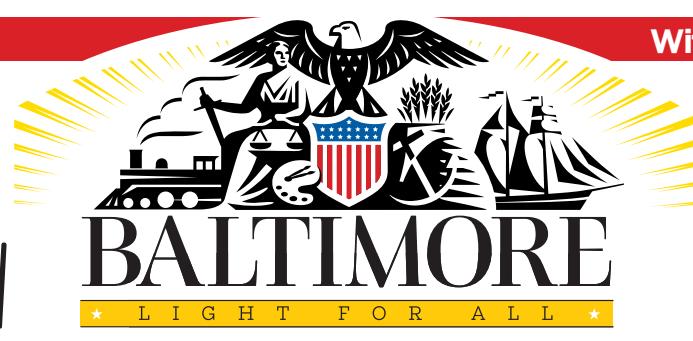


## THE



## SUN

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THURSDAY

September 29, 2016

# O'S WIN IN A PINCH

Kim's 2-run home run in 9th inning gives Orioles 3-2 win, pulls them within one game of Jays SPORTS

Volunteer rescue group finds homes in the Baltimore area for dogs neglected or abandoned in Kuwait



BARBARA HADDOCK TAYLOR/BALTIMORE SUN

Patricia Riska, co-founder and president of Wings of Love, Kuwait, holds two of the seven dogs that arrived at Dulles Airport on Monday. Riska and vice president Jennifer Yoon incorporated the organization in October 2015 and it now has five volunteers with 10 to 20 foster homes.

## Four legs and wings

BY SARAH MEEHAN

The Baltimore Sun

As the dogs touch down on a plane from Kuwait, each arrives with a story: Hope was the last survivor pulled from a pile of dead puppies; Stella was stabbed eight times; Mandy is recovering from pancreatitis.

Jennifer Yoon recalls their histories as she scrolls through pictures of some of the 152 dogs her organization has rescued from abuse and neglect in the small Persian Gulf

country during the last year. Yoon is co-founder and vice president of Wings of Love, Kuwait, a Baltimore-based organization that just received its nonprofit status this month after more than a year of transporting dogs to the U.S.

Standing in the cellphone lot at Washington Dulles International Airport, Yoon is waiting for more dogs that will soon arrive on a flight with Patricia Riska, Wings of Love, Kuwait's founder and president. It's about a 30-hour "turn and burn" trip from Dulles and back.

A flight attendant for United Airlines, Riska founded Wings of Love, now a five-volunteer operation with 10 to 20 foster homes, after traveling to Kuwait for work. The Riverside resident connected with another flight attendant who was finding new homes for animals there, and brought home her first dog in April 2015.

Yoon learned of Riska's work when she was looking to adopt a second dog, and joined the effort. They incorporated as Wings of Love, Kuwait in October 2015.

See DOGS, page 13

## Police see rash of teen thefts

Armed youths robbing victims across the city, raising crime statistics

BY KEVIN RECTOR

The Baltimore Sun

An 11-year-old boy was walking near Patterson Park in Southeast Baltimore when five teenagers approached on bikes. One pulled out a knife, according to police, said, "Give me your stuff," and rifled through the boy's pockets. He stole \$6 and a cellphone.

Across town a couple of hours later, a 64-year-old man was reading a book on a bench in the Wyman Park Dell near the Johns Hopkins University. A group of teens approached, police say, put a gun to his head, sprayed him with pepper spray, stabbed him and stole his belongings.

One of the teens casually streamed video of the attack on Facebook.

Law enforcement officials say both incidents, described in police records, fit an alarming pattern: roving groups of armed teenagers, working around the clock and across Baltimore, brazenly targeting victims for cash, cellphones and other belongings.

They say the attacks are helping to drive the highest rate of robberies the city has seen in years.

"We just have a larger pool of suspects because we are now seeing juveniles who don't have a juvenile record being involved in these crimes," said Baltimore police Maj. Kimberly Burrus, commander of the department's district detective unit, which investigates robberies citywide.

See ROBBERIES, page 13



## Congress overrides Obama veto of 9/11 legislation

The Senate voted 97-1, and the House voted 348-77, on Wednesday to override President Barack Obama's veto of a bill that would allow families who lost loved ones in the 2001 terror attacks to sue the Saudi Arabian government. It was the first veto override since he took office. NEWS PG 10



KIM HAIRSTON/BALTIMORE SUN

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake says State's Attorney Marilyn J. Mosby should have told the public she needed more time to review the Freddie Gray case.

political pressure and charge when you're not ready," she said.

