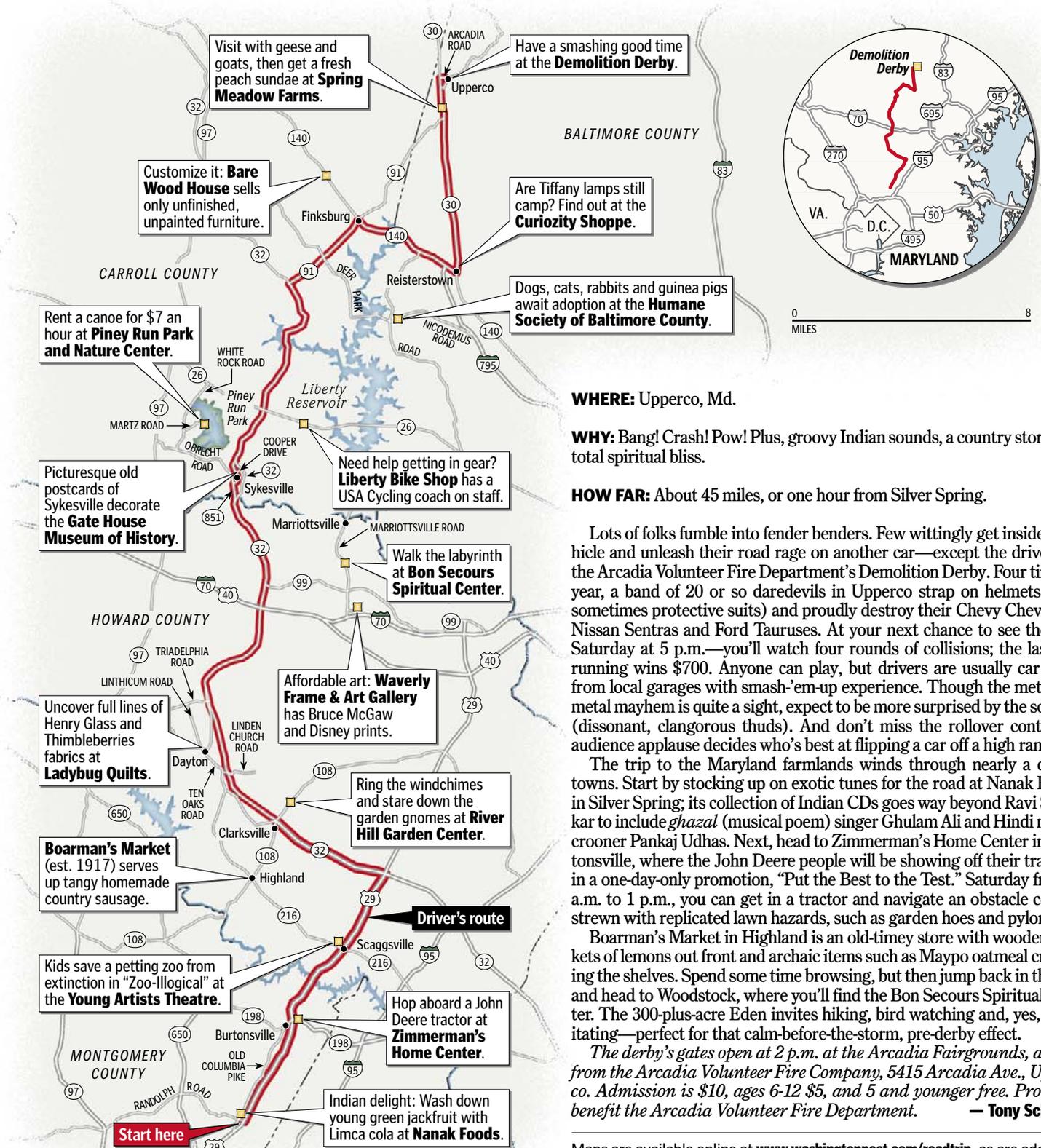


ROADTRIP | Crash the Demolition Derby



WHERE: Upperco, Md.

WHY: Bang! Crash! Pow! Plus, groovy Indian sounds, a country store and total spiritual bliss.

HOW FAR: About 45 miles, or one hour from Silver Spring.

Lots of folks fumble into fender benders. Few wittingly get inside a vehicle and unleash their road rage on another car—except the drivers in the Arcadia Volunteer Fire Department’s Demolition Derby. Four times a year, a band of 20 or so daredevils in Upperco strap on helmets (and sometimes protective suits) and proudly destroy their Chevy Chevettes, Nissan Sentras and Ford Tauruses. At your next chance to see them—Saturday at 5 p.m.—you’ll watch four rounds of collisions; the last car running wins \$700. Anyone can play, but drivers are usually car buffs from local garages with smash-em-up experience. Though the metal-on-metal mayhem is quite a sight, expect to be more surprised by the sounds (dissonant, clangorous thuds). And don’t miss the rollover contest—audience applause decides who’s best at flipping a car off a high ramp.

The trip to the Maryland farmlands winds through nearly a dozen towns. Start by stocking up on exotic tunes for the road at Nanak Foods in Silver Spring; its collection of Indian CDs goes way beyond Ravi Shankar to include *ghazal* (musical poem) singer Ghulam Ali and Hindi movie crooner Pankaj Udhas. Next, head to Zimmerman’s Home Center in Burtonsville, where the John Deere people will be showing off their tractors in a one-day-only promotion, “Put the Best to the Test.” Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., you can get in a tractor and navigate an obstacle course strewn with replicated lawn hazards, such as garden hoes and pylons.

Boarman’s Market in Highland is an old-timey store with wooden baskets of lemons out front and archaic items such as Maypo oatmeal crowding the shelves. Spend some time browsing, but then jump back in the car and head to Woodstock, where you’ll find the Bon Secours Spiritual Center. The 300-plus-acre Eden invites hiking, bird watching and, yes, meditating—perfect for that calm-before-the-storm, pre-derby effect.

The derby’s gates open at 2 p.m. at the Arcadia Fairgrounds, across from the Arcadia Volunteer Fire Company, 5415 Arcadia Ave., Upperco. Admission is \$10, ages 6-12 \$5, and 5 and younger free. Proceeds benefit the Arcadia Volunteer Fire Department.

— Tony Sclafani

Maps are available online at www.washingtonpost.com/roadtrip, as are addresses and hours of operation. Have a trip idea? E-mail roadtrip@washpost.com.

BY JEROME COOKSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST