



PHOTO BY MARKETA EBERT

Matisse Gilmore, 6, and her sister Monet, 8, examine some of the inventions at the 12th Annual YMCA Thingamajig Invention Convention at the Show Place Arena and Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro Aug. 3.

YMCA event has kids feeling inventive

By Melissa J. Brachfeld
Sentinel Staff Writer

The Show Place Arena and Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro was packed with over 3,000 children inventing, creating and learning as the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington hosted the 12th Annual YMCA Thingamajig Invention Convention last Thursday.

John Embrey, senior executive of marketing for the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington, said the invention convention was designed to bring together kids ages 5-14 to learn about how fun can intersect with science, technology and the arts.

"This started at one branch 12 years ago and they had about 100 children turn out for it and it grew from that time to become the event that it is today, which now is over 3,000 children participating as well as hundreds of volunteers," he said. "This event is significant and unique

because it allows kids to combine art, science, creativity in an active type of environment. It's about being active and having fun at the same time."

"This is one of the ideas I never got to do in school."

**BURT BURCH, 10
"Super Food Cutter" Inventor**

Embrey added that the invention convention is an event that challenges children to use basic scientific skill, no more than \$20, recycled materials and their imaginations to create unique projects or designs. Children competed either individually or in small groups in various categories such as "Funky Fashions USA"—

complete with a fashion show—and "Hear that Beat," a challenge where kids designed an original musical instrument. Projects were then judged on creativity, effective use of materials, attention to detail and accuracy.

Burt Burch, a 10-year-old resident of Silver Spring, Md., was one such invention participant at the event. As he made some final adjustments to his "Super Food Cutter" — made out of tinfoil, cardboard, plastic knives and a plastic bottle — he said the convention allowed him to try out of one of his design ideas.

"This is one of the ideas I never got to do in school, so I did it in science camp," he said.

James Epps, one of the judges, said he was pleased with Burch's design and awarded the camper 10 points across the board on a scale of 5-10 points.

"The things I focus on are the visual concepts and the creativity,"

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Palumbo steps down, citing health

Cade controversy led to Reader's Digest 'Broken Gavel' award

By Stephanie Samuel
Sentinel Staff Writer

Prince George's County Judge Richard Palumbo stepped down from the bench last Friday, weeks before a scheduled hearing relating to misconduct charges according to officials at the governor's office.

Palumbo, 67, announced his resignation in a letter to Gov. Robert Ehrlich, Jr. (R), copies of which were later distributed among members of the Maryland District Court. He said in the letter that he was stepping down from the bench due to health concerns.

"The decision to retire was made at the urging of my long-time personal physician and my family

members — all of whom are aware of the heavy toll the stress of the past year has had on my health," Palumbo wrote.

In the past year, Palumbo has faced immense criticism for his handling of female protective order cases. The most recognized case was that of Yvette Cade. Palumbo denied a protective order set against Cade's estranged husband, Roger Hargrave, saying, "Well, I'd like to be 6-foot-5."

Hargrave came to Cade's job three weeks later, poured gasoline on her and lit her on fire. He has since been convicted of attempted murder.

Cade's case led the Commission

See Palumbo, page E-4

Realtors take fear out of buying a home

By Scott Shewfelt
Special to The Sentinel

Realtors Robert and Victorine Clarke joined with financial professionals from the Bank of America to conduct the second in a series of seminars to both new and experienced homebuyers Saturday afternoon.

The seminar held in the lobby of the Greenbelt Bank of America entitled "Buying Made Easy," aimed to ease stress and reduce the confusion surrounding what is likely the largest purchase of a person's life: a house.

"We started doing these because we met so many people who are scared and think that they can't purchase a house," Victorine Clarke said.

Nearly all the seats were filled as the seminar began and the audience unanimously responded that they were looking to purchase a home within the next six months.

"Now is certainly better than

last year in terms of purchasing," said Robert Clarke, who outlined the benefits of a buyers' market.

