

# CENTREVIEW

A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SERVING CENTREVILLE, CLIFTON & CHANTILLY

## Blizzard of '96: Sleds and Samaritans

By **BONNIE HOBBS**  
Centre View

As area residents shivered and shoveled this week under a two-foot blanket of snow, they were anything but idle.

The lucky ones able to get out of their driveways and off their streets stocked up on groceries and video tapes. Others cursed at snowplows that never came, ordered pizzas and caught up on household chores.

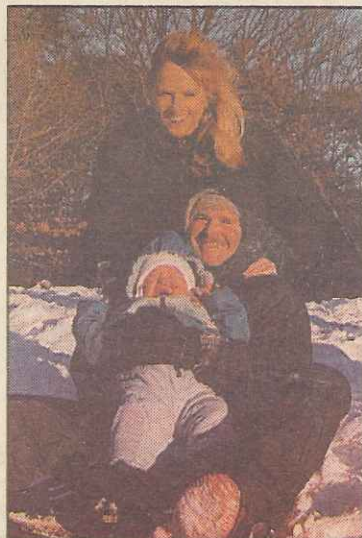
For some, the Blizzard of '96 was sheer delight.

"I've been waiting for this to happen for the longest time," said Tony Easlick, 14, as he and his buddy Jeff Iannamico, 13, prepared to sled down a hill Monday in Centreville's Clifton Townes community. Both students at Stone Middle School, they said they were glad to be out of class and they were having fun in the snow.

"The best part is playing football in the snow," said Jeff. "When you get tackled, it doesn't hurt, at all."

But, for others, the idyllic snowy scene soon turned into a nightmare.

"I can get to the end of my driveway, but I can't get off my street," said Sye Smith of Centreville's Country Club Manor community. He measured 24 inches of snow in his yard and, by Tuesday, he vowed to dig out his trapped truck



**SNOW-BOUND:** Bethany Hall-Long, husband Dana Long and son Brock, 10 months.

so he could go to work Wednesday.

"I hate being in the house, and this has been terrible," he said. "I've cleaned files in my basement I haven't used in five years, and packed up kids' toys and clothes they haven't used in 10-15 years."

The snowstorm closed the airport, the post office, the majority of area businesses and Fair Oaks Mall. The mall was closed Sunday and Monday and opened for only five hours Tuesday, before resuming full operations Wednesday. "We didn't want our



**SLEDDING PALS:** Tony Easlick, 14, and Jeff Iannamico, 13, of Clifton Townes community.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/Centre View

merchants or [customers] driving in unsafe conditions," explained Marketing Director Judi Lewis.

The weather forced closure of Dulles Airport Sunday and Monday. It reopened Tuesday at 12:30 p.m., but spokeswoman Tara Hamilton said only about half of its scheduled flights were able to leave. She said

crews worked since Sunday at 3 p.m. clearing snow from runways, taxiways, the parking ramps for planes and the passenger parking lots.

On Wednesday, the airport was up to two-thirds of full service, and Hamilton was pleased no one had been stranded there: "People knew

not to come until they'd talked to their airlines first."

The snow closed Centreville's Urgent Medical Care Sunday and Monday. Fair Lakes Urgent Care Center was open and its doctors were on call, but Dr. Charles Okorie

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## Snow and the road Patience, common sense advised

By **BONNIE HOBBS**  
Centre View

With Mother Nature predicted to drop another foot or more of snow on the area this weekend, Virginia State Police spokeswoman Lucy Caldwell offers some advice for motorists.

Additionally, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) spokeswoman Joan Morris explains the road-clearing situation and hopes snowbound and angry residents will be a bit more understanding of the massive task

VDOT workers face.

"Snow-plow operators are working in 53 percent of Fairfax County subdivisions," she said on Wednesday. She said road crews were working 'round the clock since last Saturday and would continue to do so to clear the remaining roads.

But local residents such as Mike Fleckenstein of Centreville's Cabell's Mill community are still upset and at the end of their patience. On

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## Food, videos sustain cabin-bound

By **BONNIE HOBBS**  
Centre View

While this week's massive snowfall meant delays and inconveniences for many Centreville, Chantilly and Clifton residents, for others it spells big bucks.

"We're lovin' it," said Mike Reese, a manager at Domino's Pizza in Centreville's Newgate Shopping Center. "We make lots of money."

Although the area's two-foot cover of snow forced Domino's doors to close Sunday and Monday, it opened Tuesday morning after its lot was plowed. And the customers were ready ...

"It was insane," said Reese. "We had so many people, it was impossible to keep up with the demand." He said

pepperoni pizza — mostly to residential customers — was the most popular item, and the store did "double the business" it usually does on a normal weekday.

