

ROUNDUPS

Home Invasion in Centreville

Fairfax County police are looking for a man who forced his way into a home in the 5600 block of Virginia Chase Drive in Centreville on Saturday, Feb. 14. The family — a man and woman, both 58, a 16-year-old girl and a 22-year-old woman — were inside the home around 7:45 p.m. when they heard a loud bang at the door.

As the father went to investigate, the door was forced open and a man armed with a handgun entered. He demanded money and personal items from the victims. But as the 22-year-old began to comply, officers arrived and confronted the suspect inside the house.

He fled into a wooded area nearby and escaped. He's described as black, about 6 feet and 200-220 pounds. He wore a black ski mask, dark jacket and dark sweat pants. The homeowner was treated for minor injuries at the scene; the other victims didn't require medical attention.

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections, Thursday, Feb. 19 and Feb. 26, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140 to confirm dates and times.

Attorney General Candidates

The Republican Women of Clifton will host the three Republican candidates for Attorney General on Monday, Feb. 23, at Clifton Elementary, 7010 Clifton Road. Social time is at 7 p.m., with the candidates speaking at 7:30 p.m. John Brownlee, Sen. Ken Cuccinelli (R-37th) and David Foster will each present his vision for the Virginia Attorney General's office. For more information, call Bonnie Fite at 703-449-7751.

Sully District Council Meeting

The Sully District Council of Citizens Associations and its Land-Use Committee will meet Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 7 p.m., in the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

The keynote speaker will be a representative from Fairfax County Public Schools to discuss the school budget. The panel will also consider a land-use matter concerning the Chipotle restaurant in Franklin Farm. Call Jeff Parnes, evenings, at 703-904-0131.

Discuss School Start Times

The Fairfax County School Board will hold a meeting about school starting and dismissal times next Wednesday, Feb. 25, from 7-9 p.m., at Rocky Run Middle School, 4400 Stringfellow Road in Chantilly. Parents and interested citizens are invited to comment on potential changes being considered to start and end school later. These changes would affect elementary, middle and high-school students and could also impact parents' work schedules and child-care arrangements, as well as after-school activities, including athletics.

Park Authority to Meet

The Fairfax County Park Authority will meet Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 7:30 p.m., in the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 900 in Fairfax. Call Judy Pedersen at 703-324-8662.

Route 50 Public Hearing

VDOT will hold an open-forum public hearing on the Route 50 widening project in Fairfax and Loudoun counties, Thursday, Feb. 26. It will be at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 14685 Avion Parkway in Chantilly. Hours are from 6-9 p.m., with a VDOT presentation at 7 p.m., followed by question-and-answer period.

NEWS

Next

The next meeting of the Centreville Immigration Forum is Tuesday, Feb. 24, from 7-9 p.m., at Centreville Presbyterian Church, 15450 Lee Highway in Centreville.

Forum: Seeks Help for Immigrants

Participants hope for more community involvement.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Efforts to help the local immigrant community, and discussions about what's still needed, were the topics of the Feb. 3 meeting of the Centreville Immigration Forum, at Centreville Baptist Church.

Barb Shaiko, director of missions at Centreville United Methodist Church (CUMC), spoke about the Grace Ministries program her church offers, the second Saturday of each month. It provides Hispanic immigrants with emergency food, clothing and diapers, plus healthcare and spiritual guidance, and Shaiko said the response has been overwhelming.

"In January, 195 families — about 700 people — came," she said. "Most are coming from Centreville, Chantilly, Herndon, Reston, Manassas and Manassas Park, plus some from Fairfax and Alexandria. In our area, 95 percent [of those we help] are Latino immigrants."

Shaiko said CUMC is buying food from the Capital Area Food Bank, and CUMC's Joe Gillen said Panera, Starbucks and Manhattan Bagel have also contributed food items to Grace Ministries.

Alice Foltz of Wellspring United Church of Christ, which sponsored the forum, said that, when she visited the ministry recently, she saw there was "a need for clothing." Said Gillen: "We especially need medium to small clothing for the men."

Agreeing, Shaiko said that, because of the huge demand, "We're running out of clothes, and I'm thinking of having schoolchildren collect for us. Word-of-mouth will also help."

So will clothing donations to CUMC for the ministry from local residents. Said Foltz: "It's really important for the whole community to adopt this program, if it's going to work."

She said Wellspring continues doing what it can to help Centreville's day laborers. "We're paying Connie Rojas to go to the corner of Machen Road and St. Germain Drive, Wednesday mornings," said Foltz. "She gets to know the day laborers and, in emergencies, she can pass on information, and they really seem to appreciate it."

"You just see how desperate these people are, particularly with the economy now," added Wellspring moderator Sara Little. "They don't have jobs."

"In December, we took them warm coats and invited them to help themselves," said Foltz's husband Jerry. "[So donations of] coats, hats, scarves and gloves are really helpful."

Alice Foltz said church members have also come into contact with some day laborers who are homeless and living outdoors, even in below-freezing weather." She noted that FACETS operates a hypothermia shelter in two locations that rotate from church to church. "People get hot meals and a bag lunch before they leave at 7 a.m.," she said.

Sarah Allen, a regional director with Fairfax County's Department of Systems Management for Human Services, said mental-health outreach workers for the county "can also make site visits to people living outside. No one needs to sleep outside, at all,



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Dan Choi (on left) listens while Arnoldo Borja speaks during the last meeting.

ever."

Foltz said the day laborers requested English-language classes on Sundays so, as of last Sunday, Feb. 8, Rojas began offering them free, each Sunday, from 1-3 p.m., at the Centreville Regional Library. Foltz hopes other churches will follow suit, and Allen said she could also have a Spanish-speaking social worker come and talk to the day laborers on Sundays, as well.

