

Go ahead and tell me

I think the key to growing older gracefully is to pay attention – something I should have been doing the last time I wore that brown and gold sweater. I wonder how long that spot on the front had been there? Was it there when we went out for dinner the previous time I'd worn it?

And the ultimate question – why didn't anyone tell me, *dear*? After all, if my other half won't tell me, who will? Maybe he didn't see it. That would be bad news. We can't have an age-related deficit in the same area at the same time. He is supposed to compensate for my shortcomings, right?

That goes for remembering names, too. When we run into someone I know but can't remember her name, my other half is supposed to step up, introduce himself and ask who she is as though I have forgotten my manners. That seems to be far better than saying, "I haven't a clue who you are" or "I remember what we talked about the last time I saw you, but I can't remember your name."

Wearing the right shoes requires close attention. That is not a style dilemma. If I am going to be doing much standing or walking, I pick the shoes first and then the outfit selec-

tion follows. For a day of errands and shopping, comfortable wins. Out to dinner means anything goes because I will be sitting down most of the time.

I do find myself yearning for things the way they used to be – a definite sign of getting older. And I have noticed that businesses are hiring younger and younger people. The newscaster on yesterday's noon news must be a child prodigy. He couldn't be a day over 16, and I doubt if he shaves yet.

I had a very unpleasant revelation last week. For the first time ever, I fell going up some stairs, and I didn't even turn around to check if anyone had seen me. It wasn't that I was hurt so badly, but apparently my priorities have changed. I was busy making sure I hadn't broken anything.

Have you noticed how intolerant the young people are today? And it is getting worse. The male offspring in my family has always been good at rolling his eyes, but now he has gone too far. He is holding the door for me, carrying packages and reminding me of things two or three times in the same evening. Polite? No – he thinks I am doddering.

After he reminded me for the third time in the same game that saving those cards wouldn't do me any good, I exploded. Well, not exactly. I patted him on the hand and said I would have my geriatric specialist let him know when I was having short-term memory problems as soon as I could remember who it is.

I would like to see his face the first time he realizes that he is becoming his parents.



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Budget calls for \$35.5 million in new education funding

By Donna C. Gregory
NEWS EDITOR

Chesterfield County Public Schools is asking for a 6 percent raise during FY09-10 (starting July 1), amounting to an additional \$35.5 million in funding. If approved as presented, about \$13.1 million of that increase would come from county taxes.

Superintendent Marcus Newsome met with school board members last week to reveal his latest budget, which calls for a 13.4 percent increase in state funding (\$31.5 million) and a 5.4 percent rise in county funding. The entire operating budget totals \$604.6 million, up from \$569.1 million in FY08. Revenue is predicted to be \$616.5 million for FY09-10.



Newsome

Newsome's budget figures were based on the addition of 923 new students this fall, bringing the school system's total enrollment to 59,338. The per-pupil operational cost (excluding debt service) for 2008-09 is \$9,959.

More than 70 percent of the proposed budget is earmarked for instruction. The remaining 30 percent is comprised of administration, transportation, debt, operations/maintenance and other related categories.

School board members were also given a preview of FY10, which "is anticipated to be a very lean year," said Newsome. Typically, the first year of the state's biennial budget is richer with the second year of the budget seeing a much smaller increase in funding. For FY10, Newsome projected an increase of 3.7 percent, or \$10 million, in state funding. At the county level, funding projections call for a 2.4 percent increase, totaling around \$6.1 million in additional monies needed.

Highlights of the FY09 budget include:

- \$19.9 million to fund salary increases for teachers and other employees so the county's wages are competitive with neighboring localities. Teachers at the top of the pay scale would receive a 2 percent raise with those in the middle and lower ranges receiving 4-6 percent raises.
- \$4.3 million to cover health insurance contributions for employees.
- \$2.8 million to hire security officers for all middle schools. A portion of this amount would also be used to hire additional school nurses, cover fleet maintenance and rising fuel costs, and other county services.
- \$2.6 million to pay for utilities, staffing and other costs associated with the opening of Elizabeth B. Davis and Tomahawk middle schools this fall.
- \$2.3 million to add International Baccalaureate programs at Evergreen and Bettie Weaver elementary schools and to expand other programming for gifted students,

Free concert kicks off Black History Month events

Chesterfield County will kick off its 18th Annual Black History Month celebration with a concert on Feb. 1 by R&B group Maze Featuring Frankie Beverly.

The popular San Francisco-based group formed under the leadership of frontman Beverly and has been thrilling audiences for years with spectacular performances. The group has produced such hits as "Before I Let Go," "Joy and Pain" and "Back in Stride." Today, the band tours continuously, headlining major

Budget calendar

- Jan. 29
School board work session #1
- Feb. 12
School board budget public hearing, 7 p.m., Public Meeting Room, 10001 Iron Bridge Rd. Citizens are invited to give their comments on the budget.
- Feb. 19
School board work session #2, 5:30 p.m., School Administration Building board room, 9900 Krause Rd.
- Feb. 26
School board budget approval, 7 p.m., Public Meeting Room, 10001 Iron Bridge Rd.
- Mar. 10
Superintendent presents budget to board of supervisors, 6 p.m., Public Meeting Room, 10001 Iron Bridge Rd.
- Apr. 2
Board of supervisors budget public hearing, 3 p.m., Public Meeting Room, 10001 Iron Bridge Rd.
- Apr. 9
Board of supervisors budget approval, 3 p.m., Public Meeting Room, 10001 Iron Bridge Rd.
- Apr. 22
School board budget adoption

students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.

- \$2 million for new science and language arts textbooks at the elementary level.
- \$1.3 million to hire staff and buy materials to handle increased student enrollments.
- \$730,000 to start a new 403(b) savings plan for employees. As proposed, the school system would contribute 50 percent in matching dollars to the savings plan up to \$10 per month. Over time, Newsome said the school system would like to raise its contribution. "We're hoping this will encourage our employees to invest in their retirement," he added.
- \$450,000 to offer a second shift of classes at the Chesterfield Technical Center beginning this September.
- \$240,000 to expand world language instruction to six additional elementary schools, bringing the total number of elementary schools that offer a foreign language to 13.

The complete proposed budget is available for viewing online at www.chesterfield.k12.va.us.

music festivals and delighting longtime fans with their distinctive blend of musical genres.

The free concert will be held at the Daniel Gymnasium at Virginia State University. Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors will open at 5 p.m., and the concert will begin at 7 p.m.

For more information about the concert, or other Black History Month events happening throughout February, call 748-1161 or visit www.chesterfield.gov.