

CENTRE VIEW

SOUTHERN EDITION



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Fire investigators wait for safe access to the site of what was a two-story, Brookfield home before a gas explosion and fire destroyed it, Sunday night.

Fire, Gas Destroy Home

Brookfield family loses everything when house explodes.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

It was a phone call the Chantilly husband and father of two could never have imagined receiving — and yet, Sunday night, while he and his family were out for dinner, it came.

"My neighbor called and asked, 'Where is your family? Are they with you?'" said the Brookfield resident. "I told him, 'Yes, what happened?' And he said, 'There was a big explosion and your house burned down.'"

Centre View is not identifying him because he's a victim, but 60 firefighters from five stations — including two hazardous-materials units — rushed to his home after receiving neighbors' 911 calls about a gas leak, an explosion and a fire. The two-story house at 4303 Lees Corner Road, near Pennsboro Drive, was completely destroyed; Fairfax County fire officials estimated the damage at \$400,000.

"It took approximately one hour to bring [the two-alarm blaze] under control because of the large volume of fire," said Fire and Rescue Department spokesman Dan Schmidt. "The heat was intense, nearby trees caught on fire and the siding melted on the neighbors' homes on both sides."

Still, before firefighters arrived, two neighbors across the street risked their lives after the explosion to search the home for anyone trapped inside. Twenty-something Kevin McCollum had gone outside, around 8:45 p.m., and was standing next to his car while talking to a friend on the phone.

"I work in the parts department of Pohanka Lexus in Chantilly, and I was about to go to the gas station," he said. "My tank was almost empty, and I wanted to be ready for work in the morning. I was facing the house across the street and, the next thing I knew, it exploded."

"It seriously felt like a sonic boom," said McCollum. "Their front door landed in our yard, all their windows blew out and a shower of glass sprayed all over the street. Their roof just caved in on itself. It was a huge explosion; I saw fire on the roof and smoke coming from inside."

His father, Charles McCollum, came outside, too, and they soon realized that both cars belonging to the homeowners were present. One was in the garage, and the other was in the driveway so, believing their friends were still in the burning house, they sprang into action.

"My dad and I ran inside and yelled their names,"

SEE DESTROY, PAGE 3

'A Place Where Magic Happens'

Mountain View Principal Jim Oliver retires.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

If anyone was ever the heart and soul of a school, it was Jim Oliver, principal of Mountain View. So his sudden retirement, Dec. 3, caught much of his staff by surprise.

But as far as he was concerned, that day had been coming for awhile. "I could have retired in July," he said. "But because they were closing another alternative high school, I wanted to make sure



Oliver

Mountain View was going to be the school I wanted it to be, and stay for the transition."

With Mountain View gaining some 40 stu-

dents from Pimmit Hills, plus other schools, Oliver wanted "to get the school year up and running. We had to renovate two classrooms and hire two new teachers, so I didn't want to leave until I felt comfortable that everything would be OK and that things I wanted

SEE OLIVER, PAGE 5



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Delivering a Happy Holiday

From left: Westfield High freshmen Grace Horgan and Katelyn Rennyson, plus Haymarket's Brooke Bowen, distribute gift wrap collected for Our Neighbor's Child (ONC) by Chantilly High. More photos, page 6.

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Fire, Gas Destroy Chantilly Home

FROM PAGE 1

said Kevin McCollum. “It looked like something out of a horror movie. There were holes in the walls everywhere, smoke was coming out of the kitchen and everything was broken and in shambles.”

He said pieces of the roof had crashed inside the home, onto the staircase, and were on fire. “So my dad kicked some of it aside and went upstairs,” said McCollum. “He said the whole, second level had fallen on itself. All the doors were blocked and the fire alarm was going off.”

McCollum said friends of the family who lived there

had come by, earlier that evening, and taken the husband, wife and their two sons, ages 13 and 5, out to dinner. But, he added, “We didn’t know that, at the time, so we kept listening for them.”

Eventually, though, the smell of gas was so strong and overwhelming that they had to leave and go outside. They hopped a fence to get to the backyard and discovered the whole, right side of the house was gone. Still, they refused to give up.

“I jumped on top of some debris and climbed into their master bedroom, but there was nobody there,” said McCollum. “The back part of the house was on fire now, and my dad told me, ‘Get out of there – it’s going; it’s too late now.’ And when I turned around, the whole house was on fire.”

Two minutes later, he said, “It seemed like a whole armada of fire trucks – about 20 – showed up, along with Washington Gas and Dominion Virginia Power. You name it, they were here. Everybody in the neighborhood had heard the explosion, and they were outside, too.”

While searching the burning home, said McCollum, he didn’t think about his own safety. “Adrenaline kicked in,” he explained. “And if I didn’t do anything and somebody had been inside, I couldn’t have lived with myself.”

He described the house as “one, whole ball of fire. We could feel the heat and had to back up into the carport to get away from it. You see things like this on TV and in movies and think, ‘It won’t happen here,’ and then it does. You just hope and pray for everyone’s safety.”

After awhile, said McCollum, “One of the firefighters asked us to get everybody out because of the strong odor of gas, so I went to two neighbors’ homes and made sure they were out. During the night, the gas company shut off the gas. There was a huge hole, about 5x5, in the middle of the road, and the gas company found the leak and fixed it. They worked on it throughout the night.”

McCollum said houses on his street have gas heat, water heaters and stoves. So all Sunday night and early Monday morning,

firefighters and Washington Gas employees went inside residents’ homes with scanners, every 45 minutes or so, to measure gas levels and make sure no one else was in danger.

At press time, fire officials still hadn’t determined what caused the blast. Monday afternoon,

Schmidt said fire and gas-company investigators would be “sifting through things there for the next, few days. We don’t

know the fire’s point of origin in the home, and we won’t know what was first – the gas leak or the fire – until we sort through it all. And even then, we may not know. It was fortunate no one got hurt – that’s the main thing.”

Anthony Barrero Jr., battalion chief with the Fire and Hazardous Materials investigative section, said the home was “fully involved” in flames when firefighters arrived. “Defensive tactics were taken to surround, isolate and extinguish the fire while protecting the houses on both sides,” he said.

Monday afternoon, fire investigators were waiting for access to the property to begin searching for the cause of the blaze and its exact starting point. First, though, Washington Gas needed to make sure it was safe and Dominion had to find and cut the electrical line to the home.

Anjana Amin, who also lives across the street, said the destroyed house had just been renovated and enlarged last year, and the brick exterior added. “It was one of the nicest homes on the block and one of the few, brick homes,” she said. “The neighbors to the left of them had just finished renovating their home’s exterior, two months ago, and the people to the right [of the victims’ house] had just put in new windows.”

She and her daughter Sima both heard the explosion and ran outside. “She ran toward the house, and I ran inside to call 911,” said Sima, a nursing student employed at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital. “The explosion was scary because our whole house shook.”

“We were also worried because we knew they had two, little kids,” said her mother. “The family’s cars were there and we didn’t know if they were in the house.”

Afraid, as well, that the flames could spread to their house, too, they grabbed their coats, cell phones and a laptop in case they had to flee quickly. “We also worried about the people in the homes beside the one that exploded, but they got evacuated and came outside,” said Sima. Then, said Anjana, there was “a



A view of the side and back of the house, looking into the “interior.” The top of the family’s gazebo is on the ground.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

strong smell of gas” and they, too, had to evacuate, along with other neighbors.

They came back at 2 a.m. to see if the gas company would allow them back inside their house. “But it was still pending, so we stayed with my brother in Fair Lakes and returned home [Monday] at 7:30 a.m.,” said Sima. “But we were still scared to come home because it could have been anybody’s house [that exploded]. We

were almost afraid to turn on the gas burners this morning at breakfast. It makes you feel small because you don’t have control over something like this.”

Before the blast, said Anjana, the victims’ outside Christmas lights were aglow and each window was decorated with an electric candle and a wreath. “It was one of the nicest displays on the street,” she said.

