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Maryland Independent

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Charles County, Maryland ■ 75¢

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Southern Maryland Blue Crabs outfielder Devon Rodriguez jogs in from left field.

PHOTO BY BERT HINDMAN

Paying the price for a diamond dream

Like other Blue Crabs players, Rodriguez lives on shoestring budget while pushing for a major league career

By CHARLIE WRIGHT
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It's the rallying cry among independent baseball players, a beacon of hope, a true mark of success for every athlete at this level: making it to "The Show."

But first, they have to make it to affiliated baseball.

Ballplayers plying their trade in independent ball are in a constant state of limbo, teetering on the edge of relative stardom

and irrelevance.

Scanning through rosters of the six significant independent leagues across the country conjures up memories of yesteryear as well as curiosity. Every team seems to have former major leaguers, undrafted college standouts and recent minor league dropouts. No matter their origins, their backstories or the number of entries on a Baseball Reference page, the goal remains to some-

day earn a check signed by one of the 30 Major League Baseball organizations. That could be with any of their minor league affiliates on the way up — or the ultimate destination — calling their home field one of those American cathedrals of sports.

Yet, these young men must weigh current financial responsibilities against future career

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Disability advocacy display visits local library

P.D. Brown holds reception for Department of Disabilities tour

By CHARLIE WRIGHT
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P.D. Brown Memorial Library hosted a reception for the traveling disAbility History Tour on Tuesday in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

The tour celebrates the 27th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), with the primary draw being a five-panel display titled "Advocacy: A History of People Speaking Up for Themselves," on loan from the Museum of disAbility

History. The collection tracks the progression of the advocacy movement from early educational facilities to organizations dedicated to the cause. A sixth panel designed by a local group depicting disability history in Maryland will be added at the conclusion of the tour. Charles County is the fifth stop on the six-city trip, and the display will be available for viewing until August 19.

A video of former U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer's (D-Md., 5th) annual Fifth District

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STAFF PHOTO BY PAUL LAGASSE

The 15th annual Women's Equality Day luncheon, hosted by U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer, was a sell-out event.

Annual luncheon celebrates Maryland's women leaders

Baltimore mayor was keynote speaker at the annual event

By PAUL LAGASSE
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Heavy rains did not prevent a full house at the Colony South Hotel in Clinton on Tuesday for U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer's (D-Md., 5th) annual Fifth District

Women's Equality Day luncheon. More than 300 guests and elected officials attended this 15th occasion of the event.

Hoyer noted that this year marked the 97th anniversary of the 19th Amendment

granting women the right to vote, as well as the 45th anniversary of Title IX, which prohibits gender discrimination in public education

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Schools taking action in light of abuse incidents

Hill takes questions, discusses changes following Bell arrest

By JAMIE ANFENSON-COMEAU
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Additional cameras, additional training for employees and counseling for anyone affected by the arrest of a former instructional assistant — charged with sexually abusing numerous students — were just a few of the changes Charles County Public Schools Superintendent Kimberly Hill announced during

a packed and sometimes contentious information night with Benjamin Stoddert Middle School parents Wednesday.

More than 120 people attended Wednesday's meeting, and 18 shared comments and questions regarding the school system's response. Five of the

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Hoyer decries hate, violence in Virginia

Highlights local, national priorities

By TAMARA WARD
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During a press conference Monday in Bowie, House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md., 5th) focused on condemning the recent acts of hate and violence in Charlottesville, Va., and local priorities like the outlook for the Gov. Thomas Johnson

Bridge replacement, among other issues.

"I am appalled by the groups that fermented the demonstrations — the alt rights, white supremacists, nationalists, Nazi sympathizers, people who I think represent the worst instincts in mankind," Hoyer said.

The 18-term congressman expressed frustration with President

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DISABILITIES

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president George H.W. Bush signing the ADA greeted the audience of two dozen people at the reception, followed by a dialogue from department officials and library staff about the significance of the act.

"It's really the Civil Rights Act for those with disabilities," said Carrie McGraw, director of communication and outreach for the Maryland Department of Disabilities. "It was

really the first time the rights of those with disabilities were addressed on a federal level."

The occasion hit close to home for Charles County Public Library Executive Director Janet Salazar, who has multiple relatives that utilize ADA services. She drew parallels between the legislation and the library while addressing the crowd.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act has some things in common with the public library," Salazar said. "The ADA provides for equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in

employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities and transportation. In the public library, we affirm the right of all library users to open access of information."

The event closed with an appearance by Deputy Secretary of Disabilities William Frank, who spoke about the importance of celebrating the act and spreading its principles throughout the community.

"We are committed to a Maryland in which all citizens are able to access the same resources and services," said

Frank, before presenting a citation to Salazar and library staff to applaud them on their participation in the tour.

Charles County Commissioner Amanda Stewart (D) attended the event and said she plans to draw up a proclamation to bring attention to the celebration. As for the local government's role in disability awareness, Stewart explained the administration is responsible for making sure facilities in the county are in compliance with ADA regulations.

"We just make sure that our building codes are up to stan-

dard to make sure people with disabilities can experience and go to any building for any service," Stewart said. "If a county resident has a problem, we're there to make sure our buildings are up to code."

The tour will close with a visit to the Kent County Public Library in Chestertown. P.D. Brown Memorial Library is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for those interesting in checking out the display.

Twitter: @CharliIndyNews

HOYER

From Page A1

Donald Trump's initial response to the incidents on the campus of the University of Virginia that led to the death of anti-hate protester Heather Heyer. Hoyer called Trump's response lame and tepid because he initially failed to call out white supremacist groups.

