

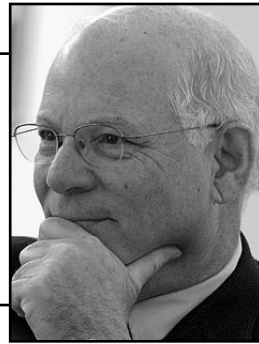
COMMENTARY

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S POST

A Community Newspaper for Prince George's County

Benjamin L. Cardin

United States Senator for Maryland



Deceptive Voter Practices Cannot Be Tolerated

Voter suppression and intimidation are still very much alive in our nation. From misleading and fraudulent information about elections to voter intimidation and robocalls designed to suppress the vote, deceptive voting practices are often aimed at depriving minority communities of their voice in our democracy. The U.S. Constitution guarantees and protects the right of every American citizen to vote, and we have a duty to protect and ensure that right.

Unfortunately, we have seen a resurgence of deceptive voter practices in recent years. In 2006, during my own election to the U.S. Senate, thousands of minority voters in Maryland were targeted for misleading information designed to suppress their vote. Nationwide, there have been numerous reports of efforts to suppress the minority vote by putting out wrong information about election dates and location of polling places, along with suggestions that voters who had outstanding parking tickets would be arrested if they tried to vote.

To put an end to this type of deceptive voter practice, I recently joined with U.S. Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) in re-introducing the Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act of 2011. This bill is designed to protect voters across the nation from election fraud and voter intimidation by creating criminal penalties for deceptive voting practices and by giving individual voters the right to take action.

My bill would specifically allow for criminal penalties of up to \$100,000 and up to five years imprisonment for those found guilty of decep-

tive campaign practices. If deceptive practices are found to have occurred before Election Day, the U.S. Attorney General can take corrective action to halt distribution of such information and to set the record straight. After federal elections, the Attorney General also would be required to report to Congress on the allegations of deceptive practices and the actions taken to correct such practices.

Deceptive voter practices are not pranks and they threaten our democracy. Since the end of the Civil War, there have been numerous efforts to ensure the right to vote for all citizens. In 1870, Congress ratified the 15th Amendment to the Constitution stating "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race [or] color. ..." The Amendment also gave Congress power to enforce the article by "appropriate" legislative action.

Unfortunately, for another 100 years African Americans faced poll taxes, literacy tests and outright harassment and violence when they attempted to vote. It took the passage of the 24th Amendment in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to end the discrimination of Jim Crow laws and regulations denying African Americans their full voting rights.

Deceptive voting practices are not a matter of free speech or a First Amendment right. In reality, such practices threaten the very integrity of our electoral process by attempting to rob voters of their right to vote. It is time for Congress to act once again to put an end to tactics that are deliberately intended to suppress or mislead voters.

To Be Equal

Marc Morial, President and CEO

National Urban League



Out with the Old -- In with the New

"Ring out the old, ring in the new... Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I am not one to make impossible New Year's resolutions. Gumbo and red beans and rice will be safe on my plate for another year.

But at the beginning of every New Year, I do like to pause to affirm my highest intentions for the National Urban League movement and our nation.

The year just ended was one of the most difficult and divisive in American history.

Thirteen million Americans remain out of work. Unemployment has ticked down to 8.6 percent overall, but it is still disproportionately high in communities of color. As we begin the year, the unemployment rate is 15.5 percent for African Americans and 11.4 percent for Hispanics.

Income inequality and poverty are on the rise. Confidence in government is at an all-time low. And the Presidential election of 2012 is shaping up as an epic battle between those who envision an America that works for the many and those who are content that it only works for the fortunate few. Obviously, we have a lot of work to do as a movement and as a nation. And so, with apologies to David Letterman and millions of other habitual list makers, here is my top-ten wish list for 2012:

10. Congress passes a full year payroll tax cut and extended unemployment benefits without 11th hour brinksmanship.

9. Washington finally ends partisan stalemate and enacts major legislation to create jobs, stop foreclosures and support business development.

8. Nation's leaders resolve to never again engage America in a needless war like the one just ended in Iraq.

7. Supreme Court upholds health care law.

6. New Orleans Saints win the Super Bowl (I had to sneak that one in for the folks back home).

5. Voter suppression efforts are stopped once and for all.

4. Crime in urban communities goes down...fair and equal justice for every citizen goes up.

3. African Americans and Hispanics vote in record numbers in the 2012 presidential election.

2. In our schools -- resource gap, achievement gap and graduation gap all eliminated.

And my number one wish for 2012 is for good health, greater prosperity and personal fulfillment for my family and yours. And that the National Urban League continues to grow so we can have an even greater impact on the movement for equality, justice and economic opportunity in America.

