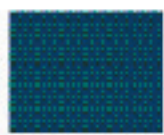


THUMBS UP! She saved her father with the Heimlich maneuver. **PAGE 8**

COMING SUNDAY Our special graduation issue features student profiles, plus bus schedules



SUN

SUFFOLK SISTER CITIES BAND

Students focus on music for England

By Hattie Brown Garrow
The Virginian-Pilot

SUFFOLK

One song into an afternoon rehearsal, Ed Woodis had some advice for his band: "Don't bury your eyes in the music. Look up."

He had arranged the teens in a circle, with the drummer in the middle, so they could watch each other. They would need to use all their senses to hear the melody, Woodis explained.

The group launched into "The Typewriter" for a second time. Woodis, who was filling in as a tuba player that day, was pleased at the end of the song "You hear it?" he asked. "You hear the difference?"

Woodis' band, a collection of students from Nansemond-Suffolk Academy and the city's three public high schools, formed about a year ago for a special purpose. Along with a student chorus, band members are headed to England in July to represent the city of Suffolk.

The musical – and cultural – ex-

See **EXCHANGE**, Page 4



▲ Edward Woodis, Nansemond River High School's band director, makes a point during a recent Suffolk Sister Cities band rehearsal.

◀ The band, which heads to England next month, gathers at Nansemond River.

Free concert tonight – details, Page 4

RYAN C. HENRIKSEN PHOTOS | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

EDUCATION | CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

1 OR 2 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS? SUFFOLK BOARD MEMBERS ARE STILL ASKING

By Hattie Brown Garrow
The Virginian-Pilot

SUFFOLK

School Board members received feedback from the City Council in February and heard

from residents in the months that followed. Even so, they decided last week they still couldn't answer a critical question: Should one or two elementary schools serve students in southern Suffolk?

The division's 10-year capital improvements plan calls for a new school to replace Southwestern Elementary in the Holland area. It also includes an overhaul of Robertson Elementary in Whaleysville.

That doesn't match the plan written by the city and approved by City Council earlier this year. Except for Vice Mayor Curtis Milteer, council members have said they sup-

port combining students from both schools into one new building.

The School Board has discussed amending its plan to reflect the City Council's wishes and was scheduled to vote on the switch last Thursday.

Instead, members took the advice of Holy Neck representative Enoch Copeland, who rec-

See **SCHOOLS**, PAGE 4

ANIMAL WELFARE

'HUMANE CAMPAIGN' GETS UNDER WAY

By Eric Feber
The Virginian-Pilot

Knowledge is power, and with this in mind, the Suffolk Humane Society is embarking on a public-awareness campaign to empower city residents to become responsible pet owners.

The Driver-based pet advocacy group hopes to achieve this through a six-month "Humane Campaign" with messages on billboards and in television commercials, fliers distributed throughout the community and print ads in local newspapers.

This inaugural educational effort was created to bring three important issues in pet ownership to city residents, said Angela Chandler, president of the Humane Society's board of directors.

"We're bringing before the public the ideas of spay/neutering, adoption and unchaining dogs. We're hoping this will create an awareness and will remind residents about the importance of these issues and how they can help."

Chandler said 100,000 homeless pets are put to death annually in Virginia. This number includes healthy, well-adjusted dogs, cats, puppies and kittens, including purebreds and what she calls "designer dogs."

"Much of this can be prevented through spay/neutering and pet adoption," Chandler said. "We're hoping both adoptions and spay/neuter procedures will increase during our campaign."

The billboards and ads will also cover the separate issue of unchaining dogs.

"We're telling people to bring their dog into the family, into their pack," Chandler explained. "When dogs are kept on chains continuously, they become neurotic, unhappy,

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SCHOOLS

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commended they tour some of the bus routes in the Southwestern and Robertson zones, as well as those in three neighboring zones.

"We as a board need to know exactly where these areas are," Copeland said. "We're talking about something very serious here. We're talking about 4, 5, 6, 7, 8-year-olds."

Sleepy Hole representative Diane Foster agreed that driving through those areas would be helpful, but she also suggested the board review enrollment numbers at the northern schools. That region has received the most



"We as a board need to know exactly where these areas are," board member Enoch Copeland of Holy Neck says. "We're talking about something very serious here."

attention because that's where the majority of students are, she said.

The group tour is set for Monday. Board members opted to take a school bus so they could see how the vehicles maneuver on the southern end's rural roads.

Earlier in the meeting, several Holy Neck

Borough residents spoke in support of community-based schools in the Holland and Whaleyville areas.

"I feel that it is our time to be on the receiving end of services," former Southwestern Principal Lorita Mayo said. "... It is disheartening when other areas of the city receive new schools and other services and we are continually ignored."

Holland resident Carlton Williams said having a school in the community builds pride and involvement. Michael West, the speaker who followed, echoed that sentiment.

"Having a school outside the community will not get the parent involved, will not get the community involved. The farther away you get from the community, the less involvement you get."