“It’s very sad and tragic that this happened during the holidays,” added her daughter. “But they were just lucky they weren’t home; we thank God about that.”

Sima also noted it “was a relief to see the gas crew and fire marshal still here [Monday] checking, so we know they’ll be here in case anything else happens and to find out the cause. Our prayers are with the family; I’m sure the stress is very traumatizing for them.”

Indeed, after receiving the phone call about their house, said the homeowner, the family rushed back to Brookfield, but his wife and children “didn’t want to see the house on fire, so they stayed at my sister’s



Just six days before Christmas, a gas explosion and fire decimated the home of a Chantilly family of four.

house while I went to the scene. It totally shocked me – I couldn’t believe it. If I was in there, I would be burned to death.”

He said he and his wife and two sons – an eighth-grader at Rocky Run Middle School and a kindergartner at Brookfield Elementary – had left their home Sunday, at 6 p.m., to have dinner in Manassas “and that saved us.”

Still, he added, “Everything is totally gone. We just have what was on our bodies; everything was burned.” And although the family is temporarily staying with his sister, he said, “We are homeless.”

He said the fire marshal told him of the McCollums’ heroic actions, trying to rescue his family. “It was fantastic and wonderful what they did for us,” he said. “I need to go and thank them.”

Naturally, he said, his family is devastated to lose its home and belongings – and just six days before Christmas. But he said the most important thing is that they’re all safe and well. And, he added, “We’re thankful we weren’t there.”

CENTREVILLE

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'A Place Where Magic Happens'

FROM PAGE 1

would be in place."

He spent 31 years with Fairfax County Public Schools, the last 7 and a half at Mountain View. He began in 1978 as a Spanish teacher, head track coach and assistant football coach at Herndon High. "Bill Trussell was the principal there and, when he opened Centreville High, I was one of the fortunate teachers who helped him," said Oliver. It was 1988 and, again, Oliver coached and taught Spanish. He stayed 15 years and eventually became an assistant principal.

It was exciting being in on the ground floor. "We only had ninth and 10th grades, to start, and only about 40 teachers," he said. "So we were a close-knit group and I had a lot of great times there; it was a fun experience."

In 1995, Oliver even made All-Met Coach of the Year when the Wildcats won the state track title. He also learned a great deal about administration. "When I left Centreville in 2004, we had 3,000 students and 45 trailers," he said. "We had to think outside the box, dealing with quick growth, and it helped me learn how to manage a building and its space."

Eventually, though, Oliver



PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN BURTON

At his retirement party, Dec. 15, Mountain View Principal Jim Oliver poses with (from left) Pam Rutkowski, finance technician; Lynne Chrisinger, main-office secretary; Yolanda Villanueva, Oliver's administrative assistant; Ghada Aqel, Guidance student information assistant; and Tina Perez, Guidance administrative assistant.

wanted a different experience, for his own growth, so he became Mountain View's principal. "Being able to speak with students and parents in Spanish helped make them feel comfortable," he said. But the school, itself, surprised him.

"As a subschool principal at Centreville, I'd sent some students there for disciplinary action," said

Oliver. "But I had no idea what the students were really like until I walked those halls. After the first couple days, it was incredible — the sense you felt and received from the students. It hooks you as soon as you walk in the door; it's just a special place."

Describing the students as "real" and "street-smart," he said, "They

SEE OLIVER, PAGE 12

Praise, Admiration from School's Teachers, Staff

Besides making a positive influence on Mountain View's students, Principal Jim Oliver also left his mark on its teachers and staff.

Sometime in January, at Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey's request, Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors will formally honor Oliver for his service to the school. Meanwhile, school personnel gave their thoughts about him following his retirement.

Jeffrey Reaman, Employment/Transition representative, has spent 33 years in FCPS and worked for many leaders. But, he

said, "What set Jim apart was his passion. He believed strongly in the mission of alternative education in this county and embraced the challenge. You couldn't be around him without [doing the same]."

"His devotion was unique, because he personalized it," explained Reaman. "To him, every young person that came through the doors of Mountain View was a new family member entitled to love and respect, and expected to love and respect, in return. The academic success these students achieved in this family atmosphere is unparalleled. I've been lucky to work for such a terrific school system, but truly blessed to work at Mountain View with

Jim Oliver."

Special education teacher Tim McElroy said Oliver placed people into positions best matching their abilities and then "let them do their jobs, without micromanaging," while supporting them when needed. "He set the goal, provided the tools to meet it and communicated his faith in his staff that his high expectations would be met," said McElroy. "He's the kind of person who made you want to work hard for him."

Oliver's administrative assistant, Yolanda Villanueva, said he had "a

SEE PRAISE, PAGE 12

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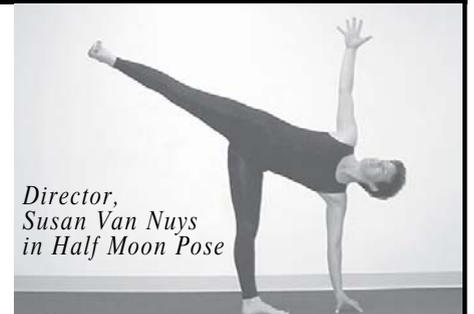
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COMMUNITY



These Girl Scouts helped A Child's Joy stuff 800 handmade stockings with small toys and games for ONC.



Some 135 Westfield High SGA members baked 4,860 cookies and boxed them up for ONC.

Delivering a Happy Holiday

Our Neighbor's Child (ONC) delivered Christmas presents and cookies, Sunday, Dec. 19, to 800 local families in need. Community members donated gifts, made stockings and baked cookies to help make it all possible.



From left: RCD Inc.'s Connor Damico, Matthew Kline and Curt Damico with Westfield High lacrosse players Mike Ritter, Kevin Hughes and Will Beal are ready to deliver these presents.



Helping ONC volunteer Pat Shelton (second from left) with gift delivery are Westfield students Duncan Somers, Peter Donovan and Adrian Ott.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/
CENTRE VIEW



ONC's Brooke Caskey (on left) confers with volunteer Leslie Dominy about directions to a recipient's home.



From left: Ryan Lavin (WHS '05), Patrick Morrisette (WHS '08) and Trey Messiah (WHS'08) carry bicycles to cars for delivery.



From left: Paul VI sophomores Will Biagi and Owen Costello load Anna Jackson's car with ONC gifts to deliver.



From left: Westfield High seniors Yasmin Sheikhabadi and Jackie Barrera prepare to bring the gifts in their car to the recipients.

COMMUNITY



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Centreville High SGA students pack up boxes of home-made cookies for ONC.

Centreville High SGA Lends Helping Hand

Not only are the members of Centreville High's SGA training to be good leaders, but they're also learning firsthand about citizenship. Not only did these students bake and box up nearly 4,000 cookies for the Our Neighbor's Child recipient families, they also worked three days helping sort and package toys at ONC's warehouse.

But that's not all, said SGA Advisor Demby Banbury. "They collected 2 and a half tons of food for the Capital Area Food Bank," she said. "And the SGA sponsored 40 families through Centreville High's Winter Wish program."

The school counselors and social worker gave Banbury a list of local families who need help providing presents for their children at the holidays. Each family was only identified by a number, but information was given about their

children's ages, sizes and needs. "Then the SGA kids and some teachers bought toys, clothes and gift cards for them," said Banbury. "Most families will get two bags full of goodies, and the SGA will shop for any items not received."

She said 39 of the families live in the Centreville High community and the other is a Fairfax County family with three children "that our SGA kids personally took on so they can have a happy holiday."

Delighted with their actions, Banbury described her students as "amazing, unselfish, caring, passionate, young people. Sometimes kids this age get a bad rap about always thinking, 'Me, me,'" she said. "But these kids went above and beyond my expectations. They really put themselves out, and I'm very proud to be their teacher. These are our future leaders."