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COVER STORY/NEWS

Baltimore students visit Piscataway Creek

By Taya Flores
Special to The Sentinel

"It was a little windy that day, we saw several birds including the bald eagle and we identified plants in the marsh," said Kathy Siegfried, youth coordinator for the National Aquarium in Baltimore.

She described the kayaking trip to Piscataway Creek as an "out-of-element" experience for the six Baltimore City students who attended the outing.

For many of the students, it was their first time in a kayak.

"Some students look at the kayak and say, 'You expect me to get in that,' but by the end of the trip, they do not want to get out," Siegfried said.

Siegfried took the students kayaking in Piscataway Creek, July 28 as a part of the Henry Hall Program, which provides free educational opportunities for students from Baltimore City Public Schools.

The program helps disadvantaged students participate in outdoor aquatic activities like kayaking and sea turtle watching. The students have to be residents of Baltimore and attend the public schools.

"The kids would not be able to do these opportunities unless they were offered free," said Vicki Sabiyi, youth program manager for the National Aquarium in Baltimore.

Sabiyi said 85 percent of the participating students are African-American and 40 to 50 percent receive free or reduced lunches.

The students learned the basics of sea kayaking on the Piscataway Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River. They also hiked through a marsh where they identified plants.

The purpose of the program is to expose students in grades six to 12 to nature and potential careers in aquatic and marine sciences, Siegfried said.

The students have to fill out an application, have a teacher recommendation and write an essay to apply for the program named after Henry Hall.

Henry Hall was an engineer, world traveler, teacher, aquarist, inventor and philanthropist. He traveled around the world, collecting aquatic animals and he donated his collection to the aquarium in 1977.

The aquarium exhibited his collection at the 1978 groundbreaking ceremony.

In 1982, the National Aquarium Foundation donated money and created the Henry Hall program in honor of the late engineer and aquarist.

Since then, more than \$300,000 has been awarded to students to participate in the program.

Other trips that the program funds for students includes a shark tooth hunt, sea turtle watch in South Carolina, coral reef ecology summer camp and a canoe rig program.

Seminar shows benefits of buyer's market

Seminar, from page E-1

"The time is right to purchase."

Juan-Carlos Arroyo, a mortgage account executive at the Bank of America, was the first person to speak at length about the financial side of the home buying process and he stressed that the most important thing to do is to get pre-approved for a mortgage.

"This [pre-approval] shows that you are serious," said Arroyo, who added that it makes it easier for all parties involved to know what they have to work with and it can be done in an hour.

Robert Clarke outlined an eight-point process to home buying. Clarke said that following these steps would show the banks and realtors that you as a buyer are serious and, in turn, it will make this seemingly daunting process less stressful.

Identification of the buyers' wants and needs and the importance of home inspection were central to the Clarkes's seminar.

"These seminars are good for both the first-time and the experienced homebuyer. Advanced tools like the Internet have changed the industry and all homebuyers need to know how to take advantage of these and realize that there are professionals here to help," Robert Clarke said.

The audience was provided with relevant literature partly as a seminar guide, but also to serve as an extension of the seminar.

The seminar concluded with a lengthy question and answer period and following the seminar, the onsite professionals remained to answer questions on a more private level.

This is the second in a series of seminars that began in June. There are plans for more seminars in the area, ideally once a month, Robert Clarke said, with the next being on Aug. 19, at the Seabrook Bank of America.

The Clarkes are husband and wife realtor team based in Silver Spring, with a focus on properties in Lanham, Bowie and the surrounding areas.

Palumbo's future uncertain

Palumbo, from page E-1

of Judicial Disabilities to conduct an investigation and charge Palumbo with insensitivity and misconduct.

Palumbo's lawyer William C. Brennan, Jr. sent a 14-page rebuttal letter to the commission saying that the denied protective order in the Cade case was the result of a clerical error.

The commission scheduled a hearing to discuss penalties ranging from a warning to removal for Palumbo's improper conduct in the courtroom and during two traffic stops on Aug. 28 and 29. It has yet to be announced whether Palumbo's Friday resignation will preclude any disciplinary actions. Executive Director Greg Kolb said that the com-

mission would issue a statement relating to the hearing soon.

