

Fauquier Times-Democrat

Late-breaking news of Fauquier County and the beautiful Virginia Piedmont

5TH YEAR ... No. 22

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THE CURVE: An accident Tuesday afternoon on Bealeton Road claimed the lives of three and seriously injured two others.



REMINDEERS: Bits of car parts remain along the road where the accident occurred.



REMEMBERING: Liberty High School students erected a shrine Wednesday at the site of the wreck.

Wreck claims lives of three in Bealeton

No seat belts, high speed cited in crash

BY ALEXANDRA BOGDANOVIC
Times-Democrat Staff Writer

The spot where a single-vehicle accident claimed the lives of three in Bealeton Tuesday afternoon is still littered with stark reminders of the crash.

The wreck happened on Bealeton Road roughly one and half miles away from Schoolhouse Road around 3:26 p.m.

According to Virginia State Police Sgt. Les Tyler, Ausha M. Sterlitz, 20, of Bealeton, was driving a 1986 Ford Crown Victoria southbound on Bealeton Road when she entered a sharp right-hand curve and lost control of the vehicle.

The sedan, carrying Ausha Sterlitz and four passengers, went off the left side of the road and hit a tree, Tyler said. Police say speed was a factor in the crash and that none of the car's occupants wore seat belts.

State police, Fauquier deputies and personnel from several fire and rescue companies rushed to the scene, where they worked to free everyone from the car.

Ausha Sterlitz and Sumerduck resident Calyssa Leigh Wickham, 20, who was riding in the front seat, both died at the scene from injuries sustained in the crash, Tyler said.

Michael Dominic Montessi, 16, of Midland, who was the middle passenger in the back seat, also succumbed to his injuries at the scene.

Devon Alexander Sterlitz, 18, of Bealeton, and a 17-year-old Bealeton boy were airlifted to INOVA Fairfax Hospital, Tyler said.

The aftermath ...

Now there's broken glass and debris strewn along the road. There's also a makeshift memorial, replete with flowers, balloons and a small pinwheel left by friends.

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Times-Democrat Staff Photos /Randy Litzinger

NEVER FORGET: Alex Bell, left, Frankie Tierney and Michael Blevins erected a cross after school Wednesday at the site of the car wreck that killed three students and injured two others.

LHS offers grief counseling for students

BY HEATHER GRAY
Times-Democrat Staff Writer

Still numb in the wake of Tuesday's tragic accident, students, staff and families of Liberty High School are working to support each other in their grief.

Dave Bell, director of guidance at Liberty described the day following the accident as "draining" for the entire school community.

"In a school environment, there is nothing more significant than the loss of life ... this is very personal," he said.

Following a predetermined school plan for crisis response, a specific support network was set in motion immediately after news of the accident reached school officials Tuesday evening.

By the time students arrived Wednesday morning,

staff were prepared with factual statements about the incident and additional counseling professionals, familiar with Liberty students, were on site to assist the guidance department in helping students throughout the day.

Counselors were available in every homeroom and class of the deceased and injured students, as well as in designated rooms throughout the school where students could go to find support in group settings.

Individual counseling is always available, Bell said, and students were invited to meet privately with staff to work through their grief.

"We tell students, 'If you have friends who you feel need help or are really struggling, send them to Guidance,'" Bell said.

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LHS students make roadside memorial

BY STEVE CAMPBELL
Times-Democrat Staff Writer

Tire marks on the pavement point the way.

Bark's off an ash tree. Tokens of friendship, of remembrance, lie beneath the tree.

A black tie-dyed scarf hangs from a low branch. A hubcap leans against the tree trunk. A vase of red flowers, a potted red rose, a heart-shaped red balloon comprise a shrine of sorts, a goodbye from their friends, their best friends.

Three of them gone. Nearby, a pile of debris remains, pieces of chrome, maroon interior upholstery, shattered glass.

Shattered lives. Three young lives ended.

“

They were very, very much loved, and will not be forgotten.

Frankie Tierney

On a blistering hot afternoon, Wednesday, pickup trucks, minivans and cars roll by, drivers slowing, passengers looking out the window.

Three former Liberty High School students died at about 3:30 p.m. Tuesday in a single-car crash on Bealeton Road about a mile or so from Liberty High School.

The driver of the 1986 Crown Victoria, Ausha M. Sterlitz, 20, of Bealeton, along with Calyssa Leigh Wickham, 20, of Sumerduck, and

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Smaller Cannon Ridge plan still calls for 199 home lots

BY DON DEL ROSSO
Times-Democrat Staff Writer

Three years ago, developer Doug Darling wanted county rezoning approval for 280 homes off of Marshall's Main Street.

Like the Maytag repairman, he soon understood what it felt like to be the loneliest guy in town.

Back then, one probably could have counted on one hand the number of people who backed his Cannon Ridge proposal. But none of them, to Darling's disappointment, served on the county planning commission or the board of supervisors, who over time would whittle it down to size.

Detractors cited a slew of problems with the project.

Some believed the 57-acre site simply couldn't accommodate that many homes. Others suggested Marshall might not have enough water to serve it. And several doubted whether the village's roads could handle the extra traffic that Cannon Ridge would generate.

Doggedly, Darling returns to the supervisors next week with a more modest proposal for 199 homes, or about 30 more than the property's existing zoning allows.

The board will hold a public hearing

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PUBLIC HEARING

- **Topic:** Proposed 199-lot Cannon Ridge subdivision in Marshall
- **When:** 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 9
- **Where:** Warren Green Building, 10 Hotel St., Warrenton
- **Landowner/developer:** Eidolon Capital Partners II LLC; Doug Darling, principal
- **Agency:** County board of supervisors

School board approves \$32.8M FHS funding

High school renovation can now begin

BY HEATHER GRAY
Times-Democrat Staff Writer

In a 3-2 vote Tuesday, the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors approved a \$32.8 million resolution funding the Fauquier High School renovation project.

The vote came at the end of a special meeting held to consider whether the county should accept or yield back the \$10 million in Qualified School Construction Bonds awarded to the project by the Virginia Department of Education.

Factors in the decision included

the recently received 95 percent construction estimate for the new four-story building, as well as the conceptual estimate for additional work on areas related to biology, fine and performing arts, and foreign language.

The two estimates were discussed by the school board at a special work session May 27.

While the base construction costs in the 95 percent estimate were just under the \$25 million limit previously specified by the board of

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