

Monday

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# Potomac News

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## Awareness

Youth group calls attention to AIDS plight A5



## New explosives

FBI helps protect against kitchen sink bombs A11



## Wild finish

Kevin Harvick wins wreck-filled Daytona 500 B1



# Board to vote on senior program

By KEITH WALKER  
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Attendance at the Manassas Senior Day Program has decreased by 23 percent in the last year, so the county is getting ready to shut it down.

The Prince William Board of County Supervisors will vote Tuesday on whether to discontinue the program.

"We are so devastated by this," said Courtney Tierney, director of the Prince William Agency on Aging.

"We have a wonderful staff. The people that come get great service," Tierney said of the day care service that provides for four full-time clients who attend daily and 27 who attend sporadically.

Program participants are seniors who have a diminished capacity to go about daily living without help, Tierney said.

"The population that this serves is a very frail population," Tierney said.

But it's not as if the seniors will wind up with no other place to go.

Heath and Home, which is owned and operated by the Manassas Baptist Church at 8730 Sudley Road, provides a comparable service at about the same price, Tierney said.

"The facility at the Baptist place

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## ROSES FOR THE FALLEN

### Florist decorates soldiers' graves

By BENNIE SCARTON JR.  
bscarton@manassasjrn.com

Like so many other florists who had many roses left over after inclement weather prevented the sale of them on Valentine's Day, Wendy Fike, owner of Lake Ridge Florist at Tackett's Mill, was able to turn her loss into something positive.

She and 15 of her employees and relatives spent Sunday afternoon putting 720 of the leftover roses, mostly long stemmed red ones, on the graves of about 350 American soldiers buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

"It was an emotional experience for all of us," said Fike on her return to the shop she has operated for the past 14 years.

Fike said that while she anticipated the snow and ice storm on Valentine's Day and made most of her advanced deliveries the two days before the bad weather set in, but "there was absolutely no expected walk-in traffic on Valentine's Day."

That day is normally one of the florists' top selling days and makes up for a lot of slow days, she said, noting that that this was the first time she had experienced such a storm hitting on Valentine's Day, closing down schools, businesses and offices and making deliveries difficult.

Fike had five or six drivers delivering the roses Monday and Tuesday, including herself, which



Photos by Ana Pimslar/News & Messages

Sarah Fike, 14, places roses on the graves of soldiers fallen in Iraq at Arlington National Cemetery Sunday. Fike's parents are the owners of Lake Ridge Florist in Woodbridge. Employees and friends of the store brought over 700 roses leftover from Valentine's Day to leave on the graves at the cemetery.

led to the idea of donating the unused flowers to the servicemen and women.

"I was making a delivery to a Woodbridge home when no one answered. I called a cell number to get an alternate delivery site or to know when someone would be home. The number I called was actually a soldier serving in Iraq who had placed the order of the four dozen roses for his sweetheart. He told me when it would be a good time to make the second delivery," she said.

Fike said that on Valentine's day

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Christen Steich walks a bucket of roses through Arlington National Cemetery on Sunday to place on the graves of soldiers killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

### Drivers should hang up

There's a move on in Richmond to make it illegal for teenagers to use cell phones while they drive.

A bill proposed Sen. James "Jay" K. O'Brien, R-Clifton, recently passed in the Senate and will go to the House of Delegates this week.

It's a great idea, but why single out teenagers?

Everyone gets stupid when they drive and talk on a cell phone.

Face it. No one is really all that great at multi-tasking and it's dangerous when people don't pay attention when they're behind the wheel.

At the very least it's highly annoying to other drivers.

How many times have you found yourself waiting at a turn arrow that's green while some idiot without a clue carries on a cell phone conversation?

How many times have you had to brake on the highway or lean on your horn because some fool driver on a cell phone failed to check the blind spot?

How many times have you had to stop short in parking lot because some blockhead pulled out in front of you while talking on a cell phone?

How many times have those drivers been adults who

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### Homeowners were removed to make room for Prince William Forest Park

By BENNIE SCARTON JR.  
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of their land by the Park Service. The park was once the home to Native Americans, Euro-American settlers and African-Americans.

Chopawamsic Recreational Development Area.