"You have to stand up, be in the big role and say to the people ... you need time to continue to investigate."

Rawlings-Blake spoke after The New York Times Magazine published a profile Wednesday of Mosby and her reflections on her office's failure to convict the six officers involved in the arrest and death of Gray.

Gray, a 25-year-old Baltimore man, died in April 2015 after suffering a severe spinal

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## SUMMARY OF THE NEWS

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**CALMING SPACE:** Survivors of alleged sexual assault who are interviewed at Baltimore police headquarters will sit in a room designed with the science of trauma, and how the brain and body best handle it, in mind, rather than the previous harsh, interrogation-room atmosphere. NEWS PG 2

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HIGH | LOW



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# Rash of robberies by armed teens

## ROBBERIES, From page 1

"When we arrest one group of juveniles, we have another group that pops right up."

Gavin Patashnick, chief of the juvenile division in the Baltimore state's attorney's office, said the trend is not necessarily new, but one prosecutors are trying to combat.

"The public's fed up, and the perception is that we live in a 'Clockwork Orange' world where kids are roaming around and beating people up," Patashnick said. "We're always trying to figure out the answer, what the magic bullet will be to solve violence, particularly youth violence."

Ericka Alston-Buck, who heads Kids Safe Zone in West Baltimore, said youth crime — even when it appears brazen or careless — is often an expression of the teens' own vulnerability.

Kids can be compelled to take up crime, she said, either as a means of social or physical survival in impoverished neighborhoods, or as an emotional release after suffering trauma in their dysfunctional family lives.

"We've got all these lost kids," she said.

Robberies were up 12 percent this year through Sept. 24 compared with the same period last year, according to citywide crime data, reaching at least a six-year high. The increase has pushed overall violent crime up 5 percent, despite declines in other crimes, including homicides, rapes and arsons.

The spike in robberies is being led by carjackings, up 44 percent, and "miscellaneous" robberies — at schools, Metro stations and other semi-public locations — which are up 64 percent. Residential robberies are up 7 percent; street robberies are up 16 percent. Commercial robberies are down.

The Police Department's clearance rate for robberies this year is 34 percent, slightly below the rate last year, but above recent national averages.

Police said they do not track the ages of robbery suspects in the city, so it is impossible to know whether the number of youths committing such crimes has risen, or if so by how much. In many cases, the ages of suspects in an unsolved robbery are unknown.

What is known is that the number of juveniles charged with robbery has increased, from 220 last year through Sept. 23 to 265 during the same period this year, according to the state Department of Juvenile Services, a 20 percent jump.

The number charged with carjacking

**"Now what we're seeing is a lot less drugs — a lot less drugs, it's shocking — and we're seeing a lot more robberies."**

Gavin Patashnick of the Baltimore state's attorney's office, on juvenile crime

rose from 13 to 20. The number charged with robbery with a deadly weapon rose from 54 to 58.

While police are arresting more youths, Burrus said, younger teens are ready to take their place. And when juveniles are arrested for serious robberies, she said, they are being processed quickly through the juvenile judicial system and landing back on the streets to commit the same crimes again — at times with court-ordered monitoring devices strapped to their ankles.

"We see a lot of juveniles committing crimes that they have already been arrested for," Burrus said.

Police say groups of juveniles and others were causing fender-benders to rob the unsuspecting drivers of the vehicles they hit.

In North and Northwest Baltimore, police say, a group who called themselves "the Jankz" were recruiting juveniles to commit carjackings, then using the vehicles themselves to commit more robberies.

And police say they have seen a citywide increase in callers luring for-hire sedan and illegal hack drivers to a location, where they are approached by a female and then robbed by two males.

The increase in robberies is most pronounced in the Southeastern District, where they're up 38 percent, and the Southern District, where they're up 30 percent.

Robberies are up 11 percent in the Central District, 16 percent in the Eastern District and 12 percent in the Western District.

Robberies are down 3 percent in the Southwestern District, 4 percent in the Northwestern District and 12 percent in the Northern District. They're up 20 percent in the Northeastern District.

Burrus said officers feel as if they are "dealing with a different mentality and a different culture" in Baltimore, in which teens are more willing than ever to engage in violent crimes.

Patashnick, of the state's attorney's office, said prosecutors and police have had some success in recent years disrupting youth robbery trends, such as teens targeting their

peers around school buildings.

