

BACK TO SCHOOL

GEARING UP FOR CLASSES

Building an education

St. John Regional and Spalding complete major new buildings

By GEORGE P. MATYSEK JR.
Staff correspondent

While schools throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore have been busy this summer updating classrooms, painting and improving their facilities, St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick and Archbishop Spalding High School in Severn have really had their hands full as workers put the finishing touches on new, multimillion-dollar buildings.

St. John Regional is moving from its former location in downtown Frederick to a brand-new two-story building five miles away on Opposumtown Pike, while Archbishop Spalding has added a single-story academic and athletic center on its existing campus in Anne Arundel County.

The new school in Frederick is a 76,800-square-foot facility that rests on a 27-acre site. Designed by Bowie Gridley of Washington, it features more than 25 classrooms, ample office space, computer and science labs, a library and separate rooms for band, art and the Quest program.

A chapel that seats 30 people is one of the central components of the building, which also boasts a gymnasium/cafeteria, playgrounds and athletic fields.

Nearly all the grade levels will be operating at the goal of three classes each in the building's inaugural year, according to Ms. Smith, who said the school has welcomed 100 new students in grades 1-8 and 40 students in the new pre-K program.

"It's a wonderful facility," said Ms. Smith, noting the school will be ready for operation as the fall semester gets underway.

St. John raised more than \$6.1 million in a capital campaign to help pay

for the \$13 million project.

At Archbishop Spalding, the new academic and athletic center is still under construction, but is slated to open on Nov. 1. The building is the result of "Expanding the Spirit," the first capital campaign in the school's history. The campaign was established to raise \$3.2 million, of which, \$2.5 million has been contributed toward the new \$5.3 million structure.

The building will house eight classrooms, a new 1,000 seat multicourt gymnasium, a fitness-training center, locker rooms and a multipurpose lobby. Plans call for new athletic fields in the future, which will be developed on the adjacent farmland purchased by the school in 2003.

Martha Wentz, Archbishop Spalding's director of institution advancement, said the results of a focus group conducted by the school four years ago showed the number one priority for the school's future was having small class sizes. The additional classroom space will allow the school to have classes of about 22 students to a room, she said.

Enrollment for the coming school year is 1,050, within the range of between 1,000-1,100 that Archbishop Spalding has set as its enrollment goal, she said.

The new building will provide a new main entryway and a plaza area while the new gym will provide plenty of space for athletic events and allow large groups of students to gather in one place for dances and other events, Ms. Wentz said. The existing gym will be used for physical education classes, practices and other events.

Construction is continuing on Archbishop Spalding High School's new facilities in Severn. (CR file)



RIGHT: Eighth-grader Sara Franciscovich, right, is the student council president of St. John Regional Catholic School. She has attended the school since first grade. **BELOW:** Students file into the school's newly opened building on Opossumtown Pike. The school has added 250 new seats in the Pre-K to eighth grade programs.

A NEW DAY DAWNS

Staff photos by Bill Green



After 175 years, St. John's moves out of downtown

By KELLY ANN HINCHCLIFFE

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FREDERICK — Amanda Hanley and Nicole Cederdahl were the first students through the doors of St. John Regional Catholic School's new building Tuesday. Hundreds more poured in behind them.

After spending 175 years on East Second Street in downtown Frederick, St. John's made the move this summer to a 27-acre campus at 8414 Opossumtown Pike.

Nearly 600 students from Pre-K to eighth grade will attend the new school, which has added 250 more seats.

Eighth-grader Sara Franciscovich is the school's student council presi-

AT A GLANCE

St. John's by the numbers:

- 7 regional parishes
- 13.5 million dollars to build
- 20 teachers' assistants
- 27-acre campus
- 38 teachers
- 75 total staff members
- 175 years in downtown
- 250 added seats
- 575 students, prekindergarten through eighth grade

Dawn

(Continued from A-5)

As she gave a guided tour, Ms. Wright smiled at each addition the new school offered.

"We have special posture chairs in the music room," she said.

"We have a full-time nurse."

"We have a dedicated computer lab."

Room after room, she happily pointed out the brand-new amenities.

Air conditioning is another bonus. In the old school, only the gym and cafeteria were air conditioned, according to Ms. Wright.

"This is so great, because kids will be comfortable all the time," she said.

The library, which used to be hidden away in the basement, has found a new home at the center of the new school.

"This is the heart of the school," said Librarian Barbara

Phillips. "The kids are so proud of this space."

The school is still not completely finished, however. The gym floor is still being installed and should be ready in the next couple weeks. A playground will also be installed sometime in October.

Here's how the first few weeks of back-to-school are shaping up for SJRCS:

■ Aug. 31 - SJRCS Family Fun Night at the Frederick Keys

Game, 7:05 p.m.

■ Sept. 1 - Meeting for cafeteria volunteers at 2 p.m. in the cafeteria

■ Sept. 1 - Back to School Night for grades 5-8 at 7 p.m.

■ Sept. 5 - No School - Labor Day

■ Sept. 6 - First day of classes for Pre-K and Kindergarten

■ Sept. 8 - Back to School Night for grades 1-4 at 7 p.m.

■ Sept. 9 - No School - Teacher In-service



Tom Fedor/The Gazette

St. John's Regional Catholic School Principal Karen Smith (right) tests prospective students Monday morning in the media center of the school's new campus at 8414 Opossumtown Pike. The school has about 600 students enrolled and can accept up to 750 students.

Catholic school opens new doors

by Diana Mota Morgan
Staff Writer

St. John Regional Catholic School students are just a few weeks away from attending their new, state-of-the-art facility.

"It's unbelievable. It's truly unbelievable," said Principal Karen Smith. "It really makes you wonder how we functioned in the other building, but we did. Students didn't seem to mind, even though they had a parking lot for a playground."

During the summer, little by little the school has moved out of its old home at 114 E. Second St., in downtown Frederick, and relocated to 8414 Opossumtown Pike. The school was in the downtown for 175 years.

"We're one of the oldest Catholic schools on the eastern seaboard and we're taking that history and tradition with us," Smith said. "We're still going to offer the same faith-based education."

While Smith is excited about the move, she said the downtown location had its perks.

"There were definitely some pluses," such as walking field trips to the Weinberg Center for the Arts, and other historical sites, she said. "It was just the lack of space. A lot of times, we had to turn people away."

The new space gives the school room to grow, said Jean Wright, St. John's development director. The school currently has about 600 students enrolled and can accept up to 750 students, she said. "We're still testing new

students and still accepting applications."

Ellen Santucci, who has taught kindergarten at St. John for 13 years, had one word to describe the new school: awesome.

"It's huge," Santucci said. "We have bigger classrooms, a computer lab and an actual library. We're also going to have a playground" — items missing from the Second Street location. "And no more parking tickets," she said, laughing.

The new facility includes a computer lab with 30 workstations, a media center and a science lab.

Amy Aguilar, whose two children attend the school, will teach computer classes for grades one through four this school year. She said she is also looking forward to the air-conditioning. "Sometimes [at the old building] we got out early because of the heat. I think they've done a great job to meet a lot of the needs that weren't met at the old school."

Smith said the school community raised more than \$30,000 to add two playgrounds — one for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students and a larger one for other grades, she said. The school grounds also include sports fields.

"Things are coming along very well," Wright said. "There have been no major issues. We're just putting on the finishing touches," she said. She expected everything to be in place when the doors open to students Aug. 29.

Smith credits the Rev. Keith

Boisvert of St. Katharine Drexel parish with making the school a reality. "It's because of Father Keith and parishioners' support. They gave us vision and encouragement through this whole process."

The school and church will share the new space until a separate church building can be constructed at the 25-acre location in the future, Smith said. Presently, the congregation meets in the theater at Frederick Community College on Sundays and at Faith United Church of Christ on Opossumtown Pike on Saturdays.

Tuition for the school is \$4,760 for full-day programs and \$2,856 for half-day programs for Catholic students, according to the school's Web site — and \$5,620 for full-day programs and \$3,372 for half-day programs for non-Catholic students. There are tuition reductions for enrolling more than one student per household. Financial assistance is available.

The school's curriculum is based on national standards and is approved by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges.

Students have classes in computers, Spanish, art, physical education and music, as well as math, science, English and religion.

To find out more about the school or to enroll a student, call the school office at 301-662-6722 or visit the school's Web site at www.sjrsc.org.

Karen Smith St. John Regional Catholic School, Frederick

After serving as interim principal last year, Karen Smith will be the new principal of St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick. Ms. Smith, a parishioner of the Holy Family Catholic Community in Middletown, taught at the school for four years before taking the position of assistant principal last fall. Mrs. Smith has 20 years of teaching experience.

With bachelor's and master's degrees in education from William Patterson University in New Jersey, she completed her certification in administration and supervision from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

St. John Regional Catholic School will hold a dedication of its new school at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday at 8414 Opossumtown Pike. A reception will follow in McElroy Hall. Satellite parking and shuttle service will be available from Frederick Community College.