Happy New Year!



The Inn & Conference Center, University of Maryland University College

Child Watch

by Marion Wright Edelman



Remembering Fred Shuttlesworth: The Most Courageous Man in America

"That Fred Shuttlesworth did not become a martyr was not for lack of trying... There was not a person in the civil rights movement who put himself in the position of being killed more often than Fred Shuttlesworth." This quote from Andrew Manis, author of Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth's biography *A Fire You Can't Put Out*, sums up the truth about the man Dr. Martin Luther, King Jr. once called "the most courageous civil rights fighter in the South." When attackers planted a bomb near his parsonage at Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama on Christmas Day 1956 that tore apart the bedroom walls, floor, and even the mattress he was sleeping on but left him unhurt, Reverend Shuttlesworth took it as a sign that God would protect him as he kept on doing the work he was called to do. When he finally passed away on October 5 at age 89, he had been granted a long, full life to keep following that calling.

I like many others pause at the end of every year to remember and honor the heroes and loved ones I have lost, and this year Fred Shuttlesworth is one of my personal lanterns and a true American hero. His fearless leadership in Birmingham in the middle of some of the worst violence of the Civil Rights Movement—violence that appalled and helped wake up the rest of the nation—inspired me and countless others.

Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, a native of rural Mount Meigs, Alabama, came to Birmingham in 1953 to serve as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church. Almost immediately he became a leader in the local civil rights scene, first joining the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and then co-founding the new Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) in 1956 after a circuit judge banned NAACP activity in Alabama. When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Montgomery's segregated bus system that November, Fred Shuttlesworth immediately encouraged the ACMHR to begin fighting bus segregation in Birmingham. This was the campaign that led to the bombing of his church and parsonage. But far from being deterred, Fred was just getting started.

The next year he helped co-found the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference (SCLC) along with Dr. King. The two of them were notorious for having very different leadership styles with Fred described as more fiery, confrontational, and brash. In Fred's own words a few years ago, "He (Martin) was sometimes slow in doing things. Too slow for me. He'd meditate on things a lot and agonize over them. I think if things need doing, be about them." Fred Shuttlesworth's bold and unafraid attitude when "things needed doing" was ideally suited for standing up to the harsh, violent climate of segregationist police commissioner Bull Connor's Birmingham. He was indispensable in getting Dr. King and other civil rights leaders to focus on Birmingham as a powerful symbol for the rest of the nation. His instincts proved right. Today many of the first images that come to mind when people think about violence during the Civil Rights Movement—like crowds of non-violent child protesters being attacked by police officers with dogs and fire hoses, or the four little girls killed during Sunday School at the 16th Street Baptist Church—are scenes from Birmingham. At the time, these searing heartbreaking pictures on front pages across the country helped turn the tide of public opinion in support of the Civil Rights Movement's fight for justice.

Fred Shuttlesworth became a familiar figure at every stage of

the Birmingham campaign, from lunch counter sit-ins to supporting and welcoming Freedom Riders to the nonviolent marches of the Children's Campaign, and he was a target at every turn. He survived a second bombing, a number of police beatings that led to several hospitalizations, and dozens of arrests. When he had to be rushed to the hospital with chest injuries after fire hoses were turned on him during a nonviolent protest, The New York Times reported that Bull Connor said "I'm sorry I missed it. I wish they'd carried him away in a hearse." But Bull Connor's racism and meanness was no match for Fred Shuttlesworth's courage.

Fred Shuttlesworth moved to Cincinnati after Birmingham as the founding pastor of Greater New Light Baptist Church and was an unwavering warrior against racism, homelessness, poverty, and injustice before retiring to Birmingham in 2008. He was always generous in sharing his time with the young people and others who gathered at CDF-Haley Farm and enabled the next generations to relive his experiences firsthand. He was one of the great heroes who changed the odds for all children in America.

In 2007, a memorable Shuttlesworth appearance at a march in Selma, Alabama on the anniversary of the 1965 "Bloody

See WATCH, Page A7

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS

Business Exchange

by William Reed



When Are We Going to Admit That Race is Still an Issue in America?

When Are We Going to Admit That Race is Still an Issue in America?

The NAACP's allegations are totally unfounded and reckless. We have never tolerated, and will never tolerate, discrimination in any way, shape or form in any of our business practices, products or services. — Wells Fargo Spokeswoman — 2009

Back in 2009 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a class action suit to stop lenders from engaging in "systematic, institutionalized racism in making home mortgage loans." The NAACP suit specifically named: Ameriquest, Wells Fargo, Fremont Investment, Option One Mortgage (H&R Block), WMC Mortgage, Countrywide, Long Beach Mortgage, CitiGroup, BNC Mortgage, Accredited Home Lenders, Encore Credit (Bear Stearns), First Franklin, HSBC, and Washington Mutual as modern practitioners of discrimination.

