



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Cutting the ribbon on the Chantilly Regional Library renovations are (from left) Sam Clay, Michael Frey, Daria Parnes and John Finneman.

## Chantilly Library Turns a Page

Ribbon-cutting signals start of new chapter.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

When the ribbon was cut last week to celebrate the changes at the Chantilly Regional Library, it marked the beginning of a new era there. It was also the culmination of years of planning and work.

"I thank the staff for their patience, vision and willingness to dream and come along for the ride," said Branch Manager Daria Parnes at the Wednesday, Feb. 29, ceremony. "This happened because of all of our efforts together. It's something that's taken many years, but I think it was worth the wait."

Supervisor Michael R. Frey (R-Sully) said Fairfax County "couldn't possibly afford to pay for all the things we'd like for our community. So we're fortunate to live in a community that believes in self help."

**"What the Friends does for the library is a wonderful example of what a partnership can do."**

— Supervisor Michael R. Frey

The all-volunteer Friends of the Chantilly Regional Library funded the recent renovations and, said Frey, "What the Friends does for the library is a wonderful example of what a partnership can do."

"When I took office in 1992, we were in the middle of the worst recession we'd had up 'til that point," he continued. "We couldn't open the Chantilly Library because we couldn't buy the [book] collection. When we did, it was with the help and support of the community."

The building opened in 1993 and, said Frey, "While the place was always warm and inviting, it looks even better now — especially the smiles on the faces of the people working here. Thank you to the Friends and staff for all you do. Members of the community are going to love it."

Sam Clay, director of the county's library system, called Chantilly's library beautiful and "an incredibly busy and important branch in our system. This is more than a miracle and took so much time and effort. We could not exist without the help of the Friends throughout our community;

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## Trophy Time For Westfield

Thespians win VHSL One-Act Play State Championship.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
CENTRE VIEW

There's rejoicing at Westfield High. The school's thespians captured a state championship Saturday, March 3, at the VHSL One-Act Play competition in Charlottesville.

Their winning entry was "Oleanna," a drama by playwright David Mamet. It took second at Districts and Regionals, but roared to the top for Westfield's first-ever, One-Act victory at states. Chantilly High's comedy, "Going to School," came in fourth.

"We were incredibly ecstatic," said "Oleanna" student director Joey Biagini. "I don't think any one of us ever expected to win it. We

had modest expectations because we were coming in as the second seed from the Northern Region."

The show had a cast of only two — juniors Mitchell Buckley and Madeleine Bloxam — and, in honor of their talents, they each received "Outstanding Actor" awards at states, recognizing them as among the best actors in Virginia.

"Oleanna" is about a college professor and a female student who accuses him of sexual harassment. The outcome of this case will affect whether he gets tenure. Bloxam plays Carol, the student, who sees an ulterior motive to everything her teacher does. As the professor, Buckley portrays the

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ELISABETH BLOXAM

From left are Mitchell Buckley, Joey Biagini and Madeleine Bloxam.

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Listening to their president John Finneman (at far right) speak during the Feb. 29 ceremony are Chantilly Friends and board members (from left) Elise Serrano, Dave Price, Rosannah Moser, Nora Britch, Lois Price, Bonnie Dinkin and Barbara Levermann.

## Chantilly Library Turns a Page

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thank you all." Chantilly Friends President John Finneman said the \$163,000 his group raised for the renewal project was from three years of book sales — some 210,000 donated books total that the volunteers sorted and sold. "I'm ecstatic about the way it looks in here," he told Parnes and her staff. "You've done a great job."

**HELPING WITH** the library's used-book sales is also one of the projects of the GFWC Western Fairfax County Woman's Club. It's based in Greenbriar, and current president, Barbara Levermann, along with members Lois Price, Rosannah Moser and Nora Britch, are also members of the Chantilly Friends. And all of them were among the nearly 50 people at last week's ceremony.

"About 30 of the Woman's Club members participated in the book sales last year and contributed about 1,600 volunteer hours," said Levermann. As for the library renovations, she said, "I think they're fantastic and worth every penny. The children's area is such an improvement, and I think all the families will appreciate it."

"We'd thought for years that the magazine area in the back left corner would be better for children because it's more contained and has more room," said Steve Okrend, the library's youth services manager. "Before, it was close to the front door, so it was also a safety issue."

The new children's area was reconfigured to maximize space and make it more child- and family-friendly to accommodate strollers. The lighting was improved and the walls were painted a lighter color. "Here, we have walls for things like posters and

bulletin boards," said Okrend. "We also bought new children's furniture and have more on order. We wanted families to stay and read with their children, and they are — and it warms our hearts to see the room used to this extent."

On a recent Thursday, Franklin Farm's Lorraine Colavito was reading there with her 2 and a half-year-old granddaughter, Anna Showalter, of Centreville's Sully Station II community. Pleased with the changes, Colavito said, "The way the tables are angled, Anna can look at her books easily, and the chairs are the perfect height for children."

Okrend said this area's "usually packed, especially on weekends. Families come for the children's room and for children's stories and early literacy programs. We also have book-discussion groups for different ages and, twice a month on Fridays, the meeting room is open to teens — overseen by staff — for board games and Wii."

"We also promote our summer-reading program, in person, in the elementary schools before school ends," said Parnes. "It puts a face on the staff members for the children. This is our community and we're excited about our services."

She said the library's graphic novels and teen books are so popular that library staff is now considering where to establish an area there for teenagers. "I'm also trying to work more closely with Chantilly High," said Parnes. "I want this to be a welcoming place for people of all ages."

The library is also trying to fill the need for computers for people lacking them at home. "The need is greater than people realize, so we're having a dialogue with the local schools on how we can help one another," said Parnes. "This library reflects our community, and we want to make it the best place for them to come."

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