

Health Department to withdraw all its activities in the school system as of the close of schools in June. By state law, screenings must be held for vision, hearing and scoliosis, and "medically fragile" children must have their needs met. How the school system can add these law-mandated staffing positions when they cannot meet current needs was not commented upon.

The BAC report prepared by the "Facilities" committee set up a list of detailed criteria for school repair needs. These ranged, with specific examples, from "immediate need" to "nice to have;" from things that are life-threatening to things that are morale-boosting.

Only the vaguest outline of five lines was presented by the "Materials of Instruction" group in listing budget priorities. When questioned, spokesman McNulty said that while it is not true that some students in the county do not

man McNulty added that at some point a central source of communication needs to be established so that in emergencies a bus driver could summon help at once and not rely on a passerby. Board member Mary Haff asked if the committee had looked into parking fees for high schoolers who drive to school and into the problem of almost-empty busses travelling to and from the high schools. McNulty said they were aware of the low-rider bus situations.

Facing a financial shortage and more potential cutbacks on the current school budget, the board of education was largely silent in the face of trying to set up a realistic budget for the next school year. Superintendent John Bloom said that it is "unknown" what is going to happen at the state level in upcoming weeks as the legislature is in session. He did recommend that the board let a potential January 27 staff "furlough" day

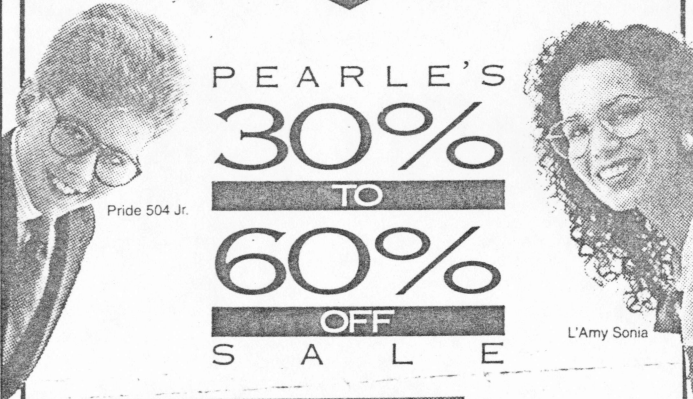
to see it. Board members William Runyon and Edith Patterson felt the redistricting plan should be worked out by the committee. They did not want to know the details. "There is a time for everything," Runyon commented.

Board member Dr. James Gesl agreed with Caniglia that "not knowing the history," [of finished proposals] is "frustrating" when the final proposal is submitted. He said he often asks himself, "Were there better ways?"

Caniglia, visibly upset, stated strongly that she would take the time to attend Mr. Pender's committee's meetings if she could get the information no other way. She felt she needed to be able to be responsive to parents if they called her. Pender agreed to send her a copy of the notes.

The consensus was that it would be March before the public hearings on the redistricting would be held.

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Library Closings Scheduled

The Boards of Library Trustees of Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties have decided to close each public library branch in their county on a rotating basis. This will allow staff to work on the new computer database which is essential to the start-up of the automated circulation system. The Charles County Public Library closing schedule will be:

- **Bryans Road Branch**
February 3 through 8
 - **La Plata Branch**
February 10 through 15
 - **P.D. Brown Branch (Waldorf)**
February 24 through 29
- Bookmobile and Outreach Services will maintain normal schedule. (All branches will be closed February 15 through 17 for

President's Day weekend.)

Before the library can circulate books with its computer system, staff must convert each title to a computer record. This costly and time-consuming process had been undertaken by staff of the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA). Since July, SMRLA staff has spent over 1,000 hours working on this project. Because of state budget cuts, SMRLA staff have been furloughed 22 days this fiscal year and are no longer able to make progress.

The tri-county libraries have a contract for a CLSI LIBS 100 Integrated Automation System. Millions of costly and labor intensive transactions will be handled more efficiently by the

automated system.

The state-of-the-art computer system, which cost close to \$1/2 million, cannot be used to circulate materials until conversion of records is complete. To advance this project, county libraries will close each branch for one week on a rotation schedule. Staff will spend the work week at SMRLA working on the database.

When the computer system is fully in place, library customers will be able to tell the location of a book owned by SMRLA, Calvert County, Charles County and St. Mary's County. This will increase the access to the collection of all Southern Maryland libraries to everyone — even the smallest branch library.

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