

EDITORIALS

Great golf

Bulle Rock Golf Course in Havre de Grace and all of Harford County have yet another wonderful opportunity to host the McDonald's LPGA Championship presented by Coca Cola, a major women's professional golf tournament, which returns for its fourth year.

This week, and especially from Thursday morning through Sunday afternoon, our area will be in an international spotlight and remember that word "international," because the women's pro tour is a major international sporting interest, as much as, if not more so, than the men's tour.

A number of great events are planned this year in conjunction with the golf tournament itself, which has raised millions of dollars for Ronald McDonald House Charities. A local event, The Taste of Harford County, is also being held in Havre de Grace this year as a fund-raiser to benefit both Ronald McDonald House Charities and many worthy local organizations.

There's going to be plenty to see and do, not to mention having the best women golfers in the world right in our midst. What could be better for us or for our visitors? Let's be great hosts and happy to meet all our guests this week. And here's hoping the McDonald's LPGA will return for many, many more years beyond next year's initial five-year commitment. It's a wonderful event, one we all should be proud to be a part of and proud to host every June.

Beating the bite

All the rain that's fallen on Harford County this spring means we can count on plenty of mosquitos in the coming weeks.

The pests breed in the stagnant water that accumulates in just about anything that can hold a few ounces. More than just irritating, mosquitos are notorious disease carriers, so having an abundance of the little blood suckers is more than just an inconvenience.

Town leaders in Bel Air are considering a program to deal with the potential problem by spraying to prevent the bugs from proliferating.

This is a good idea, so long as officials pay attention to potential negative consequences.

On Page AA2 of this newspaper is the regular 50 Years Ago column, which makes note of an "all out war" on the pests declared locally in 1958. The chemical of choice to deal with bugs was the notorious DDT, which was effective at killing bugs, but also took out plenty of other creatures.

Certainly spraying for mosquitos is a good idea, so long as the cure isn't worse than the disease.

Look again

Can Harford County Public Schools survive without filling 56 positions it has on the books?

Thomas Fidler, president of the Harford County Board of Education, says he doesn't know.

The question comes up because the school system was granted an increased allocation from Harford County totaling \$11.3 million over and above what was allocated last year by the county. The school system requested an additional \$27.1 million more than it got last year from the county. The \$11.3 million additional allocated in the budget for the coming year brings the school system's operating budget to \$422.3 million. The increased allocation from the county, according to school system administrators, means the raise package that had been planned for school system employees isn't realistic. To make up \$3.3 million, school system officials say, they aren't filling 56 positions and to come up with money for the full raise package, a similar adjustment would have to be made.

Keep in mind that this is the same school system that has seen its staffing levels climb substantially over a span of years when enrollment hasn't increased. It appears too many of these positions have been in non-teaching (and in some cases redundant or non-necessary roles). Certainly, school administrators have been hit, like everyone else, with substantial price increases for energy, but the difference between the increase the school system received from the county and what it asked for amounts to roughly 4 percent of what it will spend in the year ahead.

We're inclined to agree with the sentiment expressed by Harford County Council President Billy Boniface: "The council felt the county executive allocated enough to accomplish the salary increases for employees." Enough said.

Getting hooked

Harford County is blessed with a variety of fishing opportunities.

Some of the best fishing in the world for rockfish, known elsewhere as striped bass, can be found in the upper Chesapeake Bay and lower Susquehanna River. Good to respectable fishing for largemouth bass, catfish and even trout can be found in these parts. In a story Friday on our Outdoors Page, reporter Rachel Seawell documented a few of the angling opportunities available. This is the time of year for it. The mornings and evenings are cool, and that's when the fish are biting. It's a great time of year to wet a line and maybe hook a fish or two.

Fish on!

Letters to the editor

As indicated by The Aegis, and as you may be reminded that brief ones are invariably better read. In any case, the limit for letters submitted for publication is 300 words. The deadline for letters intended for Wednesday's edition is noon Monday and Friday's edition noon Wednesday.

All letters must be signed. They must also include a full address and telephone number, although these will not be published. While the free expression of diverse views and ideas on the part of our correspondents is encouraged, light editing for grammar and spelling may be expected. Letters also may be submitted by e-mail to news@theaegis.com, but should include home address and daytime phone number. The Aegis, of course, reserves the right to reject any letter deemed unsuitable for publication.

John D. Worthington IV, Publisher
 Ted Hendricks, Executive Editor Jim Kennedy, Editorial Page Editor
 A Tribune Publishing Company

OPEN FORUM



In their words
 'My mom
 always said
 the sky is the
 limit.'

