

WORD ON THE STREET

“(W)e as average Americans are called to consider what we often take for granted.”

Capt. Margaret Grun Kibben, Navy chaplain, about the Vietnam War memorial in Washington, D.C., during Memorial Day services in Warrington

OUR TOWNS

TheIntelligencer

NOW YOU KNOW

On May 26, 1960, U.N. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge accused the Soviets of hiding a microphone inside a wood carving of the Great Seal of the United States that had been presented to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.



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Apathy rules in primary

OK, Taters, you really blew it this time.

Only 13 percent of you could get your butts off the couch and vote in the primary elections.

Still, you will have one final opportunity this year to renew your yearly license to whine.



Peg Gibbons
Commentary

Yeah, I am talking about the November general election.

I know that that election is still a gazillion days off but it is never too early to exercise those fingers to push the buttons on the voting machine or to learn a bit about the candidates who have the most impact on your lives — the taxes you pay, the safety of your neighborhoods, your kids' education or the plowing of your streets.

Start getting into shape now.

The supervisors and staff in the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals are the most arrogant or clueless people I know.

In the latest episode, board chairman Dennis J. Sharkey used his county e-mail address as his contact address in a political matter.

What is it that these folks do not understand about NO county equipment or its e-mail system being used for political purposes?

Sure makes you wonder about the politicking that may go on when they are messing with your property assessments.

Have you checked out the Montgomery County Republican Committee's new Web site at montgomerycountypop.com?

Go to the section where it lists the GOP "team's" roster of elected county officials. Notice anything missing?

That's right — there is no photo or even a mention of commissioners chairman James R. Matthews, who was censured last year by party leaders because of his unprecedented alliance with Democrat Joseph M. Hoefel III that left Matthews' running mate, Commissioner Bruce L. Castor Jr., as the odd man out in the current administration.

Guess there is no room under that so-called Big Tent for Democrat-leaning GOPers.

Speaking of Castor, how the mighty have fallen.

As district attorney, Castor was once able command the attention of the national media with his investigations.

Now, as a county commissioner, he is left quizzing county administrators on whether the bucket loads of lotion contracted for the county's geriatric center is body lotion or hand lotion.

Life as an executive sure is fun.

The county recently honored all of its worker bees who retired over the last year with a luncheon that featured petite filet mignon with béarnaise sauce as its featured entrée.

This group of retirees, beefed up by an early retirement incentive, represented 6,422 years of service to the public.

The public property department was tops when it comes to dedication.

Albert Ciociola had put in 39 years, 11 months and 14 days of service to the county and its residents while fellow public property employee James V. Fulton was a close second with 39 years, 4 months and 27 days of work with the county under his belt.

Third on that list was Michael F. Hamel, the former chief adult probation officer who spent 37 years, 11 months and 27 days serving county residents.

Overall, there were 63 employees with 30 years or more with the county who retired over the last year!

That experience will be missed but best of luck in the next chapter of your lives!

Margaret Gibbons covers the Montgomery County Courthouse for The Intelligencer. She can be reached at 610-279-6153 or at mgibbons@phillyburbs.com. Her column appears on alternating Mondays and online at <http://gibbons.phillyburbs.com>

Searching for the write stuff



ART GENTILE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Allan Grim of Hilltown, a former lawyer, is a certified handwriting analyst who can look at a person's writing sample and determine personality traits.

Handwriting analysts look to the strokes of letters for insight into personality.

BY HILARY BENTMAN
STAFF WRITER

Whoever said "You are what you eat" probably should have paid less attention to their dinner and more to their letters.

The simple strokes of our pens speak volumes about who we are, at least according to graphologists and handwriting analysts. A severe stroke, for example, indicates an extreme personality; a soft stroke means you may be a pushover.

"Handwriting tells the truth about you. People don't even know what

they're saying about themselves. It's honest, frank revelation," says Hilltown resident Allan Grim, a retired lawyer turned analyst, teacher and writer on the subject.

The economic recession has been a boon for the handwriting analysis business. The International Graphoanalysis Society reports an upsurge in people interested in the craft.

"There seems to be a lot of people out of work that are looking for new careers or new ways to make money, and many find that handwriting analysis can be an enjoyable, fulfilling and lucrative career opportunity," said society president Greg Greco.

Certified analysts can earn \$100 to \$200 an hour.

Searching for personality traits in scribble is nothing new. Confucius and Aristotle both pored over handwriting for enlightenment.

In modern times, handwriting analysis is used in a host of different fields, from criminal investigations to hiring criteria. Grim has consulted with police departments and school districts to identify those responsible for threatening notes or graffiti. He also consults on forgeries and anonymous letters.

Catherine Ebert of Doylestown uses her skills to size up potential boyfriends. She won't go out on a second date if she doesn't like what she sees. Of course, she won't tell him that's the reason.

"It's great insight," said Ebert, president of the Pennsylvania chapter of IGAS.