Between 1942 and 1943, the remaining residents were forced to re-



W. FOREST PARK  
 LARRY SYSTEM  
 2007, VA

HISTORIC SITE FILE: PK WFM FOR EST PARK  
PRINCE WILLIAM PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
RELIC/Bull Run Reg Lib Manassas, VA

# Homeowners were removed to make room for Prince William Forest Park

508 LANE PARKLEY, Page A2

By **BENNIE SCARTON JR.**  
bscarton@potomacnews.com

The tragic and sad way some 250 homeowners, both white and black, were removed from their land and homes to make way for Prince William Forest Park were relayed by two speakers on Saturday at the Park Visitor Center.

Arvilla Payne-Jackson, professor at Howard University, and Sue Ann Taylor, public anthropologist in residence at American University, presented their findings from their historical study "Prince William Forest Park: An African-American Experience."

The two were contacted by the National Park Service in 1998 to make a study on the impact of the families displayed by the takeover

of their land by the Park Service.

The park was once the home to Native Americans, Euro-American settlers and African-Americans.

"We were about 50 years too late in making the study as the settlements and cultural artifacts from past inhabitants have been destroyed over the years, yet our interviews with family members of former residents, shed a great deal of information for our study," said Taylor, noting "there was a lot of hostility toward the government for taking their land."

In 1933, as part of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the family's land was one of 46 sites selected as part of park conservation programs around the country. The inhabitants were displaced to create what was then known as the

Chopawamsic Recreational Development Area.

Between 1942 and 1943, the remaining residents were forced to relocate for the expansion of Quantico Marine Corps base as a training site designated for use by the Strategic Services during World War II. Following the war, the land was returned to the National Park Service.

"The primary aim of our history project was to study the daily lives of the 250 families — about equal white and black — and gather data to help in developing cultural awareness, identifying culturally sensitive issues and recognizing significance resources with potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places," said Payne-Jackson.

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Jeff Mankie/For the News & Messenger

**Dr. Arvilla Payne-Jackson, a professor at Howard University, left, and Dr. Sue Ann Taylor a professor at American University, presented their Oral History Project the African-American Experience collecting cultural history and stories of African-Americans who resided within what is now Prince William Forest Park at the park's visitor center in Triangle on Saturday.**

## WEATHER

Sunny and cold  
High 35, Low 24  
Details/B12

## INSIDE

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## COMING TOMORROW

### SPORTS:

Osborn basketball feature

## ON THE WEB

Events calendar with local and regional events for kids, adults and groups.  
**KEYWORD: Calendar**



# PARK

Continued from page A1

She said interviews showed that the whites and blacks got along well, often volunteering to help each other at harvest and other times.

"The only segregation was in churches, schools and bars," she said.

The primary areas now inside the 15,000-acre park were Batetown, where free blacks were present in the area as early as the mid-eighteenth century, and Hickory Ridge, which grew out of the property originally purchased in 1869 by Zeal Williams, the first black property owner in the area. Betsy Bates, considered the matriarch of the family, was born around 1795 and was the first of the Bates in the area. By the end of the 19th century, Batetown had 150 residents.

Taylor said a typical family that was displaced was that of Annie Williams, who lived to be nearly 105 years old.

"She was a well-respected midwife who delivered hundreds of babies and sold apples and peaches from her orchards to make a living. She got something like \$2,000 for all of her land," Taylor said.

Payne-Jackson said in her interviews she discovered the former park land area was once the "moonshine capital" of the area and the county sheriffs would usually tip off the moonshiners when federal agents were after them.

She also said families told her that once there was a creature known as "big foot" in the area; that many homes were thought to be haunted; and that coon hunting was a big part of the life of some of the residents.

Payne-Jackson said most residents depended on subsistence

farming along with odd jobs to make a living.

"Land was invaluable to African-Americans not only as an economic resource, but also as an extension of self and family," Payne-Jackson said.

Activities revolved around the family, church and the land. Families were very closely tied to their land, symbolically, spiritually and economically. Many of the day-to-day tasks were shared by whites and blacks. Social activities included enjoying music, games and house parties.

Taylor said the most revealing aspect of the research was that most people interviewed did not seem to be aware of the park takeover in the 1930s as they were of the land acquisition in the expansion of the Marine Corps base in the 1940s.