— BONNIE HOBBS



Some 160 Centreville High SGA students each baked two dozen cookies to contribute.

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ENTERTAINMENT

To have community events listed in Centre View, e-mail to centreview@connectionnewspapers.com. Call Steve Hibbard at 703-778-9412.

MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS

ZUMBA Classes. 7 to 8 p.m. Latin based dance fitness class. The first class is free; afterward it's \$7-\$9 per class. At Cornerstone Montessori School, 4455 Brookfield Corporate Drive, Suite 201, Chantilly. Visit www.gozumbafun.com.

THURSDAY/DEC. 23

Centreville Stitches. 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Do you enjoy knitting, crocheting or other needlework crafts and conversation? Join the fun at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Dr., Centreville. All levels (adults) welcome. Call Jo at 703-803-0595 or email joknitter@verizon.net.

FRIDAY/DEC. 24

Christmas Eve Service. 8 p.m. Jubilee Christian Center will have a Christmas Eve Service on Dec. 24, 8 p.m., with refreshments, at 4650 Shirley Gate Rd., Fairfax. Call 703-383-1170, or see www.jccag.org

DEC. 30 TO JAN. 2

2nd Annual FROSTIVAL! 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except Dec. 31, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. only. Will include 15 winter-themed crafts, interactive science activities and games, professional and local celebrity storytelling, 15 bounces, slides and rides, two stages featuring nationally recognized children's performers, as well as numerous exhibits and vendors. At the Dulles Expo and Conference Center, 4368 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. A presentation of Celebrate Fairfax, Inc. Visit www.FROSTIVAL.com.

FRIDAY/DEC. 31

Bull Run 5K Run. Held at the Bull Run's Festival of Lights in Centreville. To benefit the CMG Heart Foundation and Bull Run Regional Park with proceeds going to the Adam P. Seymour Foundation. Early registration is open until Dec. 13, (\$22), and regular registration (after Dec. 13, 2010) is \$27. Online registration can be made at www.bullrunrunners.com and will close on Dec. 30. Pick up race numbers at VA Runner, 5734 Union Mill Road, Clifton, VA 20124. Visit www.bullrunrunners.com

SUNDAY/JAN. 2

Southern Gospel Concert. 6 p.m. With The Proclaimers Quartet from Columbus, GA. A freewill offering will be received. At Oakton Baptist Church, 14001 Sullyfield Circle, Chantilly. The church is located on Route 50, 1/5

BULLETIN BOARD

ONGOING

Fair Oaks Parkinson Support Group for people living with Parkinson's disease, caregivers and family, meets on the 4th Saturday, from 10 am-noon at Sunrise at Fair Oaks, 3750 Joseph Siewick Drive, Fairfax. Free. 703-378-7221. www.ParkinsonFoundation.org

Parkinson Aquatic Exercise Classes for people living with Parkinson's disease and caregivers meets 10:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, The Woodlands, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. People living with Parkinson's \$10, caregivers \$5. Registration required. Sonia Gow 703-378-7221

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter is offering a free spay or neuter for the first 100 cats, kittens, dogs or puppies adopted from the shelter during the month of December. The special offer is part of the shelter's annual Home 4 the Holidays adoption celebration to help homeless animals make their way out of the shelter and into a new home in time for the holidays.

The shelter has a variety of cats and dogs available for adoption, in addition to small mammals, reptiles and birds. To view animals available for adoption, visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/animalservices/> and click on adoption. Additionally, a new animal is featured each week on the Fairfax County Police Department website homepage, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police under "Adopt-A-Pet."

The shelter is located at 4500 West Ox Rd., Fairfax. Regular adoption hours are Tuesday – Friday, 12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Contact the shelter at 703-830-1100.

The Western Fairfax County Woman's Club is selling the 2010 White House Christmas ornaments. This year's ornament honors our 25th President, William McKinley. The two-sided ornament commemorates the long history of music in the White House with the Marine Corps band greeting White House guests and entertaining the President and Mrs. McKinley. The 2010 ornaments cost \$19. All profits benefit charity. Order yours now by calling 703-378-6841 or 703-378-6216.

Ladies, do you have a Revolutionary Patriot in your

mile east of the Route 28 overpass on the corner of Route 50 and Sullyfield Circle. Call 703 631-1799.

FRIDAY/JAN. 7

Swing Dancing. 9 p.m. to midnight. Cost is \$15. With the band, Natty Beaux. Drop-in beginner swing lesson from 8:30 to 9 p.m.; dancing from 9 p.m. to midnight. At the Hilton Washington Dulles Airport Hotel, 13869 Park Center Road (Route 28 near the airport), Herndon.

SATURDAY/JAN. 8

Lane's Mill DAR Meeting. 1 p.m. The Lane's Mill Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) will meet. At Centreville Regional Library. Contact lanesmillchapter@hotmail.com

JAN. 28 THROUGH JAN. 30

Sugarloaf Crafts Festival. More than 250 craftspeople will display their handmade works. Hours are Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$7/online; \$9/door. At the Dulles Expo Center, 4368 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Call 800-210-9900.

SATURDAY/JAN. 29

Winter Dance Clinic. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. For grades 1-8. Participants will learn two dances, and are invited to perform at halftime at the Chantilly Girls' Varsity Basketball game vs. Oakton on Tuesday, Feb. 1 at 7:30 p.m. The cost for the clinic is \$50 includes pizza lunch and a t-shirt. Registration forms can be found at www.chantillysports.org on the Dance Team page under "Camps and Clinics". Questions? Contact coach Casey Cassara at chargerdancers@gmail.com.

SATURDAY/FEB. 5

Beekeepers Beginners Class. 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. An eight-week class. The Beekeepers Association of Northern Virginia is offering beginner classes for those interested in learning about beekeeping. At Centreville Regional Library, 14220 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Visit BANV's website at beekeepersnova.org.

FEB. 12-13

Wine and Food Showcase. More than 300 different wines produced by Virginia's leading wineries as well as food and wine demos and pairings. The goal is to offer wine lovers the opportunity to sample Virginia's locally grown wines all in one place. Tickets per person run \$45 at the door, \$36 online, and \$20 for non-drinkers. At the Westfields Marriott Hotel in Chantilly. (www.vawineshowcase.org).

family tree? Membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) honors and preserves the legacy of your Patriot ancestor. Any woman is eligible for membership who is no less than 18 years of age and can prove lineal, blood line descent from an ancestor who aided in achieving American independence. Admission to membership is by invitation through a Chapter. Interested in learning more? Contact the Lane's Mill Chapter at lanesmillchapter@hotmail.com

New Neighbors League Club (NNLC) of Northern Virginia is looking for women who are new to the area, looking to reconnect, or just interested in meeting new people for fun and friendship. Come to one of the monthly coffees or luncheons to meet us. Then join one of the numerous clubs such as bridge, couples bridge, mahjong, gardening, quilting and stitching, Bible study, bowling, bunco, Southern living dining, movie outings, cards or board games, couples mixers, book club, nursing home sing-alongs, and many other activities. Visit the Web site www.newneighborsvirginia.com or Newneighborsleagueclub@yahoo.com

TUESDAY/JAN. 11

Preschool Fair. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free. Come meet representatives from local preschools who will be prepared to answer your questions. Hosted by the MOMS Club of Centreville North. At Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly. Visit <http://centrevillenorthmoms.webs.com/preschoolfair.htm>.

MONDAY/JAN. 17

Training Tomorrow's Leaders. 7 p.m. Free. GFWC-Western Fairfax County Woman's Club will host a spokesperson for Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) and an alumni of HOBY's unique leadership training, service-learning, and motivation building experiences. Learn more about this outstanding leadership program and WFCWC's annual sponsorship of a local high school student to attend state seminars. At the Greenbriar Community Center, 4615 Stringfellow Road. Call Jackie at 703-378-8551 or e-mail us at westernfairfaxcountywc@gmail.com.

