

TODAY'S NEWSMAKERS

DISMAS MASOLO

Dismas Masolo, a native of Kenya, will discuss African philosophy and cultures at 7 p.m. March 11 at McDaniel College in Westminster. Masolo is the Justus Bier professor of humanities and a member of the philosophy department at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. He is also president of the Society for African Philosophy in North America. Previously, he taught at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and at several other American universities. Call 410-857-2294 for more information about the free lecture.

AMI PAREKH

Ami Parekh, a home-schooled student, is the 2008 Baltimore Brain Bee champion at the Maryland Science Center. The 10th annual Brain Bee — a neuroscience competition launched by Norbert Myslinski, associate professor at the University of Maryland Dental School — drew participants from Dulaney, Notre Dame, Franklin, Digital Harbor, Towson and Mount de Sales high schools. Second-place honors went to Cara Paul of Mount de Sales, and third place went to Scott Butler of Franklin. The two-hour competition tested understanding of the human brain and included topics such as memory, emotions, sleep and addictions.

JOE ROGERS

Joe Rogers, who served as the country's youngest lieutenant governor in Colorado, will present The Dream Alive Program during a schoolwide assembly at 8:15 a.m. Tuesday in the Mc Manus Theatre at Calvert Hall. The program is dedicated to the memory and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and leaders of the civil rights movement.



VISIT US ONLINE

Read all the local news from The Examiner on the Web. examiner.com



City wants dirt bikes 'immobilized'

By Stephen Janis
Examiner Staff Writer

Baltimore dirt bike owners may be forced to lock up their vehicles, or face seizures by police.

A bill to be introduced at tonight's City Council meeting would require residents who own dirt bikes and unregistered motorcycles — illegal to operate but not own in the city — to "immobilize" them.

The bill, sponsored by the Dixon administration, would make it illegal not to have either an ignition lock or wheel clamp on dirt bikes to prevent the vehicle from being ridden.

The measure would allow police to seize any of the vehicles not properly secured, Dixon spokesman Sterling Clifford said.

"The bill will require them to be immobile while they are in the city. It gives us another tool for addressing dirt bikes," he said.

The bill would also prevent owners from repurchasing seized dirt bikes, a restriction sponsors said was necessary to keep drug dealers from buying the bikes back.

"What typically happens when the police seize these bikes [particularly from drug runners] is that the people who forfeited the bikes show up at auction and just buy it right back. This law outlaws that practice," said Shaun Adamec, spokesman for City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who also supports the bill.

Dirt bikes have been a source of controversy in Baltimore, with police and city leaders labeling them as hazards operated by reckless teens.

Last year, 7-year-old Gerard Mungo Jr. was arrested for allegedly sitting on a dirt bike. The arrest embroiled the police department in controversy and raised questions about the legality of sitting on a dirt bike with the ignition off. Gerard was released without being charged.

In the wake of the controversy, City Councilman Jack Young, D-District 12, proposed building a city-owned dirt bike park, a proposal the administration rebuffed.

"I think in order for us to control all this illegal riding, we need to be stricter," Young said. "I support the idea."

sjanis@baltimoreexaminer.com

DESSERT



LET THEM EAT CAKE

Cakelove employees Mary Meyers, left, and Cortni Romaine dance as the Baltimore Westsiders Marching Band performs during the bakery's grand opening in Canton. » See story, Page 21. — Arianne Starnes/Examiner

Howard considering trust fund for retiree benefits obligation

By Sara Michael
Examiner Staff Writer

Taking a page from Baltimore City's investment strategy, Howard County officials are considering a trust fund to tackle the looming burden of funding future retiree benefits.

Establishing a trust fund would provide officials more flexibility to invest the money and ensure it couldn't be spent when budget times are tight.

"Any money we put in there has to be used for health care for retirees," said Howard Finance Director Sharon Greisz.

"It also makes it clear we are committing that money to this liability."

A measure before the Howard County Council would create this

trust fund and a board of trustees to administer the fund.

Several surrounding counties are considering trust funds, and Baltimore City seeded a fund last year with \$15 million toward its \$2.9 billion liability.

A trust fund allows for long-term investment of the money, so the county can get a higher rate of return, Greisz said.

Beginning in fiscal 2008, state and local jurisdictions must show they can afford to fund retiree health benefits.

Howard's obligation is roughly \$477 million, and based on the benefit program, Howard must set aside about \$53 million each year to pay down this debt, officials said.

This year, Howard set aside \$14 million, which would go into the trust fund, Greisz said.

"We think it's financially responsible to start setting money aside

not too slow and not too fast," she said.

Michael Sanderson, legislative director for the Maryland Association of Counties, said a trust fund managed by a board of trustees "makes a good deal of sense."

Particularly for larger counties that have similar pension trust funds, officials can invest this money the same way or even in the same pot of money, he said.

If reforms are made to the health care system and the money is no longer needed, the trust can be dissolved and the money given back to the county to use, he said.

However, Christopher Summers, president of the conservative Maryland Public Policy Institute, said jurisdictions should consider cutting or renegotiating the benefit programs rather than just putting more money aside.

smichael@baltimoreexaminer.com

THE 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Dr. Angelina Whalley

The conceptual director behind Body Worlds 2 and the Body Worlds franchise now touring the globe, Dr. Angelina Whalley, met plastination inventor Gunther von Hagens in an anatomy class, and the two have presented the world with unprecedented views of the human body.

Body Worlds has a visceral impact on people who see it as well as those who refuse to go near it. How has this work affected you?

When I first began to work in the field of plastination, I was enthralled and amazed by the science of it, and the refinement of the science. But if one works closely in a setting, the setting becomes normal. What is extraordinary is what happens outside the sphere of my work. People who have seen the exhibition write movingly about their experiences at Body Worlds, and that is what affects me and my work now.

Is plastination something you would consider for your body?

Of course. I and my husband, Gunther von Hagens, and many members of our families and staff are registered donors in the Institute for Plastination's Body Donation Program.

Your plan was to practice medicine; what made you stick with Gunther von Hagens all this time?

Sometimes, something so monumental happens that you just feel that it is important to be a part of it. I did have great doubts about tying my fate to his science, but I was caught up in the vastness of his intention and ambition. As a physician, I had hoped to heal one patient at a time, but with Body Worlds, I have been able to teach preventive medicine to millions. — Karl B. Hille