Still, he said, the volume of teen robberies is a problem, and has grown since he was an assistant state's attorney about a decade ago, when more of the juvenile crime in the city was associated with drug dealing.

"Now what we're seeing is a lot less drugs — a lot less drugs, it's shocking — and we're seeing a lot more robberies," he said.

Teens in poor neighborhoods have realized they can make as much money robbing people as they do dealing drugs, Patashnick said, with less risk of becoming victims of violence themselves.

Jemal Cole, a 42-year-old computer programmer who lives in the Chinquapin Park neighborhood of North Baltimore, said he knows the pattern well. The father of two has been robbed twice in the last year.

The first time, in November, he was walking along Northern Parkway when he was struck in the head from behind, punched repeatedly in the face and kicked in the ribs. His nose was broken, and he needed stitches. His cellphone and wallet were stolen.

He never got a good look at his attackers, but a witness described them as teens.

In January, Cole was walking in the area when a teen "ran up from behind, punched me, threw me up against a car and smashed me in the face with a rock a few times," he said. Another teen produced a gun, he said. They took Cole's phone and ran off, "just sort of laughing and joking and smiling the whole way."

Cole spoke with police both times, he said, but no suspects were arrested.

After the second attack, he said, he and his wife "stopped walking around our neighborhood for the most part."

"I just don't understand the glee in beating someone up and making a game of it," he said.

"I remain hopeful. I want kids to do better. I want all of us to do better, the city to do better. I haven't stopped giving to charities that serve these kids, or hoping that things will turn out better for these kids. I just wish they would have some empathy for other people."

Patashnick said prosecutors often ask that teens who have committed violent crimes be detained, but sometimes the assessments used in juvenile cases to determine whether a youth will offend again lead judges to put them back on the street.

He said the state's attorney's office is working to provide more support programs for kids to prevent recidivism.

Alston-Buck, of the Kids Safe Zone, said some kids are "stealing for sport" to blow off steam in a world where they are routinely traumatized, poorly educated, disrespected and given few outlets to expend their energy and frustration in constructive ways.

She said others are trying desperately to fit in on city streets where cash flow means cachet, so they rob a victim and then go out and buy the most popular pair of sneakers, or bags and bags of candy for their peers.

"They want to be the man on the block," she said.

Others, she said, are turning to crime to survive.

"Do we understand how many teens are homeless?" Alston-Buck asked.

She said the city needs more "trauma-informed" adults to help teens turn their lives around and the resources to help them do it.

She described a recent conversation with a man in his early 20s. He told her he was struggling to get by. His mother had recently died; his father was nowhere to be found. He was sleeping at a girlfriend's house but had to pay her family to do so.

"He said, 'How do you think I eat at night?' And I said, 'I don't know,'" Alston-Buck said.

"He said, 'I rob people. I literally hide in a bush near a bus stop. I don't care if it's an old lady. I don't care if it's a mother and her children. I don't care if it's a guy in a uniform. I rob people.'"

The young man told her he sleeps with a 45-caliber handgun and a .38-caliber handgun.

"I don't feel good about it, but it's all I have to do until I find a job," he told her.

Alston-Buck talked to community leaders and collected \$40 to get the young man through the night, buying her time to find him a job.

"Can you please not rob someone tonight?" she asked as she handed over the cash.

"He said, 'I promise you I won't.'"

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# Dogs rescued in Kuwait find homes here

## DOGS, From page 1

Riska landed on Monday with seven dogs in tow. Popeye and Luna flew with her in the cabin in a soft carrier; chubby brother-sister pair Hershey and Sherry arrived in a crate; Jeff the poodle and Gipsy the papillon mix flew together in a third cage; and German shepherd mix Cecilia, the only large dog of the bunch, traveled alone in the fourth and final crate.

Yoon and Riska's husband, Bryn, circle around to the passenger pickup zone when they get word that she's cleared customs. They load the crates into their cars and head back to the cellphone lot, where the dogs stretch their legs in an adjacent dog park.

Popeye scratches at the grass. Jeff sits and stays on the familiar concrete. Cecilia bounds around the fenced-in yard.

"There's barely any grass in Kuwait, so this is new for them, and they just either rub themselves in it or they eat it," Patricia Riska said. "It's so funny to watch them."

Riska and Yoon connected with rescuers in Kuwait through women like Karen Orobey, a Florence, Ore., resident who lived in Kuwait for 20 years.

