

THE POST

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Richard Urban Jr., 14, models some of his favorite Civil War memorabilia, a uniform and sword.

FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Harveys Lake youth brings history to life

BY GENELLE HOBAN
Post Correspondent

HARVEYS LAKE – Piles and piles of books envelop the bedroom of a 14-year-old Richard Urban Jr.

But he isn't into the latest Harry Potter craze like most in his age bracket. In fact, his interest dates back to the 1860s.

He will share his knowledge on this period in history with the Wyoming Valley Civil War Round Table at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 8 in the lower level of the Dallas American Legion on Route 415 in Dallas.

"I just want to teach other people what I know," said Urban, whose program is titled "Gordon's Flank Attack at the Wilderness." "The aspect I'm doing is not well-known and I want to make it more well-known."

The Lake-Lehman High School freshman first developed a love for history at the age of 7 after watching a program about the Civil War on the History Channel.

"We went to Washington, D.C. and on the way home stopped at Gettysburg," Urban said. "I started watching more stuff and got so interested in it. All I get for Christmas are Civil War books and movies."

His favorite Civil War movie is "Gettysburg" which is based on his favorite book "Killer Angels" by Michael Shaara. Urban even owns a first edition of the text.

"I found out that the first edition of 'Killer Angels' is worth like \$4,500 after I did some research," he said.

Urban stores his collection of

more than 600 Civil War books on bookshelves and in boxes. He said he found most of the books in his collection during library book sales or on eBay. He has been collecting first editions since the age of 8.

"You look for first editions because they are worth the most money," he said. "You can buy them for 50 cents and they are worth hundreds of dollars. First editions are all I buy."

He even started selling his books through his very own catalog "Richard's Books of Harveys Lake" about a month ago that he is running out of his parents' house.

"I have too much stuff," he said. "I am running out of room."

Urban has also written a book titled "A Lull in the Storm, an account of the war in Virginia from Jan. 1, 1864 to May 4, 1864." It hasn't been published.

"It was really hard because not much information is published on it," he said. "I was only able to write 85 pages. I tried to get it published but most of the publishers said it was too short."

Despite the delay in the publishing of his first text, Urban is already working on his second piece "The Army of the James" which is about the Battle of Wilderness.

"At Appomattox, where Lee surrendered in 1865, he was cut off by the Army of the James not the Army of the Potomac like most assume," Urban said.

Some of Urban's other historical interests include the Revolution and the War of 1812. He has approximately a dozen books

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Civil War buff Richard Urban Jr. looks at a Civil War book he's writing.

Diverse group learns meditation at Mercy Center Zen is a serene trip

By IAN CAMPBELL
For The Post

DALLAS TOWNSHIP – Fourteen people – from students to retirees – gathered earlier this week at the Mercy Center, listening to a Roman Catholic nun explain the benefits of Zen meditation in finding a calm port in a hectic and harried life.

And they learned that, like all great journeys, you don't know you've arrived until you look around and find you're holding what you were looking for.

Or words to that effect. Sister Barbara Craig and fellow Zen meditator Gail Shemo have been holding introductory sessions to Zen meditation training once a month for almost a decade. The nun has been a practitioner for 15 years, having been introduced to the concept by several other nuns and priests. Shemo was one of the first to join her group and they have been introducing, and running meditation groups, ever since.

The great benefit to Zen meditation is that it holds no religious aspect, but can establish the mental clarity that all religions seek, Craig explained.

Zen is a way of seeing the world more clearly and one's place in it, she told the group. The variety of methods used to achieve that clarity means almost everyone can find something beneficial in it.

The group who had come to the introduction at College Misericordia's Mercy Center all seemed to have similar reasons for looking into Zen meditation techniques. By far the most prevalent of their concerns revolved around handling daily stress. That's not uncommon, Craig said.

"Our problem is that we are thinkers and doers, and this calls upon us to stop that for a moment," she said.