There are handwriting-analysis detractors — those who call it pseudo-science and regard it in the same vein as astrology.

See **ANALYSTS**, Page B2

Warrington

Photo available at <http://clickintelligencer.com>

Appreciating sacrifice



CARL KOSOLA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Retired Navy Reserves Lt. Cmdr. Bill Grun of Warrington and Chief Mike Bean of the Warrington Township Fire Co. lay a wreath down in front of the Warrington War Memorial during the Warrington Memorial Day Ceremony at Igoe, Porter, Wellings Memorial Field Monday afternoon.

A Memorial Day service sought to honor residents past and present who served with the armed forces.

BY ANNIE TASKER
STAFF WRITER

Military men and women who died in service would hope to inspire people with their sacrifice, not haunt them with their memory, Capt. Margaret Grun Kibben told the crowd at Warrington's Memorial Day ceremony. "They lived and died so that we could be better off," the Navy chaplain said.

About 100 people gathered in Warrington's Igoe, Porter, Wellings Park on Monday to honor township residents past and present who served with the U.S. armed forces. The field served as a Cold War missile defense base and is named for three township residents killed in the Vietnam War.

The message of ceremonies like Warrington's, and countless others held nationwide Monday, was that people are willing to take time to appreciate and stand united behind their armed forces, said State Rep. Kathy Watson, R-144. No generation has been spared war since the country's founding, she said; whether veterans fought in the 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st century, "we remember, today, all of them — and we honor their memory."

Five names were added to Warrington's granite veteran memorial

wall this year: John Gradwell, who served with the Army and the U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Marines during World War II; Master Sgt. James J. Weller, who served in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and the Balkans as an armament system craftsman in the Air Force; Purple Heart recipient Fred L. Phelps Jr., who served with the Army during World War II; Capt. Jennifer Schlotter, a five-year combat engineer with the Army Reserve who served in Iraq from 2003-2004; and the late Fenton Furlong, an Army gunnery sergeant during World War II.

Schlotter, Gradwell and Phelps attended the ceremony, as did Furlong's family. The township veteran affairs committee selected the five applicants whose names were chosen for engraving.

See **SACRIFICE**, Page B2

Pennridge schools

Language challenges targeted

Pennridge hopes to more easily serve its growing population of non-English speakers by creating ESL "magnet" schools at Bedminster Elementary and Pennridge North.

BY THERESA HEGEL
STAFF WRITER

With the number of English as a Second Language students slowly growing in Pennridge, the school district has put in place a more efficient system to teach them English.

This year, Pennridge is working with 98 non-native speakers in its ESL program. That's up from 2007-08, when the district had 90 students, said Jennifer Polinchock, supervisor of the program.

ESL students make up about 1.4 percent of Pennridge's 7,000-odd student population.

For comparison's sake, the much larger Central Bucks School District also has about 100 students in its ESL program — and about 20,000 total students.

It's difficult to say whether the numbers at Pennridge will continue to grow next year. Even if more students are required to enroll in ESL in 2009-10, other students may test out of the program, keeping its levels stable, Polinchock said.

No matter how that number fluctuates over the years, Pennridge will be able to more easily serve that population by consolidating ESL instruction to two "magnet" schools — Bedminster Elementary and Pennridge North.

"One of the things that we're just looking at district-wide is to just be as efficient as possible with our staff and still provide the best services," Polinchock said.

Bedminster Elementary already had an immersion ESL program in place — for students starting from scratch — so it seemed the logical choice for the expanded program.

From teachers to the custodial staff, everyone at that school is familiar with the needs of English learners, Polinchock said.

See **LANGUAGE**, Page B2

Upper Moreland

Expansion eyed for Christian facility

A Methodist summer camp is hoping to become a year-round operation by expanding its Davisville Road campus.

BY ANNIE TASKER
STAFF WRITER

The Carson-Simpson Farm Christian Camp in Upper Moreland is hoping to expand its program offerings by expanding its footprint.

Plans for new construction at the sprawling Davisville Road complex include a new activity center, dining hall and children's dormitory. A longer-term wish list involves adult lodges, a

chapel and a gym.

The goal is to transition from a summer camp to a year-round option for school trips and church retreats, camp manager and director Ray Neitz said last week. Today, an unheated dormitory holds up to 50 campers and the same building doubles as a dining hall. Phase one of the hoped-for expansion involves raising two new buildings for kids' dorms and the dining hall and turning the existing building into an activity center.

Now, representatives of the Methodist camp are laying the zoning approval groundwork to make sure their plans are feasible. Once the necessary approvals are in place for the initial land development plans, the church can start raising money, he said.

Preliminary plans on file with the township show sketches of the dining hall and children's dorms.

Other areas are blocked out for

See **FACILITY**, Page B2

CARL KOSOLA
STAFF
PHOTOGRAPHER

Capt. Margaret Grun Kibben, a Navy chaplain, speaks during the Warrington Memorial Day Ceremony at Igoe, Porter, Wellings Memorial Field. She said of those who died in military service: "They lived and died so that we could be better off."



