. Sheridan will be serving as Acting Chief starting on Feb. 1.

"Jim Johnson served this County faithfully and honorably for 38 years, and we are grateful for his service," said Kamenetz. "However, at this time we choose to go in a different direction, and I wish Chief Johnson well."

The announcement surprised members of the Baltimore County Council.

"I was shocked and surprised," said Councilwoman Cathy Bevins. "He's been nationally acclaimed. I don't know many people that could say anything bad about Jim Johnson."

Councilwoman Vicki Almond echoed those sentiments and added that the council had a "great relationship with Johnson" because he was "always willing to listen."

Johnson, 58, has been in charge since 2007. During that time violent crime has dropped 28 percent. Johnson was also recognized by President Barack Obama as a "Gun Violence Prevention Champion of Change" and pushed for body-cameras for Baltimore County officers.

Over 38 years in the department, Johnson held every sworn rank. He started his career in the 911 Center as a cadet before moving out to the Essex precinct. He is only the second person in the history of the department to rise from cadet to chief.

Sheridan, 73, ran the police department from 1996 - 2007. From 2007 to 2011 he served as superintendent of the Maryland State Police (MSP). Since then he's been working as an advisor for the Department of Homeland Security. Sheridan will need to be confirmed by the County Council, but Bevins doesn't think that'll be a problem.

"He's certainly qualified to run the department - he was actually in charge when I began working under Jim Smith," said Bevins. "I don't want to speak for the entire council but I can't see anyone having a problem with him."





Klausmeier urges DHMH, Hogan Administration to seek federal funds to fight heroin and opioid crisis

- By Senator Kathy Klausmeier (D-8) -

Senator Kathy Klausmeier (D-Perry Hall) has written the Secretary of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Dennis R. Schrader, asking the Department and the Hogan Administration to seek available federal funds to fight heroin and

The federal funding is now available with the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act. The Act provides \$1 billion in funds for drug treatment. According to Kana Enomoto, Deputy Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Maryland would be eligible for \$10 million of those funds. Senator Klausmeier has asked that DHMH and the administration seek all of the \$10 million available from the federal government.

"It is extremely important that this funding come to Maryland", said Klausmeier. "We've done great work over the past few years to combat the heroin and opioid crisis, and this funding will allow us to address the problem in a much more stronger role."

In her letter, Senator Klausmeier talks about recent achievements that the General Assembly has accomplished in regards to the crisis, including increasing the availability of Naloxone and expanding the State's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP).

"I have diligently worked with the Governor and my colleagues in the General Assembly on this very important issue. As the Senator on the Governor's Heroin and Opioid Emergency Task Force and the Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Behavioral Health and Opioid Use Disorders, we have made much progress in our battle against addiction. Much of the progress was possible with the increase of funding levels. By seeking the \$10 million available to us, we can fight this growing epidemic and save lives each and every day."

Senator Klausmeier can be reached at: Phone: 410-841-3620, 301-858-3620 or 1-800-492-7122 x3620 (toll free)

E-mail: katherine.klausmeier@senate.state.md.us

Happy New Year from the Councilwoman

- By Councilwoman Cathy Bevins (D-6) -

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful and safe holiday season. It is hard to believe that another year has passed. I am proud of what the County Council accomplished in 2016 and I look forward to continuing that success into 2017.

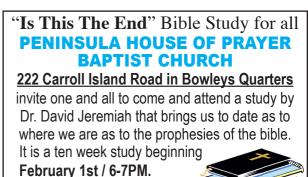
As always, my focus will be on providing excellent constituent services and ensuring that county government is responsive to the needs of the Sixth District. I will also work with my colleagues on the Council to make sure your tax dollars are protected and put to good use, that there is fiscal discipline and oversight, and that county government is accountable. I am also looking forward to working with our state delegates and senators as they begin a new legislative session in Annapolis.

I am truly excited to work with you over the next year as we strive to make the Sixth District the best place to live and work in Baltimore County!

Councilwoman Bevins can be reached at: District Office Phone: 410-887-5223 E-mail: council6@baltimorecountymd.gov







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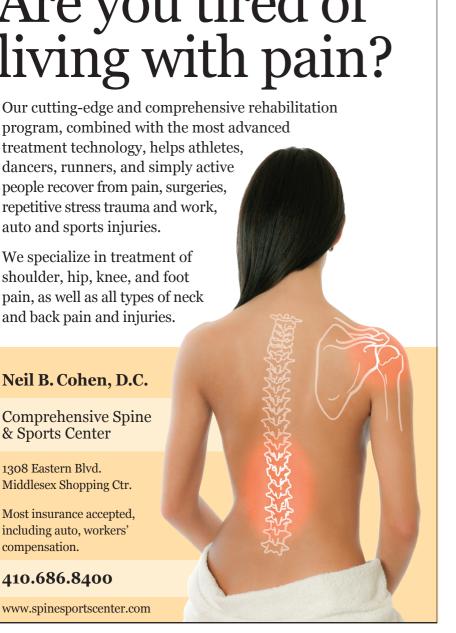
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Teddy's 10 Most Anticipated Films Of 2017

