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TODAY'S NEWSMAKERS

GLENELG HIGH SCHOOL

Glenelg High School in Howard will host a rededication ceremony in honor of its 50th anniversary. The ceremony is just one of a number of activities scheduled during the next several weeks to mark the school's golden anniversary. The event is scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday in the school's auditorium. The school is at 14025 Burntwoods Road, Glenelg.

DR. ROBIN SMITH

Dr. Robin Smith, an author and frequent guest on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," will be the keynote speaker today at the second annual fundraiser for the William E. Proudford Sickle Cell Fund, a nonprofit organization that raises awareness about sickle cell disease. The event starts at 6 p.m. today at Renaissance Harborplace Hotel, 202 E. Pratt St., Baltimore. Tickets are \$60 (or \$125 including VIP reception). Go to www.wepsicklecell.org.



Smith

SOPHIE LANZKRON

Dr. Sophie Lanzkron, director of the Sickle Cell Center for Adults at Johns Hopkins, is to be honored Sunday at a fundraiser for the William E. Proudford Sickle Cell Fund at the Renaissance Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore. Lanzkron's primary clinical research interest is understanding barriers to care for adults with sickle cell disease. Lanzkron's research has shown patient-care costs have increased significantly despite FDA approval of using hydroxyurea to treat sickle cell patients.



Lanzkron

Sales-tax revenue set to decline

Comptroller: Estimates reflect economic uncertainty

By Len Lazarick
Examiner Staff Writer

State revenues this year are projected to fall \$132 million behind official estimates, worsening a budget picture in which a \$1.5 billion deficit already was predicted for the following year.

In a letter to Gov. Martin O'Malley and legislative leaders, Comptroller Peter Franchot said the primary reason for lowered estimates is that projections for the sales tax are down \$115 million, growing only by 2.5 percent, not the 4.8 percent originally estimated.

Revenues are also projected to decline from death taxes (by \$20.7 million), tobacco levies (by \$11.4 million) and lottery sales (by \$16.7 million). Only individual income taxes have risen slightly, by \$38 million.

The estimates are based on economic data and forecasts of the state economy by private-sector economists hired by the state.

Franchot said the change in estimates "reflect uncertainties in the economy" and "volatility in the stock market."

The national loss of 4,000 jobs "may mean that the economy is at a turning point," he said.

"While the forecast does not call for a recession, the risk that the national economy will fall into recession in the near future has risen appreciably," Franchot said.

Official estimates for fiscal 2009 will be made in December.

"This news confirms that the budget situation is only getting worse," said Rick Abbruzzese, O'Malley's spokesman. "The state of Maryland needs to act to protect our ability to make progress on public safety, education and health care, which make up 80 percent of the budget."

The governor meets with legislative leaders Tuesday morning to discuss solutions to the deficit. O'Malley consistently has said the solution will include some combination of budget cuts and tax increases, including increases in sales, income and corporate taxes.

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HIGH-QUALITY VINTAGE



Alejandro, a day laborer, harvests chardonnay grapes at Fiore winery in Pylesville on Wednesday. - Kristine Buls/Examiner

Drought, temperatures make '07 a good year for Md. wine

By Carolyn Peirce
Examiner Staff Writer

After a long summer drought, Maryland wineries are celebrating.

"In a dry year, we don't need to combat diseases, so there is less spraying, less managing of the vines and less time in the vineyard," said Kevin Atticks, executive director of the Maryland Wineries Association.

Wines from 2007 are expected to be some of the best in years because of a combination of little rain and moderate temperatures.

"Every year we have been suffering with ongoing droughts, so the quality has been pretty good, but this year will be above average," said Eric Aellen, manager of Langanore Wineries in Mount Airy.

"In a drought year, the root system on the grapes can't absorb moisture from the ground, because there isn't any, which keeps the berries

LOOK INSIDE

The 24th Maryland Wine Festival is taking place this weekend. For more information, go to Page 23.

much smaller and the flavor more concentrated," Aellen said.

Most Maryland wines are made from grapes grown in state vineyards, and the wineries account for about 80 percent of what is grown locally.

"There are tragic years, like 2000, when Hurricane Isabel came through and it rained for four days straight," Atticks said. "I had sobbing winemakers calling me, and all we could do was wait until next year."

Because of their deep roots, grapevines absorb whatever water is in the soil. During heavy rainfall, the grapes can burst right on the vine from too much moisture, Atticks said.

Vineyards begin the crop in April when there is little but sufficient

“Wineries are talking about how good the chardonnays and merlots will be. But just about any variety from 2007 will be a sure bet.”

- Kevin Atticks, executive director of the Maryland Wineries Association

rain to boost growth. From there, winemakers hope for dry periods, moderate temperatures and light rain. This year was perfect.

The 2007 white wines are expected to be released around the holidays and into spring. Red wines require more aging and will be released in about two years.

"Wineries are talking about how good the chardonnays and merlots will be," Atticks said. "But just about any variety from 2007 will be a sure bet."

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Alibis provided for two accused of attempting to kill witness

By Jaime Malarkey
Examiner Staff Writer

The two men accused of trying to murder a witness in a Baltimore County homicide case were not near the crime scene when the shooting took place, according to testimony during the trial Friday.

Witnesses said Victor Rickey Shuron Jr., was traveling in New York the day murder witness Donnie Hill was shot six times in his car parked in the Waverly Shopping Center Nov. 26, 2006.

Yusuf Winston-Bey bought a lottery ticket from a shop clerk around the time of the attempted assassination.

The day after Hill testified he was sure Winston-Bey and Shuron followed him into the shopping center just before he was gunned down, defense lawyers offered alibis for the two men.

A shop clerk at a Baltimore pool hall said Winston-Bey, who Hill said was driving the van that tailed him, bought a Countdown to Millions lottery ticket from her around the time of the shooting.

"It was a very slow day, we had very few customers," the clerk said. "He's tall, dark and handsome ... It's a \$20 ticket, and we rarely sell them."

Shuron, family members said, traveled to New York to return his girlfriend's son to the boy's father in New York City.

Missing an earlier bus, the 10-year-old needed an adult to travel with him and Shuron offered, said Elliott Harris Sr., the boy's father.

"Mr. Shuron stepped up," Harris said. "It was too late for [the boy] to travel alone. He brought him up."

Shuron's girlfriend testified that he didn't return until 9:30 p.m. the following night, hours after the 2:15 p.m. shooting took place.

Hill planned on testifying against Shuron in a Baltimore County case two days after the shooting.

Defense lawyers said that trial had been postponed.

Closing arguments are expected to begin Monday.

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