LOCAL



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

The Friends of Catholic Education held its annual banquet this week. From left are Al Edwards, president of FOCE board of directors; Mike McGowan, FOCE board member; Jim Plamondon, 2005 John McElroy Award recipient; Rev. Keith W. Boisvert, 2005 John McElroy Award recipient; and Mary Fourcade, FOCE board member.

Catholic education award given

FREDERICK — Friends of Catholic Education Inc. earlier this week awarded the 2005 McElroy Award to the Rev. Keith Boisvert and James N. Plamondon.

The award was presented during the Annual McElroy Award Dinner and ceremony at Ceresville Mansion. For the past 14 years, FOCE has awarded its highest honor annually to an individual or individuals whose actions or achievements have advanced Catholic School education in Frederick County.

Mr. Plamondon and the Rev. Boisvert recently co-chaired St.

John Regional Catholic School's successful Faith in the Future Campaign, which raised in excess of \$6 million to build a new school on Opossumtown Pike.

Mr. Plamondon is co-president of The Plamondon Companies, based in Frederick. The Rev. Boisvert is pastor of St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Frederick and the former chaplain at Mount St. Mary's University. Keynoting the address was Lt. Gov. Michael Steele. John Fieseler, executive director of the Tourism Council of Frederick County, served as master of ceremonies.

Friends of Catholic Education Inc. is a local non-profit organization that supports Catholic School Education at the elementary, secondary and university levels in Frederick County. Since its inception in 1989, the organization has provided more than \$2 million in financial assistance through scholarships, tuition assistance grants, capital improvement grants, and tuition credits through its Grocery Certificate Program.

For more information, please call 301-846-7804, or write to: FOCE, 53 E. Patrick St., Frederick, MD 21701.

Frederick News Post
Sept. 13, 2005

Students pitch in for hurricane relief

By KELLY ANN HINCHCLIFFE

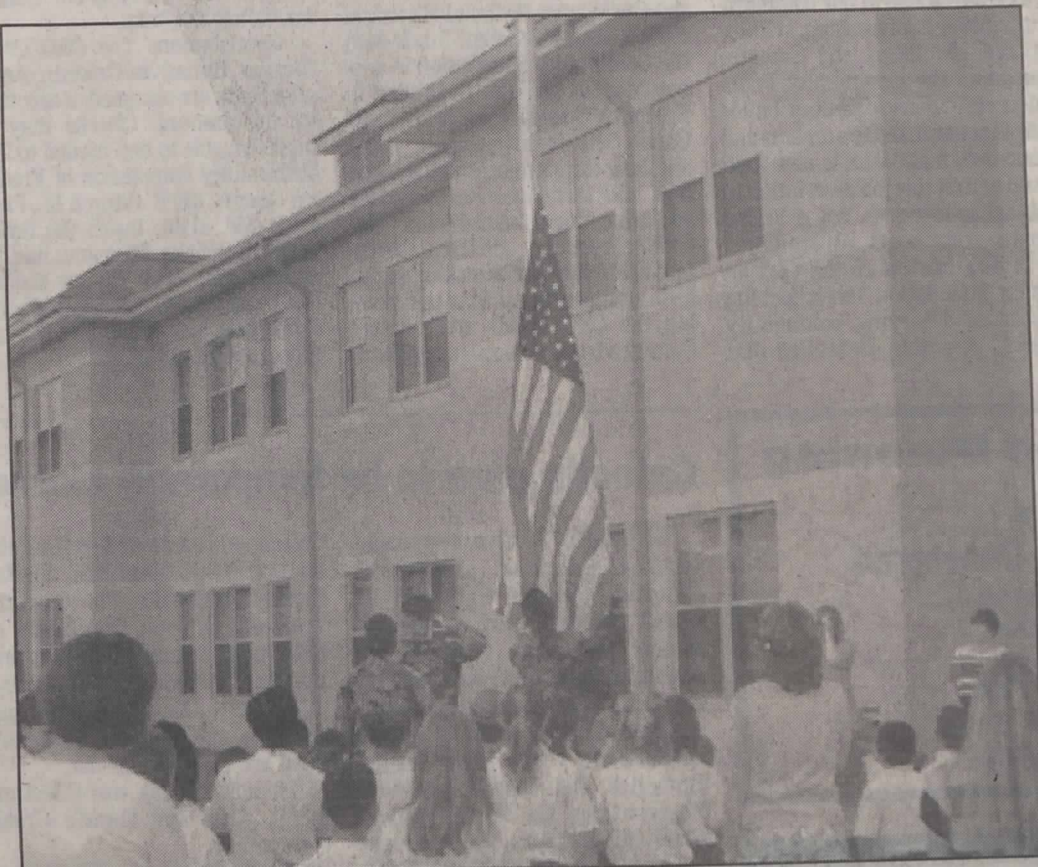
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FREDERICK — In this column last week I asked students and schools to contact me if they had any Hurricane Katrina relief efforts planned.

I was so happy to see the responses. Here are some of the e-mails and calls I received:

■ Jean Wright, director of development/admissions for St. John Regional Catholic School, wrote in to say that students will be contributing to relief efforts by making contributions to Catholic schools in the New Orleans area. The "Child to Child: A Catholic Education Campaign," launched by the National Catholic Education Association, will distribute money collected to the diocese in the region. "Twenty percent of the Catholic churches and one third of the Catholic schools in this area have been

destroyed. Students will collect 'mission' money in their classrooms and from a Mass collection during the month."



Flags donated

Francis Scott Key Post 11 American Legion donated United States flags and Maryland state flags to each of the 32 classrooms in the new St. Johns Regional Catholic School. Post 11 arranged for the flags to be presented during a ceremony on Sept. 16. Presenting a United States flag that had previously flown over the U.S. Capitol, was Debbie Burall, legal aide for Veterans Affairs with Congressman Roscoe Bartlett's office. Presenting the Maryland state flag was Del. Pat Hogan. All 600 students from St. John were present as a detachment from Fort Detrick, shown above, raised the flag for the first time.

The Gazette
Sept. 22, 2005

St. John's honors constitution

Frederick County Public Schools celebrated Constitution Day Friday, as mandated by a new law for schools receiving federal funds.

St. John's Regional Catholic School students made the most of it by incorporating a flag-raising ceremony after they learned about the constitution and amendments during the week.

Delegate Patrick Hogan (R-Dist. 3A) of Frederick raised the Maryland flag, and a representative of U.S. Rep. Roscoe G. Bartlett (R-Dist. 6) of Buckeystown raised the American flag, said Jean Wright, with St. John's Office of Institutional Advancement.

Representatives from American Legion Francis Scott Key Post 11 came to the ceremony and distributed flags to every classroom at the school, while Bartlett's office provided copies of the constitution for all of the students.

This was the first day the flag was raised in the school's new location on Opossumtown Pike, which opened this school year.

Frederick News Post 9/27/05



Staff photo by Sam Yu

New gym

These first-graders were among the first students to use the new gym at St. John's Regional Catholic School on Monday morning. The school opened in a new building on Aug. 29, but the gym and cafeteria opened only Monday due to construction delays.



CR/Denise Walker

Cardinal William H. Keeler blesses a classroom at the new St. John Regional Catholic School Oct. 2. Deacon Jeffrey Sutterman, Principal Karen Smith and Father Keith Boisvert, St. Katharine Drexel mission parish administrator, joined the cardinal in procession as he blessed the interior of the school building.

Cardinal dedicates Frederick school

By GEORGE P. MATYSEK JR.
Staff correspondent

FREDERICK — Leading a joyous procession of more than 400 people through the wide corridors of the new St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick, Cardinal William H. Keeler sprinkled holy water inside gleaming classrooms and state-of-the-art labs while

smiling parents snapped photos of the historic event.

It was a moment the people of Frederick had dreamed of for more than four years, having invested long hours of planning and fund-raising to complete the two-story, 76,800-square-foot facility.

Moments before the Oct. 2 blessing, Cardinal Keeler addressed

See ST. JOHN on Page A4

MAIN POINTS

- The new school is a 76,800-square-foot facility.
- It includes 25 classrooms, computer and science labs, a library, band and art rooms, chapel and cafeteria/gym.

St. John Regional School dedicates new building

Continued from Page 3

parents, teachers, administrators and students in a sun-splashed outdoor ceremony attended by Bishop W. Francis Malooly, western vicar; Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, superintendent of Catholic schools; pastors of Frederick-area churches; and several Frederick County commissioners.

In addition to serving as a school, the building will be the temporary pastoral home of St. Katharine Drexel parish in Frederick as that fast-growing, 600-family faith community works to build its church on the same 27-acre site on Opposumtown Pike which it provided as a home for the school.

"Students come here in search of knowledge and truth, and the parishioners of St. Katharine Drexel come to worship God," said Cardinal Keeler, noting that he appreciates the "enormity" of what the Catholic community in Frederick has achieved in building the facility.