Ciro D'Agostino, owner of Tony's New York Pizza in Centreville Square II, said his place was also closed Sunday and Monday, but his business was also better than usual when he reopened on Tuesday.

"Everytime it's snowing, people order more pizza," he said. D'Agostino said customers that day ordered more pizzas than pasta, but most wanted to eat them there, rather than take them out. He sold lots of artichoke-and-tomato pizzas and said most of the diners drove up in four-wheel drive trucks.

But some residents trudged on foot



through the snow for their supper — and didn't mind a bit. Monday night, Bill and Cindy Mason walked across

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## FOOD

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the street to the Lone Star Steakhouse from their Trinity Centre apartment.

### Cabin fever

"We've got binoculars, and I looked out our third-floor window and saw the Lone-Star sign was on," said Bill Mason. "We'd eaten enough peanut butter."

"And tangerines left over from Christmas," added his wife. "So when we saw [Lone Star] was open, we bundled up and went out."

They'd taken out their mixed-breed dog for a walk earlier in the day, but the dog was so small that she had a tough time negotiating her way along the snowy ground. "A 14-inch dog in 18 inches of snow was so funny," said Cindy Mason.

Both she and her husband were getting cabin fever, so they were glad to get out for awhile when the sun broke through that afternoon. Until then, he'd passed the time reading and watching cable TV, and she sewed a quilted vest.

Wilson Hickman, a Lone Star manager, said the restaurant closed early Sunday so its employees could get home safely. On Monday, the managers picked up the staff members and brought them in to work. Hickman said Lone Star was the only restaurant around Centreville open on Monday, so business was brisk.

"A lot of people walked over," he said. "They got there any way they could."

O'Toole's Roadhouse Restaurant in Centreville's Pickwick Shopping Center also closed early Sunday and was unable to open Monday because its lot wasn't cleared. But it opened Tuesday morning, and Manager Dennis Greaver spread the word — literally — by going to residential and shopping areas and spray-painting in green on snowbanks the words, "O'Toole's is open."

His strategy worked, and the customers came in droves and, by 5:30 p.m., had to wait to be seated. "We did three times [the business] we normally do on Tuesday," he said. "At 10 p.m., I drove over to a deejay's house and dug him out of his street so he could come in and spin [songs]."

Greaver said someone splintered his outside wood box trying to steal O'Toole's firewood, but he'd already taken in most of the wood for the restaurant's fireplace on Saturday, so diners were warm and cozy.

Now, with another major snowstorm predicted for this weekend, he expected lots of food deliveries on Thursday and plans to stay open again during the inclement weather. "Everybody in here [Tuesday] had a real good time," he said.

At Sully's Restaurant in Chantilly, Manager Michael Powell said last weekend's snow closed the place until its lot was cleared Tuesday. He also said most of the employees had a tough time getting out of their subdivisions to come to work.

Owner Stuart DeBell said the opening drew "four-wheel drive people and cabin-fever people" who mostly ordered burgers and "munchie-type

things," rather than full-course meals. He said deejay Jack Diamond of radio station Mix 107.3 FM is scheduled to entertain Friday night, so he hopes the weather will permit him to open.

At the Outback Steakhouse in Clifton's Colonnade Shopping Center, Renda Dowling, wife of General Manager Bob Dowling, said the restaurant was also closed until Tuesday, but was "extremely busy" when it did open.

"A lot of people walked from Little Rocky Run or came in four-wheel drives," she said. She said they were happy to get out of their homes and didn't mind an hour's wait for tables. The Outback also transported many of its staff members to and from the restaurant, and hopes to stay open through the weekend even if more snow comes.

### So many videos

Business was also good at the local video stores. Germain Lavoie, manager of Hollywood Video in Centre Ridge, said the store's parking lot was still under a few feet of snow on Tuesday, so cars had a hard time going back down hill after customers picked up their videos.

But he said many people just walked uphill instead to return tapes and take out new ones. He said "Die-hard With A Vengeance," "Crimson Tide" and "First Knight" were especially popular.

Rebecca Phillips, assistant manager of Blockbuster Video in Chantilly, said her store closed early Sunday and Monday, but rentals were still a lot higher than normal. She said people checked out all the new releases — mostly comedies and adventures.

Store Manager Joe Davis said "While You Were Sleeping," "Apollo 13," "Congo," "Clueless," "Mortal Kombat," "Pulp Fiction" and "Rob Roy" were the top picks.

"People usually rent two or three [videos each] on Saturdays," he said. "But this Saturday [with the impending storm], they were renting six or eight." He said customers were also renting more games than usual "to keep the kids occupied inside the house."