"The takeover of the property in the 1930s was gradual. Most families seemed to be given time to relocate, remaining on their properties for several years in some cases and in some cases they benefited by the takeover as a way out and up," Taylor said.

"The strongest reaction of families was the takeover of the park by the Office of Strategic Services in 1942-43 where families were given two weeks to clear out during a period of extremely bad weather," she said.

In their report, the two recommended that a cultural trail that covers the legacy of Native Americans, African-Americans and Euro-Americans be set up to show the losses suffered by the residents as well as setting up permanent and rotating exhibits at the center that provide "an overview of the rich cultural heritage of what is now the park."

The two were invited to speak on their findings as part of Black History Month.

Staff writer Bennie Scarton Jr. can be reached at (703) 369-6707.

# ROSES

Continued from page A1

as she looked at all the flowers still her shop coolers "I wanted to cry" but she came up with the thought of rather than letting them go to waste to take them to the graves of soldiers who had died in Iraq.

She called Arlington and was given permission to bring the roses in and was allowed to park close to the grave sites.

"The footing was very treacherous as it was very icy and snowing at times, but we were careful not to fall. In some of the graves we doubled up on the roses, particularly on the graves which were bare of any other flowers or tokens of love," she said.

A few other families, she said, were also at the cemetery. At one of the gravesites where a rose was placed, a woman told her "it's awesome

what you are doing" and she had a tear in her eye.

Fike said she was amazed at how massive the cemetery is.

"As I looked back at what we had done just before leaving, it was just overwhelming and very moving. I felt very good that even if what we had done, was just a small token considering how many of the soldiers had died to preserve our freedom," she said.

"It made me feel better that we had turned a sizeable loss of business into something that made me and my employees feel so good."

Tresa Caplanis, 51, mother of employee Carrie Caplanis, was among those who went to the cemetery and she agreed.

"When my daughter asked me if I wanted to go along, I said sure. I thought it was a very good idea to do something nice for the soldiers. The thing that impressed me the most was some of the gravesites had flowers, toys,



Ana Pflieger/News & Messenger

**Sisters Kelly, left, and Erin Wessel read the temporary marker for a soldier recently killed in Iraq after placing fresh roses on the grave at Arlington National Cemetery Sunday.**

pictures and mementoes, and the others had nothing. Those were the ones where I was particularly moved to leave the roses."

Normally open on Sunday, Fike left a note on the door of her shop at 22538 Old Bridge Road that said she would be

closed for several hours while she and her staff were away for the afternoon — on a patriotic mission to honor the soldiers who died in Iraq and are buried in Arlington.

Staff writer Bennie Scarton Jr. can be reached at (703) 369-6707.

# SENIORS

Continued from page A1

is much larger and they are able to offer a fair amount of things that we do not offer," Tierney said of the 4-year-old program at the renovated Marsteller Middle School, which the church bought in 2002.

The Hearth and Home facility has 8,000 square feet compared to the county's 3,503-square-foot center near the Sudley North Government Center on Ashton Avenue.

Mary Eskridge, the Hearth and Home project director, said some of the services the church program offers include a staff nurse, a beautician that comes in regularly, regular visits by a

podiatrist and a massage therapist, as well as planned activities.

Staff reports show that Hearth and Home can provide other amenities that the county cannot. The amenities include a quiet room, a medical treatment room, a crafts room and a recreation room and two outside courtyards.

Hearth and home is also able to provide for its clients' special dietary needs, which the county cannot do.

Manassas Senior Adult Day Program clients who use Medicaid to pay will be allowed to continue the practice should they choose to go to Hearth and Home where everything is handicap accessible and on one level, Eskridge said.

"We're a Medicaid provider so we're able to accommodate those that have Medicaid," Eskridge said of the program that is licensed to care for 60 people.

Prince William County Executive Craig Gerhart said his recommendation to eliminate the program was purely a "business decision" that is unrelated to the county's \$18.1 million budget shortfall.

If someone can do the job better, the government should step aside, Gerhart said.

"As a government, we don't exist to out-compete with the private sector," Gerhart said. "If they can do it better, we ought not to be in that business."

