

Girl to talk about shooting

A girl who was in the library when two of her fellow students at Columbine High School burst in shooting, killing 15 and injuring 23, will talk with students, parents and teachers at the Burlington High School gymnasium at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Heidi Johnson, 16, was asked to come, along with her father and pastor, Dr. Billy Wayne Epperhart, by the Rev. Terry and Susan Skov, pastors of Bethel Assembly of God in Burlington.

Talks by Heidi and her father, Gary Johnson, and Epperhart will be open to the public. She will also talk to an assembly of high school students that

afternoon, said Terry Skov.

Skov said the girl will talk about her experience in the high school on April 20, 1999, and her father will talk about struggling to find his daughter. Then Epperhart will tell his side of the story.

Epperhart is the senior pastor of the Trinity Christian Center in Littleton, and has appeared on CNN's Crossfire, Larry King Live, CBS News, CNBC's Upfront, MSNBC, Swedish Broadcasting, British Broadcasting Corp., TBN, Life Today, CBN and in Time and Newsweek.

He has been a pastor in Littleton

for many years and had several people in his congregation who attended Columbine, three of whom he had to perform funeral services for after the shooting.

"He had to deal with the aftershock of the event," said an associate.

Johnson, her father and Epperhart have been touring the country for almost two years.

During the day Johnson will tell her story to the high school, but in the evening, she will detail some of the miraculous things that happened during the ordeal. An offering will be taken for the speakers.

Students study animals and politics

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grew and how they grew it."

Two sixth-grade teachers had their students present projects that help young minds understand animals, the environment and politics and develop their spelling skills.

With her teacher, Joan Darnauer, sitting close by, Lea Shores, a sixth grader, held up a cellophane-covered box with a small dolphin swimming in blue-green paper waves inside.

Using brochures and an educational display she made explaining the animal's habitat and scientific classification, Shores said she used her creation to convince a jury of her peers to allow the animal into the school's pretend zoo.

Darnauer said other students chose dingoes, snakes and wolves as the subject of hand-made displays and brochures they presented to the jury. All of the animals were voted into the zoo.

Michael Smith, a sixth grader, passed around blue and red "political persuasive" posters his class made and hung on hallway walls, endorsing either Al Gore or George Bush for president.

The students researched the candidates on the Internet, Darnauer said, and focused on one issue important in the election when designing the posters. She said the students had in-depth discussions on the candidates and issues.

"I was really impressed with the interest," she said.

Pam Hardy said she's helping her sixth graders improve their spelling skills with vocabulary and word-building games and activities. Part of each school day is dedicated to spelling, she said.

On Mondays, Hardy said, the students take a spelling test and then spend the next three days trying to improve that score for Friday's test.

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, she said, the children gather in teams to do spelling exercises, including playing board games, and on Thursdays the teams compete against each other in a spelling tournament.

Those who show improvement, Hardy said, receive a free movie rental from Harvey Swager, high school principal and owner of Pied Piper video.

The night had a colorful ending, as

the board walked into Jona Neufeld's multi-age classroom, where fifth and sixth graders have spent the past two years studying every aspect of sunflowers.

Neufeld said the sunflower project is based on a Canadian artists' effort to build a huge replica of one of Vincent van Gogh's sunflower paintings in Goodland.

She said Cameron Cross, the painter and former high school art teacher, has worked with the students throughout his project — which is expected to be erected on an 80-foot easel soon.

Students have done everything, she said, from visiting a sunflower field, planting sunflowers, dissecting a sunflower and doing drawings and paintings of the colorful plant that is key to Sherman County's economy. Neufeld said the project has touched on all subjects, from math to social studies.

The class has also followed Cross' work, she said, and plans to put together a documentary of the artist's painting process.

"It has really been an incredible project for the kids," she said.

Gore challenges Florida loss

RECOUNT, from Page 1

edented legal challenge to Bush's certified victory in Florida. The vice presidential hopeful made the same claim on the other television networks, with only slight variations in phrasing.

But former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, speaking for Bush, sharply disputed that at a news conference in Tallahassee.

"It is wrong, simply wrong, and I would submit not fair to say, as our opponents do ... that these votes have never been counted," he said. The ballots contain no vote for president, he said, but even so, "they've been counted just like all of the other nonvotes, not only in other counties in Florida, but across the United States of America have been counted. They've been counted, and they've been recounted by machines."

Lieberman said "our hope" is for the election to be settled by Dec. 12, the date for final selection of Florida's 25 electors. The candidate who controls them will become the next president, since neither Bush nor Gore can command a majority of the Electoral College without Florida in his column.

That mathematical imperative has spawned an election controversy unlike any other — machine recounts, manual recounts, countless lawsuits — but not yet an acknowledged winner in the race for the White House.

Bush was in Texas on Tuesday, meeting with his aides, after serving notice on Monday he wanted the keys to the government's transition office — a request the Clinton administration rebuffed.

Gore was in Washington on the morning after his televised appeal to the nation in which he cast his court challenge as an obligation to assure that the true winner is known, and said, "ignoring votes means ignoring democracy itself."

Public opinion polls pointed to an

uphill climb for the vice president A CNN-USA Today-Gallup survey, released just before Gore spoke, showed 56 percent of those polled believe the vice president should concede, and 38 percent believed he should not. A Washington Post poll yielded approximately the same result.

Whatever the timetable Lieberman had in mind, the legal wheels were turning.

Gore's attorneys filed a motion in late morning to speed up the process of hearing their challenge to the vote count in three Florida counties, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Nassau. Gore's challenge is before Circuit Judge N. Sanders Sauls, who is known for swift action. He told lawyers on Monday he understood their difficulty in trying to get the case resolved before the Dec. 12 deadline for selecting Florida's 25 electors.

A mid-afternoon hearing was set in yet another case, a lawsuit in Seminole County challenging thousands of ballots there.

And the Bush team labored over its written appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has set arguments for Friday in the Texas governor's lawsuit challenging the validity of the manual recounts that the Gore campaign triggered last week.

At the heart of the legal contest, and the public sparring between Baker and Lieberman, was a dispute over thousands of ballots on which voting ma-

chines failed to read a vote for president. The Gore campaign argues that an unknown number of them contained an imperfectly cast vote — meaning the voter failed to punch a hole out of the cardboard ballot fully. The Bush team says not all voters intended to vote for president in Florida, as elsewhere, and the votes have, in fact, been counted.

Republican running mate Dick Cheney was on the talk show circuit as well as Lieberman, making the case that Bush needed all the time available for his transition, especially given the time spent on recounting votes in Florida.

"It's time to wrap this up that we've had the election, we've had the count, we've had the recount now we've had the certification of George W. Bush as the winner," Cheney said on NBC's "Today" show.

He said the Bush team is "rapidly running out of time to put together that new administration."

Yet another interested party, the Republican-controlled Florida Legislature, was taking a step toward a special session that could result in appointment of its own slate of electors. A special joint committee was scheduled to meet for the first time to discuss election issues.

Gore's evening remarks Monday, coming after Cheney's call for the keys to the transition office, capped a full day of legal and rhetorical skirmishing.

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