Jeff Parnes of Chantilly Highlands said he and his wife and children had a 1950s and 1960s film festival. They rented black-and-white videos of such classics as 1959's "Lilies of the Field" and 1962's "The Manchurian Candidate." Parnes said his children, Sarah, 15, and Adam, 18, enjoyed sledding and playing football in the snow, and he was happy to have Adam's help shoveling.

He said the area has a "notorious sledding hill" at Scottsmore Way and Kinross Circle, and people parking their cars along Kinross Circle hindered snowplows trying to clear the area there. Making a right turn from Kinross Circle onto Centreville Road was also quite a trick, he said.

Vicki Francis of Belle Pond Farms in Centreville, said she re-stocked her groceries Tuesday at the Village Center Giant in Sully Station. She said everyone "wanted to stand and chit chat, because it was so long since they'd seen anyone else."

She said she brought home her groceries by sled and saw others doing likewise or using backpacks. She also

saw lots of cars "slipping and sliding on Braddock Road." She was surprised that "even trucks you thought could deal with the snow were getting stuck."

Francis said her daughter Sherie, 17, was busy working at Blockbuster Video during the storm, while her other daughter, Katie, 9, was enjoying climbing up and sliding down the snowy hills outside. "I've lived about 10 years in Centreville and 17 years in Fairfax County, and this is the most snow I've ever seen," said Francis. "I couldn't believe it."

Shirley Nelson of Chantilly's Popular Tree Estates was busy upgrading her computer skills, writing letters and working on an upcoming Martin Luther King Festival. She said her area got about 20 inches of snow and she still couldn't get out of her front door on Wednesday.

Sye Smith, of Centreville's Country Club Manor, said his daughter Crystal, a sophomore at Chantilly High, was "loving every minute" of her unexpected break from school, happily playing with her new computer.

Jan Welch, executive director of the Western Fairfax Christian Ministries, said the coming snowstorm sent twice as many families as usual scurrying to the organization's food pantry on Saturday. She said her own family, in Little Rocky Run, was still snowed in on Tuesday.

Her parents were visiting from Washington State, and she said the huge snowstorm was "a bit much" for them. She said they "stood outside long enough to have their photo taken by the drift" and then ducked backed inside the house.

In Clifton, Mayor Jim Chesley was enjoying the clean air and less pollution as a result of less cars passing through his town. He caught up on paperwork and "slept in" an extra hour in the mornings — until 6:30 a.m. He also went to local resident Chris Rehder's birthday party and saw two snow plows stuck at the Clifton Road/Route 29 intersection and near Popes Head Road.

### Clifton's ski resort

Clifton resident Tom McNamara said the locals flocked to a hill on Water Street to go skiing, and nearby homeowner Rick Peterson set up spotlights Monday so they could ski at night. "Children and adults have been going down on innertubes, skis, sleds and toboggans," he said. "It's great — we almost feel like a ski resort."

Meanwhile, in Centreville's Clifton Townes community, Terri and Eddie Sutton sledded Monday with their son Casey, 6. Eddie Sutton said they'd had fun driving around in their new Land Cruiser. Friends Bethany Hall-Long, husband Dana and 10-month-old son Brock were also sledding. The two women also enjoyed watching a movie together, and they all dug out each other's cars in a group effort. Ruth and Chip Brown of Centre Ridge had a family outing, taking daughter Leah, 15 months, for some fresh air in her backpack, while their beagles Jack and Beauregard scampered by their sides as they walked along Centreville's New Braddock Road.

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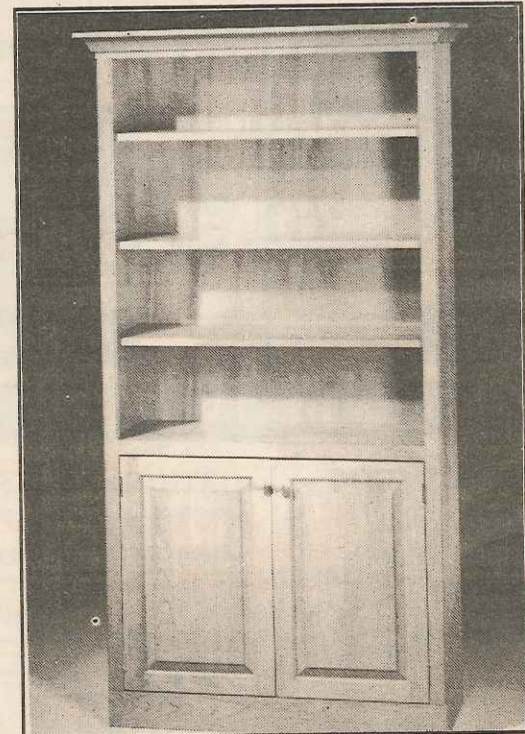
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