—LAUREN N. KROPP,
 ABERDEEN HIGH GRADUATE

Arc thanks

Editor:
 On May 14, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region recognized Direct Support Staff and community organizations at their annual Awards Dinner for their dedication to individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Arc would like to congratulate the nominees and the following award winners for their leadership in improving the quality of life for those with developmental disabilities and their families: The Harford County Executive Direct Support Staff Award - Nahshon Smith; Repeat Award - Angelo Herbert; Self-Determination Award - John Rosser; Community Building Award - Chassity Seymour; Responsiveness Award - Nicole Edwards; Inclusion Award - Laura Frisby; Personal Growth Award - Joe Brown; Success at Work Award - Sean Parks; Personal Achievement Award - Kim Ludemann; Outstanding Achievement Award - Education Partnership Initiative (EPI) Participants; Outstanding Service Award - Julie Morrison; and The Rob Dare Unsung Hero Award - Christine Walton.

For more than 50 years, The Arc has sent forth tiny ripples of hope together we have brought change in the form of opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and their families in an effort to enrich lives and fulfill dreams. We thank our dedicated staff and friends for being part of that process.

Patrick Neary
 Board President
 Tim Quinn
 Executive Director
 The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region

School days Ring Factory singers shine

Editor:
 The fourth and fifth grade Fox Festival Choir of Ring Factory Elementary School competed on May 17 in two competitions in Northern Virginia and took top honors at both. In the Kings Dominion Choral Festival, the Ring Factory Elementary group was the first ever to receive perfect scores from the judges and ended up with a superior rating from the festival judges.

At the Music in the Parks Festival at Deep Run High School north of Richmond, the choir won first place in the elementary category and overall grand champion against all other middle school and high school ensembles. The Outstanding Top Soloist Award went to Rachel Hall of Ring Factory Elementary with the Fox Festival Choir receiving the Esprit De Corp Award (discipline, spirit and music performance), again besting the older middle school and

high school students. These two wins were a continuation of seven years of first place finishes. The group has participated in the Music in the Parks Festival six previous times and every time they were declared the champion. In four of the earlier competitions they were judged against other elementary schools but in the last two years won against middle and high school groups.

Everyone in the Fox Festival Choir is to be congratulated for their long history of award winning performances and a special thanks to choir director Miss Bridgette Crawford, a nine-year veteran at Ring Factory Elementary School, for a directing job extremely well done.

Signe and Jack Shagena
 (grandparents of choir member
 Megan Woodring)
 Bel Air

Fond memories of Bel Air High

Editor:
 As Parents, my wife and I would like to thank Bel Air High School. My youngest son has graduated this year, his older brother in 2005. We will never forget the Back to School nights, Friday football games, soccer games, proms, lunch tickets, assigned parking, late notes, report cards,

teachers, principles, staff, coaches and broadcast telephone calls. We will miss all of this and more. But life goes on. It's a new beginning for them and us. For myself and my wife, we will always remember Bel Air High School.

George and Robyn Meredith
 Bel Air

Harford Humane Society

Pet project help

Editor:
 The Humane Society of Harford County held its fourth annual Bow Wow Boogie fundraiser April 25 at the Richlin Ballroom.

The event was a complete success because the animal-loving community came out in droves to show their support, many compassionate local businesses gave donations for our silent auction and we sold all 400 seats a month prior to the event!

Planning an event of this magnitude every year requires hundreds of hours of planning time from our dedicated team of volunteers as well as the support of dozens of local businesses.

Our deepest gratitude to the following volunteers who donated their time

and talents: Belinda Baker, Kristen Baugher, Carol Bennett, Colleen Brady, Sheri Brandenburg Cobb, Debbie Bull, Linda Bullis, Sandy Fazio, Lisa Marie Grzybowski, Beth Harris, Kris Hickerson, Dr. Amy Hubbard, Bill Hubbard, Julia Ireton, Dr. Tom Lomax, John Long, Shannon Meeks, Torrey Meeks, Christina Moss Miller, Anna Marie Ohler, Bonnie Rexroad, Heather Rey, Diane Rogge, Helen Secola, Devon Treptor, and Sally Trout.

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to the following businesses that so generously sponsored the Bow Wow Boogie: The Animal Emergency Hospital, CNA, Inc., Dr. Dan Hopkins of Churchville Veterinary Clinic, Festival Veterinary Clinic, Harford

Emergency & Referral Veterinary Services, Stark & Keenan, Stifel Nicolaus, and Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra Chartered.

We are deeply appreciative to our additional supporters: APGFUCU, Associated Administrators, LLC, Knights of Columbus, Father Wolfe Council 11372 of Abingdon, Kunkel Service Company, and Plaza Ford.

To our partners in compassion, Harford businesses with a heart, we thank you for sponsoring this event and the life-saving programs of the Humane Society of Harford County!

Laura Ulrich
 Interim Executive
 Director
 Humane Society of
 Harford County, Fallston