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SCHOOL NOTES

Centreville High

Brandon Austin, a junior at Centreville High School, was selected to perform with this year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. This is the second consecutive year Brandon has performed in the parade; he did so as part of the McDonald's All-American Marching Band, a select 250-member ensemble comprised of high school students from all 50 States and Washington, D.C. He typically plays snare drum in the CVHS Marching Band, but played Bass Drum in the Macy's parade. A total of five bass drummers marched in the parade, a timeless and classic event to herald the upcoming holiday season.

Brandon is no stranger to performing in big events. He has performed as a percussionist in the Centreville Wind Ensemble Orchestra since his freshman year, and in addition to his performance in NYC at Thanksgiving, he will be part of a performance in February 2011 at Carnegie Hall with a local group called Flutopia. Upon graduation from CVHS, Brandon expects to pursue a degree in Music Education.

CHRISTMAS TREE SALE: The third-annual Centreville High School Christmas Tree sale has begun in front of the school again this year. Frasier Firs ranging from 5-8.5 feet tall are selling like hotcakes at prices from \$55-\$65. All trees purchased are bailed and cut at the customer's request. Hours of operation Wednesday-Friday 5:30-8:30 p.m., weekends from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. All proceeds benefit the Athletic Program at Centreville High School. Contact Jimmy.sanabria@fcps.edu or 703-802-5416

More than 2.5 tons of food was gathered for the Capital Area Food Bank by Centreville High School students during the past few weeks. It is the single largest donation from any organization to date for the Food Bank. Congratulations and a huge pat on the back to the CVHS SGA to organize and oversee the project.

The SGA is sponsoring The Jason Linett Comedy Hypnosis Show on Jan. 19 at 7 p.m. at the Centreville High School Auditorium. Tickets will go on sale for \$7 during lunches Jan. 17-19 and will be for sale at the door beginning at 6 p.m. the evening of the event.

Centreville High School is proud to announce its "All A-B Honor Roll" members for the first quarter of the 2010-2011 school year:

Ranjana Addanki, Sabrine Ahmed Iqbal, Joanna Ahn, Michael Ahn, Jonea Ahouissoussi, Kynat Akram, Sarah Alberstein, Jean Paul Aleman, Eun Beul An, Hayley Anderson, Mark Anderson, Bryan Anthonio, Aiyla Arif, Mitchell August I, Rachel Avery, Taylor Avery, Melissa Baba, Peter Bahng, Andrew Balberde, Victoria Bannon, Christopher Bark, Fatoumata Barry, Adam Beaton, Emily Berkley, Jessica Berkley, Nicholas Bilyeu, Rebecca Blake, Taylor Bogemann, Andrew Bongardt, Denise Bozek, Jessica Braaten, Kevin Brawner, Jacob Brodie, Stephen Broussard, Rachel Brown, Anna Bruce, Courtney Burke, Kyle Burrell, Haley Carlson, Valerie Cateriano, Nicolo Luis Cervantes, Randy Chaing, Isabel Chang, Kevin Chau, Karen Chin, Eun Hee Cho, Jeong A Cho, Maria Cho, Sung Cho, Hyung Choi, Seong Ho Choi, Stefannie Choi, Borahmie Chon, Jonathan Chu, Allan Chua, Nataly Chuchon Reyes, Jin Chung Chae, Daniel Chung, David Chung, Seon Woo Chung, Suk Won Chung, Alexandra Cipolla, Holly Clark, Teresa Clementi, Mary Colandro, Keegan Collins, Jennifer Conner, Thomas Cramp, Ryan Crane, Connor Crilly, Juliana Cuomo, Jessica Dagata, Tony Dabura, Kylene Daily, Howard Darling,

Christopher Darvishian, Christian Davis, Haley Diamond, Julia DiGaetano, Bianca Nadine Dizon Ma, Emily Dohse, Jason Dolinger, Cara Donovan, Ellen Dranginis, Daniel Drangstveit, Kelsey Dunn, Emily Dwornik, Elaine Edwards, Carl Ehinger, Kathryn Eichenberger, Joy Elimiiian, Rebecca Ellis, Samir Elzibir, Sara Emsley, William Ermlick, Aleksey Ermolaev, Shannyn Esmond, Kristen Fadel, Sarah Farooqi, Katherine Faughnan, Bret Fite, Aidan Fitzgerald, Alaina Forte, Marissa Forte, Ashley Frongello, Catherine Fu, Katrina Fuentes, Jacob Fulkerson, Danny Funez, Deep Gandhi, Parini Gandhi P, Maricela Garcia Monter, Keith Garfield, Shilpa Garg, Johnny Germanis, Elsi Godolja, MaryKate Goff, Derek Gordon, Vatsala Goyal, Christina Guh, Rajat Gupta, Rishi Gupta, Trisha Hajela, Hayley Harris, Liban Hashi, Mohamed Hassan, Brynna Hefln, Sara Hendrick, Kelly Hicks, Jacqueline Hogg, Rachel Hollenbeck, Danica Hong, Yujin Hong, Connor Howell, Kevin Hu, Erika Hubbard, Gina Huber, Katherine Hussey, Chae Wook Hwang, Siwon Hwang, Noori Hyun, Lauren Ierardi, Alyssa Grace Ignacio, Paul Iwatake, Daniel Jackson, Colin Jareb, Gagandeep Jathoul, Won Young Jeong, Yeon Ji Jeong, Bun Hong Jin, Chase Johnson, Karen Johnson, Princess Johnson, Lauren Johnston, Jae Hyon Joo, Eun Mi Ju, Jung Jin Ju, Grace Jung, Grishma KC, Jon Paul Kaczmarek, Kelsey Kallapos, Phillip Kang, Aman Kapoor, Sarah Karlik, Charles Kelly, Robert Kelly, Meredith Kernbach, Amin Khatib, Thomas Kidwell, Isabel Kigo, David Kilpatrick, Beom Jun Kim, Brandon Kim, Cha Hyun Kim, Christine Kim, Da Hyun Kim, Ji Sung Kim, Joshua Kim, Katherine Kim, Keun Young Kim, Kyu Kim, Linda Kim, Lora Kim, Na Hyun Kim, Sewon Kim, Sharon Kim, Soo Hyen Kim, Suemin Kim, Sung Do Kim, Sung Kyoung Kim, Yoo Na Kim, Yoonah Kim, Young Whan Kim, Rachel Knutti, Mira Ko, Yoon Ko, Nimrata Kochhar, Shaan Kololgi, Joshua Koters, Pranavi Kotagiri, Jason Kruse, Ajay Kumar, Andrew Kurowski, Joong Hyun Kwon, Hae Jin Kye, Woo Jin Kye, Jenying Lam, Chelsie Lawrence, Diane Le, Thomas Le, Carrie Leaman, David Lee, Eleun Lee, Elga Lee, Hanna Lee, James Lee, Jennifer Lee, Joo Li Lee, Kevin Lee, Maria Lee, Min Gi Lee, Rebekah Lee, Seung Hyun Lee, Soo Lee, Sun Joo Lee, Adrienne Lewis, Jackie Lin, Praveena Logeswaran, Gaomei Kristin Lu, Teresa Lu, Valery Luna, Luis Luna-Quintero, Anish Luthra, Margaret Lyons, Lauren Maginness, Maaz Malik, Omar Malik, Harini Manikandan, Samuel Marks, Mari Marotta, Taylor Marrow, Brett Martin, Alexander May, Eric Mayer, Megan McAuliffe, Katherine McCaskey, Betty

