

Balancing careers and constituents

Local lawmakers' full-time jobs range from pilot to hairdresser

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As most people catch a few extra winks on a recent Saturday morning, Joan's Beauty Cellar is bustling. Del. Joan Cadden's first customers arrive by 7 a.m., and a few hours later, one sits under the blow dryer as another gets a trim.

The ladies, who will only say they're older than 60, talk about what their children are doing, where old friends are living, and of course, who's passed on.

The topic of school system pension benefits comes up, and Joan Hunter tells Mrs. Cadden about how good her benefits are.

"We're her constituents," Mrs. Hunter says. "We tell her how we feel."

The day before, the powerful incumbent delegate was holding court in Annapolis as a member of the House Appropriations Committee.

But in the basement of her brick rancher in Brooklyn Park, she's just Joan.

Mrs. Cadden is one of 20 state lawmakers who represent Anne Arundel County, and more than half of them have other jobs.

They are pilots, like Del. Herb McMillan, R-Annapolis, or county employees, like House Speaker Michael E. Busch, D-Annapolis, or firefighters, like Del. Bob Costa, R-Deale.

Only California, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania have truly full-time legislatures, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Most states, including Maryland and 21 others, are technically part-time, but lawmakers work roughly 70 percent of a full-time job.

Maryland lawmakers are paid \$43,500, and are on a salary freeze for the next four years. Mr. Busch and Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr., D-Calvert, are paid \$56,500.

While their jobs help them make decisions in Annapolis with the regular guy in mind, they also present potential conflicts of interest.

Del. Theodore Sophocleus, D-Linthicum, sponsors several bills relating to the State's Attorney's Office, where he works as the administrative officer.

Mr. Busch pushes bills for parks, and works as a top official in the county Department of Recreation and Parks.

And Sen. John A. Giannetti Jr., D-Laurel, has garnered attention for the close relationship between his bills and his work as an attorney.

Lawmakers chalk such issues up to the very reason the legislature was set up the way it is: to have a citizen legislature.

"It's important you avoid the appearance of impropriety," Mr. Giannetti says. "Everything we do down here is a conflict."

Brooklyn Park & Paris

At her home salon, Mrs. Cadden typically charges \$16.50 for a shampoo and set.

"How much do you pay at Hair Cuttery?" she calls over to Helen Jarkiewicz, sitting under the blow dryer with her hair wrapped up in curlers.

"Huh?" Mrs. Jarkiewicz asks. She's engrossed in her *Star* magazine.

Mrs. Cadden has been a beautician for 34 years, and a state lawmaker or county school board member going on 20 years.

Fellow members of her committee marvel at her running in on Friday mornings for meetings after making her clients beautiful. She takes appointments as early as 5:30 a.m.

"I'll say, 'I gave three hair-cuts this morning and a couple blow dries,'" Mrs. Cadden says.

She makes decent money because of the low overhead working out of her house, even though she hasn't added customers in years. Plus, she loves the job and hanging out with her friends.

A few hours after Mrs. Cadden puts the final touch on her last head of the day, snow starts to fall in the county. Mr. McMillan is on a jump seat to JFK Airport in New York, en route to Paris for his weekly flight.

Mr. McMillan is a pilot for American Airlines. He dropped his youngest son, Brady, off at hockey practice and went to his day job that carries over into night.

From New York, he rode as a co-pilot on a more than seven-hour flight to Paris. He arrived there at 1:45 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, which is 7:45 a.m. in France.

"When I get to Paris, I change my watch and I don't think about what time it is back home," he says.

He went to Mass, took a four-hour nap and jogged in Le Parc Montsouris. Later, after dinner at Chez Maison, he was in his hotel room, reviewing bills, writing press releases and drafting letters to the editor.

The next morning, he was the captain on the flight back to New York, and made it home just in time to catch the General Assembly session at 8 p.m. Monday.

"We've all got to earn a living," he says.

Mr. McMillan saw some of the rioting in Paris earlier this year and says it drove home his view that uncontrolled immigration can spark civil strife.

Busch

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He is pushing a bill that denies driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. He has also observed the difference between a socialized system of government and free enterprise, and decided our system is better.

"It has shaped my world view, and it does affect my votes here," he says of his travels around the globe.

Full-time referee

Mr. Busch works half-days for the first 32 days of the 90-day legislative session.

He recently started taking leave without pay from his day job as an assistant to the director of the county Department of Recreation and Parks, something he does to accommodate his crazy schedule for 56 days.

Over his 27 years with the county, he's been in charge of boys' athletics and scheduling, helped establish the organizational structure for youth recreation councils and assisted in determining where to locate new parks and facilities.

He even helped start the girls youth lacrosse program that plays at Anne Arundel Community College.

Mr. Busch, a former St. Mary's High School standout running back, has also been a coach and history teacher, and a referee.

That's kind of like what he does now as speaker — managing sometimes difficult personalities, breaking up potential fights and tackling the budget.

"You're refereeing something every day," he says.

Last weekend, he was the assistant coach when his eldest daughter Erin's basketball team secured its first victory of the season in the final game, winning 12-10. One game this season entered the fourth quarter scoreless.

Erin, 10, complains that he yells at her too much.

"I shout encouragement," says Mr. Busch, always the politician.

Today, his Toyota Avalon is parked out in front of the State House. He meets with his staff there every Sunday morning.

Mr. Busch says his life, his day job and his political job are intertwined. Erin will be performing in "Henk" at the

Children's Theatre of Annapolis, and the legislature is considering a bond bill that will help expand that facility.

Mr. Busch doesn't see any conflict with his three hats, as a father, county worker and elected official.

"That's what I believe the job of a local legislator is," he says. "Even though I'm the speaker, I believe my job is to advocate for families and children."

Wearing two hats

Constituents looking for Mr. Costa on weekends would probably find him at the Avalon Shores fire station in Shady Side, working a 24-hour shift.

Mr. Costa has been a county firefighter and emergency medical technician going on 30 years, including his time as a volunteer.

He has an endless supply of stories about the job. There's the nine-alarm tobacco warehouse fire at Wayson's Corner in 1985, when he spent 12 hours pumping water out of the Patuxent River.

And the time nearly a decade ago when he was holding a car crash victim's head in traction one second, and the next second the man bled out as he was cut from the car and died.

"I'm going, I was just talking to him," Mr. Costa recalls.

When he tells old firefighter stories, including one about trying one-man CPR with a station mate years ago on an elderly couple who drowned in their backyard pool, they are inevitably stories without a happy ending.

While modern medicine has made growing number of calls result in saved lives, Mr. Costa says, "You remember the bad ones."

Last Sunday, Mr. Costa was called out on a fire in Harwood at 11:30 p.m. He didn't leave the station until 4:30 a.m. the next day. Hours later, it was back to the State House for an 8 p.m. session.

Sometimes it's hard to figure out when one job starts and the other ends.

He was at a meeting recently as an elected official at Anne Arundel Medical Center, and a call came over the loudspeaker: Code blue.

"I started leaning, and

thought, 'I'm not wearing that hat today,'" he smiles.

Mr. Costa's job as an emergency medical technician helps him analyze bills all the time. He has a problem with a proposal by Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. to affix special logos on driver's licenses of people who have advanced directives instructing medical technicians whether to resuscitate them.

He's worried the new policy will open up emergency rooms and first responders to lawsuits.

"In concept it's a good idea," he says, "but the reality is if you go out on a crash, emergency medical technicians and firefighters don't look for a driver's license. We're trying to save lives."

He tries to do that no matter which hat he's wearing.