

## TAKING ADVANTAGE

Three homers, three sacrifice flies help O's pummel A's, 10-3, shrink wild-card deficit to two games **SPORTS**

# Back to school

Thousands of students return to the excitement of education this week, some at new buildings and some at new stages of their lives



KIM HAIRSTON/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTO

Cole Benson-Williams, 5, right, looks last week at the new lockers at Stoneleigh Elementary School in Baltimore County, which is due to reopen today after renovation and expansion. Several new schools in the area open this week. **ARTICLE, NEWS PG 6** Advice on dealing with school-related anxieties, **SUNRISE, PG 1**

# A dream school realized in city

New Baltimore Design School serves as a model of how to pay for modern facilities



Sen. Catherine Pugh is pictured in the reception area of the Baltimore Design School with principal Nathan Burns, left.

**BY ERICA L. GREEN**  
The Baltimore Sun

When Baltimore school officials lobbied state lawmakers to fund an ambitious \$1 billion, 10-year plan this year to modernize facilities, no one understood having a decade-long vision more than Sen. Catherine Pugh.

It was about 10 years ago that Pugh felt a spark on a New York City street corner as she watched the hustle and bustle of students heading into the High School of Fashion Industries. But when she spoke of replicating such a school in Baltimore, her idea was met with veiled skepticism.

"No one thought I was crazy; they just sort of looked at me and said, 'OK,'" she said with a chuckle, mimicking a stoic smile and patronizing nod. "So I took those OKs and ran with them."

As the school year starts in the city and other school systems around the area, city and state officials will celebrate today the opening of the new Baltimore Design School. The \$26.85 million transformation of a vacant, century-old building into a modern-chic school is emblematic of what the district hopes to accomplish with the \$1 billion — building schools that support a 21st-century education.

Interim CEO Tisha Edwards said the school's building and instructional program, which focuses on architecture, fashion and graphic design, "represent the innovative spirit of city schools" that she is encouraging in the new school year. "The Baltimore Design School," page 6

# U.S. spurns Syria's offer

Too late, official says; U.N. poised to check on reported gas attack

**BY CHRISTI PARSONS AND PATRICK J. McDONNELL**  
Tribune Newspapers

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration dismissed Syria's offer to allow inspectors access to the site of a suspected chemical weapons attack as having come "too late" and declared there was "very little doubt" the regime had used poison gas against civilians — a statement that appeared to move the U.S. closer to a military strike.

On Sunday, Syrian authorities said their government had agreed to allow U.N. inspectors access to the areas near Damascus where the attacks allegedly took place Wednesday. Opposition groups claim hundreds of people were killed, including women and children. The Syrian government has denied it used chemical weapons.

U.N. officials confirmed that its inspection team, already in Syria to investigate previous allegations of chemical-weapons use, would begin "on-site fact-finding activities" today. The Syrians have "agreed to provide the necessary cooperation," according to a U.N. statement.

But a senior White House administration official, in a written statement given to reporters on condition of anonymity, brushed aside the Syrian offer.

"If the Syrian government had nothing to hide and wanted to prove to the world that it had not used chemical weapons in this incident, it would have ceased its attacks on the area and granted immediate access to the U.N. — five days ago," the official said. By now, the regime has had many opportunities. **See SYRIA, page 11**

## SUMMARY OF THE NEWS

### MARYLAND

**VIOLENCE IN CITY:** Seven people — including a 15-year-old boy who was killed — were shot in West Baltimore on Saturday night as police grapple with a recent wave of shootings with multiple victims. **NEWS PG 2**

**RACING AT FAIR:** The Maryland State Fair has trouble finding enough horses to stage competitive races, despite purses that have increased because of revenue from slot machines. The meet runs 10 days. **NEWS PG 2**

### NATION

**MARCH REMEMBRANCE:** President Obama plans to speak Wednesday on the anniversary of the March on Washington, joining previous presidents and Oprah Winfrey on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. **NEWS PG 4**

**MORE EAVESDROPPING:** A German news magazine says the Fort Meade-based National Security Agency bugged the headquarters of the United Nations, further straining relations between Washington and its allies. **NEWS PG 8**

### TODAY'S WEATHER

**PARTLY SUNNY**

**85**  
HIGH

**66**  
LOW



Cloudy, a storm Tuesday **SPORTS PG 8**

# Fish kills, toxic algae plague Shore creek

Residents, state, researchers seek remedy in Stevensville

**BY TIMOTHY B. WHEELER**  
The Baltimore Sun

STEVENSVILLE — When Jim Wilson retired from the federal government four years ago, he and his wife moved to Kent Island, where they initially enjoyed watching ospreys fishing in Northwest Creek from their waterfront home.