McConn, Abigail McCranie, Meagan McCue, Jordan McFadden, Kristin McKain, Michael McKain, Anna McKittrick, Andrew McLenigan, Emily McLenigan, Daniela Medina Mate, Isabela Medina Mate, Justin Melnyk, Amanda Meny, Stephanie Merida, Alden Methfessel, Kenny Mezher, Brandon Miller, Melissa Millis, Lexi Moles, Daniel Molina, Katelyn Moore, Tasmia Moulvi, Alyssa Muggleworth, Samuel Muggleworth, Megan Murphy, Un Min Nam, Richa Namballa, Moiz Nasir, Sarah Nawab, Monica Nazir, Charlie Vinh Nguyen, Christopher Nguyen, Jolie Nguyen, Kevin Nguyen, Khanh Hung Nguyen, Nhut Nguyen, Sarah Nguyen, Sean Nguyen, Truc Nguyen, Zahra Nomani, Ana Patricia Noriega, Keawe O'Connor, Catherine O'Donnell, Seo Yoon Ok, Ayala Kimberly Ona, Rachel Orlowsky, Gloria Pak, Christina Park, Jee Won Park, Sun A Park, Yi Park, Inez Paz, Jessica Peltier, Kara Perdue, Brittanie Peterson, Mark Piatkowski, Sydney Pryor, Abhishek Ramanan, Arjun Rao, Sapna Rao, Kristina Rathjen, Seher Raza, Paige Reaman, Adrienne Rector, Sang A Rhim, Anna Rhodes, Matthew Rice, Bryan Riedel, Megan Riedel, Joshua Rimer, Mariah Rivera, Chance Roman, Archit Rupakhetee, Gabriel Rushin, Sana Saleen, Thomas Schneider, Jamie Schoshinski, Edward Schiortino, Sean Scott, Sarah Seale, Ashima Sekhawat, Gurkiran Sethi, Manan Shah, Aleena Shahzadi, Neha Sharma, Andrew Shim, Haejung Shin, Young Shin, Shirinakhon Shokir, Kayley Shomers, Sameen Siddiqui, Zachary Sikora, Ravneet Singh, Sabetta Singh, Michelle Singh-Guillen, Matthew Smirich, Erin Smith, Montana Smith, Warren Smith, Emma Soderstrom, Daniel Son, Ye Jin Song, Yuni Song, Stephanie Sor, Joseph Steinbach, Kathrine Steinbach, Lucy Stratton, Kelly Strauch, Georgeanne Stuebner, Brian Su, Bo Won Suh, Chantelle Tait, Kip Talman, Helen Tan, Sai Thota, Danvy Tran, Jennie Tran, Tessie Tran, Thanh Tran, Thomas Trieu, Ariundari Tsogoo, Ingrid Unander-Scharin, Astrid Unson, Jenfrey Van, Heather Vass, Sonal Vijayanagar, Rebecca Vinter, Matthew Vlissides, Jonathan Vu, Howe Vuong, Ali Waldman, James Wang, Kevin Wang, Weerasu Warajuntano, Lauren Waters, Fiona Watson, Daniel Weisz, Connor Wilhelm, Garrett Wilhelm, Texas Williams, Christopher Winans, Hoo In Won, Hannah Woodruff, Jee Min Wooh, Jessica Woolson, Katrina Wright, Ho Jin Yang, Christine Yen, Sabina Yim, Esther Yoo, Esther Yoon, Ji Heun Yoon, Stephanie Yoon, Elizabeth Yow, Haley Yow, Ji Won Yu, Seung Wan Yu, Ashley Yum, Joshua Zarger, Christopher Zempolich, Nicholas Zempolich and Tiffany Zuniga .

FAITH NOTES

Temple Beth Torah is a Reform Jewish congregation and member of the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) that meets at St. Johns Episcopal Church in the heart of Centreville. Religious school is held at the Goddard School in Chantilly, Virginia. The congregation offers the Northern Virginia Jewish community services that provide numerous spiritual, educational, support and social opportunities including religious school for member children age 3 through Bar/Bat Mitzvah and confirmation. Our congregation welcomes all members of the community to attend any of our services or events. For more information, a newsletter, or a membership package, call 703-263-2252 or visit www.BethTorah.net

❖ Wednesday, Jan. 5 at 7:30 p.m. — First Annual TBT College Preview Night. At Temple Beth Torah, 4212C

Technology Court, Chantilly.

All high school students and their families are welcome to join in first annual College Preview Night. There will be a panel of TBT members who are currently in college to discuss their experiences with you.

❖ Friday, Jan. 14 — Shabbat Shirah Service - 7:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help lead this service.

❖ Wednesday, Jan. 19 at 7:30 p.m. — Spirituality in the Interfaith Family. At Temple Beth Torah, 4212C Technology Court, Chantilly. Join in an open discussion regarding spirituality in the interfaith family.

Lord of Life Lutheran Church's second location, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Clifton, is now open. Everyone is invited to worship services at 10 a.m. on Sunday. Call the church office at 703-323-9500 or go to www.lordoflifelutheran.com.

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CENTRE VIEW SOUTH ❖ DECEMBER 23-29, 2010 ❖ 9

Best Wishes For The Holidays



PHOTO BY LOUISE KRAFFT

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Gazette Packet
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CENTRE VIEW

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year

We wish our readers, our clients and everyone who lives, works, studies, plays, shops or pursues their avocations here all the best over this holiday week and beyond into the New Year. Thank you for making the Centre View a part of your week, a part of your year.

This is our last news edition of 2010; next week shortly after Christmas, readers will receive the Children's Centre View, our traditional issue devoted to the writing and artwork of local children and teens.

In the meantime, we are looking for input on New Year's resolutions. Share one or more of the resolutions you will make for 2011, or tell us about a past resolution and how you approached it, for better or worse. Do you have some tips to share for achieving your goals? Send us 50-200 words, and please share a photo as well. We'll print selections in our first issue of the New Year, Jan. 5-12, 2011.

Send your submissions to centreview@connectionnewspapers.com.

Another opportunity to be a part of the newspaper: The Pet Centre View will publish on Feb. 2, 2011, send us photos of you and your pet

Group Organizes Care Packages for U.S. Troops

The Democratic Women of Clifton (DWC), an organization of more than 480 members in Northern Virginia, is celebrating its sixth anniversary this coming year with a full calendar of events that includes informative speakers, campaigning for Democratic candidates, and projects serving the community.

At its most recent monthly meeting on Nov. 14, the DWC assembled 49 care packages for a unit of U.S. troops serving in Afghanistan. The contact in Afghanistan was Lt. Col. Ryan Elliott, an engineer with Special Operations. Elliott became known to the DWC through his sister Stephanie Holt, a teacher at local Mountain View Alternative High School.

Donations for the packages came from DWC members, the DYNAMO Soccer Team coached by Jeff Reaman of Little Rocky Run, and VFW Post 5412 in Burke, whose members paid the entire cost of postage. Representing the veterans was Tom Troy, who attended the DWC meeting to deliver more donations and help with the packing.

The packages were received by Lt. Col. Elliott within the following week, and his sister relayed heartfelt thanks from her brother and his fellow servicemen and women, who were thrilled with the food gifts, supplies, and entertainment sent by the DWC and friends.

Also at the November meeting, the DWC launched its annual Food Gift Card Project to benefit those served by Our Daily Bread, the Fairfax-based nonprofit, nonsectarian organization that feeds area families in need. All residents of local communities are invited to contribute to the project by purchasing food gift cards in any denomination from local grocery stores.

Food cards or checks may be mailed to DWC, P.O. Box 143, Clifton, VA 20124. Checks should be made payable to Our Daily Bread, with

by Jan. 20.

Alternatives to Drinking and Driving

A recent ride-along with a Northern Virginia police officer gave Connection reporter Alex McVeigh a chance to convey some of the methods and mission to get drunk drivers off the road. (See Getting Drunk Drivers Off the Streets, in Dec. 15's Reston Connection, <http://connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=346976&paper=71&cat=104>)

Among other things on the night of the ride-along, the officer encountered an apparently drunk driver who had fallen asleep behind the wheel waiting to make a right turn, his car running, his turn signal blinking and vomit evident down the outside of the driver's side door.

It's enough to make you want to stay home.