"Congratulations to all of you present here for what you have done to make this possible," he said.

The cardinal said Catholic education has a rich tradition in Frederick, with the newest St. John school serving as the third building in the school's history. The previous building, located about five miles away in downtown Frederick, had become too small to accommodate the growing student population.

"Faith-based education is so critical," Cardinal Keeler said. "It helps our young people integrate religion into daily life."

Dr. Valenti said the new building is "more than steel and brick and mortar."

"Let it be known to all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school, the ever-present teacher," the superintendent said.

Jim Plamondon, co-chair of the capital campaign that raised \$7 million toward the \$14 million structure, told The Catholic Review that it was an "incredible thrill to see the work of so many people result in this

beautiful facility."

The capital campaign was unique because it relied on the contributions of more than 2,300 people and not just a few individuals who made very large gifts, he said.

"It really was a grassroots effort," said Mr. Plamondon, noting that the school's biggest gift was a bequest of more than \$1 million from a longtime St. John parishioner.

Father Keith Boisvert, co-chair of the capital campaign and pastor of St. Katharine Drexel, said the campaign was a success because people believed in the project.

"You get the feeling that we've made a historic contribution to the Frederick community," said Father Boisvert. "I hope this building will serve for another 100 years."

In recognition of their fund-raising efforts, Father Boisvert and Mr. Plamondon were recognized by the Friends of Catholic Education as this year's recipients of the McElroy Award during a ceremony at the Ceresville Mansion in Frederick, Sept. 27. Lt. Gov. Michael Steele was the keynote speaker.

Karen Smith, principal of the inter-parish school, said the new building is a tremendous improvement over St. John's former home. More than 100 new students have been welcomed this year, allowing the school to expand into a three-track school that allows three classes for each grade level. Currently, there are three classes for kindergarten and first, second, third, fourth and sixth grades. There are double classes for grades five, seven and eight. A new pre-kindergarten program has 40 children.

"We have the space we didn't have before," said Ms. Smith, marveling at an expansive gymnasium that also serves as the cafeteria. "It's very special."

Frank Lipscomb, school board president, said his vision is to "fill this school to capacity." There are currently 575 students enrolled.

LOCAL



Staff photo by Skip Lawr

Blessing

Cardinal William H. Keeler of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, flanked by the Knights of Columbus Color Guard, leads a procession into the new Saint John Regional Catholic School after blessing during dedication ceremonies for the facility on Opossumtown Pike on Sunday afternoon.

Thursday, Oct. 27, 2005 f

Gazette Community News

Poster contest winners named

Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association Fire Prevention Committee sponsored a poster contest in conjunction with Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9-15.

The contest's theme was "Use Candles With Care: When you go out, blow out." Winners were presented with their awards Sunday at Frederick Towne Mall.

A total of 927 posters from 14 area schools were judged.

At St. John's Regional Catholic School, the following students won awards: first-graders Sophia Lopez and Danny Pittinger; second-graders Kate Dailey, Ann Leatherman and Claire Tiskos; third-graders Kathanne Hicken and Mark Moehrle; fourth-grader Domenica Locco; sixth-graders Martin Scire and Hannah Currens; and eighth-graders Amy Cutchin and Carolyn Wright.

At the Banner School, the following students won awards: first-grader Morgan Humphrey; fifth-grader Katryna Oliveau; sixth-graders Sarah Gillelan and Coral Lindenberg; seventh-grader Lena Marsteller; and eighth-graders Caleb Levy and Aubrey Rose.

Also, Tuscarora Elementary School student Taylyn Diggs-Cherix won an award for the fourth grade contest, and Gov. Thomas Johnson High School senior Emily Hyser won first place for her grade.

Upcoming events

• Open house, 7-9 p.m., Wednesday, St. John's Regional Catholic School, 8414 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick. Meet with teachers, learn about the curriculum and textbook, learn about admissions and registration, register children for the 2006-07 school year.



CommunityNews

Breast cancer survivor to guide new patients

by Rebecca McClay

Staff Writer

As National Breast Cancer Awareness Month begins to wrap up, one local breast cancer survivor is ready to join Frederick County Memorial Hospital's breast cancer program, established this year.

Corina Noah, 44, of Jefferson said she wants to use lessons from her own illness to guide new patients through breast cancer diagnosis and treatment processes.

Frederick Memorial Hospital this year is establishing an integrated program that will include a mentor-like support system for new breast cancer patients. Noah said she plans to participate as a mentor.

"It's a new chapter in my life," Noah said. "I couldn't have done it five years ago, but now it's time to move on."

Noah, who is a gym instructor at St. John's Regional School in Frederick, first found a lump in her breast at age 20. She said she initially hesitated getting a mammogram because she was younger than the majority of breast cancer patients.

"But I watched it a lot," she said of the slow-growing lump in her right breast.

In 1996, Noah was living in Gaithersburg with her 3-year-old daughter, Jasmine, and her husband when she noticed a protruding mass under her arm. Noah was then an employee at

Shady Grove Hospital and received a mammogram there that revealed only minor calcifications.

She then turned to the Bethesda National Institute of Health, where a biopsy confirmed the lump was cancerous and had ruptured.

"I was in shock," Noah said. "You really don't hear anything but the word 'cancer.' But I was very lucky. It would have been much worse if it had been aggressive."

Aggressive cancer grows at a faster pace, which may limit treatment options to chemotherapy for some patients. With a more manageable cancer, Noah opted to have a mastectomy.

"I wanted this thing out," Noah said. "I wanted to get back to my life."

Noah said her six months of recovery took an emotional toll on her and her family.

"It all came crashing in on me," Noah said. "When you're going through something like that, you're really plowing through a lot of emotions. I was scared. I lost a part of myself. I really had to rebuild my self confidence."

The Pink Ribbon Project in Frederick last Saturday featured information booths, a "pink drink" happy hour and a panel discussion at C. Burr Artz Public Library on how men cope with their wives being diagnosed with breast cancer.

Noah said her husband had a difficult time trying to help her during the illness.

"He was trying to constantly fix it," Noah



Bill Ryan/The Gazette

Corina Noah of Jefferson teaches gym class Monday at St. John's Regional Catholic School. A breast cancer survivor, Noah plans to participate as a mentor to breast cancer patients in a new program offered by Frederick Memorial Hospital.

said.

Other local breast cancer survivors, such as Colonial Jewelers owner Patty Hurwitz, agreed that their husbands and family members provided an emotional support system.

"I had tremendous support from my husband," Hurwitz said. "Everybody was incredibly supportive and that makes a difference."

Noah, who moved to Frederick in 1997 and had her son Matthew in 1998, began teaching

fitness in 2001 after receiving a teaching certificate for aerobics. She is enrolled in the business program at Mount Saint Mary's College.

She regularly participates in 5K run-walk race to raise funds for breast cancer causes such as the annual Susan B. Komen Race in Washington, D.C.

"I've never regretted any of the steps I've taken," Noah said. "Every step was the right one."

ST. JOHN REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL AT OPOSSUMTOWN PIKE

The secret CEMETERY

QUEST students research the history of a farm graveyard

By SUSAN GUYNN

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FREDERICK — When George Clemens was laid to rest on a December day in 1823, his family most probably never imagined that his final resting place in the small cemetery on Opossumtown Pike would become a bit of a mystery more than 180 years later.

The cemetery is located in a small grove of trees adjacent to the recently-opened St. John Regional Catholic School (SJRCs). There are about half a dozen headstones — some upright, others broken and scattered about — and what appears to be a fieldstone crypt, with a vaulted ceiling and a cast-iron door.

Not so many years ago, dairy cattle roamed the fields where schoolchildren now learn and play. To some of those children, the mystery of the cemetery is one they hope to crack.

Four students, in grades two through six, are working on the mystery as their project in the school's QUEST program, which provides a variety of enrichment activities for students. A QUEST instructor, Lisa Cutchin, who is also the school's art teacher, suggested the cemetery project to the students, who were then eager to pursue it. Most of the students were not aware of the cemetery's existence.

"I didn't know there was a cemetery until Mrs. Cutchin said there was. That's when I found out," said 10-year-old Janine Bainger of Frederick, a sixth-grader at the school.

Through interviews of some former residents and information documented from other resources, the students have learned a lot about the cemetery and the farm that surrounded it. Recently, the students, Mrs. Cutchin and two other QUEST teachers, Peg O'Hara and Carol Gill, visited 81-year-old Charlotte Young Clem Langbehn, who was born in 1924 in the brick farmhouse that used to stand about where the front entrance of the school is now located. Mrs. Langbehn lives in a Catonsville retirement community.

By chance, Mrs. Cutchin discovered Mrs. Langbehn's connection to the farm. "My mother lived at the retirement community and I had an aunt who lived there, too. She lived across the hall from Mrs. Langbehn," said Mrs. Cutchin.