Staff reports show that shutting down the program will eliminate seven jobs, which includes four health aides, an adult day care program coordinator, a recreation specialist and a driver for a total savings of \$312,040 annually.

Staff writer Keith Walker can be reached at (703) 878-8063.

News & Messenger  
**Web poll results**  
 PotomacNews.com

**Q** Should the General Assembly pass a measure that would allow localities to install photo-red technology at intersections? Total votes: 174

Yes	68
No	100
Undecided	6

**This week's question: Should all driver's seat cell phone usage be banned?**

*Note: This poll is not scientific and reflects the opinions of only those Internet users who have chosen to participate. The results cannot be assumed to represent public opinion.*

# LANE RANGER

Continued from page A1

should know better?

It's too late for this year's General Assembly, but maybe the state legislators could consider outlawing driving and talking on cell phones for everybody.

Police say they don't have statistics about how many accidents are the direct result of people talking on cell phones, but the Lane Ranger figures that's because people deny that they were on the phone when they had the accident.

O'Brien appeared before the House of Delegates' Transportation Committee on Thursday to promote his bill, which passed the committee with a 20-1 vote.

If it passes the in the House of Delegates and the governor signs it, it would become law on July 1.

**Transit woes?**  
 Talk back to the Lane Ranger at PotomacNews.com

# VDOT exceeds road construction goals

The Virginia Department of Transportation exceeded all construction and maintenance deadline and budget targets through the second quarter of fiscal 2007, according to the agency's quarterly report issued last week.

VDOT was due to complete 119 construction contracts by the end of the second quarter, which ended Dec. 31.

Of those, 107 or 90 percent, were completed on schedule, said a recent VDOT press release.

This exceeds the goal of 70 percent for this year and tops the 84 percent score for the

second quarter of fiscal year 2006.

VDOT also ended this fiscal quarter with 93 percent of construction projects completed within budget, compared with 86 percent for the same period last year, according to the release.

The department delivered 79 percent of its maintenance projects on time through the second quarter of this fiscal year, the same percentage completed on time by this time last year.

The agency improved its on-budget performance on maintenance projects with 94 percent of projects completed within budget, compared with 88 percent for the same quarter last year, the release said.

The fiscal 2007 target is 91 percent.

The following are the report card results:

### DEADLINES:

Construction contracts completed on time:

- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2007 — 90 percent
- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2006 — 82 percent
- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2005 — 74 percent

Maintenance contracts completed on time:

- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2007 — 79 percent
- Through the second

### BUDGETS:

Construction contracts completed within budget:

- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2007 — 93 percent
- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2006 — 88 percent
- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2005 — 82 percent

Maintenance contracts completed within budget:

- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2007 — 94 percent
- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2006 — 88 percent
- Through the second quarter of fiscal 2005 — 84 percent

The full report is available online at VirginiaDOT.org/info/ctb-qtrlyrpt.asp.

In a major effort to provide citizen access to VDOT's performance measurements, the agency began releasing quarterly reports and launched its Dashboard in 2003. The Dashboard is an online system that provides the latest status on construction, maintenance, operations, safety, finance and environmental compliance.

For more information about all of VDOT's projects and programs or to view the VDOT Dashboard, visit VirginiaDOT.org.

Please send questions or comments on transportation to: lane

**Corrections and clarifications**

The Potomac News wishes to present a fair and accurate news report each day. It is the policy of this newspaper to correct all errors. If you have a concern about a story or photo published, please contact the editor of the department concerned. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses are listed below.

**Shuffle up and deal!**

Take a seat at the table with Phil Hellmuth, 9-time World Series of Poker champion. From friendly neighborhood poker nights

**Lotteries** 5/2

D.C. Daily 6...3-37-26-13-36-29(12)

**Maryland**

Midday Pick 3.....5-4-0  
 Midday Pick 4.....8-9-1-2  
 Pick 3.....2-7-7  
 Pick 4.....3-3-9-7  
 B. Match 5...12-24-28-30-37 (34)

**These numbers were drawn Saturday, Feb. 17:**

**Virginia**

Pick 3.....0-1-0  
 Pick 4.....3-3-5-9  
 Cash 5.....1-10-13-22-23

**District of Columbia**

Midday Lucky Nos.....5-9-9