

# Old tensions between old rivals boil over

by Josh Kurtz

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ANNAPOLIS — Long-held resentments — within Montgomery County and between Montgomery and Baltimore — briefly bubbled to the surface during a Senate debate on the state's \$445 million capital budget Thursday.

The temperature began rising when Sen. Jean W. Roesser (R-Dist. 15) of Potomac tried, for the third straight year, to kill state funding for Montgomery County's new jail in Clarksburg. The issue has been debated a thousand times in a thousand ways within the county, and the old arguments were trotted out once again.

"This is a bad investment," said Roesser, whose district includes Clarksburg. "We have better uses for this money."

But Sen. Ida G. Ruben (D-Dist. 20) of Silver Spring, chairwoman of the Senate subcommittee that repeatedly approves the jail allocation, leaped to her feet and fiercely defended the project.

Roesser and Ruben went back and forth for a while, and senators voted 31-13 in favor of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee's recommendation to keep the jail funding intact.

Then things got even more interesting. Sen. Brian E. Frosh (D-Dist. 16) of Chevy Chase got up to protest the committee's decision to cut \$2 million for the restoration of the Glen Echo amusement park out of Gov. Parris N. Glendening's capital budget proposal.

Sen. Thomas M. Middleton (D-Dist. 28) of Waldorf, the chairman of the capital budget subcommittee, and Sen. Barbara A. Hoffman (D-Dist. 40) of Baltimore, chairwoman of Budget and Tax, said senators cut the Glen Echo money for several reasons:

- They did not want the state to contribute to a federally funded project.
- They did not like the fact that the plan to re-

store the park envisioned a \$6 million state contribution over three years, which included state funds to help operate the park.

- They felt Glen Echo did not have the statewide impact of other projects that Glendening included in his budget.

- They felt Montgomery County already had enough projects funded in the capital budget.

Frosh protested. The state is giving money to private institutions, like hospitals and museums, so why not to a federal project, he wondered? He also noted that the state has funded a federal facility in Baltimore, Fort McHenry. And he said because Montgomery County is sharing the cost of the Glen Echo project with the feds and the state, the state would get twice the return it does on most capital projects, when it usually contributes 50 percent.

"I'm searching for a principle here," Frosh said. Hoffman replied that while Glen Echo is "a

lovely project," the institutions that receive funding in Baltimore City "are generally for needy people and not so much for parks."

Frosh angrily listed a half dozen Baltimore City museums that are receiving state aid this year. Hoffman shouted that everyone visits Fort McHenry, "where 'The Star Spangled Banner' was written."

"I actually have heard 'The Star Spangled Banner' before," Frosh yelled back.

Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Dist. 27) of Clinton exploded. His face turned red, and he twice banged his gavel loudly.

"One at a time! One at a time!" he bellowed.

When things calmed down, Middleton pointed out that several museums in Baltimore "have statewide significance," which could not be said about Glen Echo. The new performing arts center planned at Strathmore Hall in North Bethesda is being treated the same as the Baltimore museums, he said, even though "somebody could make the argument that that's not a statewide project."

When the testy 15-minute debate ended, the Senate, by voice vote, decided to ratify the committee's decision to drop funding for Glen Echo.

Then came the denouement — slightly less dramatic, but no less interesting. Roesser introduced an amendment that would transfer the \$2 million for the jail and give it to Glen Echo.

"This is a valiant attempt to try to fund Glen Echo," said Ruben, who had fought to restore the money when the committee met earlier in the week. "We cannot afford to cut the money from the county jail. The soil has already been turned."

Roesser's amendment was defeated 33-14.

While these issues were being debated, Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan sat in the Senate gallery, watching — in the company of two top aides and a Washington Post reporter.

And then, another old issue that inflamed passions — state support for professional football stadiums — was unearthed one more time. Sen. Paul G. Pinsky (D-Dist. 22) of Cheverly, a leading foe of the stadium proposals when they were debated in 1996, proposed an amendment to the capital budget that would prevent corporations from obtaining naming rights on arenas at state colleges and universities.

The amendment was defeated handily 37-7.