With the season for holiday parties comes the increased incidence of driving under the influence, with drunk driving arrests up more than 70 percent compared to other times of year. In 2010, Fairfax County Police have in-

vestigated more than 660 alcohol related accidents. In 2008 in Fairfax County, there were more than 3,100 arrests for driving under the influence.

In Arlington, 677 arrests. In Alexandria, 515 arrests. In the City of Fairfax, 181 arrests.

DON'T TAKE THE RISK. Plan ahead, leave your car at home, take public transportation, arrange for a designated driver, or choose to abstain if a designated driver isn't available.

But if you find yourself in the unfortunate position of drinking without a safe way home on your own this holiday season, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program has provided you with a safety net called SoberRide. Take their number with you when you head out, and be sure any young adults (must be 21 or over) in your family are similarly armed.

WRAP's 2010 Holiday SoberRide program is available now through 6 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 1, 2011. To receive a free cab ride home (up to a \$30 fare), call 800-200-8294. You must be 21 or older. (Callers are responsible for anything over \$30.)

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Democratic Women of Clifton, family members, and Tom Troy of VFW Post 5412 in Burke with 49 packages they mailed to U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

"Food Program" noted on the memo line. The DWC will collect food gift card donations through Dec. 30 for distribution to families in January.

To find out more about the Democratic Women of Clifton, go to www.DemocraticWomenofClifton.org or email: cliftonwomens@aol.com.

Earning Silver Award

Members of Cadette Girl Scout Troop #3663 earned their Silver Award by teaching a group of Brownie Girl Scouts the basics of tent camping. The award, which the girls worked on for over a year, culminated in an overnight camping adventure with the younger scouts at the Isaac Walton Campground. Girls that earned the award are Brooke Peterson, Amanda Linthicum, Cameron Rabdau, Katelyn Rebelo, Paolah Garcia-Urista, Kirsten Cardinal, Gabby Dagata, Rebecca Vinter, Melissa Millis, Sydney Pryor and Katie Hannah (missing from picture). Also pictured are troop members Lana Mahmoud, Isabela Medina Mate, Jessie Healy and Maddie Assel. The Silver Award is the highest award that can be earned by Cadette Girl Scouts.



'A Place Where Magic Happens'

FROM PAGE 5

know when you're sincere and honest and really committed to them. They'll give you their heart and soul, and that's one of the things that make it so rewarding. Every day you can see the difference you've made."

So one of the first things Oliver did was to change the school's image. "It went from 'the place where only bad kids go' to a school to be reckoned with academically in the state," he said. "Mountain View's won several awards, and our staff and school have been recognized with every award possible in Fairfax County."

Oliver, himself, was a finalist last year for Principal of the Year. And in December 2009, the Board of Supervisors commended the school for its academic excellence. It ranked sixth academically out of 318 high schools in Virginia.

"It gave us a tremendous rush because no other Fairfax County school had been recognized by the supervisors with a resolution," he said. "So I think our school's performance has been phenomenal, and we're so proud of all the students and staff."

"Mountain View's a little, alternative high school, but it's got a powerful punch," continued Oliver. "We always say it's a place where miracles and second chances, where no one says, 'failure,' or 'You can't do this.' Before coming here, a lot of the students had been told, 'You'll never succeed.' At Mountain View, we say, 'Yes, you can.'"

He said the 2 percent of FCPS students who aren't successful come to Mountain View. "They're the most at-risk kids in the 18 schools from which they come," said Oliver. "School hasn't been a positive influence on them. But at Mountain View, they succeed, pass SOLs for the first time, make A-B honor roll, apply to colleges and get scholarships. It's also the first time they've gotten positive recognition for their academic achievements."

Oliver said the teachers there make learning exciting: "We make the environment nurturing and caring so students want to come to Mountain View." They also live the school's motto, "Family, love and respect."

There, teachers, administrators, counselors and students have a sense of family. "We can do this because it's a small school where everybody knows everyone," he said. "So every student feels a part of that family."

Therefore, if a student isn't acting like himself, the other students and teachers know him so well that they pick up on it quickly and intervene. Said Oliver: "Students know they have people in the building they can go to and fill comfortable with about discussing important things in their lives."

He noted that a love for teaching and learning is evident there, and mutual respect is crucial. "It breeds itself," said Oliver. "Students treated with respect will treat each other and the teachers with respect, so everybody gets along."

All in all, he said, "We're proud to have accomplished so much in the past 7 and a half years. It's a testament to the fine students and staff. That's why I'm incredibly emotional about leaving. But my dad, who's 85, lives with my wife and I and is going through some serious, medical issues. So for now, I really need to be home and help out with him, full-time."

At Mountain View, said Oliver, seeing the students in good spirits made him happy. "Knowing they're taking advantage of that second chance just touched my heart," he said. "Being part of 16 graduations and handing out all those diplomas, you know you made a difference. Having that opportunity to serve and influence a young person's life is the greatest reward ever."



COURTESY OF KEN BURTON

Jim Oliver holds a memory book that Mountain View's teachers made for him.

Praise, Admiration from Colleagues

FROM PAGE 5

vision of success" for the school, right from the start. She said he brought on board faculty members in tune with the "alternative way" of teaching and did his best to make sure each student's individual needs were recognized and addressed.

His Spanish-language skills were a plus, she said, and he often shared with the ESOL students "the struggles his mom went through in coming to the U.S. from Spain. He hoped it would help them understand that, with perseverance, they, too, could excel. More importantly, he connected with all the students and they responded in kind. They respected him and knew he always wanted to see them get ahead."

Villanueva said Oliver also stressed the importance of Mountain View's staff not neglecting their own families. "He will surely be missed by students, faculty and staff," she said. "We appreciate all he's done - not only for us - but for everyone during his years of service with FCPS."

Librarian Jean Fidyk was the first person Oliver hired at Mountain View and he supported all her ideas to make its library not a sterile and forbidding place but, rather, the cheerful, welcoming, social center of the school. There, students meet their friends, chat, eat lunch, read and use the computers. Said Fidyk: "Jim didn't want this to be

a place with a lot of 'no's, but where kids could relax and be themselves."

She said the next principal will have "big shoes to fill because Jim was the glue that kept all of us focused on the mission of this place, 'Family, love and respect.' He's a man with a big heart who made it all work, and we'll miss him."

Counselor Jim Lockwood credited Oliver with "building, orchestrating and leading a one-of-a-kind, educational program that delivers a priceless service to both students and the community. It's tough to see a strong leader move on, but I believe that what he's established here has been done so in such a firm way that Mountain View will continue to be a first-class school."

Career Development Coordinator Sharon DeBragga said Oliver was responsible for bringing up the building, physically, to the standards of a high school. She said he championed the new library, building renovations and the school's logo outside. He also placed reminders of Mountain View's motto throughout the halls.

"That motto is what this school is all about, and Jim taught us to really embrace the students as family, with love and respect," said DeBragga. "I know he'll eventually find something to do that's equally challenging and fulfilling, and we really wish him well."

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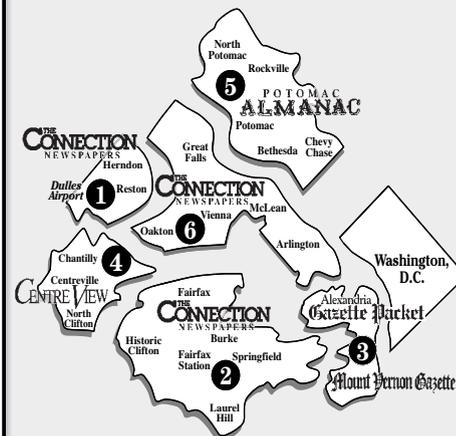
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A Quarter for My Thoughts



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Wondering whether what I'm feeling physically is symptomatic of my having my stage IV lung cancer – or not, has become the bane of my existence. The presumed inevitability of it wears on me night and day. Though my overall stress level is significantly lower than when I was working full time, commuting two rush-hours a day by car and being "clock-radioed" at 5:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, I'd be lying if I said living with my diagnosis/prognosis is "no problem."

