Rand(e)m Thoughts

By Rande Davis

I was thinking about the Queen of England lately. Why? Because it’s reported that she has canceled this year’s Christmas bash at Buckingham’s Palace. Seems the Brits, through necessity, have themselves caught up in a radical movement, a bit of a reality show, if you will, where the objective is to find ways to cut government costs. Everyone needs to do his part and even Her Majesty wants in on the game. This unexpected fiscal fever is spreading through parts of the Celtic islands like nothing else since the barbarians crossed the frozen Rhine in A.D. 406.

We could stand to catch a bit of the fever. It seems like just yesterday that our state delegation came to Poolesville and proudly reported how use of the federal stimulus money helped Maryland stay on a “path of fiscal responsibility.” Their concept of fiscal responsibility was simple. Use the fed bucks to close gaps in the budget now, and in just two years, when the economy comes roaring back and everyone is making money again, tax revenue will jump up and we won’t need Washington’s dough anymore. Why does that have the ring of a Ponzi scheme to me?

I realize there are few states whose financial dependency on Washington is greater than Maryland’s. Here, one either works for the government, provides service to the government, or makes a living providing products or services to one or the other. To many of the people working in the county, cutting government expenditures sounds more like a threat than promise.

It doesn’t have to be that way, though. If environmental responsibility starts with one light bulb at a time, why shouldn’t cost savings start with one simple idea after another? You can call the notion a game, if you want. I call it revolutionary. Maybe, just maybe, the Brits are onto something. If so, all I can say is: The redcoats are coming!—thank goodness.