As we start the year 2012, the largest residential fair-lending settlement in American history is starting to take place. Bank of America has agreed to pay \$335 million to settle federal allegations that its Countrywide unit discriminated against minorities. Due to the NAACP's activism, the U.S. Justice Department carried out years of investigations that ultimately concluded Countrywide loan officers and brokers charged higher fees and rates to more than 200,000 minority borrowers than they did to White borrowers who posed the same credit risk. The Justice Department's investigations also found that Countrywide steered more than 10,000 minority borrowers into costly subprime mortgages when White borrowers with similar credit profiles received regular loan portfolios.

Contrary to the protestations of America's lenders our country's unique racism continues. Black buyers often enter a separate and unequal lending universe. The mortgage companies the NAACP filed suit against accounted for half the loans given to Black middle-income borrowers in 2005 and 2006. Minority borrowers paid hundreds or thousands of dollars more to get a mortgage than did similarly qualified White customers. Justice Department officials said, "The victims had no idea they were being victimized. They were thrilled to have gotten a loan and realize the American

dream."

With the impetus of the NAACP discrimination lawsuit the Justice Department created a division to focus exclusively on banks and mortgage brokers suspected of discriminating against minority mortgage applicants, a type of litigation that requires extensive and complex analysis of data. Working with bank regulatory agencies and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the unit reached settlements or filed complaints accusing a lender of engaging in a pattern or practice of discrimination. The Federal Reserve first detected statistical discrepancies in the loans Countrywide was making and referred the matter to the Justice Department in early 2007.

Those proven to be victims of Countrywide's deliberate discrimination will get to divvy up \$335 million, an average of roughly \$1,700 per borrower. The compensation rate will depend on who originated the loan and whether the borrower was steered into a subprime product. Justice Department officials say that "checks should start going out to qualified borrowers in about 24 months."

For those wanting to just meld into the mainstream, note that the case represents the first time that the Justice Department alleged and obtained relief for borrowers who were steered into loans based on race or national origin. The NAACP released a statement saying Bank of America "takes one more important step toward creating a fairer lending environment for consumers."

Ironically, over recent years it has become daily talk fare among African Americans to question "the NAACP's relevance in modern American life." The mortgage industry discrimination suit shows the idiocy of such talk. Were it not for the NAACP, the government wouldn't have investigated embedded lending practices, and Countrywide would not be paying victims of its 2004 to 2007 discriminatory practices. What does it take for us to realize that racism is alive and living in America and we need all the forces we can muster? The NAACP's membership categories range from \$30 "Annual" to \$750 for "Lifetime." How many people being compensated by the settlement will send funds to: NAACP Memberships, 4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, Md. 21215?

Maryland First to Implement New Energy Standards To Save Homeowners Hundreds

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of Maryland First

BALTIMORE—Buyers of new homes will save hundreds of dollars each year on energy bills as a result of newly updated state building energy standards that went into effect on Sunday. The new version of the Maryland Building Performance Standard will make new homes and offices approximately 15 percent more energy efficient than the previous standard.

"America's buildings consume more than 40 percent of the total energy we use, and generate over half of Maryland's global warming pollution" said Ewa Krason Field Organizer at Environment Maryland. "Maryland is the first state in the nation to take this critical step towards reducing and ultimately eliminating fossil

fuel use in our buildings, which will result in real savings on energy bills for home and business owners."

Included in the new energy conservation code are requirements for better insulation, more efficient lighting and windows, testing to identify and correct leaky air ducts, and other "off-the-shelf" technologies that will yield cost-effective energy savings for home and business owners alike. An optional green building standard will allow builders to stretch for even greater energy savings.

"Maryland building officials deserve tremendous credit for leading the country and taking action that will save building owners money while avoiding pollution from burning fossil fuels" said Krason. "We look forward to working with the Department of Housing and Community



FILE PHOTO

Maryland First to Implement New Energy Standards To Save Homeowners Hundreds and Reduce Energy Use and Pollution

Development and other state officials to continue to promote high-performance, energy efficient buildings."

Over 8,000 new homes were built in Maryland in 2010 alone. And while many forward-thinking builders have gone above and beyond the minimum requirements, most new buildings are built

no better or worse than is required by the state's building code. Improving the energy standards of these codes, therefore, is one of the most effective ways to reduce energy use, save home and business owners money, and prevent the global warming pollution that results from energy generation.