Having said – and admitted that out loud, I am however, reasonably able to get on with the activities of my daily living and pretty much be counted on to finish most of what I start. And what I find myself needing to finish most are my quarterly scans: Bone, CT and Brain MRI, which I have every three months per my participation in a Schering Plough "Randomized Phase 2 Study".

After 15 months in, my results have been, to quote myself (and referring to a previously published column): "Scantastic!" Nevertheless, future results/my health could change in a week – or so I've been reminded, professionally. As such, I've learned to take the so-far good news with the as-yet-not-received bad news. Still, if there's good news to be heard, given the terminal nature of my original prognosis, I want to hear it. More importantly – for me, I need to know how to process it, and where to place it in my compartmentalized/"defense-mechanized" brain – for self-preservation of course, so that I don't upset this delicate Libra balance that I strive to maintain. And it's about this time (eight to 10 weeks out) in my recurring quarterly scan cycle when my subconscious takes over.

I believe this happens because of something my oncologist said about eight months ago. That was when I first received unexpected and amazing news from him – following the previous week's scans. The tumors were not moving or growing. In fact, there seemed to be more scar tissue than tumors, the doctor said. Perplexed at what it all meant, since I came in experiencing what I thought were cancer-related symptoms, my oncologist attempted to put me at ease – and clarify as well when he said: "You've been scanned stem to stern in the last week, anything you feel over the next eight weeks, don't even worry about it. It's not the cancer," (the cancer that we know about, ergo the continuing mental problem). And as reassuring and wonderful as that answer/explanation was, it has however, had an unintended effect: anxiety.

Per my doctor's advice, for the first eight weeks after my scans and every-three-week appointment with my oncologist have been completed, I really don't worry too much (as much, to be honest) about whatever I might be feeling physically/the cancer. It's all good. However, once I'm into the ninth week or so, the worm turns and all presumptions, rationalizations and nothing-to-worry-about concerning my cancer/any miscellaneous symptoms I may be experiencing, are off. At that point on my mental calendar, the cancer window is officially open for business, or so my subconscious thinks. It's the next four weeks until I'm scanned again that my brain is in total control. It reacts, overreacts, wonders, worries, stresses about every little thing I feel, or think I feel. I can't stop it. I can only endure it.

Consequently, those/these next four weeks can't pass quickly enough. And as peculiar as it may sound, I'm not nearly as nervous for those scan results as much as I am eager for them. At least then, I'll know exactly where my cancer is or – more importantly, where it's not. Then I'll be back in control, for another eight weeks, anyway. It may not be an ideal way to live, but it is living and it is feeling, and it sure beats the alternative.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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SPORTS

Westfield Boys Off to Fast Basketball Start

Bulldogs getting set to host upcoming Bulldog Bash over the holidays.

BY RICH SANDERS
CENTRE VIEW

The Westfield High boys' basketball team, which won just a handful of games last year, is off to a terrific, early season start this winter under head coach Doug Ewell.

The Bulldogs improved their pre-Christmas holidays' record to five wins and two losses when they defeated Heritage (Leesburg), 69-47, in a non-Northern Region road game played earlier this week on Monday, Dec. 20. It marked Westfield's final pre-holiday game.

Westfield will host its own Bulldogs' Bash holiday tournament next week from Dec. 28-30. The Bulldogs' first game after the New Year will be on Jan. 7 when it hosts cross-town rival Centreville in a Concorde District affair.

Westfield, in Monday's win over Heritage, had three players score in double figures - 6-foot-10 inch junior center Zach Elcano (16 points), junior guard Julius Rosa (14) and senior guard David Aurora (13). Robert Aid, a senior forward, added six points while junior guard Mark Gibson contributed five and junior forward Quinton Basil four in the balanced attack.

Westfield lost its season opener back on Dec. 3 to guest team Edison, 79-70, in over-



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/CENTRE VIEW

Westfield High boys' basketball coach Doug Ewell has seen his Bulldogs get off to a fine 5-2 start this season.

time. But the Bulldogs then reeled off four straight wins, the victories coming over visiting West Springfield, 67-37, on Dec. 7; guest South Lakes, 57-35, on Dec. 8; home team Hayfield, 58-38, on Dec. 10; and visiting Lake Braddock, 54-53, on Dec. 14.

The win streak was snapped last Friday night, Dec. 17 when the Bulldogs lost, 60-57, at South County Secondary. Aurora tallied 15 points in the loss, while teammates Elcano (14) and Elliot Breen (10 points) had big scoring nights as well. Rosa and Basil

both added seven points. South County's Nik Biberaj scored a game-high 23 points to pace the winning Stallions that night.

OVERALL, it has been an exceptional start to the season for Westfield, which bounced back from the South County loss with the decisive victory over Heritage. But there is still plenty of room for improvement for the Bulldogs.

"Although our record is good we need to improve our rebounding, and do a better job of handling teams that press us," said Mike Coyle, a Westfield assistant coach. "We've played good defense at times, limiting teams to 30-to-40 points in three of our wins."

Westfield is an overall young squad this season with just three seniors - Aurora, Aid and Breen. Several of the underclassmen have gotten their first taste of high school varsity basketball experience over the first month of the season.

"Some of the newcomers are adjusting to the competitiveness and physical play of varsity basketball," said Doyle, speaking on behalf of Coach Ewell. "Our big player, Zach Elcano, attracts a lot of attention from other teams, but he is adjusting to this well and providing the scoring that we need. In addition, his defense has improved, which has been a nice plus."

Westfield, over its first seven games, is receiving solid contributions from a number of players.

"Julius Rosa, a returning junior, is playing good defense for us and has done a good job of knocking down open looks," said Coyle. "David Aurora is the only senior that starts and he has been very steady offen-

sively and defensively, and knocking down open three's."

The Bulldogs have received good play at the point guard position where both Gibson, a returning varsity player, and sophomore Chaucey Beckett have been productive.

"Each bring an intensity and different skill set which complement each other," said Coyle, of the two playmaker guards.

One of the team's more versatile players has been strong forward Basil.

"He does a little bit of everything, grabs rebounds, defends multiple players," said Coyle. "He hit a big three [point shot] for us in the closing seconds against Lake Braddock."

"We have some younger guys that are coming along, learning the system, and competing for minutes," added Coyle.

The Bulldog Bash will take place over the holidays from Dec. 28-30 at Westfield. The eight-team boys' team field will consist of the following squads: the home team Bulldogs, Langley, Potomac High, Centreville, Flint Hill, Potomac School of McLean, Battlefield of Manassas, and Stuart.

Westfield will need steady contributions from both its starters and players off the bench in order to put together a good showing at its own tournament.

"I believe that this year's tournament will be as competitive as any that we've had in past years," said Coyle. "I believe that we can compete for the title, but it will be a new experience for a number of our guys, playing three games in three days. Clearly, our bench will need to step up and play quality minutes so our starters can get some rest and be fresh and focused during the late stretches of the game."

Wildcat Wrestlers Place 16th at Ray Oliver Invitational

Swim and Dive: Centreville and Oakton met in a meet last Friday night, Dec. 17. Johnny Germanis won both the 200-IM and 100-fly events, both in Northern Region cut times. Wildcat boys' second place finishes came from Connor Culleiton (100-free) and the 400-free relay team of Culleiton, Nick Cole, Michael Helme, and Germanis. Third place finishes for the boys came in the 200-medley relay team of Jihun Yom, Andy Balberde, Germanis, and Culleiton; and the 200-free relay team of Balberde, Clarke, Jones, and Cole.

