



69, 9 a.m. 77, noon 80, 5 p.m. 73, 9 p.m.

Obituaries Orlando Brown, 40, a former NFL player, sued the league after he was hit in the eye by a flag thrown by an official. **B7**

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THE REGION

High-level job

The advance man of a team of experts begins to examine the earthquake-damaged Washington Monument. **B3**

JOHN KELLY'S WASHINGTON

For the funny bone

Folks at a West Virginia festival serve up an ample helping of beauty pageant with their roadkill cook-off. And if you find that amusing, well, so do they. **B2**

FEDERAL DIARY

A mixed bag

The outlook for federal health insurance premiums next year could be worse, but it's not good. **B4**



PHOTOS BY MARVIN JOSEPH/THE WASHINGTON POST

Trenton Gilstrap, front, with fellow Gwynn Park High students. He didn't speak until he was 6; now colleges are wooing him.

Haven of support and acceptance

New center in D.C. offers services to youths with disabilities and injured veterans

BY TERESA TOMASSONI

For years, Tatia Gilstrap searched for teen social groups, summer camps and sports teams in the Washington area in which her son, Trenton, could have fun without worrying about winning or being teased.

Trenton has Asperger syndrome and epilepsy, and Gilstrap's painstaking search for activities and services for him often ended up nowhere.

But next month, the HSC Foundation, a long-standing disability advocacy organization in the District, will open the National Youth Transitions Center, a one-stop shop with a variety of services aimed at people with disabilities and injured veterans, ages 14 to 26.

"If I would have had this youth transition center years back, then it would have saved a lot of leg time," said Gilstrap, who lives in Brandywine.

The seven-story building, located at 2013 H St. NW in Foggy Bottom, will house more than 40 local and national organizations to help the youths transition smoothly into adulthood. In one place, families will find a psychologist, nutritionist, career counselor, and perhaps most important, Gilstrap said, supportive peers who know what it is like to be different.

For someone such as Trenton, 17, who did not speak until he was 6, the services and social network that will be provided at the center are crucial. He remembers well how ostracized his disabilities sometimes made him feel. In the sixth grade, he once had an epileptic seizure in class.



Tatia Gilstrap had long searched for groups and activities where her son, Trenton, who has Asperger syndrome and epilepsy, could have fun without being teased.

"People were scared," he said. "I heard one kid tell her parents I had a disease. Kids thought I was dead."

Trenton also remembers pushing his peers further away by awkwardly staring at them or speaking in an "outside voice" at inappropriate times, behaviors typical of a person with Asperger syndrome, a form of autism.

Inspired by his social experiences and fed up with the lack of resources, Trenton and his mother in 2006 started a nonprofit

organization, Mind Expansion Community Services, which will partner with the foundation.

The Gilstraps' organization, which works to find creative solutions to community concerns, also serves as an umbrella for Trenton's group, the Hidden Inspirations Project (H.I.P.) Kids. Through social activities, such as going to Six Flags and the Baltimore aquarium, H.I.P. Kids aims to

STUDENT CONTINUED ON B5

Report suggests that more doctors are needed in D.C.

FEW ARE ACTIVE PRIMARY-CARE PHYSICIANS

Some areas underserved; worry over health law

BY LENA H. SUN

A new report on the number of physicians practicing in the District appears to confirm what many patients already experience: It's not easy to find a doctor in Washington.

The report by the D.C. Board of Medicine, to be released Wednesday, shows that 8,940 doctors are licensed to work in the nation's capital, but only about 4,000 practice in the District. And of those, only 2,821 spend more than 20 hours a week seeing patients.

The numbers drop even further among actively practicing primary-care doctors: 382 in internal medicine, 307 in pediatrics, 119 in obstetrics and gynecology, and 110 in family practice.

The report provides what board officials say is the first detailed snapshot of the physician workforce in the District. It was drawn from a survey during license renewal last fall and early this year. It does not draw conclusions about shortages, but the numbers suggest more doctors are needed.

"People will complain they do not have access to physicians, and, holy cow, 9,000 have a license. But what ends up happening, only a fraction actually practice in the District," said Janis Orłowski, board chair. "I think it's not a lot."

The report found that actively practicing doctors are clustered in Wards 1, 2, 3 and 5, near hospitals. Health-care experts said any shortages that might be perceived in the District depend very heavily on where a person lives.

In Ward 3, for example, there is an abundance of physicians, with "literally hundreds of doctors to choose from," said Michael Williams, chief of health-care operations for the nonprofit D.C. Primary Care Association. But he said only 90 doctors list a business address east of the Anacostia River.