Education from A1

have actually lost contracts and schools, but have replaced lost contracts with new agreements in other states and districts. Much of the growth experienced by for-profit EMOs is due to steadily adding grades or growing enrollment in existing schools."

While the growth rate of EMOs, and especially of those delivering online education, has been strong, performance has been mixed.

Only 27.4 percent of "virtual schools" run by for-profit EMOs achieved "Adequate Yearly Progress" as set forth under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Public schools that fail repeatedly to make AYP are subject to sanctions, including bringing in private companies to manage them or converting them to charter schools. The results for virtual schools are especially jar-

ring when compared with figure for the privately managed brick-and-mortar schools identified in the report as well as the national AYP figure for public schools: both in the 52% range.

The report is the NEPC's latest in its annual series of profiles of EMOs, companies that are contracted to manage charter schools and other public schools. The EMO sector emerged in the 1990s as part of an effort to use market forces to reform public education.

Profiles of For-Profit and Nonprofit Education Management Organizations is the nation's most comprehensive examination of the private entities that operate public schools. The Profiles reports are produced by a team of researchers from Western Michigan University, led by Gary Miron and Jessica L. Urschel.

This year's Profiles report covers 99 for-profit companies

and 197 nonprofit organizations that operate public schools, predominantly charters. Among the for-profit firms profiled in the report are Connections Academy, Imagine Schools, K-12 Inc., Edison Schools Inc., and White Hat Management. The largest of the non-profit operators is KIPP, with 109 schools and 32,000 students in 20 states and the District of Columbia.

The 99 for-profit companies profiled operate a total of 758 schools, with approximately 393,500 students nationwide. The 197 nonprofits manage 1,170 schools, enrolling approximately 384,000 students. The schools that have seen the fastest growth in recent years are virtual schools operated by for-profit EMOs. During the 2010-2011 school year, a total of 79 such schools enrolled almost 108,000 students.

Among their findings, the researchers obtained Adequate

Yearly Progress ratings for 677 of the 758 schools managed by for-profit EMOs. AYP provides a crude indicator of the extent to which schools are meeting state standards. Of those for-profit EMO-operated schools, only 48.2 percent made AYP; 51.8 percent did not. By contrast, the non-profit EMO sector performed better: the researchers obtained AYP ratings for 948 schools out of 1,170 under non-profit management, and 56.4 percent of those examined made AYP.

This year's Profiles of For-Profit and Nonprofit Education Management Organizations: Thirteenth Annual Report - 2010-2011 for the first time combines information about for-profit EMOs and nonprofit charter school operators in one report. As the report indicates, the for-profit and non-profit sectors are closely related with some EMOs changing status each year.

Grant from A1

the Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council. "Through our innovative initiatives and partnerships, Maryland has become one of the leading states in the use of electronic health records, and these funds represent another major step forward in our efforts to make Maryland the healthiest state in the nation. I would like to thank Maryland's Congressional Delegation, our federal partners, and all who have helped make this program a reality."

Physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, dentists, or physician assistants (who furnish services in a Federally Qualified Health Center that is led by a physician assistant) who participate in Medicaid and meet specified Medicaid patient volume thresholds are eligible for the program. Hospitals that are acute-care facilities with at least 10 percent Medicaid patient volume, as well as children's hospitals, are also eligible to receive funds under the program. So far, 449 providers and hospitals have applied for funds through the program.

"Widespread use by providers and hospitals of electronic health records is a critical component of Maryland's strategy for improving health outcomes," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH. "Patients across Maryland will benefit from improved care as a result of the expanded use of these critical tools."

The program runs through 2021, with any provider eligible to participate for up to six (consecutive or inconsecutive) years. The bulk of the payment is made in the first year of participation, and is triggered by the adoption, implementation or upgrading of certified EHR technology. For the first year, a provider will receive up to \$21,500. In each additional year of participation, the provider would earn \$8,500 if he/she meets the "meaningful use" requirements established by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS).

Eligible hospitals would receive a \$2 million base incentive, plus additional amounts reflecting Medicaid inpatient bed-days and other factors. Hospital incentive payments are calculated when the hospital

registers to participate, and would be disbursed over four years.

"As we are already seeing, the incentive program gives providers the motivation to improve their own technology, helping to build the state's health information network, and rewards those providers who have already done so," said Charles J. Milligan, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing.

"We are pleased that the O'Malley/Brown Administration has the incentive program up and running, allowing providers across Maryland to access federal Medicaid incentive dollars to support their adoption of electronic health records technology," said Gene Ransom, CEO of MedChi. "This is a big step that will help maintain Maryland's position as a leader on Health Information Technology issues -- critical to improving patient care and reducing costs."