Sacrifice

Continued from Page B1

Kibben, a Warrington native whose father serves on the township committee, spoke of looking

at the names on Washington, D.C.'s Vietnam War memorial and considering the lives of the ordinary people who sacrificed part — or all — of their lives during wartime.

Looking at names on a wall,

Kibben said, "we as average Americans are called to consider what we often take for granted."

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Language

Continued from Page B1

Right now, more advanced English learners — who could speak and read and write, though not quite fluently — stayed in their geographically assigned school, and ESL instructors traveled throughout the district to work with them.

Next year, all ESL students, no matter their level or location, will attend Bedminster or Pennridge North. The high school also has a resident ESL teacher.

"What we're looking at is making sure our ESL teachers are working with students as much as they can," Polinchock said.

The consolidation will also give the students a wider support net.

"They have a lot cut out for them, much more than regular students," Polinchock said.

The students spend most of their school day in a regular classroom, but are pulled out to receive separate reading and writing lessons.

Though the magnet system will concentrate more ESL students in certain schools, Polinchock said the district isn't worried about their presence being disruptive to other students.

Just as administrators balance the boy-girl ratio in classrooms, so too would they evenly distribute the number of non-native speakers among classroom sections, she said.

In fact, Polinchock speculated that the increased exposure to different cultures could provide a richer learning experience for the student bodies at Bedminster and Pennridge North.

Not all the ESL students are native Spanish speakers, as some might assume. Pennridge has students whose native tongues span the continents. Among the 16 languages represented are Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Korean, Polish and several African languages.

But, "They all have in com-

mon that they're trying to learn English and trying to understand American culture," Polinchock said.

Central Bucks has been using a similar magnet school model for the past five years, said Dale Scafuro, CB director of student services.

"It's really a better way to

provide service," she added.

The system not only allows ESL teachers more time and interaction with students, but it lets them "work cooperatively and collaboratively with classroom teachers," Scafuro said.

Theresa Hegel can be reached at 215-538-6381 or thegel@phillyburbs.com.

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Facility

Continued from Page B1

"future buildings." Neitz said construction on the two new buildings — each expected to cost about \$1 million to build — is likely five to 10 years away.

The camp is geared toward kids in kindergarten through sixth grade and runs both daytime and overnight programs. Day campers often come from Montgomery County, while overnight campers generally come from Philadelphia-area Methodist churches, Neitz said.

The Carson-Simpson Farm Christian Center, formed after a 1919 land donation to the Philadelphia Missionary Society, lets campers "experience God's creativity in nature, form new friendships, participate in recreational activities, arts and crafts, drama and music, swimming and Bible study," according to its Web site. The camp is run by a ministry of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The property near the Pennypack Creek is industrially-zoned. Commissioners approved a land development waiver for the proposal this month.

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Analysts

Continued from Page B1

But Grim says you can't argue with results.

"It's true the topic has never been comprehensively studied to the satisfaction of scientific authorities. But we analysts have looked at thousands and thousands of samples to reach our conclusions," he said. "If things don't line up we reject them. It's the proof-is-in-the-pudding technique."

There are 100 basic personality traits that can be discerned from a stroke. Ideally, said Grim, analysts like to have several different writing samples from a subject and hope the sample is given naturally, as people may alter their handwriting if they know it's being examined.

It's not just strokes, but spacing and angling of letters that are examined. Too much space between words, for instance, means the writer needs his

space. A forward slant is a person who may be emotional and impetuous. Backward slant indicates a person who tends to keep emotions bottled up.

One who writes in a combination of script and print is versatile, while sloppy writing (analysts prefer the term dys-rhythmic) indicates the person may be experiencing emotional turmoil.

Famous historical figures have been analyzed. Adolf Hitler's writing reveals a disciplined man, said Grim, adding that the German dictator had a strange barb coming out of his "f" that indicates someone with an edge.

Abraham Lincoln's strokes reveal a nice, humble man.

Having knowledge of a person can taint an analysis, but Grim says "with handwriting strokes it's graphic and it's there in front of you."

Analysts frequently get asked why doctors have bad handwriting. Grim says they don't. Doctors scribbling prescriptions

on a pad is an "unrepresentative sample" as they may be tired or writing in a hurry. Some even write out prescriptions illegibly so they cannot easily be forged.

Grim entered the world of handwriting analysis through his mother. Ruth Grim's interest was piqued when her husband, Allan Grim Sr., a federal judge, spoke of a handwriting case in his courtroom.

Allan Jr. caught the bug, although he admits his mother, now 96, runs circles around him and his abilities.

He is certified and teaches the subject to students in evening classes and seminars in the area.

When asked what he sees in his own strokes, he replies, "That's an intimate question." After a moment, he relents to give an answer. Students have diagnosed the traits of curiosity, enthusiasm and impatience in his writing.

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