



Obituaries Nathaniel H. Hunt was a country club's horticulturalist. Reports on his death and those of other area residents begin on **B4**.

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EDUCATION

Charters and financing equity

A commission begins its examination of education funding in the District, and the thorny issue of whether charter schools get their fair share of money surfaces immediately. **B2**

JOHN KELLY'S WASHINGTON

A city spin on forecasts?

The Farmers' Almanac could replace the woolly caterpillar by using weather predictors found in our fair capital. **B3**



Fannie, Freddie charity may end

D.C. area nonprofits could lose help from large donors, study says

BY PATRICIA SULLIVAN

Fannie Mae and the Freddie Mac Foundation, the Washington area's two biggest contributors to local charities, will probably end their philanthropy in the next few years, with troubling consequences for nonprofit groups that focus on education and human services for the poor, children and families, predicts a study to be released Monday.

The two federal housing financing corporations gave nearly \$100 million to 500 local organizations in the past four years, but they significantly cut their donations after the housing bust and financial crisis hit in 2008.

Since then, the corporations have been placed in conservatorship and have focused more of their giving on groups that address housing issues. It is unlikely that their giving will return to previous highs, according to a report by George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis.

The Freddie Mac Foundation announced last month that it plans to spend its assets down to zero by early 2015. Fannie Mae, which previously announced plans to discontinue the homeless walkathon on the Mall after the coming Nov. 19 event, is also likely to receive a directive from federal officials to "curb if not eliminate its nonprofit funding as well," the report says. A Fannie Mae spokeswoman did not respond to requests for comment.

The implications for regional charities are significant.

"The real impact will be measured in human costs," the George Mason report says. "Fewer homes for foster care kids, fewer beds for the homeless, and the many other bottom-line human needs that are being served."

John McClain, who wrote the report with Stephen S. Fuller, said the loss of the corporate money could cause some nonprofit groups to close, "particularly if they were using the Fannie and Freddie money for operating

CHARITY CONTINUED ON **B3**

A blessed day for animals



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN NEWTON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Top, Monica Hammell prays with her dog Bonni-Belle during the traditional blessing of the animals ceremony at the Franciscan Monastery in Northeast Washington. Below, a Poor Clare nun leaves the monastery with her dog Marlie after the event, which is held annually in honor of the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the 12th-century patron saint of animals and the environment.

Group looks at how courts handle abuse

Some Montgomery judges seen as rude to women seeking help

BY DAN MORSE

Five years ago, Laurie Duker took a job helping abused women get restraining orders in Montgomery County. What she saw stunned her: Some judges belittled people or didn't give women the protection Duker thought they needed. The final straw, she said, was when a judge asked a man where he was from, heard "El Salvador" and said from the bench: "Figures."

So Duker quit and started a watchdog group. Over six months, she and 24 other volunteers observed 642 restraining-order hearings to critique the judges and the system. The group plans to release its first report Monday at a news conference.

The volunteers did not see any cases that ended tragically, in which a woman was killed or critically injured after being denied a

protective order.

But for victims of domestic violence, simply seeking help from the courts can be an emotionally charged, even desperate, step. In too many cases, the group found, judges made it even more difficult.

Although most of the judges were respectful, the monitors identified four as regularly rude—conduct that the monitors say could discourage women from returning to court. According to the group, one judge said to a petitioner: "Christ! Did you not read the form?" Another questioned a woman's assertion that her abuser was high on PCP: "Do you have a degree in chemistry?"

More than half the time, judges failed to tell men that violating a restraining order was a crime and that they had to surrender any firearms. Judges rarely had victims leave the courthouse ahead of the person they had just accused of abuse—a recommended practice in the tense moments after a hearing.

The group, which calls itself Court Watch Montgomery, aims

WATCH CONTINUED ON **B4**

Illuminating a split over town's identity

Perryville board to vote soon on casino request for large lighted sign

BY JOHN WAGNER

When Maryland's first slots casino opened a year ago, it faced some tough odds. Even with a strategic location just off Interstate 95, motorists who didn't know it was there were unlikely to discover it.

Hollywood Casino Perryville, located in the northeastern corner of the state, isn't visible from the tree-lined highway. That might be about to change in a really big way.

This week, Perryville's commissioners plan to try to resolve a pesky issue that has split their town of 3,670 residents: whether to allow the casino to erect an illuminated sign on its property

so tall that it would be visible from the interstate.