Once a provider has registered, their eligibility must be reviewed by CMS. DHMH anticipates that the program will make nearly \$50 million in incentive payments to eligible providers and hospitals by the

end of the Fiscal Year in September 2012, and that the amount will increase as more providers and hospitals enter the program.

For more information, visit <http://www.dhmm.state.md.us/mma/ehr/index.html>.

Providers can go to <https://ehrincentives.cms.gov/hitech/login.action> to register for the incentive. For questions, email

MarylandEHR@dhmm.state.md.us.

As Co-Chair of the Maryland Health Care Reform Coordinating Council and Chair of Maryland's Health Quality and Cost Council, Lt. Governor Brown leads the O'Malley-Brown Administration's health care portfolio. Under the leadership of Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown, Maryland has implemented reforms that have already expanded health coverage to over 300,000 Marylanders. According to research by the independent Hilltop Institute, implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will save Maryland an estimated \$850 million and cut the number of Marylanders without health insurance in half by 2020.

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Calendar of Events

January 12 - January 18, 2012

PUBLICLY PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES 2012-2012 DANCE SEASON

CHEVERLY, MD—The Publicly Playhouse 2012-2012 season: Saturday, February 4 at 8 pm, Nimbaya! Women Master Drummers and Dancers of Guinea make the Playhouse the only Washington area stop on their first American tour in several years. Formerly called "Amazones", these exciting, energetic artists are celebrated throughout Africa for breaking social barriers to women's independence by performing the dances and playing the instruments that for centuries were restricted to men.

In April, Dallas Black Dance Theatre returns for their annual Playhouse residency with a new program of feisty, fearless and fiery modern dance performances on Friday and Saturday, April 27 and 28 at 8 pm and Sunday, April 29 at 4 pm. Tickets to each of the four dance companies in this series are \$20, or \$15/seniors, students, DancePass, and groups of 15 or more. There's also an advance ticket savings of half price for one dance company when buying all four prior to November 18.

Area dancers are also part of the season. On Sunday, February 26, at 4 pm, the annual liturgical dance festival PRAISE! features gospel singer Cora Harvey Armstrong of Richmond and exceptional dance troupes from area churches. Saturday, March 17 at 8 pm, the 10th annual World Dance Showcase highlights the broad cultural richness and talent found in our nation's capitol. Tickets for each of these programs are \$12; \$10/seniors and students.

Young dancers are on stage at Bust a Move with Café Groove on Friday, March 2 from 7-10pm, when teens battle for cash prizes and the title of "Prince George's Best Dance Crew", with teen-only admission for \$3. And Sunday, March 4, at 4 pm, the Love 2 Dance Teen Showcase presents hot talent from area schools and studios. Tickets: \$12; \$10/seniors and students Dance Classes with visiting artists include Nimbaya! workshops on Saturday, February 4, with a Drum Workshop at 10 am and an African Dance Workshop at 12 noon for drummers and dancers age 13 and up; fee: \$15/class. On April 25 and 26 from 7:30-9 pm Dallas Black Dance Theatre offers their annual Master Classes in Modern Dance for advanced dancers on Wednesday, and Liturgical Dance Workshop for intermediate and advanced dancers on Thursday; fee \$15/class or observer. Also, Big Girls Dance Workshops are being held during National Fitness Month, with an African dance workshop on Tuesday, May 8 from 6:30-8 pm, and a Belly Dance Workshop on Thursday, May 10 from 6:30-8 pm; free/one workshop per person, with advance registration required.

The Playhouse is a facility of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Department of Recreation, Arts and Cultural Heritage Division. For more information, call 301-277-1710 or visit arts.pgpc.com

Basketball League Registration: Boys or Girls - Select Teams

Date & Time: Ongoing through February 9, 2012
Description: Boys & Girls ages are invited to register teams for a competitive basketball league. Competition is open to all teams including AAU, Boys & Girls Club, CYO, M-NCPPC Community Center, County and Non-County teams. The schedule will consist of 8 regular season games and playoff games.
Ages: Ages groups: Girls: 18 & under; 15 & under; 12 & under; 9 & under; 5-7; Boys: 18 & under; 15 & under; 12 & under; 9 & under; 5-7
Fee: \$600/team. Please no individual registrations.
Information: Byron Thompson at 301-446-6818 or Paul Hall at 301-446-6811.