On her visits to the retirement home, the women would talk about Frederick. "We started to talk about the school and things when she said we were building our school where she was born," said Mrs. Cutchin. "I asked her if she would be willing to talk to students if we came down, and she was willing to do that." After talking to Mrs. Langbehn, they decided to make it a QUEST project.

"We wrote up questions we were going to ask Mrs. Langbehn," said 11-year-old Elisabeth Cutchin, a sixth-grader at the school and Mrs. Cutchin's daughter. The questions were grouped into categories, such as cemetery, farm life and the house, and each child asked the questions in his or her assigned category. All of the students recorded, on paper, Mrs. Langbehn's answers.

"I asked if any of her relatives were buried there and did she see anyone get buried there," said Sarah Kovalchick, 8, who is in the third grade. Mrs. Langbehn said she didn't see any burials there, except for a few animals, and doesn't think any of the graves hold her relatives.

"The cemetery predates her family," said Mrs. Cutchin. "So we know it's much older than we originally thought," possibly dating to the 1700s. George Clemens was born in 1751.

Mrs. Langbehn, an only child, was born in

(See STUDENTS C-4)



Staff photos by Doug Koontz

atholic School students, from left, Janine Bainger, 10; Evan Kovalchick, 8; and Elisabeth Cutchin, 11, have been ory of a cemetery located on the school property. Their pro-chool's QUEST program.



Photo courtesy of Lisa Cutchin

farmhouse used to stand on the site of the recently-constructed Catholic School on Opossumtown Pike in Frederick. The school are involved in a research project to learn more of the site, which was once a dairy farm, and a small cemetery adjacent to the new school.

have also talked to mily who last owned nd Peggy Garst. y to gather walnuts from the tree he planted 50 years ago," said Mrs. Cutchin. The tree grows at the edge of the graveyard, which is enclosed by wire fencing. "Nobody seemed to know a lot about

(the cemetery)," said Mrs. Garst in a phone interview. "We just put a lot of stuff there (branches and trimmings) for wildlife and birds," she said of the time the family farmed the land. "(Mr. Garst's) uncle had a beehive up there when we moved in."

Mr. Garst moved to the farm in 1948, with his parents, she said. "They rented the farm. We rented the farm for 10 years, then we bought it" in 1963 from Sam Young. She recalled one of her daughters writing down the names on the gravestones, but, generally, they were not interested in it.

"In the spring, it grew up with poison (ivy) and stickers," she said. "No one ever cleaned it up. Many people didn't know it was a graveyard. We fenced around it."

In his book "Names in Stone," Joseph Holdcraft wrote that he visited the cemetery in 1960 and found six graves. Holdcraft traveled the county, documenting cemeteries in the 1950s and '60s.

Janet Davis, Frederick County's historic preservation planner, found only three markers when she visited the site about 15 years ago — George Clemens's slate tombstone, a white marble marker for C.A. Wachter, a Civil War soldier with Company C, 1st Maryland Cavalry, and an initial monument with the letters "E.C.K."

"That was probably Elizabeth Cannon Keyser," said Ms. Davis. Her husband is believed to be buried in the cemetery, too.

"The names, they don't appear to have any link, but they did to the people who owned this farm over time," said Ms. Davis.

The project will likely take many twists and turns before it's completed. Some students are interested in discovering more clues about the cemetery; others are more interested in finding out more about the house, the farm and what life was like living on the farm.

"This is their program. They have so many interests," said Carol Gill, a SJRCs QUEST teacher. The slate Clemens marker in the cemetery was hand-carved following the design of the severely weathered original marker. "Why was that done?" she asked.

The project could take a few years to complete, said Mrs. Cutchin. "Eventually we'll put our research together and share it with our community," she said.

"It's like a mystery you can't stop," said Janine.

What is QUEST?

The QUEST program at St. John Regional Catholic School is a Renzulli-School-wide Enrichment model of gifted education, according to a school brochure. QUEST provides various types and levels of enrichment to students through three types of activities — general exploratory experiences such as learning lunches, "how to" training and activities that involve individual and/or group investigations, such as the cemetery/farm project.

"We ask people to come in and share their knowledge and experiences," said Carol Gill, a QUEST teacher.

QUEST is an acronym for Questioning, Understanding, Exploring, Sharing, Thinking. The program is open to students at SJRCs in grades one through eight. Parents and other volunteers who have a hobby, profession or personal interest they would like to share with the students, can contact the school at 301-662-6722 or e-mail QUESTat.SJRCs@hotmail.com.



Photo courtesy of Lisa Cutchin

As part of their QUEST research project, a few St. John students visited Charlotte Young Clem Langbehn, center, at her home in Catonsville. From left are Evan Spangler, 7; Sarah Kovalchick, 8; Mrs. Langbehn, 81; Janine Bainger, 10; and Elisabeth Cutchin, 11.

TOP: A hand-engraved slate stone stands in the small cemetery adjacent to St. John Regional Catholic School on Opossumtown Pike in Frederick. The stone marks George Clemens's burial site (1751-1823), though it may not be standing exactly where he was buried.

Frederick News Post Jan. 10, 2006

St. John Regional Catholic School has announced the following:

■ SJRCS will host an information night on Internet Safety for parents of middle school age children at 7 p.m., Jan. 24, at the school. Officer Mike Sabol of the Frederick County Sheriff's Office specializes in Internet crime and will be giving an informative talk about children using the Internet. Due to the nature of the topic, the presentation is for adults only and is open to the public. SJRCS is located at 8414 Opossumtown Pike, one mile past Frederick Community College.

■ SJRCS kicks off Catholic Schools Week from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Jan. 28, at Francis Scott Key Mall with performances with other Catholic schools in the mall's center court.

■ SJRCS will welcome Lt. Gov. Michael Steele at 10 a.m., Jan. 30, as the keynote speaker

for its Community Day Assembly.

■ SJRCS will hold an open house from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Feb. 1, for the public to tour the school and learn about the curriculum and school activities.

■ ■ ■



From left: Matthew Warner joins Community Foundation Trustee Doug Selby in presenting a \$30,000 check to St. John Regional Catholic School, represented by Principal Karen Smith, Development Director Jean Wright and the Rev. Keith Boisvert, pastor.

St. John Regional Catholic School awarded \$30,000

FREDERICK — The R.W. Warner Inc. Fund, one of more than 520 funds held by The Community Foundation of Frederick County, awards \$30,000 to St. John Regional Catholic School.

Founded by R.W. Warner Inc., Reese W. Warner Jr. and Matthew M. Warner in memory of Reese W. Warner Sr. and Mary J. Warner as a donor-advised fund, The R.W. Warner Inc. Fund allows the Warner family to recommend where charitable disbursements should be directed, pending approval from the Community Foundation's Board of Trustees.

St. John Regional Catholic School will use the grant from The R.W. Warner fund to purchase playground equipment.

One of the oldest schools in continuous operation on the eastern seaboard, St. John's traces its roots to the Rev. John McElroy, a Jesuit who laid the initial cornerstone.

The school was originally located in historic downtown Frederick but moved to a new building on Opossumtown Pike in the summer of 2005.

"Both of my grandmothers, as

well as my mother and father, attended St. John Regional Catholic School," said Matthew Warner. "Also, my two sons currently attend St. John's, so I have a strong connection and desire to improve the school for future students. My family have been long-time supporters of the school, and now we would like to assist them even further through our donor-advised fund by providing the means for them to construct a suitable playground for the children."

Since 1986, the Community Foundation has been working with individuals, families, businesses, nonprofits and civic organizations to set up funds, such as The R.W. Warner, Inc. Fund, that support charitable causes throughout Frederick County.

The Community Foundation has awarded more than \$12 million in grants and scholarships to the local community in its 19-year history.

To learn more about the Community Foundation, including how to start a fund, visit its Web site at www.cffredco.org or call 301-695-7660.

Schools to celebrate Catholic education

by Keith L. Martin

Staff Writer

Frederick County will be among the many places across the nation celebrating Catholic Schools Week next week.

Each year, Catholic schools host a number of events for students and the community to learn more about religious education in their area. The theme for this year's Catholic Schools Week is "Character. Compassion. Values."

"This explains to the general public what our core values are," said Karen Smith, principal of St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick.

"The theme tells what it is about Catholic schools that makes them a choice for parents versus public education."

Students in kindergarten through eighth grades at St. John's will mark the week in a number of ways, from providing music and entertainment at Francis Scott Key Mall to student and teacher appreciation days.

The school will also hold its annual Community Day Assembly, highlighting the various community service activities done by students. This year's event will include a keynote speech by Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele.

"This event brings all the students together for a chance to 'brag' to the rest of the school population," Smith said. "Students in the first grade get to hear about projects done by eighth-graders. Service and service learning is a large part of our Catholic identity."