For the Centreville girls, Rachel Anderson finished first in the 200-IM with a region cut time. Second place finishes by the Centreville girls came from the 200-medley relay team of Abby McCranie, Anderson, Taylor Avery, and Kylie Cuomo. Second place individual finishes came from McCranie (50-free); Avery (100-fly); Anderson (100-back); and Lauren Johnston (diving). Third place finishes for the Wildcat girls came from Cuomo (500-free); Erin Hessler (100-breast); Mary Pat Colandro (diving); the 400-free relay team of Brooke Worley, Hessler, Cuomo, and Anderson; and the 200-free relay team of Hessler, Katie Schwindt, Avery, and McCranie.

The Centreville boys and girls also competed in a meet versus Robinson last Saturday, Dec. 18. Germanis won the 100-free event with a Virginia State cut time. He also won the 100-back event. The boys' 200-medley relay team of Culleiton, Hamrick, Germanis, and Jonathan Clarke finished second. Also, the 200-free relay team of Culleiton, Cole, Clarke, and



PHOTO COURTESY/CENTREVILLE HIGH TRACK

Runners race for the finish line in the 300 event at the first-ever Polar Bear Challenge track meet, hosted and held at Centreville High School on Dec. 11.

Germanis was second. Second place individual finishes for the Wildcat boys came from Culleiton (200-IM) and Michael Helme (100-fly). Third place finishes came from Clarke (200-IM), Chance Roman (diving), and Cole (500-free).

For the Centreville girls against Robinson, first place individual finishes came from Anderson (200-free); McCranie (50-free); and Avery (100-fly). The 200-free relay of Avery, Cuomo, Kelsey Daily, and McCranie finished first. The Wildcats' foursome of Anderson, Shannon O'Donnell, Avery, and McCranie was second in the 200-medley. Second place indi-

vidual finishes came from Avery (200-IM) and McCranie (100-free). Third place finishes came from Katie Schwindt (200-free); Coumo (50-free and 100-fly); and Anderson (500-free). The 400-free relay of Anderson, Cuomo, Brooke Worley, and Hessler took third place.

Boys Basketball moves to 3-3 for season: The Centreville varsity boys' basketball team defeated Marshall, 61-50, on Tuesday, Dec. 14 to improve to 3-2 on the season. Centreville jumped to a 10-2 start and never relinquished the lead. Cameron Owens achieved his 4th double-double of the season with a

15 point, 10 rebound effort. Centreville assisted on 20 of its 24 baskets. Travis Whitney achieved career highs in points (11) and rebounds (7). Ken Ekanem had 11 points and 7 rebounds while Jake Brodie had 6 assists. On Friday, Dec. 17, the Wildcats lost to West Potomac by a score of 54-53, bringing their record to 3-3 on the season. Owens led all scorers with 24 points, and also tallied 4 rebounds and 4 assists. Ekanem had 13 points and 9 rebounds.

— KAREN FULKERSON



PHOTO COURTESY/CENTREVILLE COACH JOHN BELYEA

Centreville High junior Ryan Sepulveda, at the top of the awards stand, won first place in the 160-pound weight class division of the NOVA Classic Wrestling Tournament at Fairfax High School on Saturday, Dec. 11.

Making the Season Bright

FACETS, community play Santa to local children.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

When money's tight and people are just happy to have a roof over their heads, Christmas presents are often a luxury they just can't afford. But thanks to FACETS (Fairfax Area Christian Emergency & Transitional Services), nearly 200 children last week got some help with their gifts.

For its 10th year, FACETS organized and hosted Holiday Sibling Shops so that children in need would be able to provide presents for their brothers and sisters. All year long, the nonprofit group helps families living in transitional or permanent supported housing, and the sibling shops are eagerly anticipated and fun for all.

Last week's events were at the Ragan Oaks Community Center near Fair Oaks, at Robinson Square near GMU and at Barrios Circle in Centreville. They were also holiday parties where the children ate snacks, made Christmas crafts, selected presents for their siblings and helped wrap them.

"Throughout November, FACETS collected donations from individuals, corporations and faith communities," said Amy Marlow, FACETS assistant director of development. "They gave gifts for babies through kids age 18."

The items collected included things such as footballs, dolls, games, toys, books, cologne, makeup and \$25 gift cards to stores such as Game Stop. Then about 80 children came to the sibling shop at Fair Oaks, another 80 went to the one at Robinson Square and some 15-20 were at the Centreville party.

"We thank all the community members and organizations who donated these hundreds of toys," said Marlow. "What's really special about these parties is that the kids get to come and pick out the gifts for their siblings — which is empowering for them to do and lets them experience the joy of giving to their family."

The Ragan Oaks party was last Monday, Dec. 13, and the atmosphere was festive. Children munched on cookies, gumdrops and popcorn, as well as special, sesame-seed-coated doughnuts made by a community resident from Sudan. And while they snacked, adult volunteers helped them create crepe-paper



FACETS volunteer Katie Torgersen helps Ruba Badawi with her craft project.

Christmas wreaths and beaded snowflake ornaments. "This is also about the community coming together and having fun," said Marlow. "Most of the children's parents are here, and everyone lives in this apartment complex, so it's really neighborhood-based. We want to take this spirit of the holidays and express it all year 'round, because the need continues."

Because of the tough economy, she said, FACETS is serving about 20 percent more children this year than last year. "FACETS serves 5,000 individuals a year throughout Fairfax County," said Marlow. "It provides emergency services for families and adults in danger of becoming homeless. Ragan Oaks is an affordable-housing community, and families here are living on about \$18,000 a year for a family of four."

Fairfax residents Kati and J.P. Hesford organized last Monday's party and brought the craft materials, most of the snacks and the wrapping paper. The party for preschool and elementary-school children was from 5-6 p.m., with middle- and high-school students having their own, holiday celebration from 6-7 p.m.

A mother of four, Shannon Tatem was there helping her two youngest boys choose presents for their older siblings. "It's a good concept," she said. "I like the idea of the kids exchanging gifts for each other; otherwise, they wouldn't be able to. And they had fun, too."

Each child received a number and was then called to pick out presents, so their siblings didn't see what they were getting. "There's also a serious purpose to these events," added Marlow, gesturing toward the tables full of new toys. "Having these types of gifts donated to these families allows the families to stretch their money for basic needs like food, rent, utilities and transportation. It's also a relief for the parents because it helps them to maintain financial stability when they're struggling to make ends meet."

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Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) urgently needs donations of sugar (2-5-pounds), coffee, tea, cocoa, mayonnaise, ketchup, syrup, toothpaste and deodorant. Bring them to WFCM'S food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive (near the Backyard Grill and Bar) in Chantilly. The thrift store also needs coats and sweaters.

❖ WFCM recently opened a second

office in Centreville at 14631 Lee Highway, No. 313, and needs administrative volunteers to help out there. Especially needed is a receptionist to check in clients, make new appointments and answer phones, Mondays-Fridays, from 9:50 a.m.-2:10 p.m.

❖ The Chantilly location also needs volunteers. A driver or drivers are needed to pick up store donations for the food pantry on Monday mornings. In the thrift store, general help is needed Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 3-6 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; 10 a.m.-2 p.m.;

or 1-5 p.m. An administrative volunteer is also needed; hours and days are flexible. Call 703-988-9656.

Felony Hit-Run Are Charged

City of Fairfax police have charged a 38-year-old Penderbrook man with felony hit and run. He is Christopher J. Patterson of 12162 Penderview Lane. On Sunday, Dec. 19, at 4:26 p.m., officers responded to Main and Poplar streets after learning of

a traffic crash that injured a child. According to police, the child was in one of the two vehicles involved in the crash and was taken by a family member to a medical facility for treatment.

The driver of the other vehicle allegedly fled the scene, say police, but was subsequently identified following investigation and found at a home in the area. Besides the felony offense, Patterson was also charged with violating his restricted license. He was held in the Adult Detention Center on \$10,000 bond.

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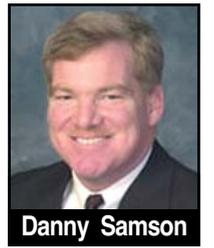


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