Inter-Center Basketball League Registration

Date & Time: Ongoing registration through January 20, 2012
Description: This popular county-wide league gives kids a chance to enjoy learning and participating in the game of basketball. Everybody plays!
This league is open to Prince George's County residents only and all participants must register in person at a community center.
Ages: 5-7; 8-9; 10-12 and 13-17
Fee: \$50/person with valid M-NCPPC Youth ID
Information: Byron thompson at 301-446-6818 or Paul Hall at 301-446-6811

The Color of Justice

Date and Time: Friday, January 13, 10:15 am & 12 noon
Event Description: A brilliant fighter for human rights and a brave little girl take on the doctrine of "separate but equal." The audience follows their case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court in this gripping drama about Thurgood Marshall's struggle against school segregation resulting in the nation changing decision of Brown v. Board of Education.
Ages: Recommended for grades 3-9
Fee: \$6/person, \$5/person in groups of 15 or more
Location: Publicly Playhouse
5445 Landover Road, Cheverly 20784
Information: 301-277-1710; TTY: 301-277-1312

Concert: The Hardway Connection

Date and Time: Saturday, January 14, 8 pm
Event Description: There is an exciting new variation of "oldies but goodies" melodies sweeping the land. It is a rhythm and blues sound counterpointed by a threat of family values and tradition. It is the smooth passionate, sometimes funky and extremely "tight" sound of The Hardway Connection, evoking feelings of nostalgia and an undeniable compulsion to dance. The six-member group all hail from the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and display a distinctive sense of cohesiveness and determination. The group has opened for Johnny Taylor, Harvey Scales, Toni Terry, Chuck Brown, and Sonny Warmer.
Ages: All ages
Fee: \$30/general admission; \$15/seniors & students
Location: Arts/Harmony Hall Regional Center
10701 Livingston Road, Ft. Washington 20744

EARTH TALK ... "Home energy audits"

Dear EarthTalk:

There are a number of companies out there now doing "energy audits" for the home, after which they try to sell you attic insulation and other products and services. Is this just a scam or would it be wise for me to look into this?

-- Bill Richards.,
New York, NY

For the most part, companies offering energy audits are reputable and legitimate and will help you both save money and reduce your carbon footprint if you follow their advice in regard to upgrading things like insulation, windows and appliances. "A home energy assessment, also known as a home energy audit, is the first step to assess how much energy your home consumes and to evaluate what measures you can take to make your home more energy efficient," reports the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). "An assessment will show you problems that may, when corrected, save you significant amounts of money over time."

"During the assessment, you can pinpoint where your house is losing energy," adds DOE. "Energy assessments also determine the efficiency of your home's heating and cooling systems [and] may also show you ways to conserve hot water and electricity."

You can conduct your own energy audit if you know where to look for air leaks (drafts), water waste and other key areas

of a home's inefficiencies. The DOE's energysavers.gov website has guidelines to help homeowners conduct their own do-it-yourself home energy assessments. For instance, DOE recommends that homeowners make a list of obvious air leaks, such as through gaps along baseboards or at the edges of flooring and at wall and ceiling junctures. The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home can be as high as 30 percent per year, reports DOE. (The DOE website also provides information on other ways to save money and resources through less obvious things such as outdoor landscaping. It also posts guidelines for energy-efficient designing and remodeling.)

You should also check the filters on heating and cooling equipment to see if they need to be changed so as to keep your furnace and air conditioners functioning at maximum efficiency. And if these or other appliances over 15 years old consider replacing them with newer models that meet federal EnergyStar efficiency criteria. Also, swapping out older incandescent bulbs in light fixtures with higher efficiency compact fluorescent or LED bulbs will save money and energy.

A professional energy auditor with dedicated assessment tools and the knowledge of how to use them will in all likelihood carry out a more comprehensive assessment than you can do yourself. "Thorough assessments often use equipment such as blower doors,



Credit: USDA

Companies offering energy audits are generally reputable and legitimate and will help you both save money and reduce your carbon footprint if you follow their advice. Pictured: A home energy auditor inspects a hot water heater.

which measure the extent of leaks in the building envelope, and infrared cameras, which reveal hard-to-detect areas of air infiltration and missing insulation."

If you are concerned about enlisting a for-profit firm that upsells its own energy efficiency upgrade services based on a "free" energy audit, check with your utility to see whether it offers unbiased, independent energy audit services (which it may do for free or for a nominal cost). The assessor from your utility may be able to recommend window and door replacement companies, heating and cooling specialists and other vendors nearby that do reputable work to make your

home is not only energy efficient but warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

CONTACTS: DOE Energy Savers,
www.energysavers.gov;
EnergyStar,
www.energystar.gov.

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Safety First

- By: Rasy Moqet,
Los Angeles County Fire Department

Every fire academy in the country teaches their recruits that safety comes first, but Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services Department (PGFD) has taken this concept one step further. In addition to the standard firefighting and emergency medical services training, PGFD has found an innovative approach to teach their recruits about the hidden dangers facing firefighters, including cancer. What began as a weekend homework assignment became something much more as a recent recruit class at PGFD set out to investigate the correlation between firefighters and cancer.