"A statement should be released by mid-week," said Kolb.

Palumbo was appointed to the court in 2001 by then-Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D). Prior to his appointment, he served as a state delegate.

In the past year, Palumbo's actions in and out of the courtroom have led to notoriety. He won one of three 2006 Broken Gavel awards given by *Reader's Digest* magazine for America's worst judge because of his involvement in the Cade case.

Almost a year before Palumbo's resignation, he was temporarily reassigned to administrative duties due to misconduct during two traffic stops. Palumbo used his position as a judge to void a traffic ticket he received during a February 2005 traf-

fic stop. Palumbo asked the state trooper if he knew who he was during the stop, and later handed his ticket back to the trooper during a chamber visit to void the ticket, violating trooper policy.

Palumbo used his name again in an August 2005 accident involving his vehicle and that of Kimberly Corlette. He told Corlette that he was a judge and she would be in a lot of trouble because of his status.

Again, Brennan refuted allegations of wrongdoing, saying that in both incidents Palumbo's position was revealed during the natural course of conversation.

Palumbo retired to his wife and home in Charles County. He will reportedly be spending his time developing a shopping center in the Glenn Dale area.

Abortion bill could penalize for transport across state lines

By Stephanie Samuel
Sentinel Staff Writer

Abortion transport laws passed in the U.S. Senate last month could further tighten Maryland laws mandating parental notification, and potentially lead some minors to enter D.C. for abortions.

The U.S. Senate approved abortion legislation, 65 to 34, that would make it a federal crime to transport a minor for an abortion in another state, evading the parental notification law regulating abortion in their home state. Both Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) and Rep. Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.) voted against the bill.

"The congressman has always supported a woman's right to chose," said Susan Sullan, an aide to Cardin.

Cardin and others fear that the legislation would limit abortion access for needy pregnant girls. NARAL Pro-Choice MD spokeswoman Ariana Kelly said that the legislation might pose a problem for people who may not have a clinic in their vicinity. She said that they could end up unintentionally violating it while trying to access abortion services.

"It's very dangerous because it's not about trying to evade the law, it might be their closest clinic," said Kelly.

She also called the legislation "isolating," saying that the law may keep some minors from talking to anyone about their situation.

"A law can't keep a child from communicating, but at the same time

a law can keep a child from talking to extended family members," said Kelly.

She said these family members would otherwise provide a support system for youth who would otherwise be afraid to talk their parents. The legislation prohibits adults from transporting minors across state lines to avoid parental notification.

"It's not about trying to evade the law, it might be their closest clinic."

**ARIANA KELLY
Spokeswoman,
NARAL Pro-Choice MD**

Under the bill passed by the Senate, anyone who transports a minor across state lines would be punished with fines. However, it does not punish the minor. Kelly said this might lead some youths to venture across state lines by themselves.

Maryland, Delaware and Virginia all have parental notification

laws. Washington, D.C. does not, leaving area minors only a few Metro stops away from D.C. abortion clinics.

Despite neighboring temptation, few minors may actually feel compelled to make the trip into D.C. Maryland's parental notification law is considered lenient by pro-choice standards. While the acting physician must notify the parent/guardian prior to the procedure, their consent is not needed to conduct the abortion. There is also a provision allowing physicians to waive notification in different scenarios including the possibility of emotional and physical abuse.

Similarly, the Senate-backed bill also allows exceptions in the case of an adult transporting a minor with a life-threatening pregnancy or abusive parents.

The recent discussion over Plan B may be another deterrent to minors crossing state lines for an abortion. In an ironic series of events, the Food and Drug Administration is currently working to make Plan B, commonly referred to as the "morning after" pill, available over the counter. The emergency contraceptive can prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex.

Despite the passage of the bill in the Senate, the legislation has yet to be reconciled with the House bill passed last year. Senate democrats are stalling the bill's movement, noting that the committee has not considered the bill and that negotiations with the House are premature.