Hattie Brown Garrow, 222-5562, hattie.brown@pilotonline.com

EXCHANGE

Continued from Page 1

change was sparked by a sister-city partnership that began nearly three decades ago. Teachers, students and other residents have made the trip to Suffolk County, England, since then.

The visits were less frequent in recent years until 2007, when a delegation from Bury St. Edmunds County Upper School came to Hampton Roads. Those nearly 40 young musicians, including members of a swing band and string orchestra, performed at four Suffolk schools, the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts and other locations.

"They were incredible when they came over. I hope we can live up to that," said Laura Holsouser, a rising sophomore at King's Fork High School. "It was the feeling they brought to that stage. They were having so much fun."

Laura, 15, is one of about three dozen students chosen to take the England trip, organized by Suffolk Sister Cities International. The most talented teens from across the city were selected, board president Mary Jane Naismith said. They range from rising sophomores to recent graduates.

The organization picked Woodis, band director at Nansemond River High, to lead the Sister Cities band. Toni Cotturone, Nansemond-Suffolk Academy's choral director, and Joleen Neighbours, Nansemond River's choral and theater arts director, are directing the chorus.

Tonight, the band and chorus will host a free concert — a dry run of sorts — at Nansemond River High to showcase their



JASON HIRSCHFELD | SPECIAL TOPICS/ENL
Nansemond-Suffolk Academy choral director Toni Cotturone leads her students during a recent rehearsal.



JASON HIRSCHFELD
Nansemond-Suffolk Academy chorus students Laura Holsouser, right, and Jessica Pyne rehearse. "They were incredible when they came over," Laura says of the British students who visited in 2007. "I hope we can live up to that."

work. The performance is free, but Suffolk Sister Cities International will accept donations. The organization, with the help of the students, has raised tens of thousands of dollars to help



RYAN C. HENRIKSEN | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT
Jabez Dixon plays during a recent Sister Cities band rehearsal at Nansemond River High School in Suffolk.

free concert tonight

What Suffolk to Suffolk Sister Cities Student Music Exchange Concert

When 7 tonight, Nansemond River High School's auditorium

Cost Free, but tickets are required; to reserve one, call Janet Blake-Perry at 484-8800.

cover the trip's estimated cost of \$60,000.

"Some of the kids have never been on an airplane," Naismith said. "... I think they're really excited."

The students are scheduled to arrive in London on July 7. They'll sightsee and watch a production of "Les Misérables" before heading to Bury St. Edmunds to perform in several concerts.

English host families will provide housing. Laura, for example, was paired with the same two teenage sisters who stayed at her house two years ago. "I'm looking forward to seeing some old friends," the 15-year-old chorus member said.

The group flies back to Virginia on July 15.

Two- to three-hour rehearsals began last fall and have ramped up since school ended. On a recent evening, the chorus went over "Georgia on My Mind" and struggled with measure 71 of "For Good" from the musical "Wicked."

Cotturone and Neighbours, the directors, said they picked songs that are American-focused. The repertoire includes Broadway, folk and pop music.

Chorus members Diana Heriford and Christiana Vastardis, both Nansemond-Suffolk Academy students, described themselves as perfectionists who are a bit nervous about matching the English students' "amazing" performance at their school.

Christiana, 15, said she expects to make lifelong friendships during the trip.

"It takes up my summer, but I knew it would turn out to be something I'd remember for the rest of my life."

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HUMANE

Continued from Page 1

nervous and aggressive. It's a threat to the safety of the dog, and members of the family, particularly children. Some cities in Hampton Roads have anti-tethering laws — Suffolk does not, yet."

And you won't have to search far and wide to get the society's threefold message during "Humane Campaign." It began airing television commercials Tuesday during local message breaks on a variety of popular cable channels including CNN, Fox, HGTV,

BET, ESPN, TNN and Discovery. These public service spots, sporting messages generated by the society's board of directors, are expected to air a total of 9,000 times on various cable spots.

Fliers were being distributed and print ads began running Wednesday, and three billboards posted at "well-placed major arteries in Suffolk" were scheduled to begin appearing Monday.

Chandler said the campaign is financed through donations, contributions and from such fundraising events as the society's annual Mutt Strut Dog Walk & Festival, scheduled from 1 to 5 p.m. Sept. 20

100,000 homeless pets are PUT TO DEATH each year in Virginia
SPAY, NEUTER, ADOPT
SUFFOLK HUMANE SOCIETY
SuffolkHumaneSociety.com | 538-3030

interested?

For more information about the campaign, the Suffolk Humane Society or its upcoming fundraiser, call 538-3030 or go online to www.suffolklhumane.com.

at Sleepy Hole Park in North Suffolk.

The fundraiser, which drew 1,500 attendees and 333 walkers at last year's inaugural

kick-off, will include a quarter-mile pledge walk, the Purina Disc Dogs, police K9 units, rescue and adoption groups, agility trials, various competitions, children's activities and games, food and vendors.

This year's goal is to surpass last year's crowd count and register 500 dog walkers, Chandler said. "It was amazing last year, and we're hoping it will continue to grow. It's to benefit all pets in Suffolk."

And if you need the details, simply turn on your TV, open a newspaper or notice the billboards.

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