At a proposed height of 175 feet, the sign would loom larger than most of the nation's lighthouses. The debate has touched several nerves in this once-thriving rail town on the banks of the Susquehanna River, which in less prosperous times has welcomed the casino as a source of much-needed employment.

"Some people say they don't want to be known as the town with the casino, but we need to face reality: That's what we are," said Michael A. Dawson, one of the town commissioners who plans to vote for the sign. "I don't buy the argument that it takes away from the aesthetic beauty of Perryville. The last thing I want is another broken-down, boarded up business here."

Michelle Linkey, a commissioner on the other side of the

CASINO CONTINUED ON **B4**

Home is where the hearth isn't

U-Va. bans using fireplaces in historic rooms over safety issues

BY SUSAN SVRLUGA

One of the first questions tourists usually ask when they poke their heads into one of the coveted historic rooms on the University of Virginia's central Lawn is "Does the fireplace work?"

And then: "Are you allowed to use it?"

In the past, people often laughed when they heard "yes."

But this year, for the first time in nearly 200 years, U-Va. officials banned fires in the fireplaces. During inspections after a roof restoration project, workers found damage to the mortar and lining of the chimneys, and officials told students in the 106 rooms with fireplaces that they would not be allowed to use them.

The rooms are connected by wooden roof and floor structures with no sprinklers, said Michael Merriam, associate director of maintenance.

"A fire in one could quickly spread to another," Merriam said, adding that although there is a primary concern for student safety, "there's also a very large con-



NORM SHAFER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Meg Raymond of Dallas studies outside her room on the U-Va. Lawn. Students are not allowed to use the fireplaces in 106 historic rooms.

cern that we don't endanger an architectural treasure."

"I was very disappointed. It was something I was really looking forward to using," said senior Matt Cofer, who lives in one of the rooms, which often have a rocking chair and a small pile of wood

by the door. One of his best memories is of hanging out in a friend's room during a blizzard, watching the fire while snow fell.

School officials are trying to decide what to do next. It could

FIREPLACE CONTINUED ON **B4**

Octobrrr is off to an unsettling start

Jet stream pushes mercury 20 degrees below normal in D.C.

BY STEVE HENDRIX

Mary Marcado found herself torn between two seasons this weekend as an unusual early cold snap signaled the abrupt arrival of autumn in the Washington area. The native of Key West, Fla., visiting the District with her husband, Pedro, was crossing McPherson Square on Sunday with Pedro's sweater over her shoulders and open-toe sandals on her feet, which were "freezing."

"I was going to ask the concierge [of the Madison Hotel] if anyone had left any winter clothes behind," she said. The couple planned to add a stop to the day's sightseeing plans: the coat department at Filene's Basement.

"I didn't bring the clothes for this," Marcado said. "We love your city, but we're hating your weather."

Across the region, tourists and residents scrambled to accommodate an abrupt shift from flip-

flops to fleeces as the jet stream dipped over the Mid-Atlantic and delivered a premature load of chilly air. Thermometers barely reached into the 50s Sunday, more than 20 degrees below the average high for the second day of October.

"It's unusual," said Washington Post meteorologist Jason Same-now. "This is more characteristic of temperatures you expect in late

"We love your city, but we're hating your weather."

Mary Marcado, D.C. visitor from Florida

November."

Building supervisors rushed to make sure boilers were ready for an early start to the heating season. Many homeowners who had been running air conditioning only days ago were surprised to wake up to find their furnaces running. Strosniders Hardware in Silver Spring reported a boom-let in sales of firewood and space heaters Sunday morning.

"We've sold more than a dozen" of the heaters, manager Jerry Bennett said. "People want a little heat right next to them."

At the weekly Takoma Park farmers market, vendors said the change in weather brought a sudden interest in fall foods.

Patty Oakley-Audia of Audia Farms in Hampstead, Md., has had her pumpkins and winter squash out for weeks, but they had little attraction. "Last week, people walked by them and said, 'I don't want to think about that yet, I'll have to eat that all winter,'" she said. "Now they're buying it. They're asking what goes well in soups."

In an adjacent block, the Takoma Park Street Festival was a sea of dark sweaters and wool caps. When Julia Andrews felt the chill, she threw out her plans to serve popcorn and lemonade at the Andrews Tutoring booth. Instead, she handed out popcorn and hot cider.

And while dozens waited in lines for sizzling chicken skewers and steaming pad Thai, Julius Little sat undisturbed in his soft-serve ice cream wagon. After a good summer at street festivals

WEATHER CONTINUED ON **B4**