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BODY:

MARYLAND

A 38-year-old man was killed early yesterday when his Jeep Wrangler crossed the median on Route 29 in Montgomery County and crashed into a utility pole. Route 29 near Crestmoor Drive was closed through the morning rush hour.

Police identified the man as Donald Raymond Little Jr. of Randallstown, Md. The crash, which occurred about 3:45 a.m. in the White Oak area of Silver Spring, caused Little to be ejected from his Jeep.

Little was traveling south when his vehicle crossed the median and struck the pole on the northbound side of the road, police said.

Maryland Transportation Secretary Robert L. Flanagan announced yesterday the 11 members of a committee that will search for a new executive director to run the Port of Baltimore.

Former U.S. representative Helen Delich Bentley (R) will lead the committee seeking to replace James J. White, who resigned last week amid reports of personality conflicts and personnel appointments that undermined his authority. He held the post for six years.

Other committee members include clients at the port, union representatives and transportation industry officials. They have been asked to submit names by April 15.

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State Comptroller William Donald Schaefer was released yesterday from Johns Hopkins Hospital, stopping off on the way to his Anne Arundel County home for lunch at a restaurant in Baltimore's Little Italy, a spokesman said.

Schaefer, 83, was admitted to the hospital in Baltimore on Tuesday after experiencing dizziness. A hospital statement said he was diagnosed as having an irregular heartbeat. He has not had a history of cardiac problems.

Schaefer, carrying a small bunch of red carnations, greeted reporters who watched him arrive at home.

"I didn't feel good, so the next day, someone said: 'You don't look so good. Why don't you call doctor?' " Schaefer said in video shown on WJZ-TV in Baltimore. He said his doctor recommended that he go to the hospital for a day.

"Four days later, here I am," Schaefer said. "It's like they check everything, everything."

Sixteen lawyers have applied for consideration as Frederick County's newest District Court judge.

Five work as prosecutors with the Frederick state's attorney's office or the U.S. attorney's office in Baltimore. Two work for the county public defender's office, and two are former Frederick city employees. One is the county's chief legal adviser.

Candidates will be interviewed April 14 by the 13-member Judicial Nominating Commission. The names of those found most qualified -- at least three -- will be sent to the governor, who will appoint one to a 10-year term.

The opening is being created by the mandatory retirement of Judge Frederick J. Bower, who turns 70 in two weeks.

VIRGINIA

The former superintendent of Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado will become Shenandoah National Park's next superintendent.

Chas Cartwright, 54, will succeed Doug Morris, who retired after seven years, said Marie Rust, the National Park Service's northeast regional director.

Beginning this summer, Cartwright will supervise 180 employees and oversee a 200,000-acre park that runs along 105 miles of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It includes more than 500 miles of nature trails, 100 miles of the Appalachian Trail and 80,000 miles of designated wilderness.

The new superintendent will encounter tight budgets that threaten maintenance and interpretive programs and will have to deal with emissions from area power plants that cause some of the worst air pollution in the federal park system.

As Virginia prepares for a statewide tornado drill March 15, the Fairfax Office of Emergency Management is offering county residents tips to protect themselves in a tornado.

The statewide tornado drill will be at 9:45 a.m. to allow state officials to practice safety plans and the National Weather Service and state and local emergency officials to test their public warning systems.

For more information about emergency preparedness in Fairfax, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency.

THE DISTRICT

The D.C. Department of Health is expected to announce today whether Cardozo Senior High School is free of mercury contamination and can reopen.

Leila Abrar, spokeswoman for the department, said health officials received a report yesterday on lab samples

taken at the Northwest Washington school that will determine whether a massive cleanup effort succeeded in removing the potentially dangerous substance. The school was closed Wednesday for the second time in a week after officials discovered more mercury contamination in the building.

"Our environmental health experts should look at the results overnight, and we should be able to make a decision Saturday" about whether the building is safe, she said.

A schools spokeswoman said Superintendent Clifford B. Janey probably will decide today whether the 830 students will return to the building Monday.

Principal Reginald Ballard Jr., who on Thursday expressed dissatisfaction with the cleanup effort supervised by the Environmental Protection Agency, said yesterday that the school system will hire its own contractor to perform another round of cleaning after the EPA contractor has completed the job.

"After they're finished, we're going to do our own cleaning," Ballard said. "We're going to have them come and clean the building thoroughly."

"When you have men and women who are in the family tree who are deployed to war, there is a chance that a branch might break. Taking all the children from families and putting them in harm's way could stunt the growth of those family trees."

-- Ann Swann, a Prince George's County mother who protested the deployment of her three sons, her only family members, to Iraq at the same time. -- B1

Compiled from reports by Spencer S. Hsu, Allison Klein and V. Dion Haynes and the Associated Press.

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