"Finding a permanent home in Kuwait for a dog and even a cat is really difficult," Orobey said. "It's easier to rehome them outside of the country."

That's because many Kuwaitis regard dogs as disposable accessories rather than part of the family, she said. Animals are usually kept outside — many times, on roofs — in the desert heat, and abandoned when they become sick or are no longer novel.

"They want a dog because it's cute, because it's trendy — because all the bad reasons people want dogs — and then they realize it's a lot of responsibility," Yoon said. Many of the dogs Wings of Love rescues are expensive purebreds like Malteses, Yorkshire terriers and huskies. "It just amazes me because they spend so much money on their animals and they just don't want to deal with it when they get sick."

Those dogs end up on the street, where many are picked up by merchants and sold at Kuwait City's Friday Market. The dogs that don't sell there are typically discarded or killed. International groups have been pressuring the Kuwaiti government to regulate the market, which has little to no standards of animal care, according to news reports and online petitions. Representatives from the Embassy of the State of Kuwait could not be reached for comment Wednesday night.

Riska said she's traveled all over the world, and she's seen some of the worst animal abuse in Kuwait.

"People don't get it — they're like, 'Oh, OK, why Kuwait?'" Riska said. "And once I took Jennifer, she was like, 'I get it now why you're doing it!'"

Popeye, a three-pound speckled imp of a dog, was pulled from the Friday Market. He's now being fostered by local magician Spencer Horsman at his Federal Hill home. Horsman adopted his own dog, Loki, from Wings of Love several weeks ago.

"When people look at this dog, they're like, 'There's no way this is a rescue'"



Local magician Spencer Horsman, who adopted a dog named Loki, center, from the Wings Of Love, Kuwait organization, is also fostering Popeye, left, who arrived from Kuwait on Monday. He said he hopes to eventually travel to Kuwait to help retrieve dogs himself.

animal, Horsman said of the Pomeranian mix with red fur and black spots that wind down his body and curly tail.

There's a demand for small, young dogs like Loki in the Baltimore area, and that's part of what makes it a good adoption market for Wings of Love.

"You're going to turn me into a crazy dog dude," Horsman said to Riska as she dropped Popeye off Monday night.

Horsman hopes to eventually travel to Kuwait to help Wings of Love retrieve dogs. Volunteers take the round-trip flight to Kuwait about once a month to bring back anywhere from four to 14 dogs, some of which come with medical issues, like dental problems and old broken bones. Sometimes unforeseen problems arise; Yoon had a German shepherd that suddenly went blind.

"These are dogs that are even screened before they come," Yoon said. "Really sick dogs, a lot of times they don't even make it in Kuwait, so they are selected from the dogs that we think are adoptable."

Wings of Love works with a group of women in Kuwait who take dogs into their homes while they await transport to the U.S. One woman has multiple apartments dedi-

cated to dog rescue.

The dogs are given necessary shots and usually spayed or neutered before they leave the country. Janice Mosher, a spokeswoman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said her agency requires dogs to be up to date on rabies vaccines and to appear healthy when they enter the country.

"I really, really love doing this because I see the difference in these dogs," Riska said. "These dogs come so depressed. ... Once they're here and they're getting love, they smile."

Wings of Love charges high adoption fees to cover the cost of the dogs' transportation from Kuwait — the larger the dog, the more expensive it is to transport. Small adult dogs go for \$300, puppies are \$400 and large adult dogs are \$500 each.

Yoon said they try to travel for less than \$1,300, but round-trip tickets can cost as much as \$3,000 in the summer.

Aside from adoption fees, most of Wings of Love's funding comes in the form of donations. It also takes in-kind donations — toys, treats and other dog equipment — for its foster network.

Natalie Martelli, a nurse at University of Maryland Medical Center, has been fostering Eric, a small white terrier mix with gray spots, for about six weeks. The Riverside resident hasn't gotten any adoption applications for him yet. She added Hershey and Sherry, a pair of shy black terriers, to her foster home Monday.

"It's hard not to get attached," Martelli said.

Riska said she tries to get every adoption applicant a dog. Wings of Love conducts extensive home visits and allows potential adopters to take dogs home for two-week trials with a \$100 deposit.

The work doesn't end after each adoption. The organization has already identified animals it hopes to bring back to Baltimore next month, including Marcel, who is recovering from distemper, and Aurora, a white husky whose back legs are paralyzed.

"If they stay in Kuwait, they will die," Yoon said. "I wish we could do more, because for every dog that we bring over, there's like 10 more."

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