While those attending

Calendar of events

Saturday through Feb. 4, Frederick County Catholic schools will join others across the nation in celebrating Catholic Schools Week. The following events are just some of those occurring across the county:

- **Saturday:** To kick off the week, various Catholic schools will have informational booths at Francis Scott Key Mall from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Performance groups from schools including Mother Seton Elementary School in Emmitsburg and Visitation Academy in Frederick will also provide entertainment in the mall's center court.
- **Monday:** St. John Regional Catholic School holds its Community Day Assembly at 10 a.m., at the school. The keynote speaker for the event will be Lt. Gov. Michael Steele.
- **Wednesday:** St. John Regional

Catholic School will welcome members of the community for an open house from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at 8414 Opossumtown Pike in Frederick.

• **Feb. 2:** From 7:30-9 a.m., St. John's at Prospect Hall will hold an open house at 898 Butterfly Lane in Frederick. All current and prospective families are invited to tour the facility while classes are in session and to meet faculty and students.

• **Feb. 3:** Visitation Academy will host an open house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for current and prospective families. The school is at 200 E. Second St., Frederick.

numerous events including open houses at a number of Frederick County institutions.

"This is our spirit week, just like 'American Education Week' in public schools," she said. "We want prospective parents and the general community to see what we're all about."

With St. John's at Prospect Hall preparing to move from its campus at Butterfly Lane in Frederick in the next two to three years, school officials are anxious to inform the public about the college preparatory high school.

"A big part of Catholic Schools Week is promoting Catholic education and ourselves," said Michael Schultz, coordinator of admissions and alumni relations.

"As we are getting ready to move, this is a good opportunity to present this aspect to the community."



CR/Owen Sweeney III

Jean Kline, pre-kindergarten teacher at St. John Regional Catholic School, Frederick, goes over the days of the week during morning gathering time Jan. 17.



Staff photo by Doug Koontz

Steele-ears fans

Lt. Gov. Michael Steele listens to Katie D'Addato tell him what is going on in her grade during his visit to St. John's Regional Catholic School's Community Day celebration on Monday during Catholic Schools Week.



CR/Owen Sweeney III

Barbara Phillips, media specialist at St. John Regional Catholic School, Frederick, reads to kindergarten students in the school's library Jan. 17.

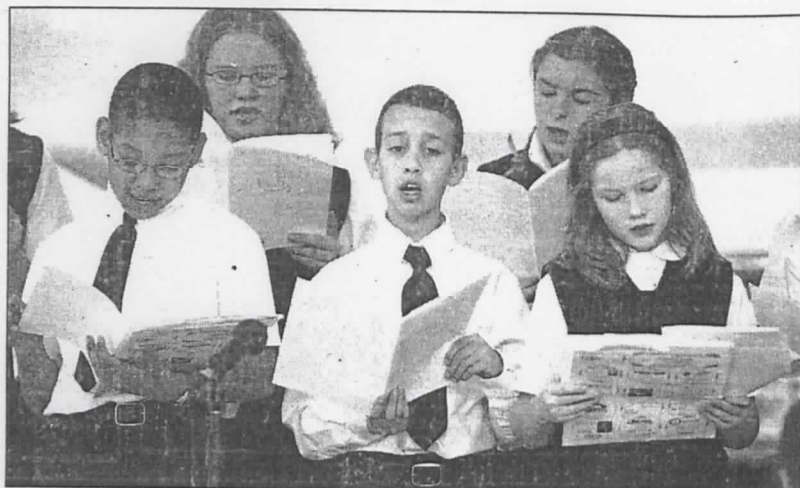
Students present projects

As part of Catholic Schools Week, St. John's Regional Catholic School held an assembly Monday to recognize community contributions made by students in various grades.

For the past month, students have participated in a variety of serv-

School Notes

BY GAZETTE STAFF

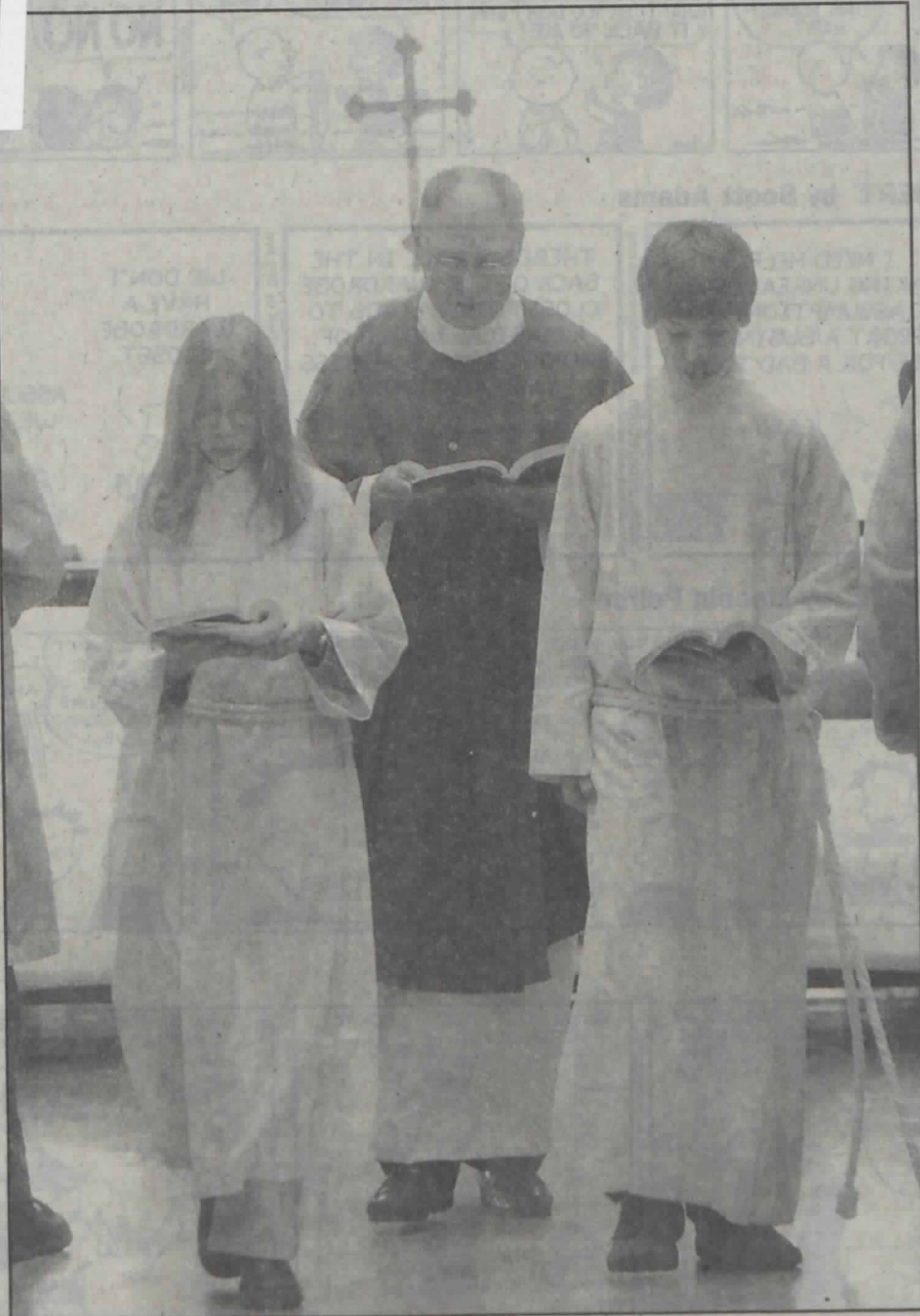


BILL RYAN/THE GAZETTE

St. John's Regional Catholic students (from left) Shawn Jones, Amy Cutchin, William Brown, Celeste Coajon, and Teresa Eade sing at the Francis Scott Key mall on Saturday, as part of Catholic Schools Week. For more on the week of activities at St. John's, see School Notes (left).

ice projects. Students in pre-kindergarten through third grade collected supplies for the St. Vincent DePaul Society to provide to the Cold Weather Shelter, all for a "Keeping Frederick Warm" program. Students in grades four through eight supplied cheerful messages to accompany deliveries for the Meals on Wheels program. Eighth-graders wrote letters and created artwork for the Frederick County Department of Aging to be delivered to members of the Brunswick Senior Center.

Second-grader Matthew Bowman and fourth-grader Christian O'Reilly presented cold weather supplies to Pauline Molano, St. Vincent DePaul Society, and third-grader Nadia Maduschke along with eighth-grader Mark Warner presented to Cathy Barnes, Frederick County Department of Aging. Addressing the students in recognition of their service were Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele and Frederick Mayor W. Jeff Holtzinger. First-grader Rebecca Vaudreuil and fifth-grader Daniel Moore presented a handmade rosary to each of these speakers.



The Rev. John Dietzenbach, center, celebrates Mass at St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Libertytown recently. Altar attendants are Becky Pollak, left, and Ben Denning.



Staff file photo by Sam Yu

John Widmann, the city carillonneur, pounds the keyboard during a Sunday concert.

Frederick's carillon chimes on as a musical landmark

This is one in a series of histories of bells that will be rung during Bell and History Days in Frederick County on April 1 and 2. The weekend also marks the opening of county museums for the spring-summer season.