Hoyer inferred that Trump appealed to "the nationalist groups that spew hate and division" during his campaign, which may have contributed to the president's initial hesitation to condemn the acts by name.

Pleased to hear the president finally condemned the groups by name, Hoyer said it took Trump 72 hours to say it and that was an indication that it was not a gut instinct for the president to reject it initially.

In an interview with Southern Maryland Newspapers on Tuesday, Maryland Sen. Steve Waugh (R-Calvert, St. Mary's) also condemned the hateful acts of Charlottesville and said leaders need to set the example.

"Radical extremist hatred finally became political murder in the last two months. We need both parties in Congress, led by the president, to give us all an example we can follow. Every one of us needs [to] say

our prayers, try to love our fellow man and stop screaming at Twitter — and that example must come from the top," Waugh said.

Talking local

In an interview with Southern Maryland Newspapers, Hoyer addressed a common question for residents and federal employees traveling routinely over the Gov. Thomas Johnson Bridge between Calvert and St. Mary's counties: What is being done about the bridge's replacement to improve traffic congestion?

"The governor has been largely focused on [Route] 301 on the Harry Nice Bridge," Hoyer said.

The congressman expressed grave concern about evacuation capabilities via the bridge in the event of an emergency at the naval air station or Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant.

"It's a national security issue, but it's a lot of money. We've been working on trying to convince the governor, and if we have an infrastructure bill, I am going to try and get some money in there," said Hoyer, who admitted missing the era of earmarks to get local initiatives funded.

In other topics of discussion, the congressman has been on the forefront in trying to get the FBI headquarters

relocated to Maryland. The sites have been narrowed down to one in Northern Virginia and two in Prince George's County: Greenbelt and Lanham. Hoyer thinks competitively the Maryland locations are in much better position than the Virginia site, which he describes as being "encumbered by present development."

He reported the process has been hampered by House Republicans defunding a bill by \$200 million already appropriated for the project, when an additional billion dollars are needed.

The selling of the FBI building will bring a half billion dollars to \$750 million for the new building project. Hoyer said delaying the process will cost another \$100 to \$200 million.

Hoyer said the president didn't include monies for the effort in his budget, but he said he is working with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle.

"Gov. [Larry] Hogan (R) and the delegation are in lockstep on this. There's no dispute," shared Hoyer, adding that the governor has given tremendous support in getting this project done.

Hoyer discusses economics, current administration

With Congress on summer recess for the

month of August, Hoyer laid out some national goals the legislative body must address when Congress reconvenes. The issues have quickly approaching deadlines and significant outcomes for the country if not addressed timely.

"We need to fund the government by Sept. 30. Locally that's a huge consequence," said Hoyer, who represents 62,000 federal employees in District 5, which includes all of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties and some of Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties. "Think about the disruption that would cause to every one of those employees."

Hoyer made note that Republicans have shut the government down three times for policy pursuit and he's hopeful it won't come to that in September, despite comments from Trump in May calling for a shut-down to further his political agenda.

Hoyer quickly pointed out that Democrats did not purposely shut down the government in the past. "It was by indirection, not direction," said Hoyer, drawing a distinction between willful shut-

down and last-minute funding arguments that led to the closing of the government.

Hoyer said Congress must also raise the debt limit so the country does not default on payments that were already authorized, to include retirement contributions and other benefits. Failure to extend the national debt would put the U.S. credit worthiness at risk.

He said he is open to changing some policies to accommodate the debt extension, but with a condition: "As long as they do not try to take hostage, for instance, the Affordable Care Act."

Waugh referred to Republicans' failed efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act in an interview with Southern Maryland Newspapers, saying, "Like most people, I'm terribly disappointed when Republicans refuse to do what they promised, and I'm just as disappointed in Democrats who fan the flames of resistance for campaign donations."

"They all need to get serious, stop posturing for TV and Facebook, and get to work," Waugh said. "Maryland needs Congress to enact last-

ing bipartisan solutions, and that will require the centrists to abandon the fringes on the left and right."

Hoyer said the 115th Congress is the most ineffective Congress in his 36 years on the Hill, attributing its state to the numerous distractions in the current administration.

"The major pieces of legislation we need to do like the budget, the appropriation bills, tax reform infrastructure and fixing the Affordable Care Act — none of that is getting done and they control everything," Hoyer said.

With job numbers up and unemployment down to 4.3 percent, Hoyer quickly discredited any assumption that the uptick is directly attributable to the president, adding job creation was substantially up during Obama's administration after he inherited a declining economy.

"[Trump] wants to do infrastructure. We want to do infrastructure. He wants to do tax reform. We want to do tax reform. Hopefully, we can try to agree on those. He hasn't done either," Hoyer said.

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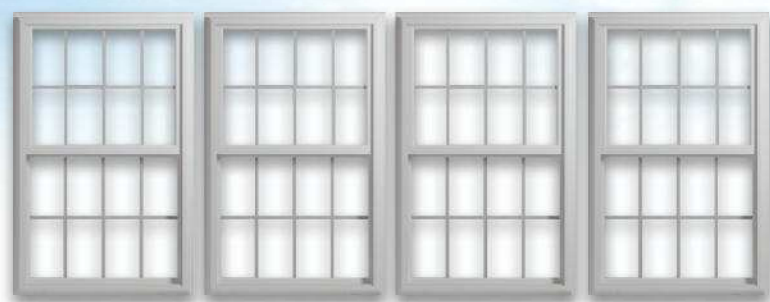
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