But now, Wilson and most others living

around the creek stay out of the murky water, which has turned yellow-green the past two summers. Even the ospreys steer clear of it, he said.

Fish kills and stubborn "blooms" of blue-green algae, which at times form a floating scum, plague Northwest Creek. Authorities have posted signs along the shore warning people not to go in the water when it looks odd and to keep children and pets away. The algae can emit a toxin capable of poisoning animals and people if they ingest enough of it.

"This is by far the worst it's been," said

Hamilton Walker, who has lived here since 2000 and no longer lets his grandchildren swim in the creek.

Waterfront property owners have struggled for several years to get help from the state in restoring the creek, essentially a 100-acre lake, as its narrow, meandering outlet to the Chesapeake Bay is essentially blocked by a buildup of sand.

How that happened, what should be done about it and by whom have been matters of dispute, which until recently seemed to have no solution. **See CREEK, page 11**

# Syria's access offer too late, U.S. says

**SYRIA**, From page 1

ties to destroy evidence, including by shelling the areas, the official noted.

A "belated decision by the regime to grant access to the U.N. team is too late to be credible," the statement said.

U.S. officials are continuing to assess the facts to determine "how to respond to this indiscriminate use of chemical weapons," the official said.

"The president has not made a decision to take action. But as you've seen, we think there is little doubt that these attacks were undertaken by the regime," the official said.

The dismissal of the Syrian offer of inspections, the assertion of "little doubt" about the use of proscribed weapons and the labeling of the attack as "indiscriminate" represent a toughening of the U.S. rhetoric. The language seems to close off potential avenues for avoiding military action.

The statement came as President Barack Obama continued to consult with advisers and allies about a potential response to the alleged use of chemical weapons, which Obama previously had said would cross a "red line."

On Sunday, Obama spoke with French President Francois Hollande, while Secretary of State John Kerry talked with officials from Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Within the administration, advocates of military action say the U.S. needs to use force to bolster an international norm against the use of chemical weapons.



SANA/AFP/GETTY PHOTO

An official photograph released by the Syrian Arab News Agency shows President Bashar Assad, center, meeting with newly appointed ministers in Damascus.

According to that argument, if the U.S. and its allies prove unwilling to use force in this case, they will embolden not just the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, but also Iran.

On the other hand, Obama and his aides want to avoid setting off a cycle of action and retaliation that would draw the U.S. more deeply into the Syrian civil war. And as recently as Friday, the president suggested the U.S. would need both clear evidence and a U.N. mandate before taking

military action.

On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urged a strong response, saying "what happened in Syria was a tragedy and a horrible crime."

On the other side, Russian officials warned against a rush toward military action, and a Syrian government statement said any American strike would "create a ball of fire that will inflame the Middle East."

The Syrian government has blamed the use of poisons on rebels seeking to discredit

## Poll: U.S. should stay out of Syrian conflict

WASHINGTON — Americans strongly oppose U.S. intervention in Syria's civil war and believe Washington should stay out of the conflict, even if reports that Syria's government used deadly chemicals to attack civilians are confirmed, a Reuters/Ipsos poll says. About 60 percent of Americans surveyed said the U.S. should not intervene in Syria's civil war, while 9 percent thought President Barack Obama should act. More Americans would back intervention if it is established that chemical weapons have been used, but even that support has dipped.

— Reuters

the government and bring on international retaliation.

Representatives of groups fighting the Syrian regime have released videotapes and photographs that appear to show victims of a chemical attack. Experts have said the images are not conclusive but could be evidence of use of some form of a nerve gas. *Parsons reported from Washington and McDonnell from Beirut.* [cparsons@tribune.com](mailto:cparsons@tribune.com)

# On Shore, Northwest Creek plagued by fish kills, algae

**CREEK**, From page 1

Residents say the lake was once a tidal tributary that teemed with geese and ducks, fish and muskrats. They said it became cut off after the farms that once surrounded it began to be replaced by homes in the 1960s, and they suggested that a builder might have hastened the process by filling in the creek's mouth.

State officials say the filling in was more likely a natural phenomenon, driven by tides and currents.

"All these inlets want to close up, everything from the Ocean City inlet to these very small ones," said Kevin Sellner, chief of riparian and wetland restoration for the Department of Natural Resources.