The concept is simple, each week the class attending PGFD's Fire/EMS Training Academy is given weekly assignments that focus on varying health and safety issues, including nutrition, wellness, fitness, NIOSH

reports, and of course cancer and its association with firefighters. According to PGFD Fire Chief Marc S. Bashoor, the recruit class has taken this assignment and turned it into a mission that was beneficial for all. He said, "These assignments are geared towards getting recruits to think why we are so adamant about safety. It refocused their training, for example now the recruits know that they want to make sure their face mask has a nice tight seal so that smoke cannot get in because not only can smoke have an immediate effect, but 20 years down the road it can lead to cancer and kill you."

The Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) whose mission is to provide support to Fire Department members and their families when dealing with cancer, was excited to learn that PGFD has found a way to integrate this

very important education into their recruit classes and hopes that other fire academies will follow PGFD's lead. Numerous studies have shown that firefighters face a significantly higher chance of being diagnosed with cancer than the public they serve and education is a key factor to helping reduce that risk. One of FCSN's primary goals is to educate firefighters about the importance of following safety procedures and ways to reduce their risks of contracting cancer. According to FCSN, "Absorption, ingestion, and inhalation are the three leading ways that firefighters are contracting cancer." Simple steps such as wearing full personal protective equipment, including the self contained breathing apparatus, during and after a fire, as well as showering and cleaning dirty turnouts can all help firefighters lessen their risks to the dangerous cancer causing carcinogens.

Firefighters have an inherently dangerous job and they need to be diligent in their efforts to maintain proper safety protocol because it can save their lives not only in the field, also in the years to come. A recent PGFD Recruit School graduate, Fire Fighter Brian Goldfeder put it, "Some firefighter deaths are not preventable; sometimes we must take big risks to save human lives, however, the past traditions of not wearing SCBA and enjoying dark soot around our noses and mouths after fires, are traditions that belong in the past. We, as a new generation of firefighters, must learn from the past and help each to retire; to a healthy life with our friends and family." To learn more about the Firefighter Cancer Support Network and the services they offer, please visit: www.FirefighterCancerSupport.org

Bonus from A1

Performance bonuses provide additional federal funding for qualifying states that have taken specific steps to simplify Medicaid and CHIP enrollment and renewal processes, and have also increased enrollment of children.

Maryland took multiple steps to streamline its health coverage enrollment process. Applicants no longer have to appear for an in person interview, which can be a coverage barrier for families with working parents. And it uses an electronic database to verify family information to simplify the

renewal process. The number of Maryland children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP coverage increased from more than 407,000 in 2007 to more than 545,000 in 2011.

CHIP is a joint federal and state program that provides health insurance to children in low-income, working families.

Under CHIP, children whose families cannot afford health insurance have access to doctor visits and medicines they need when they are sick and the checkups they need to stay well. CHIP protects the health care coverage of nearly 6.7 million children, including more than 150,000 in Maryland.

King from A1

(SCLC) chapter will be the keynote speaker honoring the life of King in Annapolis Maryland on Thursday, January 12th at 12:00pm. The Maryland Department of National Resources (DNR) Office of Fair Practices is sponsoring the event and admission is free to the public. More information about this event can be obtained by contacting Richard W. Allen at the DNR Office of Fair Practices 410-260-8058.

The National Park Service

honors the legacy of Dr. King daily at the "Stone of Hope" with an exhibit open from 9am to 10pm. Special events sponsored by the Ranger Program, will begin on Saturday, January 14th with a "Children's Recitation of the 'I Have a Dream' Speech." "Stories of Service," "Civil Rights in Washington DC," and a "Children's March for Dr. King" are also just a few of the activities planned at the national memorial from Saturday thru Wednesday, January 18th. More information about the schedule of events at the King

memorial can be found at www.nps.gov.

The Washington National Cathedral celebrates the legacy of Dr. King with a day of service, interfaith dialogues and a special concert from 2pm to 4pm on Monday January 16th. Washington Performing Arts Society's Children of the Gospel Choir, Urban National H.I.P.-H.O.P. Choir and St. Augustine Gospel Choir will be performing, along with Malcom X Dancers & Drummers and poet Tony Keith. Admission is a donation of a non-perishable canned

food item or a children's book. Directions and more information about planned events can be found on their website at www.nationalcathedral.org.

