



# No 7

## SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BILL DEFEATED.

IN THE FIRST WEEK OF MARCH, it looked like Maryland would be the sixth state to finally get a bill passed to legalize same-sex marriage. After years of lobbying, a bill won state Senate approval and Gov. Martin O'Malley was ready to sign it into law. At that point, it was just about the House of Delegates. And that's controlled by a Democratic majority. A bastion of liberalism, right? Enter religion, stage right. Combined opposition from Republicans, churches, and from some Democrats from districts dominated by Catholics, coupled with a split among the chamber's 33 black lawmakers, did in the initiative once again. Even if it had passed, some predicted, it would likely have been petitioned to referendum on grounds of faith. "They took the black votes for granted because they're so used to having it," Del. Jill Carter, D-Baltimore, said of the Democratic House leadership. "This issue was too big, people's connection to church and religion were too deep." So what's next? The campaign's already underway to try again next year.

"This is a distance run, not a sprint. We'll come back next year and take a strong look at it."—House of Delegates Speaker Michael E. Busch to *The New York Times*

# No 8 Centerstage Hires Kwame Kwei-Armah.

**KWAME KWEI-ARMAH BECAME** "the face" of Centerstage in 2011. As a public figure, the charismatic Londoner may be the polar opposite of his predecessor, longtime artistic director Irene Lewis, who was a formidable presence inside the theater but virtually invisible outside it. Since arriving this summer, Kwei-Armah—who's also an acclaimed playwright, director, and actor—immediately began meeting with area arts organizations, reaching out to local theater groups, and announcing that Centerstage would be more inclusive, diverse, and innovative than ever. He also wasted little time articulating a bold vision, programming-wise, that includes new plays, a self-proclaimed "bias" toward female playwrights, and a goal of re-branding both the theater and the city as a national arts destination.

"I want to be part of something that redefines Baltimore, outside of *The Wire*."—Kwame Kwei-Armah



# No 9 DENISE WHITING GIVES UP THE HON.

USUALLY WHEN Chef Gordon Ramsay brings his Fox series *Kitchen Nightmares* to a restaurant, it's all about what happens behind closed doors. But at Café Hon, his intervention was less about cleaning up the waitstaff or adding an extra bouillon cube to the broth, than it was about convincing owner Denise Whiting how to handle the so-called "Hon" controversy, that, she says, "has all but killed" her business. To that end, he and Whiting made an impromptu and dramatic appearance on the Mix 106.5 JoJo and Reagan morning show on November 7. In a tearful and tremulous voice, Whiting said, "Today I get a second chance. I am so sorry." She went on to explain to (a clearly stunned) JoJo and Reagan that she was releasing the "Hon" trademark and giving the word back to Baltimore. "Hon is in our hearts," she said. The question remains, will Baltimoreans embrace Whiting back into their hearts?

"I seriously did not see that coming."—JoJo Girard

# No 10 PHILLIPS LEAVES INNER HARBOR.

**BALTIMOREANS WERE TAKEN** by surprise when Phillips Seafood announced in June it was not renewing its lease at the Inner Harbor pavilion after 31 years. Within days, Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. claimed the space, saying it planned to open in May 2012. Rumors soon were swirling that Phillips would relocate to the vacant ESPN Zone at the Power Plant. In mid-July, the Phillips family and The Cordish Cos., which oversees the restaurant-and-entertainment complex, confirmed that the seafood chain would indeed be taking over the building (and adding an outdoor crab deck!) by the end of the year. The positive news came on the heels of the sad passing of patriarch Brice Phillips. He and his wife Shirley were a true local success story: turning their mom-and-pop eatery in Ocean City into the mega Phillips corporation.

"Two people would be smiling at this. They would be happy to see this union of family."—Cordish Cos. CEO David Cordish, referring to Brice Phillips and William Donald Schaefer