The creek does get periodic storm-driven influxes of water from the bay, but it has become shallower over time, with fish kills occurring when summer heat and algae deplete the water of oxygen. There have been 18 fish kills in Northwest Creek since 1986, according to the Maryland Department of the Environment. Nearly all stemmed from a lack of oxygen, and investigators noted algae blooms in most instances.

The lake dried up completely during an especially dry summer in 2007, residents say, and things have gotten worse. Last year, while investigating fish kills, state officials detected potentially unsafe levels of blue-green algae and warned residents to stay out of the water. There was another large fish kill this summer of about 400 carp, and the algae returned, prompting renewed warnings.

The algae is *Microcystis*, an ancient form of bacteria that uses sunlight to process its food, as plants do. It feeds on nutrients in the water and can draw more nutrients from bottom sediments by consuming oxygen in the water at night and carbon dioxide in daytime.



Signs at Northwest Creek warn against swimming when algae blooms are visible.

"This is the most primitive organism we know of," said Kevin Sellner, executive director of the Chesapeake Research Consortium, who along with other scientists has been studying *Microcystis* blooms that periodically crop up around the state. "And yet it can perpetuate itself day and night. I'd like to be so primitive."

*Microcystis* releases toxins, and if enough are ingested they can damage the liver and nervous systems of animals, including humans. Though there have been no documented cases of Marylanders being poisoned lately, a Girl Scout camp in Caroline County couldn't use its lake for three years because of blooms, and a pair of dogs died several years ago after swimming in an algae-infested Dorchester County lake.

The levels measured this summer in Northwest Creek weren't as high as what killed the dogs, but they prompted warnings because they were above the safety threshold set by the World Health Organization, said Matthew Rowe, deputy science services director for the Maryland Department of the Environment.



TIMOTHY B. WHEELER/BALTIMORE SUN PHOTOS

Kevin Sellner, executive director of the Chesapeake Research Consortium, in rear, and Tonghui Gao, graduate research assistant, test for blue-green algae.

ment of the Environment.

The warnings — and the worry — have kept residents off the water.

"We do have a paddleboat," said Wilson, "but we really haven't used it."

Residents want the creek dredged and reopened to the bay, arguing that the tides would flush away its water-quality woes. But that could cost more than \$1 million, by some estimates, and residents say that until this year, they've been told it is up to them to figure out how to restore Northwest Creek, never mind how to pay for it.

State officials have told residents, who formed a nonprofit, Alliance to Restore Northwest Creek, that environmental permits likely will be issued once the group fleshes out plans for dredging and opening the creek.

But drawing up a plan costs money the group doesn't have, said Wilson, the alliance's chairman, and residents can't get anyone to give them a planning grant until they get the permits.

"It's one of these 'Catch-22' scenarios," he said.

The state's attitude changed this year, residents say, after they enlisted the help of their state senator, E.J. Pipkin, a Republican who recently resigned his seat to move to Texas. After last summer's water scare, he pressed state officials to take a more active role in trying to fix the creek, writing a series of letters and holding a meeting in May.

"The waters of Northwest Creek are owned by the State, and the State should have the primary role in the creek's maintenance," he wrote the state environmental secretary in February.

Since then, the state has allocated \$40,000 to draw up a plan for restoring the creek and awarded the contract recently to a Cambridge firm.

Smith acknowledged the former legislator's advocacy, but said officials were moved by the circumstances, not political pressure.

"When you have habitat and human health issues come into play, that changes the whole tenor of the thing and cranks it up a couple notches," Smith said. "We all recognize there's an issue out there [and] we need to address it. ... It's not going to go away."

The plan should clarify options for restoring the creek and clear the way for regulators to issue permits, but that still leaves the question of who will pay for the remedies.

"That is a bridge we haven't gotten to yet," Smith said. "We're talking about a project that's going to be pricey, and it's not determined where are those funds and who's going to pay for it?"

Part of the algae problem might be self-inflicted, the DNR official said. Scientists studying the creek measured high ammonia levels there at one point, indicative of a glut of nitrogen. All the homes are on septic systems, and nitrogen from them might be seeping into the water. Some farmland still drains into the creek, raising the possibility that fertilizer might be running off, Smith added.

Wilson said residents know they must share in the effort to return the creek to vitality.

"There's snapping turtles and a few snakes in there," he said, "but really nothing else at this point. It really is a shame."

Meanwhile, scientists with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science have been testing remedies for knocking off the bloom.

Just off Walker's dock, they have experimented with a treatment that includes spraying the water with a compound made from ground-up crab shells. The acidified solution gets the algae to clump, and after a layer of fine sediment is sprayed on the surface, everything sinks to the bottom, leaving the water clearer.