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation is sponsoring The Stone of Hope Luncheon on Tuesday, January 17th, from noon to 3pm at Harmony Hall Regional Center. Harmony Hall is located in Fort Washington and admission is \$8 for residents and \$10 for non-residents. Contact 301-203-6040 for more information.

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www.fbc-cp.org

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Holy Communion 1st Sunday

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Child Watch from A4

Sunday" Voting Rights March was made more special by his wheelchair being pushed by Democratic Presidential candidate Barack Obama. At his death President Obama said "Reverend Shuttlesworth dedicated his life to advancing the cause of justice for all Americans. He was a testament to the strength of the human spirit. And today we stand on his shoulders, and the shoulders of all those who marched and sat and lifted their voices to help perfect our union... America owes Reverend Shuttlesworth a debt of gratitude." Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth's faithful and fearless dedication to getting about the things that need doing in order to fight injustice set a powerful example for the rest of us to follow. And I was pleased as punch when I visited him in his nursing home to ride on the Fred Shuttlesworth Parkway after flying into the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport. Who says transforming change is not possible?

I hope a lot of new Fred Shuttlesworths will emerge soon to lead the next civil and human rights movement in communities all across America to end the shame of child hunger, homelessness, poverty, and illiteracy.

Marian Wright Edelman is President of the Children's Defense Fund whose Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

For more information go to www.childrensdefense.org.

LEGALS

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Applications for the following alcoholic beverage licenses will be accepted by the Board of License Commissioners for Prince George's County on February 23, 2012 and will be heard on April 24, 2012. Those licenses are:

Class D, Beer and Wine- 17 DW 11

Class B, H, BLX, CI, DD, BCE, Beer, Wine and Liquor License - On Sale; Class B, BW, (GC), (DH), Beer and Wine; Class B, RD, Liquor License, all Class C Licenses/On Sale, Class D(NH), Beer and WineB

Public Hearings are also scheduled for March 7, 2012 and March 14, 2012 at 7:00 p.m., at 5012 Rhode Island Avenue, Hearing Room 200, Hyattsville, Maryland 20781. The Board will consider the agenda as posted that day.

BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS

Attest:
Diane M. Bryant
Administrative Assistant
December 19, 2011

102832 (1-5,1-12)

NOTICE

Laura H. G. O'Sullivan, et al.,
Substitute Trustees Plaintiffs
vs.
Edith Emelife-Gigger Defendant

In the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Maryland
Civil No. CAE 11-19014

ORDERED, this 28th day of December, 2011 by the Circuit Court of PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Maryland, that the sale of the property at 14602 Danube Lane, Bowie, Maryland 20721 mentioned in these proceedings, made and reported by Laura H. G. O'Sullivan, et al., Substitute Trustees, be ratified and confirmed, unless cause to the contrary thereof be shown on or before the 30th day of January, 2012, next, provided a copy of this Notice be inserted in some newspaper published in said County once in each of three successive weeks before the 30th day of January, 2012, next.

The report states the amount of sale to be \$555,091.19.

MARILYNN M. BLAND
Clerk of the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, Md.

True Copy—Test:
Marilynn M. Bland, Clerk

102840 (1-5,1-12,1-19)

Safia S. Kadir
Heise Jorgensen & Stefanelli P.A.
18310 Montgomery Village Ave
Suite 400
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT NOTICE TO CREDITORS NOTICE TO UNKNOWN HEIRS

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE ESTATE OF ALICE B MORAN

Notice is given that Robert C. Moran whose address is 540 Main Street, Winchester, MA 01890 was on December 20, 2011 appointed personal representative of the estate of Alice B. Moran who died on October 17, 2011 with a will.

Further information can be obtained by reviewing the estate file in the office of the Register of Wills or by contacting the personal representative or the attorney.

All persons having any objection to the appointment (or to the probate of the decedent's will) shall file their objections with the Register of Wills on or before the 20th day of June, 2012.

Any person having a claim against the decedent must present the claim to the undersigned personal representative or file it with the Register of Wills with a copy to the undersigned on or before the earlier of the following dates:

(1) Six months from the date of the decedent's death, except if the decedent died before October 1, 1992, nine months from the date of the decedent's death; or

(2) Two months after the personal representative mails or otherwise delivers to the creditor a copy of this published notice or other written notice, notifying the creditor that the claim will be barred unless the creditor presents the claims within two months from the mailing or other delivery of the notice.

A claim not presented or filed on or before that date, or any extension provided by law, is unenforceable thereafter. Claim forms may be obtained from the Register of Wills.

ROBERT C. MORAN
Personal Representative

CERETA A. LEE
REGISTER OF WILLS FOR
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
14735 MAIN STREET 4TH FLOOR
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102828 (1-5,1-12,1-19)

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