By GEORGIE VANBROCKLIN

Special to The News-Post

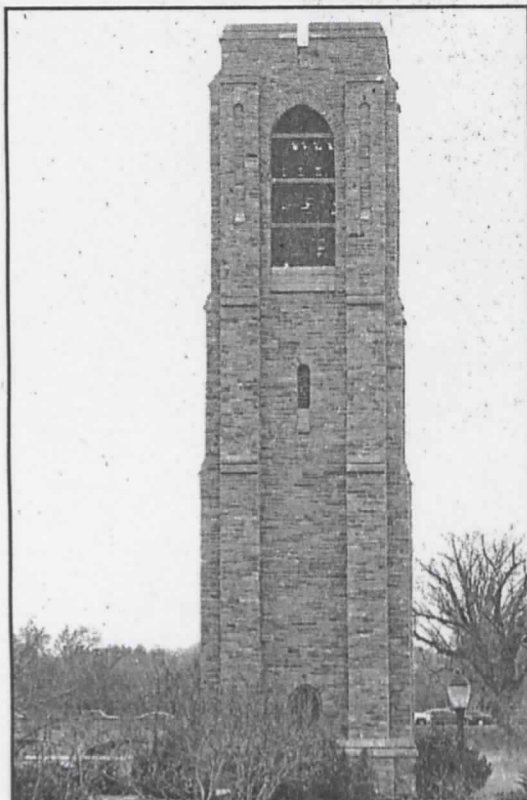
FREDERICK — Long a landmark and historic attraction, the Joseph Dill Baker Memorial Tower and Carillon in Baker Park has graced Frederick with concerts and chimes since 1941. Only 166 carillons exist across the country and Frederick's is considered one of the finest in the East.

The carillon was built in memory of Joseph Dill Baker who died in 1938. Mr. Baker donated the land Baker Park was built on, and was regarded as "Frederick's First Citizen" for his generosity and service to the community. A total of \$45,000 was raised toward the construction of the carillon with many people in the community donating, including children giving pennies from their piggy banks.

A groundbreaking ceremony took place April 2, 1941, and the carillon was dedicated the same year on Nov. 31. The Baker Tower is 70-feet high and 16-feet square at the base and is constructed of Baltimore County granite. The foundation extends 12 feet underground and rests on solid rock.

The first music played on the carillon at the dedication was Mr. Baker's favorite hymn, "Abide With Me," performed by Henry T. Wade, professor of music at Hood College.

Although it has always been called "the carillon," in 1941 it wasn't a carillon. It had only 14 bells with a compass of an octave



Candlelight Church Tour, Kris Kringle Parade, Frederick's Fourth of July celebration, and the Bell and History Days. It is now considered a full-concert carillon and musicians from all over the world have given concerts in the years since the renovation. The city and carillon hosted the National Congress of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America in June 2000.

In honor of Bell and History Days, on April 1, at 10 a.m., Mr. Widmann will ring the carillon bells in a peal-like manner, followed by a short recital of patriotic music until 10:30 a.m., ending with "The Star Spangled Banner."

On April 2, he will play his noon concert. The public is invited to come inside the carillon at that time for a self-tour until 12:30 p.m. At the end of the noon concert, Mr. Widmann will be available to talk about the carillon and answer questions.

Georgie VanBrocklin, Frederick County Public Libraries, used the files in the Maryland Room for this article.

anniversary. The 23 original bells were removed and sent to the Verdin Company in Cincinnati, Ohio where they were renovated and tuned to match each other. The carillon was then expanded to a 49-bell mechanically-played instrument with 26 bells added from the Petit and Fritsen Bell Foundry of the Netherlands, for a project total cost of \$300,000. The bell chime range was increased to four octaves.

Other new items for the carillon included a keyboard, a steel I-beam to hold the new bells, a new action (the mechanics connecting the keyboard to the clappers) and new clappers. The keys look like organ pedals and the big ones are played with a fist. Spiral staircases were built into the tower, replacing a wooden ladder the carillonneur had to climb to reach the top levels.

Mr. Widmann has followed Mr. Brooks' tradition of playing a recital every Sunday at noon, including the last hymns sung at area church services that morning.

The carillon is also played for community events, including the

them to move against the bells, thereby producing sound.

The second carillonneur was Dr. Galen Brooks, a physician by profession and musician by avocation. After moving to Baltimore in 1992, he turned the job over to John Widmann, the third and present city carillonneur.

Mr. Widmann started learning on his own at the Mercersburg Academy Chapel in Pennsylvania, then practiced and played at the Washington Cathedral with its carillonneur, Jim Saenger. He is studying for his master's in music degree from Towson University.

Mr. Widmann is a "carillonneur" member of the Guild of Carillonneurs in North America, having passed his playing exam in 1996. He lives in Frederick with his wife and two children. He is the music teacher and director of the chorus and bell choir at St. John Regional Catholic School, and is also the director of music and organist at Frederick Presbyterian Church.

At the suggestion of Mr. Widmann, the carillon was renovated in 1995 for Frederick's 250th

(Continued from A-5)

in Meneely Foundry in New York, a producer of world-class bells. The foundry burned down in 1970, so Frederick's bells are truly historic and could not be replaced.

Made of bronze, tin and copper, the bells hung in rows on two levels, graduating in weight from the largest of approximately 3,500 pounds to the smallest of 158 pounds. Their aggregate weight was 15,000 pounds.

The carillon bells are stationary and do not swing when played: clappers hanging inside are moved against the bells by a musician playing equipment in a room in the base of the tower or by an automatic music roll machine.

Frederick's first carillonneur, H. David Hagan, talked the city into expanding to a 23-bell carillon in 1966 with the addition of nine bells from the Eijsbouts Foundry in the Netherlands. It was played from an oak keyboard in the music room. When struck with the fists, the wooden keys or sticks — attached to wires controlling the clappers — caused

Frederick

eight will demonstrate their skills and abilities through projects in all subjects.

Parents and students in grade four are invited to learn about their move to the fifth grade. Parents can also see the

Frederick School Notes

changes that have taken place since the school moved from its old building on Second Street.

Principal Karen Smith instituted the night after receiving great feedback from a similar night she put together at a school in New Jersey.

"For language arts in grade eight, the students are acting out parts of Shakespeare's 'King Lear,'" Smith said. "Grade-six students are currently reading 'The Hobbit' and will perform activities related to that book, and fifth-graders will read and write poetry."

Other presentations include origami creations and their relationship to geometry, displays of National History Day projects, Hispanic culture presentations and an explanation of how St. John celebrates Pi Day on March 14.

Middle school night planned

St. John's Regional Catholic School, 8414 Opposumtown Pike in Frederick, will host Middle School in Action Night at 7 p.m., Wednesday.

Students in grades five through

■ St. John's announced a new summer camp program "Camp Exploration" to be held from 9 a.m. to noon, July 10-Aug. 4, for children entering kindergarten through eighth grades. Call the school at 301-662-6722, ext. 2204 for details;

■ As one of its community service projects during Catholic Schools Week, St. John's students contributed \$569.03 for the Frederick Memorial Hospital's Cancer Patient Assistance Fund. The money was collected during the mass celebrated by Bishop Francis Malooly and pastors from the seven regional Catholic parishes the school serves;

American Cancer Society.

LOCAL Frederick Post March 7, 2006



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

Catholic school teachers honored

The Friends of Catholic Education honored the dedication and accomplishments of Frederick County's Catholic school teachers recently at its eighth annual Teacher Appreciation Dinner. More than 200 teachers and administrators from Frederick County's Catholic schools as well as clergy and archdiocesan guests attended the event. The keynote speaker was Dan Curtin, executive director of the National Catholic Education Association. From left are Al Edwards, president of Friends of Catholic Education; teacher award recipients Sara Oxendine of St. John Regional Catholic School, Theresa Pedersen of Visitation Academy, Aimee Ballantine of St. John's Literary Institution at Prospect Hall and Kim Perseghin of St. Thomas More Academy; and Caroline Tatum Pugh, executive director of Friends of Catholic Education.

Pi in your face



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

St. John Regional Catholic School seventh-graders Julianne Walker, left, and Caroline DeLany display their poster of facts about pi Tuesday. March 14 marked Pi Day, and it was honored at the school. Students participated in the event, celebrating the ancient Greek discovery of the formulas for calculating the circumference of a circle. Students created games, posters, poems and lists of facts; wrote essays; and sang songs, all about the constant, pi. Students, teachers and parents brought in dozens of homemade deserts. March 14 was selected as Pi Day because the date's numerical representation, 3/14, is the closest approximation of the value of pi.

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MARCH 15, 2006

The Gazette

Thursday, March 23, 2006

St. John's students research history of school property

BY JULI GUIFFRE
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

As St. John's Regional Catholic School was preparing to move to its new location on Opossumtown Pike, Quest teacher Peg O'Hara brainstormed a unique project for the students to research.