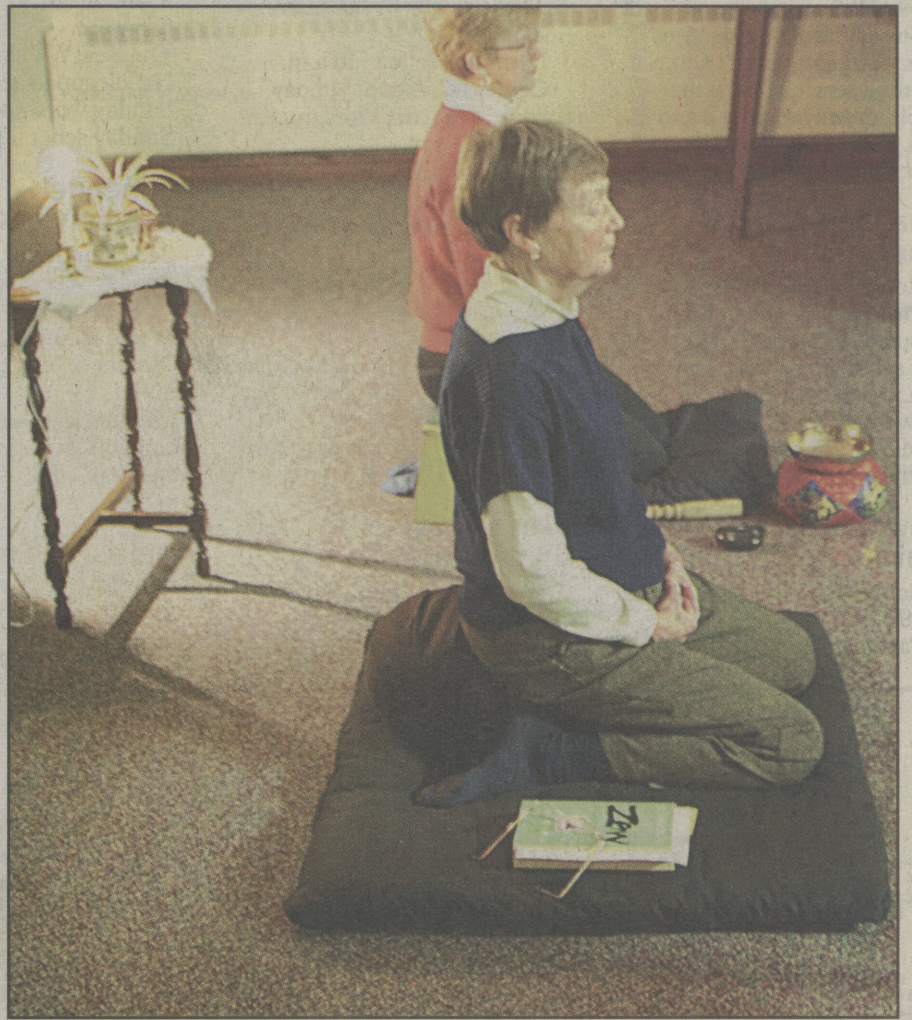
Some of the students found that a hard concept to grasp, especially one who asked what the target was, and then was surprised to learn that there was no target, in real terms.

"It becomes a matter of the discipline of the meditation," Shemo told him.

"You're focusing on your inner self, and seeing how you fit into the world around you."

Craig and Shemo outlined the postures meditators adopt, the preparations that are selected, such as creating quiet focal points and meditation locations in a home.

Both women noted they meditate in the morning, an easier time of the day to find



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Sister Barbara Craig, foreground, and Gail Shemo lead a group through 10 minutes of meditation during an introductory session to Zen meditation.



A group of College Misericordia students meditates during the introductory class to Zen meditation.

USEFUL TO YOU

Introductory sessions for the Zen meditation program will resume in February. Registration information may be obtained by calling Sr. Barbara Craig at 675-1872 or Andrea Payne at 639-5894.

10-30 minutes of practice. They both emphasized the need for people to make a daily effort.

"With Zen, you have to work at it," Craig said.

It could take months of work to reach a 15-minute meditative state, she told the group. The more practice they did, the more skilled they could become, she said.

Many of those present at last week's session might not join group meditations, she said, but they could take what they had learned at the introduction and make a start on their own paths.

If they did want to join a group meditation, her Flowing River Sangha met from 7:15-8:45 p.m. Thursdays at the Geisinger South Medical Arts Building (the former Mercy Hospital) and from 4:45-5:45 p.m. Tuesdays at the Mercy Center in Dallas Township.

The meditation sessions are free flowing, Craig said, with no requirement for staying the whole period or attending ev-

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Dallas H.S. graduate receives prestigious scholarship

By M.B. GILLIGAN
Post Correspondent

Dallas High School graduate Adam Nolan Morgan recently received a Marshall Scholarship for graduate work at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. And the news didn't come as a shock to one of his former teachers.

"I'm not surprised. Adam was such a good student and he always understood the math behind the science," said John Fredericks, a chemistry teacher at Dallas. "I could see that he had something like this in his future."

The Marshall Scholarships were established by an Act of Parliament in 1953 to strengthen the relationship between Great Britain and America. The Marshall program built upon the success of the well-known Rhodes Scholarships, which are privately funded and limited to attendance at one British university.

Marshall Scholarship recipients can attend any university in Great Britain for two years with the possibility of renewal for a



FOR THE POST/M.B. GILLIGAN

Marshall Scholarship recipient Adam Nolan Morgan, left, gets a hug from his mother, Kathy Nolan. Morgan is a Dallas graduate.

third. Approximately 40 American university graduates receive the scholarships, which cover university fees, cost of living expenses, an annual book grant, a thesis grant, and transportation to and from the United States.

"I chose Cambridge because it is a great institution for astronomy, both in general, and in the

specific area of the cosmic microwave background radiation," said Morgan, who will graduate with a dual major in astronomy/astrophysics and physics and a minor in mathematics.

Morgan has worked with the Penn State team assigned to NASA's Swift Gamma-Ray Burst Explorer Mission since January

2003. He was the only undergraduate student involved in the project that is an international collaboration to launch a multi-wavelength observatory into orbit to study gamma ray bursts.

Morgan has been a volunteer with Penn State's science outreach programs, where he has served as secretary, demonstration-development chairman and vice president of the Penn State Science Lions. The undergraduate/graduate volunteer outreach organization travels to K-12 schools to perform science demonstrations. He has also been a volunteer for AstroFest, an interactive astronomy showcase held every summer during the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts.

Morgan's long-term goal is to become a professor of astrophysics at a major research university. He hopes his career will allow him to continue to investigate contemporary issues in cosmology and to be involved with satellite missions to study the early universe. Adam is the son of Kathy Nolan of Exton and Glen Morgan of Gaithersburg, Md.

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