- By Teddy Durgin -

My "10 Most Anticipated Movies" is one of my favorite columns to write. But I totally acknowledge that it's a rather silly one. Most of the truly great flicks of each year aren't even thought of in January. If you look at my recent 10 Best Movies of 2016 list, for instance, I wasn't even aware of four of my top five at this time last year ("Hell or High Water," "La La Land," "20th Century Women" and "Hacksaw Ridge"). I knew about the "Pete's Dragon" remake, but had no idea it would be that well-made. And nobody had heard of "Moonlight."

Regardless, at this point in time, I think there is a lot to look forward to over the next 12 months, cinema-wise. Here we go (dates are subject to change):

1) "Star Wars: Episode VIII" - Of course this is my most anticipated movie of 2016. And in other news, water is wet (Dec. 15).

2) "Blade Runner 2049"

- I'm in the minority among sci-fi fans in that I have always believed a sequel actually could TOP the original. To paraphrase

Roy Batty,

I've seen No. 2 films you people wouldn't believe! "Blade Runner" wasn't so great that a follow-up couldn't be every bit as compelling and franchise-expanding as such second movies as "The Empire Strikes Back," "Aliens," "Lethal Weapon 2," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day," etc. (Oct. 6).

3) "Dunkirk" - The trailer for this epic World War II film from director Christopher Nolan had my pulse racing. And the more I read about it and the more footage I see, the more I'm convinced this has the chance to be something special (July 21).

4) "The Circle" - I'm intrigued by this one mainly because Tom Hanks gets to play a villain (an Internet billionaire with no regard for personal privacy). And I totally think he can do it! After all, the most formidable bad guys are often the ones who are the most likable (Hans Gruber, Rene Belloq, etc.) (April 28).

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"The Circle" and is top-lining here as Disney's iconic Belle in a live-action version of the 1991 animated classic. From the trailers, it sounds like she's cast quite the singing spell, too (March 17).

6) "The Greatest Showman on Earth" - Hugh Jackman as P.T. Barnum? Step right up (Dec. 25)!

7) "Murder on the Orient Express" - The pedigree of this remake is phenomenal. It's based on the classic Agatha Christie novel, Kenneth Brannagh is directing, Johnny Depp is starring as Hercule Poirot and the supporting cast includes everyone from Daisy Ridley to Judi Dench to Josh Gad. All aboard (Nov. 22)!

8) "Downsizing" - Anytime Alexander Payne writes

See our menu at www.dockofthebay.net

and directs a new movie, it's an event for me. "Election" is one of my favorite films of all-time, and I greatly admired his other works like "About Schmidt," "Sideways" and "The Descendants." Here, Matt Damon plays a man who's literally been shrunk down to thumb size to live in a community built by other people who've had the same procedure. It sounds like Charlie Kaufman Land, but I'll definitely be visiting (Dec. 22).

> 9) "Baywatch" - Would I rather have a bigscreen adaptation of "Downton Abbey" or this one? Uh... ahem... THIS ONE (May 26)!

10) "American Made" - Tom Cruise starring in a 1980s-era crime thriller. How could the author of "The Totally Gnarly, Way Bogus Murder of Muffy McGregor" NOT be intrigued?! (Sept. 29)

Ten more that have potential (in no particular order): "Life," "Kong: Skull Island," "Wonder Woman," "Justice League," "The LEGO Batman Movie," "The Beguiled,"
"The Mummy," "The Dark Tower," "Darkest Hour" and "Free Fire."

And, finally, Sequels Galore: Between now and Dec. 31 - deep breath - the world's cineplexes will see "Cars 3," "Despicable Me 3," "Pitch Perfect 3," "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2," "John Wick: Chapter 2," "Paddington 2," "Trainspotting 2," "Thor: Ragnarok," "Spider-Man: Homecoming," "Alien: Covenant," "The Fate of the Furious," "The War for the Planet of the Apes," "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales," "Transformers: The Last Knight," "Fifty Shades Darker" and "Logan" (the third "Wolverine" standalone movie).





■ ENTERTAINMENT

Wave 'Bye-Bye' to this would-be Boogeyman

- By Teddy Durgin -

"The Bye Bye Man" is one of those preposterous, self-serious, cheapie horror flicks that Hollywood routinely dumps in the first couple of months each year. The problem is, this one isn't fun, well-made or even remotely scary. It actually should have been called "The Uh Oh Man." Because something happens every couple of minutes or so that is supposed to make the audience go "Uh oh!"

