

HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Margo Pellegrino, a New Jersey mother of two, is paddling her outrigger canoe 500 miles. She's carrying messages from concerned Americans from the Jersey Shore to Capitol Hill — urging Congress to pass healthy ocean legislation. At 10 a.m. today, Pellegrino will stop by the National Aquarium in Baltimore, where a senior scientist from the aquarium and an oceans expert from her partner, the Natural Resources Defense Council, will discuss the health of the oceans, and what people can do to protect and restore them. Visitors will have an opportunity to give Pellegrino messages to carry to Capitol Hill for their congressmen. For more information, visit nrdc.org/healthyoceansnow.



WHAT'S MAKING NEWS

BOY FOUND DEAD AFTER SPARROWS POINT FIRE

An 11-year-old boy was found dead Monday morning after part of a house collapsed on him in an intense fire on Miller's Island.

Jacob Grey was found dead underneath debris in a house in the 8900 block of Hinton Avenue at about 11:45 a.m., according to county fire spokeswoman Elise Armacost.

Firefighters called to the two-story waterfront home two hours

earlier found half the home consumed in flames. Firefighters began searching the home but retreated when the roof collapsed and propane tanks started exploding. After they brought the fire under control and re-entered the home, they found the boy's body upstairs.

Armacost said the home belonged to his grandparents.

The fire is still under investigation. — AP

POLICE BLOTTER

Suspect held without bail after gunbattle with cops

A suspect in the holiday weekend gunbattle with police that left two men dead was held without bail Monday.

Darryl White, 23, of Baltimore, is charged with several drug and gun crimes stemming from the Saturday shootout with Baltimore police.

He was one of three men shot by police. The others, Raemond White, 21, and Haywood White, 18, died after the shooting.

The altercation began at a social gathering in the 1400 block of Bush Street, when security officers asked a group of people to leave, police documents state.

As the group left, some people started firing guns in the air. The group then climbed into a white Ford Taurus and shot at police, according to charging documents.

Officers returned fire, killing two men, police said. Guns and marijuana were recovered from the vehicle, police said. — Luke Broadwater

Edgewood man arrested after standoff with police

The Harford County Sheriff's Office spent nearly three hours dealing with a barricade situation in Edgewood on Monday morning, officials said.

From 7:30 to 10:15 a.m., a domestic incident between Michael K. Peters, 23, and his wife turned into a standoff in the 1300 block of East Spring Meadow Court in Edgewood, said sheriff's office spokeswoman Monica Worrell.

Peters' wife and 4-year-old daughter had left the house after he allegedly assaulted them, but he remained inside with a gun and was feared to be suicidal, Worrell said. The Sheriff's Special Response Team entered the house and arrested Peters and charged him with first- and second-degree assault. — Matthew Santoni

Teen raped at gunpoint in Reisterstown

An 18-year-old woman was raped at gunpoint in Reisterstown at 9 p.m. Saturday, Baltimore County police said.

The suspect approached the woman with a handgun and forced her to a grassy area in the 400 block of Homevale Court, where he forced the woman to engage in a sex act and raped her, police said. — Luke Broadwater

TODAY'S TOP STORY >> MEDICINE

Johns Hopkins brain surgery hits prime time in science news show

By Sara Michael
Examiner Staff Writer

Don Rottman was fully awake, reciting a series of letters and reading aloud simple words like "tree."

But what's unusual about this reading exercise is that Rottman's head was cut open, and his surgeon was poking around his brain, listening closely and waiting for him to garble the words.

"I could feel him doing something up there, then I would stutter," Rottman, 40, of Monkton, said of that day last October when Dr. Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa removed part of a brain tumor.

The rare surgery, an awake craniotomy, was captured for this season of "NOVA scienceNOW," a science news magazine show on PBS. Johns Hopkins neurosurgeon Quinones-Hinojosa will be featured on Wednesday's episode at 9 p.m.

Quinones-Hinojosa, 40, emigrated from Mexico two decades ago, starting out as a farm worker in Southern California. Now he is among a small number of surgeons who perform brain surgery while the patient is awake.

The awake craniotomy was developed decades ago, but it requires a substantial amount of skill to ensure the proper-level lucidity during the procedure, said Dr. Steve Brem, director of neurosurgery at the Moffitt



"It's incredible that we can actually open the human brain and do surgery," said Dr. Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa, associate professor of neurosurgery and oncology at Johns Hopkins University. — Courtesy photo

Cancer Center in Tampa, Fla. and a member of the scientific advisory board of the American Brain Tumor Association.

"It's a balancing act," he said.

The procedure is still rare, with fewer than 1,000 performed in North America each year, usually on areas responsible for speech or motor skills, said Dr. Gail Rosseau, a surgeon and

spokeswoman for the American Association of Neurological Surgeons.

By keeping the patient awake, the surgeon can more easily determine what to remove. The patient is usually asked to recite words while the surgeon stimulates the brain, Quinones-Hinojosa said.

"A lot of the tumors I deal with, you can't tell what is the difference between what is cancer and what is normal brain," he said.

"If you really want to clean up well, you have to find out how far you can push it."

Rottman, director of health and safety for staffing company Tek Systems in Hanover, was diagnosed with anaplastic astrocytoma, or brain cancer.

After the surgery, which left a 14-inch scar, Rottman couldn't move his right arm, but he is slowly improving. Doctors also couldn't remove the entire tumor, so he continues to undergo chemotherapy treatment.

Rottman said he agreed to allow the operation to be televised to promote awareness and raise money for a cure.

"It's hard to find information. You go to Borders and try to get 'Brain Cancer for Dummies' and you won't find it," he said.

Rottman also wants his family to understand the severity of his disease.

"There's no 'get well soon' with this," he said.

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They are my heroes

Dr. Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa, associate professor of neurosurgery and oncology at Johns Hopkins University, will be featured on the Wednesday episode of "NOVA scienceNOW" on PBS performing an awake craniotomy. He spoke with The Examiner about the procedure and the show.

What is an awake craniotomy?

I basically performed brain surgery when the patient is awake. There are very few people in the United States who do it and very

few patients who tolerate it. It's usually [performed for] lesions near very important parts of the brain that will be crucial for language generation or language understanding.

How does it feel to operate on an awake patient?

It's a great deal of responsibility and a great deal of pressure as well. The best way I can describe it is a feeling of exhilaration and excitement and passion and respect for the patient but also for

the brain itself, for the wonderful organ nature has created.

It's that whole combination of determination to get respect, resilience, passion, admiration, and in the end, these patients allow me to learn from them in that relationship. We are partners. We both learn from each other.

That is why they are my heroes. They know they come up and they rise to the occasion. They do it with such an incredible grace and incredible amount of patience.

What was it like being filmed?

It's an incredibly professional crew, in the background, quietly. They are professionals. To me it's like they are almost not there.

When I go into the operating room, I become one with the patient. I literally become connected through my hands and my brain and it's almost as if the world stops there. It's as if I am a different person.

Do you feel like a celebrity?

It's hard not to. If I say no, I would be lying through my teeth. I agreed to do this because I want people out there to know there are people who care about brain cancer.

I want this to translate to more research and more funding. It's the recognition that we can change the awareness of what is going on in the field. — Sara Michael