Designed for gifted and talented students and based on the Renzulli method, the Quest enrichment program encourages students' interest in specific topics. O'Hara said she thought learning the history of the new school property would be interesting and fulfilling.

In the chaos of the move last fall, the project was put off, but with students settled in their new building, the project is now in full swing.

After months of research, the group knows little more about the land than that it was previously a farm with a cemetery adjacent to the property. The cemetery today consists of six headstones, some broken, as well as a deteriorated mausoleum. Many names on the stones are unreadable, and there is no way of knowing if there are more people buried than the stones indicate.

As part of the project, four students traveled to Catonsville to visit a woman who was born in a house that used to stand on the property. Sixth-graders Elisabeth Cutchin and Janine Bainger, third-grader Sarah Kovalchick and second-grader Evan Spangler visited Charlotte Young Clem Langbehn, now 81, who was born in the big white house.

The students asked Langbehn about the history of the house and what it was like when she lived there. Langbehn recollected playing on her father's farm and playing in the cemetery; she said the cemetery was there before she was born.

In December, project participants met to outline the goals for the project. Elisabeth Cutchin said the group plans to visit the Frederick County Courthouse to gather deeds and titles, as well as find out who has lived on the property and whether past residents have living descendants the students could interview.

Fifth-grader Marissa Maduschke said her motivations for joining the project were mainly cleaning up the cemetery. "It should be a place of remembrance, not fear," she said.

The students plan to take part in a beautification of the cemetery,

Student readies for national bee

Competing for the statewide Geography Bee competition Saturday at Towson University, St. John's Regional Catholic School eighth-grader Jay Plamondon casually asked his father, "What round do you think

School Notes

I'll get out in?"

Jay didn't know how wrong his assumptions would turn out to be: He went on to win the state competition in his grade level and is preparing to travel to Washington, D.C., for the national competition, May 23 and 24 at National Geographic headquarters.

Thousands of schools from across the country compete in the National Geographic Bee each year, using materials prepared by the National Geographic Society. Students in grades four through eight compete. Questions range from which state has a suitable climate to grow a certain fruit to which country has the world's largest Muslim population. Winners receive a \$25,000 college scholarship.

Jay has competed in his school's competition each year. Last year, he won the competition and tied for 11th at the state level, so his hopes were not extremely high this year.

As the level of competition increases, so does Jay's level of study.

"When I go into the school competition, I usually haven't studied," he said. "For states, I picked up an atlas and made sure I knew all my

ivers and capitals and other things. I'll do some more serious studying for nationals. I'm going to try to get some National Geographic magazines and research online. My dad is making me read an article in the paper every day."

Jay is nervous about the national competition but is going into it with a relaxed attitude. "Sometimes it's the luck of the draw: You either know it or you don't. I got a little lucky at states; I threw two answers out there that I wasn't sure about, and they came back correct."

Maryland Public Television interviewed Jay Tuesday for a documentary about a few kids on their road to the national competition.

—JULI GUIFFRE

EVENTS

Students qualify for Maryland History Day

FREDERICK — Thirty-seven students qualified at the National History Day district competition for Frederick County, held recently at Middletown High School. These students will move on to participate in the upcoming Maryland History Day competition April 22 in Rockville.

National History Day is a national program that promotes learning history through conducting research and preparing interpretative projects. All students in grades 6-12 are eligible to participate in the annual contest. There are two divisions of competition: Junior (grades 6-8) and Senior (grades 9-12). Within the two divisions there are four categories: Paper, Exhibit, Performance, and Documentary. Students can work individually or in groups of 2-5 people in the categories, except for the paper category. Each project, excluding papers, must include a process paper (500 words), and all projects must have an annotated bibliography.

One hundred twelve students representing 10 teachers and eight schools competed in the 2006 NHD district contest. This year's theme, "Taking a Stand in History," allowed students to explore a wide range of topics such as Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, Dean Smith and Jackie Robinson desegregating athletics, protecting wild horses, and vigilantism.

The participating schools were Frederick High, Middletown Middle, Monocacy Middle, St. John's at Prospect Hall, St. John's Regional Catholic, Urbana High, Walkersville Middle, and West Frederick Middle.

Each student who competed in the district contest received a certificate. Students finishing first or second in their categories earned medals and an invitation to Maryland History Day.

The students advancing to Maryland History Day in the Junior Division include: Emily Brown, Matthew Gabb, Lauren Lucernoni, Dylan Veraart, Kayla Park-Brouse, Katie Mark, David Lieb, Chris Miller, Byron Pickett, Frankie Romeo, Allison Peters, Chelsea Paul, Eliza Zolfo, Kara Henson, Kate Binzer, Regina Fenstermaker, James Pressly, Jeaneva Gagne, Meredith Deener, Kate-lyn Rossick, Rachel Burdette, Emily Hughes, and Sarah Spiegel.



Allison Peters, a student at West Frederick Middle school, was awarded first place, Junior Individual Performance category at the National History Day district level competition.

Representing Frederick County in the Senior Division will be: Joselle McCracken, Christyne McCutcheon, Dan Motherway, Tyler Alrich, Jarrell Cook, Claire Miller, Rachel Marsteller, Elizabeth Negas, Katie Bidenger, Melissa Lineburg, Danielle Eastep, Katie Bentz, Patrick Georgi, and Steven Duncan.

Students competing at Maryland History Day can win several prizes as well as earn the right to move on to the national competition, which is held at the University of Maryland each June. Top prize at the national contest is a four-year scholarship to a Case Western University. Last year, Frederick County had a team not only win first place in the state for Senior Group Documentary but also make it to the final round of judging for the national contest.

National History Day in Frederick County is made possible with the help of teachers, parents, numerous volunteers, and the support of the Maryland Humanities Council, Columbia Gas of Maryland, Catocin Center for Regional Studies, Frederick County Historic Sites Consortium, Frederick County Public Schools, Frederick County Retired School Personnel Association, Historical Society of Frederick County, Honors College at Frederick Community College, Maryland Room at C. Burr Artz Library, Frederick County Public Libraries, National Museum of Civil War Medicine and the National Park Service.

A-16 | THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST | THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2006



Essay winners

American Heritage Essay Contest winners were honored at a recent meeting of the Yellow Springs Lions Club. After dinner, the winners read their essays, which will go on to a regional competition. Students were presented with prize checks. Pictured, from left, are: Middle school runner-up and winner Sara Covich and Jessi Breen, Yellow Springs Lions Club P° resident Tony O'Toole, Lions essay winner Elmer Breeden, high-school winner Ted Dacey, Yellow Springs Lions Club Program Director Rick Vose and adult winner Ethel Brauer.

School, library receive books from national endowment

BY KEITH L. MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a set of classic books on the theme of "becoming American" to St. John Regional Catholic School and the C. Burr Artz Public Library in Frederick.

libraries, said the library system is "delighted to share these materials with patrons that offer a range of perspectives on becoming American."

"This collection is particularly relevant to our community today, especially in light of the political, economic and social debates regarding immigration are taking place around the nation," she said.

For more information on the "We the People" program and the awards, go to www.humanities.gov.

Education Briefs

The two county locations are among 2,000 schools and libraries across the nation and overseas to receive the books as part of the endowment's "We the People" program focusing on American history and culture.

The award includes 15 books for students in kindergarten through 12th grade, such as "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" by Virginia Hamilton and "The Lotus Seed" by Sherry Garland. All of the books are in English, with a few titles also featuring a Spanish edition. Each title touches on stories of immigrants who have come to the United States.

Barbara Phillips, media center specialist for St. John Regional Catholic School, said the school is excited about the award and the potential learning opportunities.

"We want to use the books collaboratively to integrate the history and thoughts of the time with children," she said.

Phillips said students will do book reviews on the novels and older students will conduct peer teaching with those in lower grades on the novels' lessons.

Elizabeth Cromwell, public relations manager for county

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Frederick Post April 8, 2006

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

St. John Regional Catholic student advances to national geography bee

By SARAH BREITENBACH

News-Post Staff
sbreitenbach@fredericknewspost.com

IJAMSVILLE — At first glance, Jay Plamondon looks like an average 13-year-old with braces and a floppy haircut. But pay a little attention and you'll notice he has the handshake of an expert businessman and an uncanny ability to casually toss around weighty terms like per-capita income.

Jay, an eighth grader at St. John Regional Catholic School, brought home top honors in the Maryland National Geographic Bee on March 31 after defeating about 100 fourth- through eighth-graders from around the state.

Next month he will compete in the national bee hosted by Jeopardy's Alex Trebek in Washington.

The competition isn't just about naming states, countries and capitals. It involves understanding not only where places are, but factors like commerce, culture and physical geography.

The National Geographic Society developed the bee in 1989 because of poor geographic

knowledge among young people in the United States.

The National Geographic Bee Web site provides sample questions like: "Which capital city located on the Suriname River has distinctive Dutch colonial architecture?"

Obviously, the challenge isn't meant to be easy. (The answer is Paramaribo.)