Like... Uh oh! Look at those three dummy college kids. They actually thought it was a good idea to lease a really creepy off-campus house. Or... uh oh! There's obviously a pissed-off, evil entity lurking inside the house's crawl spaces and floor boards. Uh oh! The lead male character's angelic, little 8-year-old niece has gone wandering in the house by herself while the grown-ups are occupied downstairs. And then... uh oh! The lead female character's best friend is a creepy psychic girl who wants to hold a séance. And then... uh oh! I'm Carrie-Anne Moss. I used to be in movies like "The Matrix" and "Memento." And now I'm in this dreck. Uh oh! I'm Carrie-Anne's agent. She just fired me.

The list goes on.

OK, so here's the deal. Tired of living on campus, three college kids (Douglas Smith, Cressida Bonas and the very vampire sounding Lucien Laviscount) do indeed move into a run-down house near their Wisconsin college and agree to split the rent. The Bye

Bye Man shows up and basically agrees to split all their heads. Like "Candyman" and "Beetlejuice" before him, he can only appear if you say or think his name. When he does, he wants to get inside your mind, make you see and hear things that aren't there and then have you commit horrific acts of murder before killing yourself.

These are modest goals as far as big screen boogeymen go. But they don't make a lick of sense. First of all, there is no context given to The Bye Bye Man. There's no history or back story. In other films of this nature, we know what made Freddy and Jason and Michael Meyers and the Candyman and Pinhead and Chucky and so on. The Bye Bye Man just... is. The movie has no interest in how he came to be. It's very lazy in that regard. In fact, I would argue that the true villain is the jerkweed who rented the kids the house.

And then The Bye Bye Man's main objective is kind of stupid. He can only wreak havoc if people think or say his name. But let's say you have thought it or said it. If he then seeks to kill you and anyone else who you have uttered his name to... er, wouldn't that eventually make him... oh, I don't know... extinct?! The film takes place in the present day, and it makes it very clear that the last time The Bye Bye Man was a factor in this world was... 1969! In the years since, The Bye Bye Man has (I guess) been biding his time. He thinks he can scare us with his mind games. Little does he know, he can't scare us. WE LIVED THROUGH 2016!



Ahem

The film is just a half-baked concept. And director Stacy Title and screenwriter Jonathan Penner swear if they have characters repeat over and over again "Don't say it! Don't think it!" it will become iconic in the horror movie world a la "One, two, Freddy's coming for you." It won't. It just gives film reviewers like me a way to end their reviews cleverly. I'm sure, more than a few have written "Don't say it! Don't think it! Don't see it!" I'd just rather wave this flick "Bye-bye."

"The Bye Bye Man" is rated PG-13 for terror, horror violence, bloody images, sexual content, partial nudity, some language, thematic elements and teen drinking.



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SPOTLIGHT

Scouts with Santa



The members of Cub Scout and Boy Scout Troop 745 held a joint Christmas party Dec. 19. The boys enjoyed snacks, activities and a visit from Santa Claus. Both troops meet each Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Essex United Methodist Church. For more information, call Beth Scism (Cub Scouts), 443-386-0654, or Jeff Bandoch (Boy Scouts), 410-375-0908.

Benefit Quarter Auction

A Quarter Queens quarter auction to benefit Animal Allies Rescue Foundation will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21, at St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1803 Dundalk Ave. in Dundalk. Doors open at 6 p.m. Admission, which includes two paddles, is \$5.

Bible Study

Peninsula House of Prayer Baptist Church, 222 Carroll Island Road in Bowleys Quarters, will hold a 10-week Bible study titled "Is This The End?" beginning Feb. 1 Classes will meet from 6 to 7 p.m. Dr. David Jeremiah will lead the study.

Used Book Sale

Victory Villa Baptist Church, 75 Chandelle Road in Middle River, will hold a used book sale in the church hall from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21, and from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 22.

Zion UCC Bingo

Zion United Church of Christ, 7146 Golden Ring Road in Essex, will hold a cash bingo at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21. The event will be held in the church school building's lower hall. Doors will open at noon.

Alaskan Cruise

Alaskan 10-day land and sea cruise in July 2017. Call Anthony at 443-801-5678 for more information.

Piney Grove Flea Market

Piney Grove United Methodist Church, 210 Bowleys Quarters Road, will hold its annual indoor Friendship Circle flea market from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 21. Food and baked goods will be sold. The Friendship Circle holds luncheons at the church for the residents of three assisted living centers. Flea market proceeds help fund that program.

Karaoke

Dundalk American Legion Post 38, 3300 Dundalk Ave. in Dundalk, will host Fun Times Karaoke with Annette and Wild Bill from 8 p.m. to midnight Jan. 21 and 22. Info: 410--288-2297.



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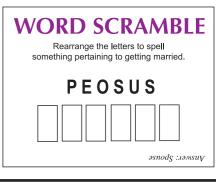
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