"We're trying to do this with the cheapest method possible," said Allen Place, a professor at UM's Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology in Baltimore.

Place and colleagues rid the Girl Scout lake of its problem, but only after draining it — something that would be costly and complicated for Northwest Creek, given its size and proximity to the bay.

Walker welcomed the scientists' efforts but said residents believe dredging offers the best option.

"That's an interesting solution, but it's not a long-term solution," he said. "What we want to do is a forever solution." [tim.wheeler@baltsun.com](mailto:tim.wheeler@baltsun.com)

## DEATH / LODGE NOTICES

**WEISS, Sam**  
On August 25, 2013, SAM WEISS; beloved husband of Marie Weiss (nee Goldblum); devoted father of Paul (Jean) Weiss; loving grandfather of Benjie (Elizabeth) Weiss, Nicole Weiss and Dominic Toscano; loving great grandfather of Dominic Toscano Jr, Grayson Toscano, Destiny Toscano, Taylor Toscano, Rebecca Stem and Andrew Stem.

Services at SOL LEVINSON & BROS., INC., 8900 Reisterstown Road, at Mount Wilson Lane, on Tuesday, August 27, at 10AM. Interment Baltimore Hebrew Cemetery - Berrymans Lane. Please omit flowers. Contributions in his memory may be sent to, U.S. Holocaust Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place S.W., Washington, DC 20024. In mourning at 233 Cedarmere Circle, Owings Mills, MD 21117, Through Thursday, with evening services only. [sollewinson.com](mailto:sollewinson.com)

## ZANNINO, Maria Santa

On August 24, 2013, MARIA SANTA ZANNINO (nee Glorioso) passed away, embraced by her husband, 8 children and spouses, grandchildren, brother and cousin. Maria was the loving daughter of the late Charles Glorioso and Felicia (nee Barranco) Glorioso; beloved wife of Joseph N. Zannino Jr., and devoted mother of Joseph N. Zannino III, and wife Barbara, Rosemarie Zannino Law, and husband Thomas, Charles S. Zannino, Felicia Zannino Baker and husband Robert, Salvatrice Zannino Marziale, and husband Lee, Kathleen Zannino Mangione, and husband Louis, Salvatore Vincent DePaul Zannino, and Domenico Zannino, and wife Kerri. She is the cherished grandmother of Anthony V. Carmen, Valentine Marziale, Lee Paul Marziale Jr., MariaSanta Mangione, Lucia Mangione, Jerry Baker, Nina Marie Zannino, Eva Marie Baker, Sophia Marie Baker, Joseph N. Zannino IV, Isabella Zannino, Luigi Nicholas Mangione, Sergio Pasquale Zannino, Luciana Bella Zannino, and Grace Maria Zannino; and beloved great-grandmother of Stella and Ava Carmen; dear sister of Joseph Glorioso, and wife Dolores, and the late Concetta Muffoletto; and also survived by many loving relatives, friends and colleagues. Mrs. Zannino graduated from St. Ambrose Elementary School, Seton High School and Walters' Modeling Academy. She also attended the Peabody Conservatory of Music. After high school, she was employed as Executive Secretary to the Controller/Treasurer of the Johns Hopkins Hospital until 1957, at which time she married Joseph N. Zannino, Jr. with maid of honor, Constance Fava Piracci and best man Andrea Mastellone. Mrs. Zannino became a Funeral Director in 1965 and has continuously been engaged in the Management of the family funeral home, which was founded by her husband, Joseph, in 1958. Mrs. Zannino was the recipient of numerous awards for devoted leadership service to the Order Sons of Italy in America, and was instrumental in the formation of numerous lodges and coordinator of the Italian Festivals and Columbus Day Parades in Baltimore for many years. As a board member, she also contributed her organizational and her interpersonal skills to various associations including The American Council on Italian Matters, The Italian-American Organizations United, The American Society of Italians and Friends, and supported Our Lady of Pompei Church and St. Leo the Great Church. She was especially devoted to fundraising for children with disabilities through the March of Dimes, and Kennedy Krieger Institute.

A visitation will be held at the family owned JOSEPH N. ZANNINO JR., FUNERAL HOME, 263 S. Conkling St., (at Gough) on TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY from 2-5 and 7-9pm. A Funeral Mass will be held on THURSDAY, August 29, at 11am at Our Lady of Pompei Church. Entombment at Dulaney Valley Memorial Gardens. In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to Kennedy Krieger Foundation in memory of Maria Santa Glorioso Zannino.

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