Jay said it takes a great deal of concentration to win a bee and the most important thing is to listen intently to the question being asked, something he forgot to do last year when he placed 11th in the state competition.

"I do know that I really listened to every question (this year)," he said. "... you really have to break it down to something simpler than the question asked (of) you."

Since winning the Maryland competition, Jay has realized that there's no time to waste before the national competition begins May 22.

"They're probably going to be really nitpicky," he said.

The first-place winner at the

(See LOCATION A-8)



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

Jay Plamondon, an eighth-grader at St. John Regional Catholic School, won the Maryland National Geographic Bee on March 31. He will attend the national competition in Washington in May.



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

Jay Plamondon, an eighth-grader at St. John Regional Catholic School, won the Maryland National Geographic Bee on March 31. He will attend the national competition in Washington in May.

Location

(Continued from A-5)

national level will take home a \$25,000 college scholarship.

Jay and his father, Jim Plamondon, have reviewed questions from last year's national competition online.

They're difficult. Jay said he didn't know the answers to any of them.

"After you're studying all these maps, all these atlases, you get this mental map in your mind," he said. "... you really have to know every aspect of the world."

Jay's mother, Cary Plamondon, said his geography ability is innate.

"I gave him a puzzle of the United States when he was a kid and the next thing I know, he said he knew all the names of the (states and capitals)," she said.

Jay was 5 when he first studied the puzzle. Throughout childhood he continued to read maps and atlases as if they were regular books, Ms. Plamondon said.

"Different kids have different interests, I guess that just sparked it," she said.

FRONT PEW

Frederick geography whiz charts way to top

St. John Regional student enters national competition

GEORGE P. MATYSEK JR.
gmatysek@catholicreview.org

Jay Plamondon is mad for maps.

Whether it's a simple street map detailing his native Frederick County or a complex historical atlas outlining 19th century political territories, the 13-year-old eighth-grader at St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick has studied it all.

With the walls of his bedroom decorated with maps and his shelves abundantly stocked with atlases, the young parishioner of St. John, Frederick, has plenty of resources to keep him occupied.

It's that hands-on passion for geography that has put Jay in elite company.

Jay was named the Maryland State Geography Bee champion at a competition sponsored by JPMorgan Chase for the National Geographic Society at Towson University March 31. He was part of a national field of nearly five million students ranging in age from 11-14.

After claiming the state title, Jay entered the national competition in Washington, D.C., May 23 but did not make it to the final round that pitted the top 10 finalists in a May 24 competition hosted by television quiz show host Alex Trebek.

"I love looking and seeing where everything is," said Jay, who is equally fascinated by history, politics, economics and world culture.

"It's interesting how countries can be so close but so different," he said.

Much of Jay's knowledge of geography flows from his love of maps. He knows all the state capitals, nearly all the world capitals and many capitals of territories and provinces.

"I have a visual memory," he said. "I couldn't memorize every capital without looking at an atlas."

In the state competition, it was his love for maps that helped Jay answer the winning question: "Darwin, the capital of this country's territory, is closer to Indonesia and to Papua New Guinea than its own country's capital."

"I knew that if it was closer to Papua New Guinea, the answer had to be Australia," said Jay, who became interested in geography when he played with toy puzzle maps when he was 5 years old.

Jay said he is surprised by the lack of



CR Staff/Owen Sweeney III

St. John Regional Catholic School, Frederick, student Jay Plamondon was entered in a national geography competition May 23.

basic geographical knowledge among many Americans. According to a new National Geographic-Roper Public Affairs 2006 Geographic Literacy Study released in May, one-third of the 18-24 year-olds surveyed could not locate Louisiana, and almost half could not locate Mississippi on a U.S. map.

Only four out of 10 were able to find Iraq, and nearly 90 percent of those questioned could not find Afghanistan.

Jay, a National Junior Honor Society member who will attend St. John's Catholic Prep in Frederick next year, said his studies at St. John helped prepare him for the competition. Ethel Brauer, Jay's social studies teacher, accompanied him to the national competition.

While Jay has received a lot of attention in recent days, including being one of three competitors profiled in a half-hour television documentary called "Road to the Geography Bee," he seems to be taking his fame in stride. While Bonny Jain of Illinois, the winner of the national competition, studied four hours a day for the event, Jay said that's a bit much for him.

"I'd rather be playing outside," said Jay, a hockey and baseball player. "I'm not obsessed with geography. It's just interesting to me."

As for his future, Jay said it would be "cool" to become a cartographer.

TEST YOUR SKILLS

1. The North Atlantic current brings warm waters from the tropics to the west coast of which continent?
2. Which country has the world's largest Muslim population – Indonesia or Mexico?
3. What is the term for a part of an ocean or sea that cuts far into the bordering landmass and may contain one or more bays?
4. Which Canadian province produces more than half of the country's manufactured goods?
5. The port of Rotterdam is built on the delta of which major European river?



Answers: 1. Europe. 2. Indonesia. 3. Gulf. 4. Ontario. 5. Rhine River.

St. John's hosts annual spring fair

St. John's Regional Catholic School will hold its 16th annual spring fair on June 3-4 at the school, 8418 Opposumtown Pike.

School Notes

JULI GUIFFRE & JESSICA SPRAGUE

The event opens at 11 a.m. Saturday and at 12:30 p.m. Sunday.

"Our school community is pleased to have been welcomed by our neigh-

Two students at St. John Regional Catholic School won the Maryland Council on Economic Education's A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words poster contest.

Eighth graders Carolyn Wright and Amy Cutchin had their posters selected by a panel of judges and will appear in the 2006-2007 economic concepts calendar.

Sixteen winners will be honored at the Maryland Council on Economic Education's annual award program at Towson University on May 31.

Each winner will receive a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond.

Fred. Post 5/16/06

Thursday, April 27, 2006 f

School, library receive books from national endowment

BY KEITH L. MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a set of classic books on the theme of "becoming American" to St. John Regional Catholic School and the C. Burr Artz Public Library in Frederick.

Education Briefs

The two county locations are among 2,000 schools and libraries across the nation and overseas to receive the books as part of the endowment's "We the People" program focusing on American history and culture.

The award includes 15 books for students in kindergarten through 12th grade, such as "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" by Virginia Hamilton and "The Lotus Seed" by Sherry Garland. All of the books are in English, with a few titles also featuring a Spanish edition. Each title touches on stories of immigrants who have come to the United States.

Barbara Phillips, media center specialist for St. John Regional Catholic School, said the school is excited about the award and the potential learning opportunities.

"We want to use the books collaboratively to integrate the history and thoughts of the time with children," she said.

Phillips said students will do book reviews on the novels and older students will conduct peer teaching with those in lower grades on the novels' lessons.

Elizabeth Cromwell, public relations manager for county

libraries, said the library system is "delighted to share these materials with patrons that offer a range of perspectives on becoming American."

"This collection is particularly relevant to our community today, especially in light of the political, economic and social debates regarding immigration are taking place around the nation," she said.

For more information on the "We the People" program and the awards, go to www.humanities.gov.



Michael Curren is presented the 2006 Distinguished Graduate Award by Jean Wright, director of Institutional Advancement.



Eileen Borowski, left, education chairperson, Catholic Daughters of America, Court of Elizabeth Ann Seton, presents the Catholic Girl Award to Kathleen Kelly.

St. John's Regional holds first graduation in new school

FOR THE NEWS-POST

FREDERICK — Fifty-four eighth grade students from St. John Regional Catholic School were awarded graduation certificates on June 9. The class of 2006 was the first to graduate from the new school located on Opposumtown Pike in Frederick.

The graduation Mass and ceremony were celebrated in the school's McElroy Hall. The Rev. Keith Boisvert, pastor of St. Katharine Drexel, presided at the Mass along with the Rev. Andy Aaron, pastor, St. Timothy's; the Rev. Lawrence Frazier, pastor, St. Joseph-on-Carrollton Manor; the

Rev. Wayne Funk, pastor, and the Rev. Leo Tittler, senior priest, St. John the Evangelist.

Mrs. Eileen Borowski, education chairperson for the Catholic Daughters of America, Court of Elizabeth Ann Seton, presented the Catholic Girl Award to graduate Kathleen Kelly. Miss Kelly is also a member of the National Jr. Honor Society. The class valedictorian was James Plamondon Jr. and salutatorian was Sara Francisovich. Both are members of the National Jr. Honor Society.

The Distinguished Graduate award, given to Michael Currens, is sponsored each year by the National Catholic Educational

Association. The award provides recognition to Catholic elementary school alumni who have demonstrated personal and professional achievements in their adult lives. Mr. Currens graduated from the elementary school in 1969 and then attended high school at St. John's at Prospect Hall. He continued his education at the University of Maryland, Hood College and George Washington University where he obtained his PhD. He has two daughters who are the fifth generation of his family to attend St. John Regional Catholic School. He is also an active member of St. John the Evangelist Church in Frederick.

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