

FRIDAY
APRIL 12, 2002

LOCAL NEWS

New Obici Hospital to host open houses

By Alison Freshling
Staff Writer

More than 90 years later, Carroll still works at Obici. Blood sugar tests now take less than two minutes, but the hospital isn't as modern anymore.

That's about to change. Today, Carroll will help dedicate a brand new Obici Hospital to replace the current building. The new hospital, which sits about a mile down the road, will host open houses this weekend and begin treating patients April 28.

"This used to be the most modern hospital around," Carroll said. "I think once we get into the new place, it's going to be just the same like that — again."

Amesko Obici, the founder of Planters Peanut, originally funded the hospital as a tribute to his wife, Louise. Over the years, piecemeal additions to the building led to layout unsuited for patients and staff, hospital leaders say. The building also became too large as the health care market centered more on outpatient services.

The new, smaller hospital costs \$65 million and has 138 beds. The brick building sits on 62 acres. For example, radiation therapy is inside the hospital instead of in a separate building. Cancer patients will no longer need to get into wheelchairs and go outside to reach the treatment area.

More than 50 percent of patient rooms in the new hospital are private, compared to about half of rooms today. Many

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DANCE FOR BRIGHTER DAYS

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Lacey Quinn who has been struggling with leukemia was taken to Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters in Norfolk on Thursday. A dance-a-thon is scheduled for Friday night to help Lacey. She needs a bone marrow transplant.

Photos by Dave Bowman Daily Press

No link found to parkway killings

Shenandoah suspect discounted by FBI

By Troy Graham and David Chernick
Staff Writers

The FBI has ruled out Darrell David Rice as a suspect in the massed and infamous Parkway Murders. Rice, 44, was indicted this week on murder charges in the deaths of two women in the Shenandoah National Park in 1996. Those killings resembled the Parkway killings closely enough that the FBI vowed in 1996 to explore any connection.

But even if Rice is guilty of the Shenandoah killings, in All four investigations do not believe he is responsible for the so-called Parkway Murders. Similarities in the cases led authorities to believe they were the work of a serial killer.

"At this point, the investigation does not believe that Darrell Rice was involved in the Parkway Murders, but the FBI will continue to monitor all possibilities," said Phil Mann, a spokesman for the Norfolk FBI office.

Mann would not discuss whether agents have questioned Rice in connection with the Parkway killings or how Rice had been ruled out as a suspect. He noted that all four Parkway killings are still open and dividing the information could jeopardize the cases.

In the first Parkway killing, Rebecca A. Dowski and Catherine M. Thomas were found strangled with their throats cut in October 1996. Three other similar incidents followed, leading investigators to believe they

Please see MurdersC2

Event will aid girl's battle with leukemia

By Brian Whitson
Staff Writer

WILLIAMSBURG — Just last June, Diane O'Neal and her 7-year-old daughter, Lacey Quinn O'Neal, celebrated life. The little girl with leukemia had just finished more than two years of an intensive chemotherapy schedule. Her cancer had been in remission since April.

For the first time in two years, she was able to go to the beach and play at the pool with her 7-year-old brother, Tanner. Her long, dark, thin hair that had fallen out because of the treatments came back thick and curly — and a little lighter.

"It was awesome," said O'Neal, a self-employed dance instructor who has coached the College of William and Mary Ballroom Dance Club the past two years. "I'm very happy we had the kind of summer we had. We did things we weren't able to do for two-and-a-half years."

While most of the summer activities were events taken for granted by most typical young children, nothing about Lacey Quinn and her struggle with leukemia has been typical.

After their brief period of rejoicing, O'Neal learned a few weeks ago that Lacey

Please see DanceC2

After charges dropped in 1997, man found guilty of rape, murder

By Keith Bushing and Holly Robertson
Staff Writers

NEWPORT NEWS — It took a jury about an hour Thursday evening to find Benjamin Stillely guilty of murder and rape for the killing of Valerie Alston.

Alston's nude body was found Nov. 9, 1995, in the bedroom of her apartment in the 2000 block of Rosebuck Avenue. She'd been strangled and raped.

Stillely, a boyfriend, immediately became a suspect. He was arrested the same night and charged in Alston's death.

Stillely, now 37, had police the two had sex on the night that she was strangled and raped. In 1997, the charges against Stillely were dropped due to a lack of evidence. But Stillely had a history of assaulting women by then was already serving a 25-year sentence for a 1994 attack on a woman.

Authorities believe Stillely is a serial rapist who targets women with drug problems. By 2001, authorities had gathered new evidence and were ready to take the Alston case to trial.

Stillely was charged again last year with her murder and rape.

Commonwealth's Attorney Howard Gwynn pleaded with the jury during closing arguments Thursday to not let Stillely "get away with Alston's murder."

"It's nice to let Benjamin Stillely know that you're not going to get away with this time," Gwynn said.

Gwynn told the jury that because the charges were dropped in 1997, Stillely thought

he had outsmarted the system and had become overconfident. Stillely confessed the rape and murder to a colleague Charles Robertson, thinking that Robertson wouldn't give the information to the police. But, he said, Robertson's little sister had been raped and he was disturbed to hear Stillely talking about how he got away with the crime. So Robertson eventually "talked to Newport News Detective J.T. Williams about what Stillely told him."

"He said he had to take responsibility not only for his actions but for someone else's," Williams said.

Please see GuiltyC2

Oh brother, where's your sense of reality?

By Jim Spencer
Columnist

Dear John: The salutation sounds funny, doesn't it? Kind of like a letter from someone who wants to break up with you.

Hey, listen. I read that the World Church of the Creator and its "Positive Maximas," the Rev. Matt Hale, will meet at the York County Library May 4. I also got the copy of the magazine that you sent.

"Facts the Government and Media Don't Want You to Know" is kind of a long title. But the Star of David superimposed over a photo of the hijacked plane imbedded in the Twin Towers was an interesting idea for a cover.

"Thanks for the personal inscription: To Jim Spencer. We stand by the contents of this publication. If your paper won't publish vital facts that are pertinent to the future of our nation, we will. If you say this in a book of lies, YOU are the liar."

Best Regards,
Eric Akers

Well, my brother, I'm afraid you've just gotta have to call me Pinocchio.

As pertinent facts go, here are a few:

Positive Maximas Hale says in your magazine that the World Church is non-violent. The PM says the church preaches white people by promoting activism. If summary serves, former church member Benjamin Smith was pretty active. He

Please see SpencerC2

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A very grand prize lot a "Hot lucky" inside your way for a 2002 LeSabre — and much more.

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