The District has a "severe maldistribution of physicians" rather than a shortage, given that roughly 50 percent of the population lives east of the river but only a

DOCTORS CONTINUED ON B6

Prosecutor, defense spar at senator's trial

Md. lawmaker Currie faces federal bribery and extortion charges

BY JOHN WAGNER

Starkly different portrayals of Maryland Sen. Ulysses Currie's relationship with a local grocery chain were presented to jurors Tuesday as they began weighing federal bribery and extortion charges against the 74-year-old legislator in a federal courtroom in Baltimore.

A prosecutor used her opening statement to walk jurors through a series of instances in which she said Currie (D-Prince George's) conspired with two corporate executives to provide government favors to Shoppers Food Warehouse for more than five years without disclosing \$245,000 in payments.

"This is a case about a politician who took bribes," Kathleen O. Gavin, an assistant U.S. attorney, told jurors at the outset of her presentation. "He sold his office

for almost a quarter of a million dollars."

Attorneys for Currie and the two executives countered that what unfolded looked nothing like bribery as most people understand it. Currie and Shoppers had signed a consulting contract, the lawyers said. Currie paid state and federal taxes on his income from Shoppers. And his work was hardly a "secret bribery relationship," a defense lawyer said. Currie appeared in public at store openings across the region.

"Their allegations simply do not make sense," said Lucius T. Outlaw III, an assistant federal public defender who is representing Currie and who warned jurors that they would hear nothing about wiretaps, hidden stashes of cash or kickbacks.

The lawyers' statements were the opening salvos in what is expected to be a highly contentious trial that could, if Currie is convicted, send him, the former chairman of the Senate budget committee, to prison. The judge has said the trial is likely to run about six weeks.

CURRIE CONTINUED ON B6

Rabbis consider how to fit today into holiday sermons

BY MICHELLE BOORSTEIN

The subject of Israel has grown increasingly sensitive for rabbis, with the American Jewish community divided over the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. But the subject will be unavoidable this week as uncertainty in the Middle East and Israel's opposition to a Palestinian bid for United Nations recognition coincide with the start of the High Holidays, when themes and liturgy are all about the uncertainty of life.

"Even with disagreements, Israel is on everyone's minds," said Gil Steinlauf, rabbi at the Northwest synagogue Adas Israel.

Recognizing the confluence of Jewish preaching and news about Israel, Kenneth Cohen, a Bethesda rabbi, recently wrote a resource guide to help colleagues talk about Israel during the holidays, which begin when Rosh Hashanah starts at sunset Wednesday and end with

Yom Kippur next week. The guide was funded by the Israeli Embassy and sent to virtually every rabbi in the country.

Aimed at the most-attended synagogue services of the year, Cohen's tutorial includes references to Jewish scripture and prayers for peace, love of Israel, compromise and negotiations, among other things. It includes sample sermons from rabbis across the theological spectrum.

In interviews, rabbis around the region reflected on a variety of approaches for dealing with Israel. Some said their job was to stand for an unwavering commitment to the existence and safety of the state of Israel. Others want to help Jews find areas of commonality in attitudes about the state and the biblical idea of a Jewish homeland.

Still others said they planned to

SERMONS CONTINUED ON B6



COURTLAND MILLOY

Whenever there's trouble around the Chinatown and Gallery Place Metro stations in the District, the finger of blame often points to a most unusual group of suspects: a black gay gang called Check It.

Depending on whom you talk to, they're just a bunch of mischievous gender benders and drama queens, vulnerable gay youths seeking safety in numbers. Or, they're one of the largest, more aggressive gangs in the city.

To hear the leader of Check It tell it, there may be some truth to both.

"I just got tired of people beating on me and calling me faggie," Tayron Bennett, 21, told me recently. He'd helped to

Black, young, gay and fighting back



COURTLAND MILLOY/THE WASHINGTON POST

Members of the gang Check It — from left, Alton Wright, 18, Tavonte Graham, 19, Tayron Bennett, 21, and Michael Boatwright, 21 — gather to socialize and defend themselves at Freedom Plaza.

organize Check It while a student at Hine Junior High School. Other gay youths from his Trinidad neighborhood in Northeast soon joined, followed by gay youths from throughout the city.

D.C. police estimate that Check It has a core membership of about 20 and counts between 50 and 100 others as "associates." "At first, I tried fighting bullies one-on-one, but they don't fight fair; they fight two and three on

one," Bennett said. So the youths got together and "started carrying mace, knives, brass knuckles and stun guns, and if somebody messed with one of us then all of us would gang up on them."

Check It.

Bennett was cryptic about the meaning of the gang's name, saying only that it might have something to do with going to a nightclub and "checking your hat or coat." Or gun? Or, he said, it might mean, "You better check yourself."

Bennett had just been released from the D.C. jail when he spoke. He'd been arrested and charged with assault after a melee near Gallery Place earlier this year. But the charges were dropped the day he was scheduled to appear in court. Although happy to be free, he despaired over losing more time behind bars. He'd also gotten into a fight in jail and came out with a fresh scar on his

MILLOY CONTINUED ON B6