IN ADDITION, Jane Kirsch with Centreville Presbyterian Church said her church's ESOL program offers beginning, intermediate and advanced English classes. "We'd love more students," she said. "And a Sunday class is appealing to me."

Next, Dan Choi and Arnoldo Borja, with the Legal Aid Justice Center in Falls Church, talked about the problems they're seeing. "Day laborers, restaurant employees, taxi drivers — the numbers of people who aren't getting paid are rising," said Choi. "Subcontractors aren't getting paid, so they don't pay their workers."

Borja, who tries to organize Annandale's 500 day laborers, said he helps them see that "It's a high price to leave their families behind. We came to this country with the illusion of a better place to live. We've come from countries including Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Peru. Now, we're all in the same place and it's helping us understand each other. But we also have to learn to trust

each other."

Choi said Borja takes little booklets to the day laborers so they can learn English, plus the rights they have in the U.S., while waiting around for jobs.

Pleased, Foltz said, "I think it's wonderful that you're getting them to talk together, develop groups and take leadership roles. That way, they feel better about themselves. The day laborers [here in Centreville] asked us why people didn't like them, and we didn't have an easy answer."

Jenn Vaz, with the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia, said her organization offers both tutoring and classroom programs. Tutoring is for those who can only speak basic English, but can't read or write it. The classroom program is for adults and families and is geared toward creating a community.

"Adults and their children come twice a week," said Vaz. "Classes meet at various places in Herndon, anywhere that'll partner with us. We teach basic literacy and things such as how to fill out apartment leases, apply for jobs and find different resources."

SEE FORUM, PAGE 7

"We came to this country with the illusion of a better place to live."

— Arnoldo Borja,
Legal Aid Justice Center

Forum Discusses Resources

FROM PAGE 3

Classes are \$35, but people attending every class get to go for free, the next semester — and get a Target gift card. “We give incentives,” said Vaz. “I’ve been pushing for us to come to Centreville. If anyone knows of a site where we can meet, contact me at jenn.vaz@gmail.com.”

Foltz said she still hopes to put together a package of resource information and emergency phone numbers people may call when they need help. “We still have families in crisis,” she said. “We should also make a list of individuals who’d be the contact people — temporarily — for families in need.”

Furthermore, she wants to draw more churches into the Centreville Immigration Forum meetings. “We have a lot of churches in our community — and

other groups, as well — who aren’t represented,” said Foltz. Shaiko then volunteered to write a letter to the various pastors “to introduce ourselves and let them know what’s going on.”

Sandy Chisholm, with Fairfax County government, said County Executive Anthony Griffin will release the new county budget on Feb. 23. Then, on March 11, from 2-4 p.m., in rooms 2 and 3 of the Government Center, Deputy County Executive Verdia Haywood will explain how the budget cuts will affect programs coming under the umbrella of Human Services.

“We know there’ll be budget cuts and they could impact what we do,” said Foltz. “But on the other hand, it makes it more important to work together to try to find creative resources to be helpful.”

Judge Cites ‘Public Corruption’

FROM PAGE 4

this [also] resulted in a divorce and his wife and two, teen-age children moving to Albuquerque, N.M.”

“He had a great career, on the fast track,” Rosenbaum told Ellis. “He made bad choices, but has accepted responsibility. Look at him as a whole and fashion a sentence that’s reasonable and just.”

But, countered Hammerstrom, “This is a defendant who knew better. He went from border patrol agent all the way to ICE headquarters. But this behavior wasn’t an aberration, when you look at all the bribes he took.” The prosecutor said the deal to armor the vehicles was struck in August 2003 and, “For four years, [Chavez] received these payments and was supposed to get another \$87,000 from Perez, the president of Blincar, for future contracts.”

“We have no doubt this defendant would have continued receiving bribes and getting more money,” said Hammerstrom. “Blincar was the gift that would have kept on giving, had it not been exposed.”

“When we lose the honest services of our public servants, we lose a great deal,” said Ellis. He also noted that these vehicles “were not really well-armed,” after all.

“Right,” said Hammerstrom. “The government’s cost for replacing [them] was \$5 million. There was also deception in the information [Chavez] provided the GSO about these vehicles. Had he not done this, perhaps the two other competitors might have won the contracts.”

Addressing Chavez, the judge commented on his “remarkable career” and called him a person of intelligence and ability. But, he said, “Public corruption is truly a cancer on the body politic, and we

need a sentence that stands as a beacon, a deterrent and a warning to other public officials that corruption will not be tolerated.”

Ellis then sentenced Chavez to 90 months in prison on the bribery charge and 60 months on the conspiracy charge, running both sentences concurrently and placing him on three years supervised release afterward. However, at Rosenbaum’s request, he allowed Chavez to delay surrendering to

authorities until May 12, so he could attend his daughter’s high-school graduation, May 10.

In addition, Ellis ordered Chavez to perform 100 hours of community service, “perhaps, talking to groups of young people about resisting temptation and making the right decisions. Mr. Chavez, if you’d made a conscious decision to live an honest life, then no amount of temptation could have altered that.”



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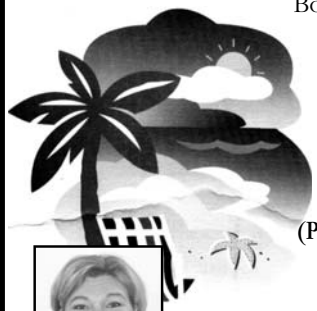
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