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It's a family tradition Chesterfield residents share their yearly holiday customs



Yearly traditions are synonymous with the holidays—whether it's reading a favorite Christmas tale or baking up a favorite recipe. For Mary Clair Thomas, tradition involves decorating a wire and grapevine tree with lights and flowers each year. She also hangs photos of family members on her Christmas tree. (Photos by Page Dowdy.)



By Susan Nienow
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

When the last bit of Thanksgiving turkey and dressing is gone and thoughts turn to the winter holidays, Chesterfield residents look to tradition and family. Tradition may be only as deep as "we did it last year," or it may go back generations. Regardless of the length of time, moms, dads, grandmas and grandpas are busy shopping, wrapping, cooking and decorating or getting ready to travel.

Below is just a sampling of the many holiday traditions carried on by our Chesterfield neighbors.

Mary Clair Thomas and her husband Ray open their Chesterfield home to their four children and their families, which includes

two granddaughters and two grandsons. Mary Clair's Southern heritage is evident in her drawl as she describes her family's traditions.

"I have a wire and grapevine tree with lights and every color flower. There is a picture of everyone in the family on the tree and an angel on top. For the nativity set, each child [ages 9, 7, 5 and 2] gets a piece of yarn for baby Jesus' bedding every time they do something good. We have a winter village that stays up all year. The kids love it. Everything in the village means something—the nurse represents me. The cake house is for Ray's mom."

"Santa wraps all the gifts, but the stockings are filled by mom and dad," continues

see TRADITIONS, page 6

Newsome's compensation draws high-level attention

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

Some eyebrows are being raised in the county government over the compensation and benefits paid to Superintendent Marcus Newsome compared to his predecessor Billy Cannaday and County Administrator Lane Ramsey. Newsome, who started his new job on Oct. 1, makes \$192,000 annually. After adding in \$40,000 in deferred income and \$12,500 for a vehicle allowance, Newsome's earnings total \$244,500.



Newsome

According to School Community Relations Director Debra Marlow, if former Superintendent Billy Cannaday had continued working for the county, he would have been paid a total of \$231,419 currently—about \$13,000 less than Newsome.

Cannaday assumed the position of State

Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Virginia Department of Education's chief executive, on July 1.

At its meeting last week, the Board of Supervisors proposed giving Ramsey a four percent merit raise—the maximum county employees are eligible to earn. The increase would raise Ramsey's salary to \$207,676 for 2007. Ramsey could also receive deferred compensation of \$20,500 and a car allowance of \$13,600, bringing his total earnings to \$241,776—\$2,724 less than Newsome.



Ramsey

However, Ramsey does receive some benefits that Newsome does not. Ramsey is given a membership to the Bull & Bear Club for business purposes at \$68 per month and receives an annual year-end bonus. Last year, that bonus was \$15,000.

see SALARY, page 3

Booze ordinance near schools may be on the rocks

By Greg Pearson
STAFF WRITER

A clear majority of the Chesterfield Planning Commission believes the Board of Supervisors should scrap an ordinance that prohibits the sale of alcohol within 500 feet of schools built after 1993. The commission asked Chairman Jack Wilson to contact the board to see if the supervisors really want to resolve the issue.

"The assumption is that the board is going to trash the ordinance anyway," said one commissioner.

Uniformly, the members believe the ordinance should apply to all schools or none at all. Currently, all schools built before 1993 are exempted. Eight schools—Beulah, Clover Hill, Enon and Hopkins elementary

see BOOZE, page 2



File Photo

The Chesterfield Planning Commission would like the county board to eliminate an ordinance that prohibits the sale of alcohol within 500 feet of schools built after 1993.



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